

Mind-Crafting: Anticipatory Critique of Transhumanist Mind-Uploading in German High
Modernist Novels

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Abstract

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This dissertation explores the question of how German modernist novels anticipate and critique the transhumanist theory of mind-uploading in an attempt to avert binary thinking. German modernist novels simulate the mind and expose the indistinct limits of that simulation. Simulation is understood in this study as defined by Jean Baudrillard in *Simulacra and Simulation*. The novels discussed in this work include Thomas Mann's *Der Zauberberg*; Hermann Broch's *Die Schlafwandler*; Alfred Döblin's *Berlin Alexanderplatz: Die Geschichte von Franz Biberkopf*; and, in the conclusion, Irmgard Keun's *Das Kunstseidene Mädchen* is offered as a field of future inquiry. These primary sources disclose at least three aspects of the mind that are resistant to discrete articulation; that is, the uploading or extraction of the mind into

a foreign context. A fourth is proposed, but only provisionally, in the conclusion of this work. The aspects resistant to uploading are defined and discussed as situatedness, plurality, and adaptability to ambiguity. Each of these aspects relates to one of the three steps of mind-uploading summarized in Nick Bostrom's treatment of the subject. In addition to transhumanism and simulation, other concepts or areas of inquiry include the posthuman; Heidegger's fourfold; Benjamin's definition of translation; free indirect speech; the narratology of Dorrit Cohn, Alan Palmer, and Alfred Döblin; and, to a lesser extent, the deconstruction of masculinity. It is ultimately argued that the location of fictional minds in the novel has a flattening effect, but it is this flattening effect which simultaneously discloses the mind's resistance to two-dimensionality.

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DEDICATION

For my family

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Introduction: The Uploaded Mind and the Novelized Mind

Mind the X

X marks the death. To be specific, the death of Fred Stiller, which, at the close of Rainer Fassbinder's 1973 made-for-TV science-fiction drama *Welt am Draht* (*World on a Wire*), is a death that obscures the boundary between reality and simulation.¹ Fred Stiller, played by Klaus Löwitsch, is a programmer at a high-tech company working on the creation of a computer-simulated world called the Simulacron. Through the course of the film, Stiller comes to discover not only that his own world is in fact a simulation, but that he is a simulated facsimile of the "real" Fred Stiller, the original programmer of the Simulacron. Stiller attempts to convince other simulants (some inspired by real-world persons, others completely original) of the counterfeit nature of their world but, by doing so, inadvertently causes the deaths of the individuals he attempts to inform. Stiller comes to learn from the simulant of the real Eva Vollmer (who is, not inconsequentially, the lover of the real Fred Stiller), played by Mascha Rabben, that the deaths of these simulants have been orchestrated by the original Fred Stiller in order to protect the integrity of the Simulacron he invented. Simulant Eva, who is controlled directly by the real Eva, confesses that she has fallen out of love with the original Fred Stiller because of his megalomaniacal drive to control the Simulacron and its simulants. Instead, Eva explains, she has fallen in love with the simulated Fred Stiller because he reminds her of what her Fred used to be. Without disclosing her plan to either Fred Stiller, Eva swaps the consciousness of the real Stiller for the simulated one, allowing the milder Stiller to wake up in the body of the Stiller prime, while the mind of Fred Stiller prime enters the simulated body of simulant Fred Stiller just as the

¹ Not to belie the intricacies and complexities of Fassbinder's film or Daniel F. Galouye's pioneering 1964 novel *Simulacron-3* on which the film is based, I focus on the end of this story in order to broach the intractable problem between simulation and "the real."

police riddle his body with bullets, inscribing a perfect X into his chest. Thus, the real Stiller has inadvertently effected his own death in the simulation he himself created.

The film proposes the possibility of death by simulation, execution by one's own art(ifice), which is strangely evocative of Jean Baudrillard's definition of simulation as the gradual replacement of reality with the simulation itself—a concept that will be discussed in greater detail in chapter one.² The mind-switch in *Welt am Draht* is profoundly troubling: on the one hand, it seems to be an exchange of minds for the better, correcting the personality excesses of an autocratic computer programmer; but, on the other hand, the viewer was never allowed to observe the real Fred Stiller, to determine whether Eva's actions were warranted. The ending of the narrative at this juncture also prevents us from determining if the simulant mind will be able to adapt to its new embodiment and to what degree it can successfully navigate the real world. Isn't it possible that original Fred Stiller might have eventually changed his evil ways, or could it be that his personality traits were misrepresented in the first place, or perhaps the simulated world of his creation was manipulated by other programmers, conspiring to usurp his control over the Simulacron? Likewise, how can we say that the new persona of Fred Stiller is even comparable to the original, or that it will function properly in a physical body? How can we know for certain that the exchange of minds was fair or even? Is it possible that something was left out in the transfer?

² Baudrillard describes simulation in successive phases; first, as reflection; then, masking and perversion; next, absence; and finally, no relation, or pure simulacrum (170). While both Gilles Deleuze and Jacques Derrida grappled with the concept of simulacrum, the latter declared in *La Pharmacie de Platon* that "Writing is a simulacrum." Baudrillard's conception provides a complexity and structure which more accurately parallel the findings in the works analyzed in this dissertation.



Fig. 1 The X inscribed on the body of the simulated Fred Stiller. *Welt Am Draht*. Directed by Rainer Werner Fassbinder, performances by Klaus Kowitsch, Barbara Valentin, Mascha Rabben, and Karl Heinz Vosgerau. The Criterion Collection, 2012.

Fassbinder may have given his viewers one clue about how to read this death by simulation. The inscribed X on Stiller's chest may seem like a small detail, but the film calls our attention to it in several significant ways. The apparently symmetrical X is made by exactly nine bullet holes on Stiller's chest, and its creation does not entirely conform with the previous action alleged as the cause of its creation. Stiller is killed by two sets of police officers, each pouring bullets from automatic rifles into Stiller's body. It seems difficult to believe that the police, firing

steadily at Stiller from different angles, could somehow manage to achieve the perfect precision needed to form an X with automatic weapons—that would mean no errors, no hurdling of stray projectiles into any other part of Stiller’s body.³ The blows come in two quick strokes, one precisely instantiated from lower left to upper right and the other from upper left down to lower right, as the viewer perceives it. In addition to the perfection of the X, Stiller’s stimulant body remains standing for an unnaturally long time under the gaze of the camera—about twelve seconds before it finally collapses. Then there is the X itself, so cliché in its marking of death, like the X marks used to replace the eyes in stick-figure drawings or emoticons. Hence, the X is an exaggerated sign of the artificiality of the simulation, an outward expression of the very nature of simulation as replacement by radical negation.⁴ Yet as final and fatal as it is, the over-contrivance of the sign glosses over the question of who the real Fred Stiller was. It is imaginable that the “real” Stiller could have been a simulation of yet another simulation, as suggested by the original title of Galouye’s novel on which the film is based, *Simulacron-3*, meaning that this was merely a murder among simulants. Be that as it may, the more vexing problem is that, with the finality of his death, it cannot be ascertained anymore for certain. We are led to believe that the original was irredeemable and therefore worthy of replacement; but what of the complexities of each individual, especially those not yet realized or discovered?

Beyond the realm of science fiction, the prospect of being able to artificially render one’s own persona or essence into a computer-simulated space has become a serious goal for transhumanist scientists and theoreticians. Known as mind-uploading, the proposition is

³ It stands to reason that the preprogrammed nature of the death may have been explicitly called for in the programming.

⁴ In the next chapter, we learn that Baudrillard’s defines simulation as the radical negation of the sign as value (Baudrillard 170).

emblematic of the contemporary drive to craft our Selves in the digital world.⁵ We need not look further than the popularity of social media and virtual reality games, with their concomitant selfies, profiles, and avatars, to recognize the appeal and ubiquity of this drive. Popular film and television are also replete with mind-transfers, mind-uploading, or mind-digitization.⁶

Transhumanists believe that technology will open the door for the human being to overcome herself through the technological singularity, and the prospect of mind-uploading promises to deliver that aim.⁷ Ray Kurzweil, a Google inventor and prominent voice among transhumanists, has argued repeatedly that advances like mind-uploading will enable us to not only “transcend [the] limitations of our biological bodies and brains,” but also “gain power over our fates,” “live as long as we want,” “fully understand human thinking and [...] vastly extend and expand [our] reach” (9). Inherent in all these promises is the audacious assertion that we will be able to fully understand the human, a concept we invented for ourselves, a concept which has been substantially criticized in recent years by posthuman theorists such as Donna Haraway, Kathleen Hayles, Karen Barad, Cary Wolfe, and Rosi Braidotti, just to name a few. Kurzweil’s claim to fully understand human thinking presumes an ability to transcend the mind despite our imperfect knowledge of its boundaries.⁸ It is an audacious assumption predicated on an uncertain investment in a future condition we do not yet know.

⁵ Mind-uploading is also referred to as Whole Brain Emulation (WBE) or Substrate Independent Mind (SIM) In this dissertation, I will use the more widely recognized term of mind-uploading so as to cover any technical subtleties that may be implied by the other terms.

⁶ A comprehensive list would require extensive research to populate, but here a few notable examples: the Netflix series *Altered Carbon* (2018), *Avatar* (2009), *Tron* (1982), *Star Trek* (in all its incarnations, both feature films and television series), *Doctor Who*, and *Battlestar Galactica*, as well as the video games *Halo 4*, *Mass Effect 3*.

⁷ See next section.

⁸ The idea of transcending the concept of the human presents an equally difficult challenge. One fundamental failing of these assumptions is that of the problem of the black swan, as Nassim Nicholas Taleb has discussed in his 2007 eponymous book. The rupture in the system or the outlier in the analysis or even the miracle *ex machina* has repeatedly presented theoreticians and scientists with considerable challenges, especially in attempting to define and understand the human being. The argument in favor of the impending technological singularity is an example of over-confidence in human-constructed patterns and systems which routinely ignore black swans or those facts which we do not yet know.

This dissertation is not an attempt to sentimentally defend the human as a concept, nor does it propose a new conception of the posthuman or attempt to undo transhumanism. Instead, it is an attempt to put the conspicuously artificial X on Fred Stiller's chest under the magnifying glass and examine the risks and limitations of simulating the mind. With the advent of so many new developments in strong artificial intelligence (AI), we are increasingly handing over more decisions to intelligent machines, the most alarming of which seems to be the conduct of warfare by automated drones.⁹ As ever more trust is placed in the abilities of machine minds created by our own hand, there is a need for a more general understanding of the artificiality and simulative nature of that intelligence. The X stands for the snag simulation in the assertion that the full comprehensibility of the human will be reachable by means of AI. If the mind ever becomes uploaded, then how can we ascertain that nothing will be left out or left behind in the process? How can we assure that the programming language that produces these technologies is not susceptible to the same flaws and instabilities of language identified in the humanities? Isn't there always something left behind when language is involved?¹⁰

Before AI, novelistic fiction had long been the playground for composing artificial minds. Thoughts often accompanied the narration of novels, and most novels are still told from the perspective of sometimes unidentified or ill-defined but discernably sentient minds. When we read novels, we are mind-reading, as Alan Palmer has argued.¹¹ This study builds on the ideas of

⁹ Rosenberg, Matthew and John Markoff. "The Pentagon's 'Terminator Conundrum': Robots That Could Kill on Their Own." *New York Times*, 15 Oct 2016, p. A1. <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/26/us/pentagon-artificial-intelligence-terminator.html>

¹⁰ Derrida's critique of Heidegger's *Unter-schied* with his *différance* makes plain that there never was an origin. There was never any ground to Being for Derrida, so it is bottomless. *Différance* is the non-concept that combines temporalization with spacing but remains silent. *Différance* is the combination of all difference; it cannot be termed. "There never has been, never will be, a unique word, a master-name" (Derrida 76). There was never an original system or native land that can be re-obtained where the word had the powers of immediacy over the thing; instead, there is a constant push and pull, a play between words in a constant deferred and differed scheme of reference.

¹¹ Palmer has attempted with his books *Fictional Minds* (2008) and *Social Minds* (2010) to argue that narrative theory lacks a complete theory of the mind. Palmer suggest that some of our primary motivations for reading is to

Dorrit Cohn and Alan Palmer, who have been some of the most prominent voices in studying the presentation of the mind in literature. I follow Palmer's definition of the mind in literature as the "presentation of fictional mental functioning" and have also found inspiration in his intersubjective conceptualization of the fictional mind (5). How this project contributes to the work of its predecessors is in establishing a relationship between the presentation of the mind in text and the German novelistic tradition. The modernist novel of the early twentieth century was especially concerned with the portrayals and representations of consciousness and mind; stream-of-consciousness, for example, is a commonly recognized term associated specifically with the modernist novels, although the term is misleading.¹² The manner in which minds were constructed in modernist novels provides us with several aspects that may be left behind when the mind is crafted in literature.

This dissertation pursues the question of how modernist novels anticipate and inform the transhumanist prospect of mind-uploading as the augmentation and replacement of the mind. It examines how the unuploadable elements of the mind, such as situatedness, plurality, and adaptability to ambiguity, were anticipated in modernist portrayals of the written mind, particularly in the German-speaking world of the 1920s and 30s. In short, it is argued that mind-uploading is in fact a simulation (for reasons given later in this introduction) and that fictional minds in modernist novels constitute a corresponding form of simulation. This argument is pursued by means of close reading, a method which, by its very enactment, accentuates the problems of attempting to fully comprehend the mind to such an extent that it could be uploaded, since proximity leads to greater detail, and greater detail leads to more grounds for criticism.

better understand and explore other people's minds: "Interiority, experientiality, and fictional minds are, after all, a good part of what we read novels for" (38).

¹² More on this in Chapter 3.

This argument about the simulated minds of German modernist novels as a precursory critique of the transhumanist concept of mind-uploading requires some explanation of the terminology and conceptual parlance involved. The combination of these concepts may also require some justification before a detailed reading of modernist texts can be undertaken. In the section “Transhumanism and Mind-Uploading,” definitions of transhumanism, the transhuman, and the posthuman are provided, along with some contextualization of mind-uploading. Justification for connection between mind-uploading and German modernist novels is provided in the next three sections. These justifications are found in a discussion of the development of ontology in the modernist period and then in definitions of modernism as a literary genre. The final section provides an overview of the chapters of this dissertation.

Transhumanism and Mind-Uploading

Transhumanism is the belief that human beings can and will soon transcend their own humanity by means of technology. According to Nick Bostrom, a leading transhumanist thinker, “Transhumanism is a way of thinking about the future that is based on the premise that the human species in its current form does not represent the end of our development but rather a comparatively early phase” (4).¹³ The transhuman refers to a status for the human being in which she can no longer be satisfactorily defined as merely human due to her enhanced capabilities. Recent scientific and technological advances suggest that we may have already reached this status; for example, performance-enhancing drugs for a variety of human pursuits (sports, sex,

¹³ Bostrom continues by defining two major branches of transhumanism as follows: “(1) The intellectual and cultural movement that affirms the possibility and desirability of fundamentally improving the human condition through applied reason, especially by developing and making widely available technologies to eliminate aging and to greatly enhance human intellectual, physical, and psychological capabilities. (2) The study of the ramifications, promises, and potential dangers of technologies that will enable us to overcome fundamental human limitations, and the related study of the ethical matters involved in developing and using such technologies” (ibid).

learning, attention, memory, etc.); revived eugenics and genetic engineering debates; robotic prostheses; and machine implants, including pacemakers, microchips or other cyborg augmentations.¹⁴ The posthuman, which has been the focus in contemporary debates concerning the future of the humanities in universities across the globe, differs considerably from the concept of the transhuman, although the term has currency in both circles, as I shall clarify momentarily. Suffice it to say at this stage that the posthuman is more closely related to its cousins, poststructuralism and postmodernism, meaning that the human should be regarded as a human concept that can be carefully deconstructed and scrutinized. The placeholder notion of the posthuman, as proposed by Karen Barad, Cary Wolfe, and Rosi Braidotti, is an attempt to move beyond the problematic genealogy of the human toward a more inclusive worldview. Insights from posthuman thinkers constitute an important contribution to my analysis. Indeed, it may be possible to regard my argument as a posthuman response to a transhumanist assertion, although I will follow no single theorist's ideas strictly in my investigation.

What the term posthuman means in transhumanist circles requires some additional explanation. Technological advancements, such as those listed above as well as significant breakthroughs in AI development, evince for transhumanists a trend in the species toward a climax of machine and computational ascendancy known as the technological singularity. The technological singularity refers to a future event in which human intelligence as we understand it is not only surpassed by AI but also exponentially overwhelmed—a sort of Hegelian fulfillment of the “Weltgeist” as technology.¹⁵ Ray Kurzweil, a Google inventor and futurist author, has

¹⁴ See Miller, Geoffrey. “Chinese Eugenics” *Edge*, 26 Jan 2013. <https://www.edge.org/response-detail/23838>

¹⁵ Nazaretyan et al. have discussed the difficulty of defining the term, considering the breadth of views and depth of background knowledge, but they ultimately concluded that “acceleration and discontinuity jointly offer necessary and sufficient conditions” for defining the technological singularity (6). According to these authors, the concept of the technological singularity probably owes its earliest articulation to Hegel's *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, while the American Henry Adams was the earliest writer to circumscribe the idea in 1900. The mathematician John von Neumann is credited with coining the term and imagining the concept as a singularity.

popularized the technological singularity in his 2005 book *The Singularity is Near*, suggesting that “within several decades information-based technologies will encompass all human knowledge and proficiency, ultimately including the pattern-recognition powers, problem-solving skills and emotional and moral intelligence of the human brain itself” (8).¹⁶ Hence, the only way for humans to survive the singularity would be to allow AI to augment or transform their essences. Referring back to *Welt am Draht*, this would be as if the real Fred Stiller had blithely submitted to the replacement of his own consciousness by his simulated alter ego. The entity who has undergone this transformation is known by many transhumanists as the posthuman.¹⁷ In order to avoid confusion, I will refer in this dissertation to the post-singularity entity with human origins as the transhuman, while the posthuman will be reserved for theories that critique the human being as a concept.

Now that the difference between competing uses of the term posthuman has been settled, let us turn our attention to the connection among mind-uploading, simulation, and text. To begin, the notion of the transhuman requires some historical contextualization, so that the textual connection between mind-uploading as a transhumanist concept and the mind represented in novels can be established. The problem of replicating or preserving the human brain has a considerable history that can be traced as far back as the Scottish philosopher Thomas Reid and even American inventor Benjamin Franklin, although its consideration as a realizable prospect

¹⁶ The proposal has given birth to a host of believers and advocates insisting, like Martin, upon the inevitability of mind-uploading. Chapter four of Ray Kurzweil’s *The Singularity is Near* represents one of most discussed summaries of the science and philosophy of mind-uploading. Kurzweil’s 2012 book *How to Create a Mind* takes up where *Singularity* left off, attempting to defend the critiques and objections raised against Kurzweil’s bold claims about mind-simulation, while simultaneously advocating a theory of the cerebral cortex that emphasizes the simplicity of the brain rather than its complexity. Marcelo Gleiser has written cogently on the philosophical roots of mind-uploading in the thirty-first chapter of his 2014 book *The Island of Knowledge*. And Nick Bostrom’s book *Superintelligence* (2014) offers one of the most comprehensive surveys of how to achieve artificial intelligence.

¹⁷ Cary Wolfe explained that, in this respect, his sense of the posthuman is actually the opposite of the transhumanist posthuman: “Transhumanism should be seen as an *intensification* of humanism.”

has its footing in the twentieth century.¹⁸ In popular science fiction, the concept enjoyed repeated reception, most notably in the works of Isaac Asimov, Philip K. Dick, Daniel F. Galouye, and William Gibson, just to name a few.¹⁹ In 1971, George M. Martin (not to be confused with George RR Martin), a professor of pathology at the University of Washington in Seattle, USA, was the earliest scientist to seriously propose the idea as “a partial and interim solution to the ‘terrible problem of death awareness’” (339). Martin knew that the claim sounded outlandish—“the *ultimate* solution is pure science fiction”—but he nevertheless concluded *ceteris paribus*:

We shall assume that developments in neurobiology, bioengineering, and related disciplines, perhaps over a period of centuries, will ultimately provide suitable techniques of ‘read-out’ of the stored information from cryobiologically preserved brains into nth generation computers capable of vastly outdoing the dynamic patterning of operation of our 10¹⁰ cerebral neurones (sic). (340)

Martin went on to conclude, “We would then join a family of humanoid ‘postsomatic’ bioelectrical hybrids, capable of contributing to cultural evolution at rates far exceeding anything now imaginable” (340).²⁰ Although Martin’s discussion focused on a mathematical or computational translation of the human brain, the proposition is nevertheless termed as a read-out, indicating that it might be possible to create an abstraction of the brain into a script that can be deciphered, interpreted, and understood.²¹

Martin was probably not aware of the ontological investigations into the mind-body gap, nor was he apparently aware of the probable ontological difference between the brain and the

¹⁸ See Bostrom 2005.

¹⁹ See Laurence Rickels, *Germany: A Science Fiction* (2014) for more on the connection between popular science fiction and Germany.

²⁰ It is perhaps no coincidence that this opinion was published just six years after Galouye’s *Simulacron-3* was published and two years before Fassbinder’s *Welt am Draht*.

²¹ See Roland Barthes’s essay “Einstein’s Brain” from his *Mythologies* (1957) for a mythological reading of the brain.

mind, both of which question the feasibility of mind-uploading.²² To speak of the mind is to stir up an anthill of possible semantic and connotative definitions, especially concerning the bilingualism of this project (the dual-meaning of *Geist* in German as mind and spirit, for example, serves to demonstrate the precarious nature of invoking the term here). Yet I am not the one who coined the word, and I beg the reader before attempting to kill the proverbial messenger to consider that it was this imprecision of language on the part of the popularizers of the concept who originally excogitated this sticky wicket. Despite these complications, the basic tenets of mind-uploading as it is understood today originate from Martin's proposal, and the idea's popularity has not waned.

Several decades following Martin's original proposal, Nick Bostrom speculated there would have to be three major precursory developments before mind-uploading could be actuated. He summarizes these theoretical prerequisites of mind-uploading as follows:

- (1) *scanning*: high-throughput microscopy with sufficient resolution and detection of relevant properties;
- (2) *translation*: automated image analysis to turn raw scanning data into an interpreted three-dimensional model of relevant neurocomputational elements;
- and (3) *simulation*: hardware powerful enough to implement the resultant computational structure. (30)

It is striking how Bostrom's three steps toward mind-uploading (his term is Whole Brain Emulation) bear, despite the technical jargon, considerable resemblance to the process of reading, especially as it was discussed by Roland Barthes.²³ Moritz Baßler's distillation of Barthes' structure of reading is also broken into a tripartite configuration: text, representation,

²² For one of the most relevant examples concerning the mind-body problem, see Ryle, Gilbert. *The Concept of Mind*. New York: Barnes & Noble, 1949. For more on the brain-mind problem, see Herbert Dreyfus, *What Computers Still Can't Do: A Critique of Artificial Reason*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT, 1992.

²³ Baßler builds on Barthes's writing in *S/Z* (1970) and *Le Plaisir du Text* (1973). See Baßler 15ff.

and meaning.²⁴ When we read, we essentially follow these three steps: the visual reception of text, apprehending the text with the eye (scanning); the processing of that information into coherent meaning (translation); and the placement of those signs into a larger whole, which we imagine in our minds (simulation). Of course, the alignment is not perfect: in Baßler's notion of meaning there is always an appeal to a larger social relevance. Simulation could only stand up to such a comparison if one considers a broader psychological connection among the species, such as Jung's collective consciousness, which is discussed in chapter two. But the alignment need not be perfect. The parallels between the two theoretical configurations provide us some basis for investigating the simulation of the human mind in literature as an anticipation of the transhuman in that the two can be regarded as readable texts. Although this does not represent the entire crux of the reasons for turning to the novel as a means of explicating the potential of mind-uploading, it does provide one avenue for linking literary analysis to artificial intelligence. Simulation, in particular, is a concept that will be utilized throughout the course of this analysis to understand the presentation of the mind in the text. There is much more to say on this connection between mind-uploading and literature, and the next section provides some ontological footing for this investigation.

The Ontological Roots of Mind-Uploading

Many of the conceptual roots of mind-uploading can be traced back to Nietzsche's "Übermensch" and from there to Heidegger's attempt to effect of restart of ontology. In particular, the debate concerning Nietzsche's "Übermensch" as the conceptual precursor to the transhuman exhibits the relevance of modernism as a beneficial field of research regarding the

²⁴ Baßler 29

transhumanist aspirations. Two philosophers from Oxford and the University of Erlangen-Nürnberg respectively, Nick Bostrom and Stefan Sorgner, were the central opponents concerning the proposed connection between transhumanism and Nietzsche's concept of the "Übermensch."²⁵ Bostrom sees the "Übermensch" as a concept with only surface-level similarities to Nietzsche's concept, arguing that Nietzsche never wrote about humanity utilizing technological means to transcend its physical limitations. Rather, Nietzsche had emphasized self-education, using a human being's preexisting capacities to surpass medieval and Christian conceptions of the Self. Sorgner's rebuttal maintains that Nietzschean values of courage, the scientific spirit, and will-to-power can be seen, especially in the eugenics debates surrounding transhumanism, as a means of achieving the transhuman through self-education and not necessarily by technological means (here Sorgner is thinking of posthuman possibilities). Additionally, Sorgner further regards Nietzsche's "Übermensch" as beneficial to the promotion of the transhuman in the popular mind because it proposes a meaning and a goal toward which humanity can collectively strive by individually laboring to form one's life in the here and now as the ancestor of the transhuman.

The difference between Bostrom's and Sorgner's arguments can be understood as the distinction between centripetal or centrifugal means of seeking the transhuman. More specifically: will humanity empower itself inwardly through a transformation of its fundamental genetic makeup, or will it create devices beyond itself capable of drawing the essence of humanity beyond itself? In either case, whether Nietzsche's concepts are precursory to the conception of the posthuman or not, the debate presents a new context for Nietzsche's well-known parable of "Der tolle Mensch" and the death of God, which wielded considerable

²⁵ See Sorgner 2009.

influence in German art and literature at the dawn of the twentieth century. In Nietzsche's parable, the wild human burns a lantern at midday, crying to his atheist audience, "Gott ist todt! Gott bleibt todt! Und wir haben ihn getödtet! . . . Ist nicht die Grösse dieser That zu gross für uns? Müssen wir nicht selber zu Göttern werden, um nur ihrer würdig zu erscheinen?"

(Nietzsche). In juxtaposition with the transhuman, Nietzsche's thought on the death of God and the rise of the "Übermensch" begins to answer the question of the singularity of the human being, the question of why the human being has been placed on such a high pedestal, as to be worthy of duplication and preservation if not augmentation of his essence in cyberspace. Nietzsche's declaration of the apparent apotheosis of the human being at the close of the nineteenth century represented a mixed legacy for the modernist thinkers, artists, and writers of the twentieth century, but it was an assertion which influenced countless modernist works and art forms.

Nietzsche's concept was not without its own predecessors. According to Giorgio Agamben, the "Übermensch" is grounded at the inception of German Romanticism in the writings of Novalis, a poet who had a profound effect on the nihilist philosopher.²⁶ Agamben's quotation of a Novalis fragment illustrates how this challenge to the human being has morphed in the concept of the transhuman: "The body is the instrument of the formation and modification of the world. Thus, we must make of our body an organ *capable of everything*. Modifying our instrument means modifying the world" (Agamben 78, Agamben's emphasis). Quoting Novalis's own words, Agamben continues, "Poetic art is only—a willful, active, and productive use of our organs." Agamben concludes, "At the end of this process, man and the becoming of the world become identical to each other in the circle of absolute and unconditional will, a circle

²⁶ See Agamben's "Poesis and Praxis" in his collection of essays, *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*.

in whose Golden Age it already seems possible to hear Zarathustra's message . . ." (ibid).

Defining poesis as the Greeks did, "pro-duction into presence, that fact that something passed from nonbeing to being, from concealment into the full light of the work" (68), Agamben demonstrates how Nietzsche, as the culminating voice of this line of thought in Western philosophy, conflated praxis and poesis. A similar problem faces transhumanists in their attempt to upload the human mind, a problem which Martin Heidegger attempted to circumnavigate. What Nietzsche accomplishes at the apex of his philosophy (and in many ways the apex of the Western philosophical tradition that preceded him) is to grant the human being her apotheosis through the confusion of presencing (poesis) with doing (praxis), forever entangling subject and world. Heidegger's subsequent mission would be to attempt to untangle these two concepts, effecting a restart for ontology.²⁷

Consequently, Heidegger's neo-interrogation of being provides the seeds for thinking of what mind-uploading will lack in its usurpation of the mind. Heidegger's post-World War II thought became increasingly concerned with the destructive capacity of technology, especially the atomic bomb. Heidegger proposed that the potential to destroy the planet began with the birth of science, which was tasked with analyzing and dissecting the world into discrete forms. This view of technology represents a shift in our state of being that began with Descartes, where everything that encompasses our world, including other human beings, could be converted into consumable resources, reaching its terrible climax with the Holocaust. With this status,

²⁷ In Heidegger's pre-war thought, his response to Nietzsche was particularly characterized by his concept of the *Weltbild*. "Kein Wunder ist" said Heidegger, "daß erst dort, wo die Welt zum Bild wird, der Humanismus heraufkommt" (93). The eminent Heideggerian scholar, Michael Inwood, defines the term *Weltbild* as "a theoretical view of the external world" through which the human being subjugates the world as her own object. "Die Welt als eroberte zur Verfügung," (the world as a conquered object for ready access). The world as objectified image goes hand in hand with the subjectified human being in the concept of *Weltbild*. This idea corresponds to many of Sorgner-Bostrum debate concerning the "Übermensch."

everything can be analyzed and converted into energy, bringing about the desertification (*Verwüstung*) of our existence. But it was a condition that was always already present.²⁸

Thus, Heidegger's great shift in thinking came to focus on the thing, which he conceptualized in his articulation of the fourfold (*das Geviert*). Following Andrew Mitchell's reading of Heidegger, the fourfold provides a means of escaping the subject-object dichotomy and Nietzsche's poesis-praxis conflation by establishing an open relationality for a thing instead of a precise delineation of its limits. As such, even the concept of the fourfold is scarcely a conceptual framework but more like a dimensional configuration or constellation of a manner of thinking about the thing.²⁹ As such, when Heidegger famously stated "Die Sprache spricht" in one of the critical texts initiating this shift in thought, he was intentionally leaving out the agent. By so doing, he leveled a critique against cartesian thought and also provided a clue for what mind-uploading lacks, or that which is resistant to the uploading. This becomes clearer by more thoroughly exploring the configuration of the fourfold.

The fourfold adumbrates and only adumbrates the dimensionality of the thing across a constellation of earth, sky, divinities, and mortals. None of the elements of the fourfold can be regarded as distinct, neither are they entirely to be discerned as unequivocally one. The fourfold is not containment or enclosure, neither is it absolute integral unity, though one can speak of them as a unity. Each coordinate in the fourfold grants a given thing a certain dimensionality without contorting the thing into finitude—they are neither "groundable nor explicable"—at least

²⁸ This realization may represent, in fact, the originator of the motivation to preserve our mind or our essence indefinitely by means of technology. Sounding the death knell for the species with the birth of science fundamentally questioned the viability of human beings to endure in their present status or in their present embodiment. The irony of technology serving as both etiology and prophylactic is undoubtedly lost on advocates of a narrow view of mind-uploading.

²⁹ The appellation of dimension comes from Heidegger's terminology in "Die Sprache": "Der Unter-Schied ist weder Distinktion noch Relation. Der Unter-Schied ist im höchsten Fall Dimension für Welt und Ding" (Heidegger 1959, 25). Heidegger aimed to disclose the relationality and interconnectedness of things, distorting the difference and deferring distinction.

not conclusively (Mitchell 262). Likewise, each aspect of the fourfold cannot be thought without the others simultaneously being called forth.³⁰ The fourfold unity is always in process or in flux, lacking stability, commonly articulated as present participles with the *-end* suffix in German and *-ing* suffix in English translation. “Each element or member of the fourfold reverberates through an endless constellation of relations that interweaves and intertwines the thing in the world” (18). Each element of the fourfold cannot be adequately conveyed here, but let it suffice to mark the earth with a sense of carrying or bearing, while the sky recalls the transience of time marked by weather and celestial bodies. The divinities denote the holy powers which are ever elusive and veiled, and the mortals are those who are dying, always capable of dying but never knowing their own death. The aspects in conjunction represent a signaling of dwelling in spacetime, a major focus of Heidegger’s late thought. But again, the thing in the fourfold is always in a process of gathering to itself, never gathered—statal conditions are consistently resisted in Heidegger’s thinking.

This view of things discloses the human being in relation to the world with room for flexibility without ever achieving pinpoint accuracy. Mitchell explains:

A thing is no simple presence, nothing that can be understood as an independent and relationless unit of objective presence. Things concern us and appeal to us, we care for them and live with them. We leave our marks upon them, even wear them out, and they leave their marks upon us. They are nodes of a relation, not inert and dumb objects. (11)

With the thing as the “nodal point for the assembly of the fourfold,” the thing does not exist without the fourfold and neither does the fourfold exist without the thing.³¹ The thing and the fourfold are always already present but not unitary or identical. They are what they are at the

³⁰ “Bauen Wohnen Denken” (151ff)

³¹ Mitchell 260ff

seams or joints, which are simultaneously disintegration and initiation, and that is the significant point for understanding the unuploadable aspects of the mind. Thinking the fourfold is to let things relate and appeal to us. It is to acknowledge that we are not unconditioned (“unbedingt”), that we do not exist in privileged independence from the world, but to realize that we are join(t)ing with things in the constellation of the fourfold. To say that things are not dumb and inert is to state that there are no fixed limits between things and those who are thinking about them. Thinking about them is a gathering of the relations of those things and the coordinates of the fourfold. It means that thought has no limits in the sense of enclosure but that the edges of thought are actually the beginnings of new openings. It is to imply that our minds and our thinking extend beyond ourselves.

In terms of mind-uploading, it cannot be understated that the human is demoted in terms of the fourfold. The mind dwells in, among, and with the fourfold, not over or above—none of these coordinates, including the thing itself, precedes the others, thus allowing for other unperceived jointings or extensions of the mind. If mind-uploading will indeed allow us to someday assume the position of divinities (or perhaps more precisely immortals) in the configuration, then we would still be unable to prevent the calling, gathering, assembling, withdrawing, abandoning, and thinging that are cohabitant with the fourfold. Perhaps it might be possible to then speak of a fivefold, with the achievement of immortality through mind-uploading, or could it be that only the coordinate of the mortals in the fourfold would stand in need of revision? Whatever the case may prove to be, the movement from mortals to divinities, the apotheosis of the “Übermensch” in mind and body, is still subject to the relativity of the fourfold, as the divinities always were.³² There is no definitive escape from the fourfold once we

³² Even the mind-body problem reflects the intractability of our cartesian inheritance.

attempt to think the thing in the manner we are accustomed to thinking. And even if a new manner of thinking were possible in a post-singularity age for our entities, wouldn't we also be automatically dragging the rest of the constellation of the fourfold with us as a condition already always present?

Under such conditions, the mind and in turn the novel must be thought of in relation to the coordinates of the fourfold. For if my argument proves tenable and simulation represents an effective means of understanding literary minds and uploadable minds, then the (con)textualization of the mind has always and will always constitute a fundamental element of our existence. Heidegger had his bridges and his Black Forest farmstead to demonstrate the dwelling of the thing in terms of the fourfold, and so it seems appropriate to appeal to literary texts as a means of contextualizing the potentiality of mind-uploading.³³ That Heidegger turned to poetry for inspiration should also service as justification for an appeal to literature. In "Die Sprache," Georg Trakl's poem "Ein Winterabend" served as vehicle for Heidegger's explication of language in terms of the fourfold, just as Hölderlin's poems were similarly utilized throughout his later writings.³⁴ Trakl's bread and wine evoke the sustenance of the earth, the progression of the skies, the remembrance of the Eucharist, and the precarious tarrying of the mortals, calling forth each of these aspects of the fourfold in an ever-increasing number of relations. How might it be possible to capture each of these elements in text without considering the relativeness of the fourfold?

³³ "Bauen Wohnen Denken" (157, 162)

³⁴ Heidegger's essays dealing overtly with Hölderlin are "Heimkunft" (1943), "Wie wenn am Feiertage . . ." (1939), "Andenken" (1943), and ". . . dichterisch wohnt der Mensch . . ." (1951). See Paul de Man's essay "Heidegger's Exegesis of Hölderlin" (1983) for an early examination of this relationship. For more recent scholarship, see Gosetti-Ferencei.

Returning to Heidegger's desertification of our world, a text in our cartesian and capitalist state-of-being is just as commodifiable and consumable as anything else.³⁵ Hence, mind-uploading may make it possible for human beings to be converted into texts for consumption. In this case, the question becomes: how might a text (in this case, novels) provide insight into how the mind would resist textualization or uploading? Without revealing too much at this juncture, let it suffice to say that as a contemporary of the authors discussed in this dissertation, Heidegger described a way of being which cast doubt on the uploadability of the mind and emphasized the resistance of the mind toward complete and total textualization by means of mind-uploading.

German High Modernist Novels

Invoking philosophical concepts such as Nietzsche's "Übermensch" and Heidegger's "fourfold" in connection with the transhuman must inevitably turn our attention to the literary imagination, since literature served such a vital role in their inception. Can we still imagine Nietzsche's philosophizing with a hammer without Wagner's hammering Siegfried, or for that matter his own Zarathustra? Or can we really imagine Heidegger's late philosophy without Trakl and Hölderlin? As such, the literary time period most receptive to Nietzsche's thought and incubatory to Heidegger's presents itself as an attractive field of exploration. I do not intend to exclude other philological or philosophical traditions by selecting German modernism—on the contrary, this project aims to expand horizons—but there are several advantages to selecting this era in the German literary imagination. Aside from the fact that the ideas of Nietzsche and

³⁵ From the fourfold arise additional Heideggerian qualities in relation to the fourfold: positionality (*Gestell*) and standing reserve (*Bestand*). These allow for this consumability or conversion of all things into potentially destructive energy or power.

Heidegger were very much at the core of much of modernist literature, the literary imagination of the inter-world-war period located on the cusp of the birth of computer technology and the terrible technological destruction of World War II and the Holocaust focused on the fractured persona, on the human being in crisis as well as the context of that crisis.³⁶

Chris Baldick's definition of twentieth-century literary modernism (not merely in the sense of German philology) provides evidence of the epoch's suitability for a critique vis-à-vis mind-uploading.

[1] Modernist literature is characterized chiefly by a rejection of 19th-century traditions and of their consensus between author and reader . . .

[2] Modernist writers tended to see themselves as an *avant-garde* disengaged from bourgeois values, and disturbed their readers by adopting complex and difficult new forms and styles.

[3] Modernist writing is predominantly cosmopolitan, and often expresses a sense of urban cultural dislocation, along with an awareness of new anthropological and psychological theories. Its favoured techniques of juxtaposition and multiple points of view challenge the reader to reestablish a coherence of meaning from fragmentary forms.

(159-160)

³⁶ In addition to the justification previously mentioned, there is an inherently moral danger in mind-uploading in terms of eugenics, and German literary modernism seems to have had some premonition of this. In the September/October 2004 issue of *Foreign Policy*, Francis Fukuyama, the influential political philosopher renowned for his 1992 book *The End of History*, argued that transhumanism was the world's most dangerous idea, warning that "if we start transforming ourselves into something superior, what rights will these enhanced creatures claim, and what rights will they possess when compared to those left behind?" (42). Such an argument must recall at least in part the dangers of National Socialism with its ideology of the *Herrenrasse*; but the difference with mind-uploading is its ability to actually make some humans superior to others in quantifiable and measurable ways, that is, beyond the irrational and unsubstantiated suppositions of racial superiority claimed by the Nazis. Mind-uploading claims to be able to deify the human being, while having only a hazy image of what the transhuman will be. Feuerbach's anthropological conception of god, described in *The Essence of Christianity* as the projection of human ideals, suggests a parallel to this concept of the deification of our own image or avatar and could present an alternative mode of argumentation.

Baldick's major elements of modernism prefigure the issues of mind-uploading, though there are imperfections in their alignment. The nineteenth-century author-reader relationship refers specifically to the realist narrative style of that century, which generally assumed a certain amount of amicability if not trust between the reader and the narrative. By the advent of the twentieth-century modernism, the waters of carefree lucidity between the author and reader had been thoroughly clouded by modernist authors, hampering the reader's trust in the reliability of its content and mechanisms.³⁷ Because of this broken trust between author and reader, the alienating style of modernist literature has, by and large, been rejected by the general reading public in the contemporary era in preference to neo-realist styles.³⁸ I do not entirely agree with Baldick on this point because, as is discussed in Peter Child's definition of modernism, modernism was not completely a rejection of realism but an attempt to outdo it. Nevertheless, Baldick's last two points give us a stronger sense of the suitability of literary modernism over other eras in critiquing the transhuman. This is because it discloses the fragmentary albeit multiple and diverse subject. Finding the exception to the rule, the oddity that does not conform, the broken cog in the machine was a common theme in modernist novels, not only those following the German tradition. The crisis of World War I led to a general discontentment with the systematic forces, whether they be ideological, economic, political, or cultural, which effected that disaster. Such systemic frustrations were reflected in the works of modernist novels and seem to corollate well with contemporary concerns about our own society, including not only the ascendancy of artificial intelligence, but also the political chaos amid the

³⁷ The quintessential example in the Anglophone sphere is James Joyce's *Ulysses*, which frequently displays indifference to the reader's comprehension, which is why it is commonly praised by literature critics as the best book of its century but seldom read by the masses.

³⁸ See Moritz Baßler's study on the evolution from realism to modernism to new realism in *Deutsche Erzählprosa 1850-1950*, Berlin, Erich Schmidt Verlag, 2015.

resurgence of populist politicians, the mounting social inequality, and the integrity and security of capitalist systems.

Peter Childs's definition of modernism stresses the themes of rupture and distrust in Baldick's definition, but he advances an aspect of modernism which attempts to outdo its predecessor. Although Childs primarily discusses English-speaking modernist writers, his analysis is applicable to German modernists as well:

In prose, it [modernism] is associated with attempts to render human subjectivity in ways more real than realism: to represent consciousness, perception, emotion, meaning and the individual's relation to society through interior monologue, stream of consciousness, tunneling, defamiliarisation, rhythm, irresolution and other terms that will be encountered later in this book. Modernist writers therefore struggled, in Ezra Pound's brief phrase, to 'make it new', to modify if not overturn existing modes and subjects of representation, partly by pushing them towards the abstract or the introspective, and to express the new sensibilities of their time. (3-4)

The modernist effort to "render human subjectivity in ways more real than realism" complements the transhumanist agenda of exceeding beyond the traditional capacities and conceptions associated with the human. From this perspective, modernist novels seem to anticipate the Baudrillardian notion of simulation, wherein the "real" object of simulation is gradually replaced until it becomes pure simulacrum. The aphorism "to make it new" divulges another advantage in favor of the modernist novel as an area for investigation, for it seems modernist authors already comprehended that the mind captured in the novel would differ from its antecedent: it seems they anticipated the mimetic joke of simulating the mind in text. While thoughts, mind, cognition, etc. are inevitably altered when transcribed into text, there remains an

unyielding element of decay or digression, a loss of high fidelity, a palpable abstraction which must be traceable back to relationality of the mind beyond itself, as discussed in the previous section. This does not necessarily mean that the task of mind-uploading should not be pursued; rather, the prospect of uploading the human mind into cyberspace or some digital realm must be regarded in its original grounding in the text of computer programming languages. Being in language, even a technical language, there is no means for the uploaded mind to escape this (con)textuality, but that version of the mind may yet prove beneficial.

Aside from Baldick and Childs, Martin Swales has more specifically established a German connection between modernism and mind-uploading via simulative concept of virtual reality. Swales provides us with some justification for the textualization of the mind, whether in the novel or in computer programs: “We still need, in the present cultural juncture of our lives, maps that will help to say ourselves to ourselves. One source of such maps is literature, and literary maps—like all maps—show frontiers, boundaries, thresholds” (Swales 39).³⁹ Swales’s emphasis on borders and limits recalls Heidegger’s conceptualization of limits not as necessary enclosures but as the points of departure and beginning. As such, the map of modernist literature may therefore provide some orienting coordinates in the evaluation of the potential of mind uploading and transhumanist endeavors, while such developments are explored or actuated.

A word on the role of new objectivity or new matter-of-factness (“Neue Sachlichkeit”) is deserved before carrying on to the next section. New objectivity is also specifically relevant to the time period in which these novels were written, traditionally covering the period between 1925 and 1945. It was a literature of extremes (“eine Literatur der Extreme”) because of its concertation on the tension between rationalism and irrationalism and the manifestation of those

³⁹ The novels which Swales analyzed were Thomas Mann’s *Der Zauberberg* and Hermann Hesse’s *Der Steppenwolf*.

extremes in the rise of National Socialism and totalitarianism (Paucker 11). As such, it shares many common identifying threads with modernism, and the one categorization does not necessarily exclude the other. The utility of the appellation is beneficial inasmuch as it references the turbulence of the time period and the focus of the time period on objectivity over the subjectivity of expressionism. Themes of new objectivity found in the novels examined in this study are addressed in more detail in their respective chapters, but suffice it to say at the onset that the flexibility in the translation of “Neue Sachlichkeit” already hints at some of the conclusions reached in this investigation.

The Mind Skewed Masculine

In the discussion of mind-uploading and literary modernism up to this point, another important justification has not been overtly discussed but requires some attention in this introduction. In transhumanist circles and among the authors of the modernist era, there is an overwhelming predominance of male voices. In fact, the reader may have already observed this bias in the comparison of posthumanist thinkers to transhumanist thinkers, or perhaps as early as Fred Stiller in *Welt am Draht*. The attempt to upload the mind for amplification and deification must necessarily remind us of the hegemonic masculine drive to dominate his surroundings, a chauvinistic understanding of Nietzsche’s “Übermensch.”

Modernist authors in German-speaking countries at this time were also predominantly masculine, and they continue to dominate research in German modernism. Scholarship is replete with comparisons of the works of Thomas Mann, Hermann Hesse, Robert Musil, Franz Kafka, Hermann Broch, Alfred Döblin, etc., but these works have never been to my knowledge compared with female contemporary authors, such as Gabriele Reuter, Ricarda Huch, Vicki

Baum, Rahel Sanzara, Clara Viebig, or Irmgard Keun.⁴⁰ There are reasons for the lack of comparison besides an obvious generational bias: few novels by female authors at the time were of comparative length to the works examined here, nor were the works of female authors regarded with similar prestige by the predominantly male scholars of the time (and the decades afterward). Of course, these incongruities are attributable to masculine dominance of society at the time, which still generally discouraged woman from participating in intellectual or public life. Gina Kaus, a contemporary writer in the modernist era, offered one reason for the dominance of men in an article she wrote about the differences between women's literature and men's literature in her time: "Men are always able to give themselves over to a world that is artificial and fictive, in a word, a toy world" (Kaes 517). Specifically mentioning detective novels, this ability to obtain "true playfulness" in literature was something that Kaus apparently envied, hoping that women would be able to develop "a female Edgar Wallace" (the creator of King Kong). But Kaus's emphasis on the male tendency toward artificiality and playfulness suggests another reason for examining modernist literature as the grounds for a critique of mind-uploading.

As we saw with Fred Stiller, there are unknown variables that are left out of any attempt to simulate the mind, which cannot always be accounted for. That the contrivers of these minds were predominately male voices establishes that other perspectives on the spectrum of gender have been or could be obviated in the creation of imitation of these minds, especially by means

⁴⁰ One need not look very hard to find that the study of German modernism is still predominantly concerned with masculine authors. In my own research for this dissertation, I have not come across any comparisons between the works examined in this dissertation with works by contemporary female German-speaking authors. Comparisons with the works of Virginia Woolf or Edith Stein do exist in the literature but are few and far between. Most of the past studies focus predominantly on masculine writers. For example, only four of the thirty-one handbooks published by J. B. Metzler on major figures of German literature are on female authors (Herta Müller, Christa Wolf, Ingeborg Bachmann, and Elfriede Jelinek). Another study on the time period by Walter Delabar (*Klassische Moderne: Deutschsprachige Literatur 1918-1933*. Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2010.) has several sections of prominent men of the era; none on women.

of predominantly masculine originators. Despite the male bias, there is some evidence that the modernist novels analyzed in the following chapters were also aware of the gender skew. For instance, in Hermann Broch's *Die Schlafwandler (SW)*, which is the primary subject of chapter two, the unuploadable aspect of the mind seems to point to a notion I call plurality—the possibility of the mind opening up to multiple voices and perspectives through a turn to the poetic. As is discovered in that chapter, the turn to plurality on the part of Bertrand leads to the deconstruction of masculine identity.

However that may be, a turn to a female perspective should be undertaken, but can only be accomplished after the masculine bias has been exposed, which is one of the consequences of sketching the limits of the simulated mind. To do so, a close reading of the masculine text provides ample footing for a discussion of what the female perspective adds. Although the posthuman has often been mentioned in connection with feminism—Donna Haraway's cyborg was in fact originally proposed as a post-gender answer to the problems of the human—there has been little discussion of whether the transhuman would even take on specific gender, although Francesca Ferrando is currently leading this avenue of investigation.⁴¹ This dissertation is primarily concerned with the limits of mind-uploading, both in the sense of enclosure and possibility, and a discussion of feminism in the novelized minds of modernist literature deserves greater attention. Hopefully, this will be possible in subsequent research on this topic. In the spirit of opening possibilities, however, the conclusion of this work offers Irmgard Keun's *Das Kunstseidene Mädchen* as a preview of how such a line of inquiry contributes to the conclusions of this dissertation.

⁴¹ See for example, Ferrando, Francesca. "Is the Post-Human a Post-Woman? Cyborgs, Robots, Artificial Intelligence and the Futures of Gender: a Case Study." *European Journal of Futures Research*, vol. 2, no. 1, 2014, pp. 1–17.

Outline of Chapters

Having provided some key definitions and rudimentary justification for the material examined in this dissertation, I can now present an outline of the argument pursued in the subsequent chapters. The following German high modernist texts serve as case studies for examining the simulation of the mind in the novel: Thomas Mann's *Der Zauberberg* (*ZB*), Hermann Broch's *Die Schlafwandler* (*SW*), and Alfred Döblin's *Berlin Alexanderplatz: Die Geschichte von Franz Biberkopf* (*BA*). One might ask why these works were selected over others, such as Robert Musil's *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*, Franz Kafka's *Das Schloss*, Hesse's *Der Steppenwolf*, or others works from the period. The answer is that the works selected were found to be the most helpful for composing and supporting the argument. If others could have bolstered this argument or contributed additional insights, then the blame rests squarely on my shoulders, but to the best of my knowledge these works appeared to be the most insightful. This work does not seek to rule out any of the other novels during this or other time periods for further investigation. On the contrary, it is my hope that theme of mind-uploading in relation to fictional minds can be pursued in other works outside the German canon.

In each of these chapters, the vital steps for achieving mind-uploading—simulation, translation, and scanning—constitute the critical and thematic foci for identifying the unuploadable elements of the mind. As such, this work represents an attempt to reverse-engineer Bostrom's theory of mind-uploading, beginning with the theme of simulation as presented in *ZB*. The concept of simulation is overtly investigated and introduced in my reading of this novel, but the term is not used in Mann's novel. Nevertheless, *ZB* aptly fits defining elements of simulation as argued in chapter one. Since simulation represents the last step in the achievement of mind-

uploading, it represents the broadest and most essential term utilized in this dissertation. Hence, as the first theme, it is also appropriately the most discussed and developed throughout the course of this study. Other terminology subsequently introduced must be seen as constituent appendages of simulation itself.

The Berghof sanatorium of Mann's *ZB* proves to be a productive example of the space in which the simulated mind is presented. In it, we find a collection of personalities and ideas comprising and imitating the major European themes and figures prior to World War I, enhancing the degree of simulation of the mind because of their verisimilitude. In order to understand the mind presented in this space, Alan Palmer's explanation of the situatedness of fictional minds and Baudrillard's concept of simulation are introduced. In particular, the minds of Hans Castorp and the unnamed narrator are examined. The spectral and aberrative appearance of Joachim Ziemßen's ghost in the section of the novel entitled "Fragwürdigstes" demonstrates, in addition to other consequences, a rupture of the situatedness of the mind, exposing the limits of the mind in the novel. This provides us with the first unuploadable aspect of our essence, i.e. situatedness, as identified through a close reading of modernist novels, namely the situatedness of the mind in its contextual space. This discloses the messiness and indistinctness of the contours of the mind in the novel.

In chapter two, Hermann Broch's *SW* is read against the backdrop of translation. Translation, as defined by Walter Benjamin, denotes a necessary constituent aspect of simulation and contributes additional insights into the role of the narrator in configuring the novelized mind. The notion of translation builds on the theme of simulation by narrowing in on the assertion that the mind can be sufficiently abstracted in order to obtain a high-fidelity simulation, which is elucidated by means of the sleepwalking metaphor. Competing trinary and binary thematic

constructions in translation are identified as contributory to the indistinct limits of situatedness. Despite the thematic tension between trinary and binary structures, it is found that the two are coterminous. The unuploadable aspect here is best termed as plurality, and it is read by examining the valence of narrative strands, the deconstruction of gendered representations, and the textual and narrative lacunae.

Alfred Döblin's *BA* provides the final proving ground for the unuploadable aspects of the human mind by means of simulation. Döblin's own theoretical writings on the novel as a form of simulation serve as a valuable theoretical informant for the chapter. Döblin seemed to understand the novel as a form of simulation, although, like Mann, he never uses the word in either his theoretical writings or *BA*. This sense of the novel as simulation is demonstrated in *BA* by the insertion of pictograms into the text, the enticements of the narrator, and the treatment of the book as medium. These themes are explicated by means of Döblin's theoretical text, "Der Bau des epischen Werks." It is also found that the words and letters in *BA* have audial and visual ambiguity that is exposed by their presentation in the novel. The overlapping visual and audial paradigms expose the adaptability of ambiguity as the third aspect of the mind resistant to uploading: a point which leads to some final insights into the task of mind-uploading as termed by Bostrom.

In the conclusion, a short reading of Irmgard Keun's *Das Kunstseidene Mädchen (KM)* provides a trajectory for further research. *KM* serves as an epitomic bookend to the project, not only because it suggests a difference in perspective, but also because it departs from other trends in German modernist literature. Keun's novel provides a means of summarizing many of the conclusions reached in the previous chapters and also hints at another aspect of the mind resistant to uploading. Ultimately, *KM* is useful because it represents a way of keeping the door

open to simulation as a productive concept in literary analysis, as well as a means of opening a dialog with those who argue that technology will provide a total means of capturing the mind. Furthermore, the conclusion summarizes how the novelized mind informs the prospect of uploading the mind in digital space.

And with that, let us begin.⁴²

⁴² The last line of the introductory statement of purpose in Thomas Mann's *Der Zauberberg* relates something similar: "Und somit fangen wir an" (10). This is also the title of a book that addresses the theme of ambivalence in Mann's *ZB*. See Seipp-Isele, Nicole. "*Und Somit Fangen Wir An*": *Ambivalente Poetologie in Thomas Manns Zauberberg*. Königshausen & Neumann, 2015. Unfortunately, this study was discovered very late in the research for this project, which denied me the opportunity to consider her findings fully.

Chapter One

Thomas Mann's *Der Zauberberg*: The Situatedness of the Mind

Abenteuer im Fleische und Geiste, die deine
Einfachheit steigerten, ließen dich im Geist
überleben, was du im Fleische wohl kaum
überleben sollst

--Thomas Mann, *Der Zauberberg*, 984

An Introduction by iCloud

Sometime between 31 August and 1 September 2014, anonymous hackers leaked hundreds of nude photos of celebrities online by illegally accessing their iCloud accounts.⁴³ Among the victims were the Academy-Award-winning actress Jennifer Lawrence, the singer Rihanna, models Kate Upton and Cara Delevingne, and the US soccer player Hope Solo. The breach was a highly publicized breach of privacy that motivated many iCloud users to find new ways to better secure their online data. The breach occurred because users were allowed an unlimited number of queries in entering a password to the iCloud backup service, which consequently allowed hackers ample opportunity to break into user accounts. Although Apple apparently knew about the potential security breach far in advance,⁴⁴ little was done to improve the security of the system or prevent such a violation of private information, betraying the company's overconfidence in its two-tiered security wall.⁴⁵ This incident was considered "a great wake-up call" for cybersecurity,⁴⁶ yet in the end all Apple did to fix the problem was to

⁴³ See Grant, Madeline. "Hundreds of Intimate Celebrity Pictures Leaked Online Following Alleged iCloud Breach." *Newsweek*, 1 Sep. 2014.

⁴⁴ Knibbs, Kate. "Report: Apple Knew of Security Problems Long Before iCloud Breach." *Gizmodo*. 24 Sep. 2014. Web. 10 Sep. 2014.

⁴⁵ The second tier was not automatically enabled.

⁴⁶ Lewis, Dave. "iCloud Data Breach Hacking and Nude Celebrity Photos." *Forbes*. 2 Sep. 2014. Web. 10 Sep. 2014.

admonish its users to increase the strength of their passwords, reutilizing the preexisting security measures.⁴⁷ Despite the severe exposure of personal storage space, few iCloud users chose to abandon the service, and apparently still fewer paused to consider the underlying assumptions of the iCloud concept.

This anecdote of the iCloud breach underscores an inherent paradox in our expectations of digital technology. Since the invention of reading, we have long used technology to enhance our cognitive abilities, and now in the digital age we regularly extend our minds into cyberspace, expecting it to serve as a backup space for our thoughts, memories, and personal images. But such a space does not consist of a singularly discrete space; it actually allows for the existence of these artifacts of the mind in multiple locations at once.⁴⁸

The situation is comparable to a scene in Thomas Mann's *Der Zauberberg* (ZB), in which Hans Castorp reacts with unbridled enthusiasm to the introduction of a gramophone into the utopia of the Berghof sanatorium. Hofrat Behrens, the sanatorium's chief doctor and director, has brought the device to the mountain sanctuary, hoping that it will comfort his patients. He praises the temporal-mechanical form ("zeitlich-mechanische Gestalt") as a means of conveying "die deutsche Seele [soul] up to date" (876). The embodiment of the German soul in a new technological form is of course hyperbolic, yet the machine is indeed able to transcend time and space, allowing musical recordings from various times and settings all over the world to inhabit the lounge of the sanatorium. Despite this astounding feat, the narrative reminds us that there is still something lacking, like looking backwards through opera glasses at a painting (877).

⁴⁷ Splashdata, a software company that produces password security management applications, annually releases a list of the 25 worst passwords. Since 2014, number one and two have been *123456* and *password*, respectively. Aside from the mental effort required to generate a difficult password that is simultaneously memorable but not easily decipherable, it is interesting how some of the passwords on the list are connected to the configuration on the keyboard: for example, number four on the list is *qwerty* and number fifteen is *1qaz2wsx*. The relevance of this comment will become clearer as I discuss external cognition.

⁴⁸ See Dehaene, Stanislas. *Reading in the Brain: the Science and Evolution of a Human Invention*. Viking, 2009.

Castorp is particularly entranced by the magic songs (“Zauberlieder”) of the gramophone, the record of Schubert’s “Lindenbaum” proving to be his particular favorite. Yet the narrative informs us that the allure of the gramophone is beyond Castorp’s comprehension: “Hans Castorps Gedanken oder ahndevolle Halbgedanken gingen hoch, während er in Nacht und Einsamkeit vor seiner gestutzten Musik sarge saß, - sie gingen höher, als sein Verstand reichte, es waren alchimistisch gesteigerte Gedanken” (898). That Castorp’s thoughts here are marked as excelling beyond his own mind (“Verstand”) already points to the argument of this chapter, the themes of escalation and alchemy (broadly speaking as transmutation or transformation) being especially critical to this reading of *ZB*. The passage suggests that technological marvels can extend our thoughts far beyond the mind that thinks them.

In context of the iCloud, if our thoughts can extend beyond our minds, then how can it be expected that images or secret files about ourselves in an expansive and indiscrete space such as cyberspace will be completely secured? For inasmuch as privacy marks enclosure and encasement, the thinking of things expands our minds outward, exposing our interiority. Though a thing may exist in multiple places at once through technological abridgment, the mind allows its spatial presence to extend beyond conventional corporeality. Once the mind becomes the thing thought, then the housing of our mind, essence, persona, or whatever it is about us that we can still claim in the posthuman era, becomes an extension and not an enclosure, albeit through abstraction. This augmentation or intensification is not advancement per se, but distension, as I hope to demonstrate. Any simulation of the mind in cyberspace may lay claim to the promises and risks of this space, a space that exists in multiple physical positions at once, but it cannot be

regarded as a reliably discrete or securable place. And it is literature that has frequently reminded us that minds are resistant to privacy.⁴⁹

The task of this chapter is to demonstrate how the simulation of the mind in the novel, i.e. the novelized mind, does not occur in an impregnable or perfectly containable space. The novelized mind anticipates the problem of the spatiality of an uploaded mind. Although the gramophone and the iCloud do not make a perfect comparison, they do expose our expectations of the magic behind these technological marvels, by which I mean the element of simulation that abridges or abstracts (even negates) the real through escalation and extremization. As was discussed in the introduction with Heidegger's fluidity of borders in the fourfold, this chapter examines the limits of the mind captured in the novel in a different light: not as the ends of a spatial mind, but as the beginning of or a dissipation into other positionalities. In other words, the novel informs the prospect of the uploaded mind in this chapter by reminding us that the simulation of the novel is the situation or context of the mind unended. In order for this condition to be adumbrated in Thomas Mann's *ZB*, some conceptual and theoretical concepts require extended introduction, i.e. situated cognition and Baudrillard's structure of simulation as a Möbius strip. Evidential for this reading are the interplay of the narrator vis-à-vis Hans Castorp in the *Vorsatz* and the final pages of the book, and ultimately the outbreak of the paranormal events in the section "Fragwürdigstes." Close readings of these passages will explicate how the situatedness of a novelistic mind extends beyond discrete boundaries.

⁴⁹ For an insightful analysis on the topic, see Miller, D. A. *The Novel and the Police*. Berkeley, Calif: University of California Press, 1988.

Situated Cognition, Simulation, and the Novel

As with the anecdote of the iCloud, we think we have found in cyberspace a discrete space that simultaneously encapsulates and liberates the mind, but in the precursory medium of the novel, we find cause to doubt the integrity of these containers.⁵⁰ Before that advent of the digital age, chirographic and typographic media, in particular the book, were the primary conveyance of preserving and externalizing human thought and fantasy.⁵¹ There has always been a demand for a container-carrier for simulated minds, no matter what form it has taken. From clay and stone to papyrus and vellum, and without exception today's silicon and plastic, or tomorrow's nanites and organic cells, simulated consciousness always has dependence on a body.⁵² Even cyberspace, as vast as it seems, is contingent upon a physical presence in silicon chips and programming language, no matter how sophisticated, intricate, or minuscule they become.⁵³ As I hope to show, transhumanist theories of how the human being will evolve, in particular mind-uploading, lack an appreciation for the spatial open-endedness inherent in our situatedness, as in Heidegger's fourfold.

In 1998, Andy Clark and David Chalmers argued in their much-read paper called "The Extended Mind" that human cognition reaches beyond the skull and skin, positing our thinking into our external world. Alan Palmer invoked Clark and Chalmers' idea in his book *Fictional*

⁵⁰ In a 2009 essay entitled "What is an Apparatus?", the philosopher Giorgio Agamben asserted that language itself "is perhaps the most ancient of apparatuses—one in which thousands and thousands of years ago a primate inadvertently let himself be captured, probably without realizing the consequences that he was about to face" (14). As such, this reading also attempts to take into account that language and literature can also be regarded as apparatuses.

⁵¹ See Tuchman (1980) and Ong 24.

⁵² See Piper (2012) for an argument in favor of the persistence of the medium of the book in the digital age.

⁵³ In *The Medium is the Massage*, Marshall McLuhan famously emphasized how specific media perform as extensions of the senses and body parts, i.e. "The wheel is an extension of the foot. The book is an extension of the eye. Clothing is an extension of skin" (27-39). McLuhan argued that the novelty of these extensions changed the utility ratios of our sense organs and that, "When these ratios change, men change" (41), suggesting that media transform their users the more they are used.

Minds, utilizing the phrases “physically distributed cognition” or “situated cognition” to broach the topic of how fictional minds are crafted in literature.⁵⁴ These concepts point to how human cognition is not insular or merely internal neurological machinations without reference in the physical world or to outside factors; rather, human thoughts are projections onto physical objects (cognitive artifacts) and even onto other individuals.

In order to illustrate this concept, imagine the following scenario: a person is crossing from one part of her dwelling to the other in order to share some piece of information with her cohabitant. Once she has reached that person, she forgets what information she had intended to share. After retracing her footsteps back to the room in which the thought occurred, the thought comes back to her, and she returns to deliver her message. In this example, the possibility is raised that there was something about the space in which the thought occurred that is key to the retrieval and preservation of that thought. Palmer gives a few additional examples to enrich our understanding: elderly persons sometimes experience significant cognitive impairment or memory loss after they have been taken from their residences of several decades and placed in the unfamiliar settings of a nursing home or care facility. For an airplane pilot, her cognitive processes are distributed not only throughout the controls and gauges of the cockpit (physically distributed aspects) but also on the copilots and personnel in the airplane (socially distributed aspects) (Palmer 159–60). Palmer elaborates:

The concept of situated cognition is a lot more than the simple acceptance of the fact that we use tools. It is a recognition of the fact that our minds extend beyond the boundary of our skin and encompass the cognitive tools that we use. Ultimately, our minds are distributed cognitive systems. At the time of my writing these words, the computer that I

⁵⁴ See also Zunshine (2006) for an additional perspective on reading the mind in fiction.

am using is as much a part of my mind as the neurons, axons, and synapses in my brain.

In fact, even when I stop typing, this Word document will remain a part of my mind.

Considering how much effort my mind has put into it, how could it not be? (Palmer 160)

That physical desk spaces or digital desktops may serve as topographies of thought recalls Heidegger thinking of the thing at the nodal convergence of the fourfold. Situated cognition as described by Palmer stages an imprecise traversing of the mind in a given space. In such a configuration, we cannot merely talk of mind as strictly local to the brain; the mind extends and dissipates out into the space it occupies. Thus, wherever we go, we animate our physical surroundings with our own cognition, creating mental imprints on our environments. And, as it turns out, they animate us as well. As was the case in the example of forgetting a thought upon leaving a room, so too in novels we find that the feel of the pages, the smell of the book, or our markings in the novel may stay with us for years after the first reading.⁵⁵ But the psychological impact of the spaces we occupy on our minds is beyond my expertise or my field of study.

In terms of the novel, the mind has excogitated the most perverse, absurd, comic, crass, alluring, and impossible ideas and events. The novel, perhaps better than any other genre, has been the playground for imagining life and externalizing our thoughts in a written structure, but we also inspire it with our stray thoughts and cognitive musings.⁵⁶ Thomas Mann also concurred with this conceptualization of the novel: “Der Romancier formt das Leben nicht nur in seinem

⁵⁵ Clark, Dennis T., Susan P. Goodwin, Todd Samuelson and Catherine Coker, “A qualitative assessment of the Kindle e-book reader: results from initial focus groups,” *Performance Measurement and Metrics*, Vol. 9 Iss: 2(2008), 118 – 129.

⁵⁶ This idea originates in the speculations on possible world by Gottfried Leibniz at the end of his *Essais de Théodicée sur la bonté de Dieu, la liberté de l'homme et l'origine du mal* (1710). Palmer discusses possible worlds theory as well (33). Although a simulation of the mind in a novel could be regarded as a possible world, this perspective does not play a substantial role in this analysis. The focus of my analysis is less on the situatedness or world of the mind than it is on the mind in its situatedness.

Buch, er hat es oft genug auch durch sein Buch geformt” (“Die Geistige Situation” 299ff).⁵⁷

Although it is beyond the scope of this project to determine how the novelized mind affects the reading mind, it may suffice to say that the mind cannot be discretely enclosed within the pages of the novel.⁵⁸ Reading is a complicated interaction and not an autarkic activity; it leaves a cognitive mess wherever one attempts it. As such, to pursue the simulation of mind in the novel, it is only possible to attempt a tracing of the contours of the mind in the text. The challenge in doing so comes from the fragmented and distended nature of simulation.

As with the situatedness of the mind, the conceptual structure of simulation requires some foregrounding in order to sketch the open-endedness of the situatedness of the mind. Jean Baudrillard defined simulation in contraposition to representation, of which the latter always originates from the assumption that the sign and the real are equivalent: “[S]imulation starts from the Utopia of this principle of equivalence, *from the radical negation of the sign as value* from the sign as reversion and death sentence of every reference” (Baudrillard 170). Accordingly, simulation begins in a non-space, an impossible space (as the etymology of utopia suggests), a blurred and indiscrete space. Though the result is a radical negation, there are dynamics to the structure: it unfolds in “spiraling negativity” wherein the simulation at first reflects reality, then masks it, and finally bears no relation to anything real, making it “impossible to isolate the process of the real, or to prove the real” (179). Baudrillard likens this process to the concept of the Möbius strip, a loop with a half-twist where the two ends have been joined together (174). To illustrate this application of Baudrillard’s concept to my reading of *ZB* more precisely, one

⁵⁷ Bruno Hillebrand utilizes this very quote from as an epigraph at the beginning of his *Theorie des Romans*: “Der Romancier formt das Leben nicht nur in seinem Buch, er hat es oft genug auch durch sein Buch geformt” (8).

⁵⁸ Martin Swales has argued that German high modernist texts in particular have made an attempt “to clear a space in the confusions, tensions and distortions of modern culture for a vindication of the human subject in his or her wholeness” (33). Literature in this regard can function to preserve some element of the human subject. According to Swales, high modernist texts, especially *ZB*, represent a process of “shifting of substance into insubstance, and that shift is registered as both threatening and liberating” (39).

should liken the simulation of the mind in the novel to walking along an enormous Möbius strip large enough that one cannot perceive its true shape. From the perspective of the walker, the path would appear to be level and straight, a constant progression in a lineal, forward trajectory, but from a perspective outside the strip, one could see that the walker has slowly undergone a reversal of polarity along the way, which Baudrillard calls the “Hades of simulation,” an “elusive twisting of meaning” that gives us the radical negation of the sign as value (176).⁵⁹ Assumedly, only those participants outside the simulation will discern this twist or change in the simulation when it advances beyond the thing simulated. Therefore, it is only by taking up the position of a close reader that the simulation as such can be discerned.⁶⁰

ZB is a text filled with negation as described in Baudrillard’s concept of simulation. The text ironically inverts many themes and ideas, playing with and oscillating between binary themes by driving their conceptualizations to the extreme. For example: Korkrowsky's lecture on sickness as love, the opulent and aristocratic attitudes of physically inhibited patients, the daily rituals and meticulous efforts of the patients’ medical treatment, the elitism of the guests.⁶¹ *ZB* erects a constant series of dichotomies set up as extreme contrasts, but the narrative shows the relationship to be organic and fluid. Many of the characters represent contrasting views or competing philosophies: Settembrini and Naphta, Clawdia and Joachim, Clawdia and Peeperkorn, or Hans and Joachim, among others.⁶² Thematically, these characters present such

⁵⁹ This concept is somewhat akin to the forces involved in the coriolis effect.

⁶⁰ In relation to mind-uploading, this might require the programmer to become a close reader of all the code required for such a monumental task. A programmer seems to assume this role whenever an error occurs in a program that requires fixing. From my discussions with computer programmers, I have found that it is not always possible to determine the origin of errors or to satisfactorily explain how to prevent them in the future. As such, it may be difficult to safely effect such a feat as whole-brain-emulation without preempting the possibility of error.

⁶¹ The reader may also take this entire passage from Castorp as evidence, though a short excerpt may suffice, “Der Mensch is Herr der Gegensätze, sie sind durch ihn, und also ist er vornehmer als sie” (679). Nevertheless, the gender and human bias of this statement suggest hypocrisy and irony, which will be touched on in my discussion the statement of purpose to *ZB*.

⁶² See, for example, Weigland 13, Downing 54.

oppositions as humanism and nihilism, occidentalism and orientalism, science and religion, charisma and reason, male and female, homosexuality and heterosexuality, and idleness and duty.⁶³ In this way, the Berghof sanatorium establishes a sampling of the European zeitgeist of the first decade of the twentieth century in that it attempts to depict the time in detail in order to ironize it.

As scholarship has shown since its publication, bipolarity and synthesis dominate *ZB*.⁶⁴ Eric Downing terms these dichotomies as oscillations between extremes, like the process of photographic development that makes use of a negative to create the final image. Thomas Mann's *ZB* epitomizes this paradox of blending because it simultaneously exemplifies and questions the *Bildungsroman*. Eric Downing observed that *ZB* "both is and is not a *Bildungsroman*" (Vaget 45, 68), that it is something apparently the same but a step ahead of the genre, a novel of development, an "*Entwicklungsroman*" as he terms it. Under the term, Downing combines psychological concepts such as Freud's Oedipus complex and the process of developing a photograph (English can render *Bildung* and *Entwicklung* as *development*) in his interpretation. Downing's emphasis on development aids my reading because it helps explicate how mind-uploading as the further development of the human according to transhumanist is the "*intensification of humanism*" (Wolfe xv). One might reasonably think of Hegel here in regard to the synthesis of extremes, but I do not mean the ultimate realization of Mind or Spirit ("*Geist*"). Instead, this is a negation of the otherness of the other to the point where the difference can no

⁶³ Peeperkorn is a charismatic figure, who stands in contrast to Naphta and Settembrini. The attraction Castorp feels toward him is inexplicable or perhaps homoerotic. See DiMassa (326).

⁶⁴ Even from the beginning of *ZB* scholarship, this scheme of binaries has been prevalent. Hermann Weigland's 1933 book on *ZB* represents the earliest and most enduring argument of this type. The character of Hans Castorp is read as an allegory for Germany itself, "*das Land der Mitte*," a character who is constantly gravitating between characters and ideas (13). Weigland's ultimate point is that "Synthesis is the principle that governs the pattern of the "Zauberberg" from first to last (157).

longer be distinguished, and the possibilities are opened up, instead of culminating at an ultimate telos.

In addition to the negation of opposites, this chapter addresses many other themes and topics indirectly. For example, Mann's text is deeply concerned with technology, commenting on photography, x-rays, gramophones, and early cinema, and some of these technologies play a vital role in my reading of *ZB*. As was broached with the gramophone, technology is concerned with abridging or abstracting the constraints of space, which will prove to be a central element of my conclusion. Other themes such as death, time, and narration are also raised in the course of this analysis, which are specifically relevant to the aspirations of transhumanists.⁶⁵ In addressing these themes, the text infamously exposes murky, difficult aspects that perforate our understanding of these concepts, but the full consequences of these issues cannot be discussed adequately here.

With this idea of simulation in mind, the chapter attempts to adumbrate areas of negation, meaning the fusion of binary opposites especially as a cyclical or looping continuum as they are found in the novelized mind of *ZB*. These twists of meaning or points of blurring between binary opposites exposes multiple instances of ambiguity that defy the perfect encapsulation of the mind in the text. The twist of meaning or the binary negation will be of considerable conceptual magnitude not only for this chapter but also for the rest of the project. Recalling the gramophone at the opening of this chapter as a form of simulation, these fusions of binary opposites are sometimes all too apparently indicative of the simulations—like looking the wrong way through an opera glass, their detection can be easily discerned. Other binaries are subtler and in turn more consequential for our understanding of the simulated mind. In point of fact, it seems that the

⁶⁵ See especially the sections “Humaniora” and “Forschungen” in *ZB*.

breadth and depth of these binaries becomes almost overwhelming once they are examined up close. As such, close readings of these passages will be the primary occupation of the remainder of the chapter.

“Der Donnerschlag”: Toward a Closure of the Binary

Mirroring Mann’s own love of irony, this investigation of the simulation of the mind begins at the end of *ZB*. In the last section of the novel “Thunder Strike” (“Donnerschlag”), there is a portion of the text that is divided from the rest of the section by a page break, a typographical marking not commonly employed in *ZB*, which simultaneously separates and unites the section into two not-completely severed parts: 1) Hans Castorp’s final departure from the Berghof conveyed as instantiated by Castorp’s taking leave of Settembrini, his constant companion and humanist mentor, and 2) a scene of war and death, in which the last glimpse of Hans Castorp is narrated before the novel ends. The page break should convey a sense of finality, that the text has moved on to a different topic or that there has been some change of scenery, either spatially or temporally. Ultimately, the latter proves true, but the narrator conveys a sense of disorientation at the page break, as if in direct response to the empty space on the page: “Wo sind wir? Was ist das? Wohin verschlug uns der Traum?” (*ZB* 980). The focus of the questions is on (dis)orientation, gaining one’s spatial bearings and identifying the space occupied. Such disorientation must invoke the arrival at a non-space, a space of departure from what has been previously narrated, a point of ambiguity at the close of a lengthy novel. That this information is conveyed to us through a narrator will be discussed shortly, but in order to accentuate the binary oppositions more clearly, let us progress a little further in my reading of the passage.

If the narrator and the empty space of the page break both mark a point of departure, a space of transition or the ambiguity in the simulation of mind in the text, then that indistinctness is further marked by the setting of the next scene in twilight:

Dämmerung, Regen und Schmutz, Brandröte des trüben Himmels, der unaufhörlich von schwerem Donner brüllt, die nassen Lüfte erfüllt, zerrissen von scharfem Singen, wütend höllenhundhaft daherfahrendem Heulen, das seine Bahn mit Splittern, Spritzen, Krachen und Lohen beendet von Stöhnen und Schreien, von Zinkgeschmetter, das bersten will, und Trommeltakt, der schleuniger, schleuniger treibet. (980)

First, it is important that the temporality of this section is also not clearly defined, for we cannot determine at this juncture, with its setting at twilight, if the scene occurs at dawn or dusk. Time is an extraordinarily important theme throughout *ZB*, presented in both cyclical and linear structures.⁶⁶ As such, the repetitive looping of time, such as with the cycle of the seasons, parallels the Möbius loop, suggesting that there may be a point of transition or indistinctness, a twist in the loop of the narrative at the end of the novel.⁶⁷ The temporal uncertainty of twilight at this point (although it is eventually revealed that it is evening, but not until the very last line of novel) is all the more reflected by the grayness of the stormy weather. This is also marked spatially by the location of the scene, at the front, the border between opposing forces, struggling for victory on the battlefield. Later in the paragraph, the narrator underscores or perhaps undermines the ambiguity of these scene further by distorting on which front this is occurring, “Ost oder West?” The sense of oscillation or ambiguity between opposites is further established by the cacophony of sounds in the language of the text, the repetition of harsh consonant clusters

⁶⁶ See, for example, Young (2013), Kavaloski (2009), and Reidel-Schrewe (1992).

⁶⁷ Such cyclical structures may be intended to recall Nietzsche’s eternal return of the same, see (Hinz 2000). See also Thomas Hollweck’s discussion of the thematic of sleep and dreams in Mann’s work (33f).

(z, sp, kr, br, tr, etc.), and the alternation of open and closed vowels. Music and sound are critical thematic elements in *ZB*, important both in the narrative and for the character of Hans Castorp, as was discussed with the gramophone and will be discussed again later in this reading.⁶⁸ These few lines also evoke images of heaven and hell before landing on the blood-marked earth. The contrasting of opposites is typical for Mann in *ZB* and points to the ultimate end of the novel, a blending of love and death; but the density of the contrasts in this portion of the text marks it with special significance.

As the section drives toward its conclusion, disorientation turns to hesitance. The narration shifts back and forth between visual and audial descriptions, as if to keep the reader mildly disoriented through to the finale. Whirling through depictions of gruesome war, the narrative shows us terrifying images of faces in excrement (“Gesichter im Kot”) and young blood (“das junge Blut”) on the coats and boots of the soldiers, but then we are made to hear Hans Castorp, the central protagonist, singing one of his favorite songs, Schubert’s “Lindenbaum,” as he staggers through this morass of death: “I carved in his bark / many a beloved word” (“Ich schnitt in seine Rinde / So manches liebe Wort”). The language of the folksong depicts amalgamating themes of life and death, of the sexual act of creation, “the notion of answering death with love” (Swales 65). Then a product of savage science (“Produkt einer vewilderten Wissenschaft”), most likely a bomb, explodes thirty paces from Castorp, creating a springing fountain (“Springbrunnen”) of earth, fire, lead, and shredded humanity (983). The springing fountain is an ironic juxtaposition of the fount in the Schubert’s song, transforming a symbol of creative life into a symbol of death. The visual depiction of the explosion shifts back

⁶⁸ This has been repeatedly established in the scholarship on *ZB*, especially in light of Mann’s admiration for the works of Richard Wagner. See “Politically Suspect: Music on the Magic Mountain” in Vaegert (2008) for a helpful discussion.

to the aural as Castorp sings “and yo-ur branches rust-led / as they called to me—” (“Und sei-ne Zweige rau-uschten, / Als rie-fen sie mir zu –”) (984). Even in the song’s text, the aural is highlighted in contrast. As the oscillation between visual and aural concludes, the narrator comments, “daß wir dich [Hans Castorp] weder sehen noch hören werden in Zukunft” (984), combining both elements in one sentence.

This migration from disorientation to hesitation as established by the alternation between visual and aural descriptors climaxes in the last two pages. There is even a blatant admission of reluctance by the narrator, “O Scham unserer Schattensicherheit! Hinweg! Wir erzählen das nicht! Ist unser Bekannter getroffen?” (984).⁶⁹ Yet, the narrator attempts to assert some closure to the novel, though the effect seems undermined by the multitude of contrasts:

Lebewohl, Hans Castorp, des Lebens treuherziges Sorgenkind! Deine Geschichte ist aus. Zu Ende haben wir sie erzählt; sie war weder kurzweilig noch langweilig, es war eine hermetische Geschichte. Wir haben sie erzählt um ihretwillen, nicht deinethalben, denn du wars simpel. Aber zuletzt war es deine Geschichte; da sie dir zustieß, mußtest du’s irgend wohl hinter den Ohren haben, und wir verleugnen nicht die pädagogische Neigung, die wir in ihrem Verlaufe für dich gefaßt und die uns bestimmen könnte, zart mit der Fingerspitze den Augenwinkel zu tupfen bei dem Gedanken, daß wir dich weder sehen noch hören werden in Zukunft. (ibid)

The finality of the expressions “Farewell” and “your story is over” loses traction against the digression of the passage toward reflection, as signified by the thoughtful tapping on the corner of the eye. It suggests that instead of merely reading the end of the story and finding closure

⁶⁹ It is possible that the shadowy security of narrative (“Schattensicherheit”) may be connected to the sleep-walking security (“schlafwandlerische Sicherheit”) in Broch’s *Die Schlafwandler*—see “Huguenau’s Indistinct Limits” in chapter two of this work.

therein, the reader should think more about what happened previously and what we learned from it—again reminiscent of the bildungsroman. The inclusion of the negated pairs, “weder kurzweilig noch langweilig” and “ihretwillen, nicht deinethalben,” also averts our attention back to the beginning of the novel; both in a reflexive, reverse trajectory back to the previous events of the novel and also back to the very beginning, as both phrases appear on the very first pages of the story (both phrases will be discussed in greater detail in the next section). Suffice it to say at this juncture that the emphasis on negation in these pairings evokes the element of negation in Baudrillard’s definition of simulation.

More relevant at this point in my reading is the declaration of the story as “hermetic,” referring either to a sealed enclosure or to alchemical arts. The former definition may be part of the attempt to put closure on the story, to end the story despite a hesitation on the narrator’s behalf to end Castorp’s story or to definitively tell us whether Castorp dies or not. But the other definition, referring to the occult, magic, and alchemical symbols seems to better speak to the story. As is discussed later in this chapter, the use of this adjective also connotes the cyclical structure of the story, i.e. because of the transformative or merging connotation of the word—the stereotypical examples are the transmogrification of lead into gold or the search for the elixir of life, both concerned with a complete inversion. This structure is not only reminiscent of Baudrillard’s notion of simulation, it also suggests that the convergence of extremes, wherein negation is not merely the opposite but the radical switch from one extreme to the other. That the passage is filled with negations should not go unnoticed. Even the last statement of the novel is structured in an ambiguity as a yes-no question: “Wird auch aus diesem Weltfest des Todes, auch aus der schlimmen Fieberbrunst, die rings den regnerischen Abendhimmel entzündet, einmal die

Liebe steigen?" (984). That it also directs our attention toward an unknown future touches on a theme discussed in my reading of "Fragwürdigstes."

Thomas Hollweck's analysis of the previously underappreciated themes of sleep and dreams in Mann's novels offers some additional insight into how one might deal with the ambiguity resistant to narrative closure in *ZB*. Hollweck quotes Mann's own insight into reading the novel as a dream, hoping also to explicate some of political context of the novel, but I cite this passage for its relevance in understanding the twist of meaning in the simulative cycle.⁷⁰

Die Traumpsychologie kennt die Erscheinung, daß der äußere Anlaß, der den Traum auslöst, ein fallender Schuß etwa, den der Schläfer hört, in Umkehrung der Kausalität begründet wird durch einen langen und komplizierten Traum, der mit dem Schusse – und mit dem Erwachen – endet, während in Wirklichkeit der Choc am Anfang der ganzen Traummotivierung stand. So steht, der dichterischen Chronologie nach, der Donnerschlag des Kriegsausbruchs von 1914 am Ende des Zauberberg-Romans, in Wahrheit aber hatte er all seine Träume hervorgerufen (45).

Though dreams and simulations are not analogous concepts, the prospect of waking from a dream by a gunshot suggests a way to approach the ambiguity of the closing passage of *ZB*. The only recourse for explaining the gunshot would be to turn back to the dream in order to understand what happened; in other words, to return to the rest of the text as a means of understanding this apparent shock, just as the narrative suggests in its hesitation. As such, the ending of *ZB* may mark the ending of the text, but it resists closure, impelling us to return to the

⁷⁰ *ZB* has often been utilized in an attempt to understand Thomas Mann's political change of heart, i.e. his choice to embrace democratic government after World War I and his support for the Weimar Republic. As such, *ZB* has often been read as an informant to his political writings in *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen* (1918) and *Von deutscher Republik* (1922) and as means of explaining the latter. For a recent attempt to tackle this topic, see Bade, James. "The Magic Mountain of Weimar Politics: The Impact of the Assassination of Walther Rathenau on Thomas Mann's *Der Zauberberg*." *Monatshefte* 106, no. 1 (2014): 37-53.

beginning, opening up the text. The so-called gunshot in the final pages of *ZB* compels us to turn back to the origin in order to understand the reluctant terminus. In effect, the conclusion marks not an ending but a Möbius twist in the novel, providing the major structural point for understanding the simulation, referring back to an abridgment of the extremes.

“Vorsatz”: Toward a Hermetic Opening of the Binary Fusion

Many of the thematic oppositions articulated in “Der Donnerschlag” had already been raised in the statement of purpose (“Vorsatz”) on the very first page of Mann’s novel. According to the critical commentary, there is some debate about how to understand the word “Vorsatz”: as a simple preface, or a statement of intention, or perhaps even as a musical prelude (Neumann 127). The word itself denotes a statement of purpose or intention, probably a transliteration of the Latin “propositum,” as in the English proposition.⁷¹ This denotation signaling intention suggests the presence of a mind at work in the text, but it quite literally means the sentence before or that which is set before. In this way, the passage seeks a space preceding the unfolding of the narrative. It is here that we first meet the narrator, before even coming in contact with Hans Castorp. As the hesitance and disorientation at the conclusion suggest, the narrator is also at this point not entirely forthright; but tracing the novelized mind must also attempt to account for the role of the narrator in the text. If the mind of major concern in *ZB* is the protagonist’s (Hans Castorp’s), then the problematic mediation of that mind through the narrator must also be accounted for. This already suggests that the text here cannot speak of an absolutely discrete and distinguishable mind. A closer examination of the narrator in this portion of my arguments helps

⁷¹ “Setzen” Duden 765.

to elucidate the complexity of the novelized mind and how that simulation functions as a sort of abridgment of the space of the mind.

The narrator adopts the first-person plural pronoun “wir” from the very first sentence of the statement of purpose: “Die Geschichte Hans Castorps, die wir erzählen wollen . . .” (9). The narrative mode adds yet another layer of ambiguity to the simulated mind in the novel. Whether as a sort of co-identification with the protagonist, Hans Castorp, or perhaps as some combination of an abstracted reader, or with Thomas Mann himself, this pluralized narrator never unveils its exact identity, though it is undeniably closely connected to the protagonist.⁷² More possibilities could be construed from the ambiguous *we*, except for the fact that the narrator does assume a masculine perspective in one instance toward the end of the text, which addresses the concerns mentioned in the introduction of this dissertation.⁷³ This identification occurs while the participants in the séance in the section “Fragwürdigstes” are waiting for the medium Elly to commune with the spirit Holger. The narrator compares the experience to when a father waits for his baby to be born: “Wir Männer, wenn wir dem Menschlichen nicht ausweichen”⁷⁴ Assuming a masculine perspective reinforces the previously proposed possibilities for understanding the narrator’s plurality, but the passage may also simply suggest a strong focalization of the narrator in the character of Castorp. Indeed, free indirect speech does not

⁷² Franz Stanzel categorized the narrator as an auctorial, omniscient, personal narrator, but he goes so far as to call their relationship transpersonal (“transpersonal”). Stanzel also speculates about over-individualization (“überindividuell”) and even collective consciousness. See Stanzel 231-3.

⁷³ See the section “The Mind Skewed Masculine” in the introduction.

⁷⁴ A close reading of the section at this point in my argument will detract from my reading of the narrator, but the scene will be dealt with in more detail in the course of the essay. For the curious reader, here is the passage with more context. “Wir Männer, wenn wir dem Menschlichen nicht ausweichen, kennen aus seiner bestimmten Lebenslage dies unerträgliche Erbarmen, das lächerlicherweise von niemandem angenommen wird und wahrscheinlich gar nicht am Platze ist, dies empörte ‘Genug!’, das sich unserer Brust entringen will, obgleich ‘es’ nicht genug sein will und darf und so oder so zu Ende geführt werden muß. Man versteht schon daß wir von unserer Gatten- und Vaterschaft sprechen, vom Akt der Geburt, dem Elly’s Ringen tatsächlich so unzweideutig und unverwechselbar gleich, daß auch derjenige ihn wiedererkennen mußte, der ihn noch gar nicht kannte, wie der junge Hans Castorp, welcher also, da auch er dem Leben nicht ausgewichen war, diesen Akt voll organischer Mystik in solcher Gestalt kennenlernte, - in was für einer Gestalt!” (931).

seem out of the question in this passage; a technique in which the narrator assumes close identification with the character in terms of the language.⁷⁵

Dorrit Cohn argued that the narrator in *ZB* could be seen as an unreliable because of a spatial paradox in the narrative (Cohn (1966) 119-21, Vaget 209ff). That this identification questions the reliability of the narrator begs the more intriguing question about how this affects the space of the novelized mind. The narrator of *ZB*, especially in chapter seven, famously dedicates a substantial amount of space to narrating about time.⁷⁶ But the difficulty in narrating the lapse of time, especially long periods of time, is that it cannot be accomplished through figure focalization, since focalized narrative means that the events of the novel are happening in real time through the eyes of a figure in the book, requiring the narrative to slow down to the speed of real time. Thus, “the reader cannot be made to share Hans’s experience of evolving timelessness; nor could the narrator tell us about this experience if he did not himself keep his distance from it” (Vaget 209). In order to narrate the passing of longer periods of time, such as years and even centuries, narrators must distance themselves from the real time of the novel. Yet considering the sheer length of *ZB*, it is apparent that the narrator indulged considerably in taking up a position of close proximity to Castorp.⁷⁷ What this means for the situatedness of the mind in the novel is that the efforts to capture a mind with high fidelity, i.e. to narrate the mind, engender a direct relationship between the quantity of space given for the simulation of the mind and the quality of that simulation. This assumption was also valid in Bostrom’s assumption about the computing RAM required to emulate the brain. Yet such an escalating relationship may not

⁷⁵ More on this concept in chapter two. See Cohn (1978) 116-9 for more discussion on this narrative mode in *ZB*.

⁷⁶ *ZB* 741

⁷⁷ Mann was caught up in the pleasure of narrating, see Hillebrand 279f.

necessarily be only a direct relationship, but could in actuality be an exponential one, meaning that the increasing variables may correspond but never reach parity.

The extent of this problematic narrative situation is made clear by regarding the entire first sentence of the statement of purpose, which is coincidentally also the first whole paragraph of the novel. To expedite the comparison, the text of the already quoted passage from the last page of the novel is repeated below.

Die Geschichte Hans Castorps, die wir erzählen wollen, - nicht um seinetwillen (denn der Leser wird einen einfachen, wenn auch ansprechenden jungen Mann in ihm kennenlernen), sondern um der Geschichte willen, die uns in hohem Grade erzählenswert scheint (wobei zu Hans Castorps Gunsten denn doch erinnert werden sollte, daß es seine Geschichte ist, und daß nicht jedem jede Geschichte passiert): diese Geschichte ist sehr lange her, sie ist sozusagen schon ganz mit historischem Edelrost überzogen und unbedingt in der Zeitform der tiefsten Vergangenheit vorzutragen. (9)

Lebewohl, Hans Castorp, des Lebens treuherziges Sorgenkind! Deine Geschichte ist aus. Zu Ende haben wir sie erzählt; sie war weder kurzweilig noch langweilig, es war eine hermetische Geschichte. Wir haben sie erzählt um ihretwillen, nicht deinethalben, denn du wars simpel. Aber zuletzt war es deine Geschichte; da sie dir zustieß, mußtest du's irgend wohl hinter den Ohren haben, und wir verleugnen nicht die pädagogische Neigung, die wir in ihrem Verlaufe für dich gefaßt und die uns bestimmen könnte, zart mit der Fingerspitze den Augenwinkel zu tupfen bei dem Gedanken, daß wir dich weder sehen noch hören werden in Zukunft. (984)

Aside from the curious pluralization of the narrator in the first sentence of the novel, the narrator also insists that the story is told not for Castorp's sake, but rather for the sake of the story ("um der Geschichte willen") with the deepest past tense—the hyperbole representing yet another example of the text's tendency toward escalation. The phrase "ihretwillen" could be regarded as ambiguous, with possible translations as either for her sake, for its sake, or for their sake, while "deinethalben," like the "seinetwillen" in the first passage, directly refers to Hans Castorp. The most obvious antecedent is the grammatically female story ("Geschichte"), in which case the narrative refers back to itself, emphasizing the self-importance and superiority of the narrator. Particularly curious in this passage is the supposition that Castorp must have some awareness somewhere behind his ears (an indication of the mind's cartesian location in the brain) that the story befell him ("zustießen"). This corresponds with the individuality of the story proposed in the first passage, but it also indicates that Castorp could be aware on some level of his own story, that *he* is situated in a story. That it is the narrator that raises this possibility, however flippantly, all the more underscores the porous limits between the two minds and their close proximity. Thus, the storyness of the story dissipating into the story mind of Hans Castorp proposes an additional insight into the narrator's hesitation to precisely kill off the protagonist.

Another example of this intimate connection between the two is in the adjectival description of Castorp as simple ("einfach") in the passage above.⁷⁸ It is significant that the first adjective to describe Hans Castorp is dismissive of his intelligence, or at least establishes a negative contrast with the intelligence of the narrator. The plurality of the narrator also adds to the privilege of his or their position, meaning that plural is also more, and more in this case

⁷⁸ ZB 9, 11

means more advanced—the escalating principle.⁷⁹ The last paragraph of *ZB* contains a similar declaration of Castorp’s simplicity: “Abenteuer im Fleische und Geiste, die deine Einfachheit steigerten, ließen dich im Geist überleben, was du im Fleische wohl kaum überleben sollst” (984). The “enhanced simplicity” gained due to Castorp’s (mis)adventures in the flesh and mind draws a subtle distinction on the characterization of Hans Castorp, indicating that his simplicity was increased (“steigerten”) but not improved. Castorp’s close proximity with the omniscient narrator does not make Castorp a smarter entity; it merely escalates him, distending his experiences. Recalling Heidegger’s fourfold, the mediation of the mind of Castorp through the narrator only allows him to retain a heightened degree of situatedness, not a transcendence of that situation. The same can be said of the narrator, for the narrator, even with such arrogance, can only assume a position of superiority as long as Castorp’s narrative continues. The narrator may call Castorp simple, but the ontological situatedness of that narrator is dependent upon Castorp’s story, which again brings their minds into increased interdependence.

This escalation is also exemplified in the attempt to increase the temporal distance of the novel: “Vorher also spielt sie, wenn auch nicht lange vorher. Aber ist der Vergangenheitscharakter einer Geschichte nicht desto tiefer, vollkommener und märchenhafter, je dichter ‘vorher’ sie spielt?” (9-10). Formed as a question, the proposition becomes less certain, for the thickening of the before-ness of the novel is not specified. Yet again we are confronted with the notion that escalation or augmentation necessarily results in a more perfect approximation: more is better. This augmentation filters down to the question of realism in the novel. From the onset, *ZB* is presented as a reproduction of the twentieth century world that existed before the crisis of World War I: “vormals, ehemals, in den alten Tagen, der Welt vor

⁷⁹ In relation to mind-uploading, the same questions about the superiority of the narrator must be posed to the programmers of the simulated mind.

dem großen Kriege” (9). The narrator emphasized elsewhere in the statement of purpose: “Wir werden sie ausführlich erzählen, genau und gründlich” (10). In scholarly circles, *ZB* is also known for its realistic portrayal of the time period and “die großartige Beschreibung der Einzelheiten” (Schott 35). So much so, in fact, that Harold Bloom asserted that *ZB* is “one of those rare fictions who acquire the authority to call our versions of reality into some doubt” (Vaget 7). In light of this observation, *ZB*’s realism recalls Peter Childs’s “more real than realism,” mentioned in the introduction to this project. This is because the Berghof itself is depicted as an ivory tower of sorts, a place above the commonplace lowlanders of the real world, a privileged perch where the elite are preserved and quarantined. The colorful array of characters encountered at the Berghof additionally supports a reading of *ZB* as a simulation, for these characters have often been read historically or mimetically as representations of “a European culture forever gone, the culture of Goethe and Freud” (ibid). Even the narrator calls the novel, not unambiguously, a period novel or a novel of time (“Zeitroman”). Hence, it is not so much that the novel perfectly replicates its time period, but that it attempts to outdo it, to transcend the original, to be more that past time than that past time.

These tendencies toward the extreme in *ZB* are critical to tracing the contours of the simulated mind in the novel. This is because the simulated mind, like Baudrillard’s notion of simulation, is a *radical* negation of the sign, an intensification that leads to negation, defined as the convergence of opposites into indistinction. The relationship between Castorp and the narrator is imbued with extreme oppositions, such as simplicity and intelligence or the proximities of narrative distance, which are all too often blurred when driven to the extreme. That these themes are iterated in the beginning and end of the novel evokes the cyclical structure of simulation, the Möbius loop; but it also shows that the extremes of the novel contain thematic

overlap, connecting them at their extremes. The overlapping themes also touch on this idea of negation, but its full understanding is made clearer in the section of *ZB* entitled “Fragwürdigstes.”

One more example of parallel themes from the first and last page serves as a segue into the next stage of my argument. Toward the end of the statement of purpose we read, “Wir werden sie ausführlich erzählen, genau und gründlich, - denn wann wäre je die Kurz- oder Langweiligkeit einer Geschichte abhängig gewesen von dem Raum und der Zeit, die sie in Anspruch nahm?” (10). The “Kurz- oder Langweiligkeit” commonly denotes the level of entertainment one can derive from the novel, either boring or entertaining. Taken literally, however, the words also connote the qualities of brevity (“kurzweilig”) or longevity (“langweilig”) in the sense of the time it takes to narrate the story. This touches again upon the issue of time and space, mentioned in the previous discussion of the focalization of the narrator. The passage above means that a novel need not be long (in terms of length of pages and time to read those pages) to be boring or short to be entertaining, but it also suggests that the actual length or quality of the novel does not necessarily correlate directly to the time and space of the novel, contrary to the assumption of “more is better” mentioned before. Once again, however, the narrator makes this claim in the form of a question, leaving that idea in the open, at least at the beginning of the novel. When this dichotomy of “Kurz- oder Langweiligkeit” is evoked again on the last page of the novel, we read that the story has succeeded in being neither short nor long in duration but hermetic (“eine hermetische Geschichte”) (984). And it is exactly this hermetic element of which I wish to speak in the next section, for it is in the blending of extremes in *ZB* that the novelized mind is disclosed in its most open relationality. The hermetic element denotes

an abridgment of space by escalation, extremization, increasing until extremes are twisted and distended into each other at their extremes, which is the task of the next section.

The “Most Dubious” Möbius Twist in Spacetime

In the section “Fragwürdigstes,” the third to last section of the last chapter in *ZB*, the hermetic aspect of the story is made explicit. The section has been translated as either *most questionable* or *most dubious*—which can be rendered in English as either “Highly Questionable” or “Most Dubious” (See King 1996).⁸⁰ The title refers to Hans Castorp’s encounter with the occult during Dr. Krokowski’s scientific observations of the young, clairvoyant Danish national, Ellen (Elly) Brand during séances. Although there are other moments in *ZB* that hint at the simulative element of the novel, the supernatural manifestations in this section offer the strongest evidence of a twist of meaning in disclosing the novelized mind as a simulation.⁸¹ This gives the reader a hint that the circumstances are contrived and aesthetic, but, more than merely a revelation of the narrative as “the radical negation of the sign as value,” the section is also a breakout of a the mysterious beyond into the narrative space. As supernatural phenomena rupture the otherwise realistic narrative style, it is the mind of Hans Castorp via the narrator that initiates their appearance.⁸² In closely analyzing this scene, the hermetic nature of

⁸⁰ The latter was John S. King’s translation in his last article for *Monatshefte* (in “Works Cited” list of this dissertation).

⁸¹ The section entitled Snow (“Schnee”) (641) and the section entitled “Hippe” in which Castorp experiences a vision or memory of his childhood friend Přibislav Hippe (161) could also be reasonably broached in terms of simulation. Both have reference to a dream or potentially supernatural space, but neither of them contains any element that could be regarded as an outbreak of that space into the realistic narrative space of the novel.

⁸² Hermann Weigland, one of the first scholars to analyze *ZB*, was “baffled” by this scene because of its break with psychological realism (144), believing that it offered evidence of Thomas Mann’s belief “in an omniscient over-soul” (147). He argued, “In presenting the environment of man’s own making, the mechanical artefacts of modern civilization in all their detail, he humanizes them, he raises them from the rank of mere articles of use to a level of expressiveness where they can function as symbols of his deepest experiences” (158). Yet Weigland’s interpretation fails to account for the porous boundaries between text and author, reversing the text back on its author as a means of interpreting him. Although Weigland’s interpretation seems to prefigure the idea of projecting human cognition onto objects, he conflates these with two different realities, not a reality twist. It is true that the biography of Thomas

this story becomes more self-evident with the unexplained appearance of certain objects during the initial séance and the culminating visitation of Joachim Ziemßen's ghost, both of which evince how the "magic" of the magic mountain prefigures the "trans" of transhumanist mind-uploading.

The first sentence in the section entitled "Fragwürdigstes" adumbrates the thematic of a looping movement between the real and simulation: "Mit Edhin Krokowski's Konferenzen hatte es im Laufe der Jährchen eine unerwartete Wendung genommen" (899). The phrase "in the course of these few years" (years in the diminutive) reiterates the recurring theme of time, especially cyclical time in the novel, such as it was described in the section "Eternity soup" ("Ewigkeitssuppe") and the opening commentary of chapter 7, where time's repetition and deception in relation to narrative is discussed.⁸³ However, the course of the years is interrupted by the phrase "an unexpected wending or turning" ("unerwartete Wendung"), already suggesting that the events of the next section are going to disrupt the well-established pattern of Hans Castorp's life at the Berghof. The word "unexpected," the past participle "unerwartet" in German, suggests an unintentional event will occur, something that may not be fully comprehended by the protagonist or that was not anticipated. That this moment of disquiet is described as a "turning" should recall the twist of meaning in simulation. The twist is a hermetic moment, a limit in the Heideggerian sense or a moment of ambiguity. It is this twist that provides the unsettling negation of the simulation as Baudrillard describes it, a point that can be sensed but not precisely discerned by the mind in the text. The irony of Mann's language deserves an additional note here, for the word "Wendung" can also refer to a phrase or expression, analogous

Mann appears to play an important role in the narrative, but *ZB* cannot be regarded as either a copy or embellishment of the author's mind. He facilitated some of the transgressions of the text, but, as I hope will be clear by the end of this study, the novelized mind is a negation of the original.

⁸³ *ZB* 255-6

to a turn of phrase in English. That the events of the séance are also fundamentally disruptive to the narrative on the level of language underscores the multifarious intensity of this twist.

In “Fragwürdigstes,” there are several paranormal manifestations in particular which unnerve Castorp, all of which carry considerable importance for the character and, by relation, the narrator. Because my reading relies so heavily on how the narrative conveys these events through Castorp, this section will guide us through many of the events in considerable detail. Conceptually, I have already discussed the beginning and conclusion of *ZB* as a loop or a synthesis of binary opposites, analyzing the text from a cyclical conceptualization of time and space. Reading the simulation under this degree of magnification allows for a greater sense of the dimensionality of the novelized mind. Any summary is inherently an abstraction, which means something about the original is lost in the act of summarizing. This adds insight into the meta-performance or conceptual dimension of this project on the whole; but I summarize in order to better accentuate the twist of meaning.

The section “Fragwürdigstes” directly follows Hans Castorp’s introduction to the sanatorium’s new gramophone, discussed in “Fülle des Wohlauts” and mentioned at the opening of this chapter. The section preceding “Fragwürdigstes” is particularly noteworthy because of it establishes Castorp’s fascination with music and with the wonder of a new technological medium for that music, or at least a simulation of that music. Since coming to the Berghof sanatorium originally to visit his sick cousin, Joachim Ziemßen, much of Castorp’s life is spent indulging in the experiences of life—hedonism, intellectualism, eroticism, even sickness, as Castorp eventually becomes a patient himself. Castorp does not even seem particularly perturbed by the death of his cousin. Ultimately, it is his encounter with the supernatural in this section that seems to finally unsettle him.

The section opens as Castorp decides, after some initial hesitation, to participate in Dr. Krokowski's conferences designed to scientifically observe paranormal phenomena by conducting séance sessions with medium and fellow patient Elly Brand, who has access to the spirit world through a lifelong spectral companion named Holger. In Castorp's first experience, participants place their hands on an overturned wine glass and move the glass back and forth over a table as it slowly inches toward little plates, each inscribed with one letter of the German alphabet, a method reminiscent of playing with a Ouija board, which allows the ghost Holger to communicate with the group.⁸⁴ Holger claims to have been a poet in life and delights in dictating a rather long-winded brand of poetry, which only concludes after the participants interrupt him so that they might finally have their questions about the nature of the afterlife answered (913). After some time has passed in answering the other patients' questions, Castorp decides to pose a question of his own to Holger, asking about how long his stay at the Berghof will ultimately be. Originally, Castorp had only intended to visit his cousin for three weeks. By this point in the novel, although the exact date is unspecified in the text, the time lapsed is closer to seven years, which will indeed prove to be the ultimate amount of time that has transpired in the narrative time of the novel (971). Holger gives a strange answer: "Transverse through his room, . . .

⁸⁴ Oddly, there are only twenty-five letters of the alphabet instead of the minimum 26 (German could reasonably have more). Michael Maar explained a possible reason for this discrepancy, suggesting that it was part of an intertextual dialog with the Hans Christian Andersen fairytale "The Steadfast Tin Soldier," in which there are twenty-five soldiers (229). Maar argues that the key to understanding *ZB* is Andersen's fairytales, and much of his argument rings true, but the error in the numbers of the letters in the alphabet may have broader consequences. The numbering is an error, and it is not the only one in the section. Holger made another error previously when asked what the ghost's profession was in life, replying "dichtr" (910-11). A sample of Holger's poem reveals every letter of the alphabet except the letter *x*, and the diapositive (an x-ray) appears on Castorp's lap at the conclusion of this séance. This *x* may also remind us of the *x* in Fassbinder's *Welt am Draht* discussed in the introduction of this dissertation, a letter that signaled death, although in a particularly contrived manner. In this sense, the omitted *x* in the alphabet may stand as a premonition of Castorp's impending death, or perhaps a sort of reading tripwire, an intentional error that serves as a test to see how closely we read the text. But might it also be possible to read the *x* as the kind of negative fusion discussed previously? The sign is, after all, the intersection of two lines in a single point, the transgressing of two tangents crossing at one specific point. In chapter two, this very model is taken up in the context of translation.

through number 34” (“quer durch sein Zimmer gehen . . . durch Nummer 34”) (915), suggesting the actual seven-year stay (3+4). That the peculiar answer is not a simple reply but instead evokes a movement through space, a bisection of a room, offers a compelling contribution to the argument of this chapter, underscoring the hermetic binaries of the novel, since it is only by dividing the room number and then adding three and four that one can arrive at the actual total for his stay of seven years. Even the word “quer” doubles with the preposition *durch* in indicating movement through or across the room, adding to the emphasis on a delineation that simultaneously synthesizes.

Before the characters can completely decipher Holger's answer, however, a mysterious knocking interrupts the guests, followed by the abrupt switching off of the night lamp. As this happens, Hans Castorp discovers that a glass x-ray, a diapositive of Clawdia Chaucat, his “Souvenir” referred to in the section “My God, I see” (“Mein Gott, ich sehe”), has suddenly appeared on his lap. The diapositive, as Downing has argued, is especially significant because it represents another technological marvel for which Castorp showed considerable interest. It also signified a strange amalgamation of eroticism and death, as the body in the x-ray was simultaneously his major love-interest at the sanatorium but ultimately a morbid depiction of her skeleton.⁸⁵ The diapositive is itself an abridgment of the time granted to a human being, revealing a snapshot of the future state of the body after death.⁸⁶ As such, it omits the future time, abstracting the image of the body in spacetime. That it is appears on his “Knieen” (916) literally places it on a joint, suggesting a point of fusion and interrelatedness, a limit reminiscent

⁸⁵ The influence of the Freudian concepts of death and love drives would seem to be the obvious interlocuter here, but scholarship tends to side with Carl Jung's influence in *ZB* (See Brown 2011).

⁸⁶ The text notes this as Castorp observes his cousin's x-ray (*ZB* 303).

of the relativity of Heidegger's fourfold. The fact that it is a glass plate with an image on it also indicates transparency, an either/or state.

In this regard, the object further demonstrates Alan Palmer's concept of situated cognition. For Hans Castorp, it relates to two individuals for whom he had intimate feelings: Clawdia Chauchat and Joachim Ziemßen, his cousin. As the x-ray image was taken in Ziemßen's presence, the inexplicable appearance of the diapositive simultaneously recalls the cousin's presence and foreshadows his reappearance at the end of this section. Castorp felt a strange sense of envy for his cousin, not only for his heroic status as a soldier but also for Joachim's sickness that landed him in the Berghof. Hans does not appear to consciously think of the diapositive, but there could be subconscious associations, such as the glass on the table with the glass diapositive, or the sudden darkness caused by an unknown hand that has turned off the gaslight, perhaps recalling the darkness of the x-ray lab. In any case, the appearance of the x-ray is a polyvalent occurrence. The technological abridgment of spacetime, in this case the ability to gaze past the fleshy exterior of the body into its future death, is contrasted with the transcendence of Castorp's actual physical space by inexplicable means: the wonder of technology meets the magic transgression of supernatural phenomena. On top of these spatial transgressions, the inexplicable appearance of this transparent object represents the vague conjuring of the ghosts of Castorp's past, recalling his most intimate relationships and experiences.

This first experience at a séance makes Hans literally sick to his stomach. "Seasick" ("Seekrank") is one phrase that stands out in particular (ZB 916-7). The term fits perfectly with the experience of a typical modernist protagonist: often ill at ease, isolated, fragmented, unsure and alienated. This fits the description of any of Kafka's protagonists, as well as Franz

Biberkopf, Joachim von Pasenow, August Esch, and Doris from *Das Kunstseidene Mädchen* (who will also be discussed in the course of this analysis). On the other hand, Wilhelm Huguenau may constitute an exception (see chapter two). That the narrator calls this “seasickness,” however, discloses something about the space in which these events take place. Seasickness connotes nausea from the uneven motion of an unsteady surface, normally water; but high in the Swiss Alps the phrase is oddly out of place. In terms of this reading, however, the word speaks in favor of simulation, the twist of meaning in the Möbius loop that is disorienting but not enough to provoke the protagonist to altogether abandon his belief in reality (a similar event in *Die Schlafwandler* is contrasted in the next chapter). What is more, the event suggests the kind of positional uncertainty that comes from Heidegger’s fourfold. It is true that unexplained phenomena occur in life outside the novel, and a feeling of seasickness may not necessarily constitute the primary reaction, though it seems a credible one. But the description of Castorp’s reaction to the experience as seasickness suggests that something is strongly disrupting his orientation. Like the pluralized narrator’s comment at the conclusion of *ZB* that Castorp ought to have some cognition of the artificiality of his situation behind his ears, the passage suggests an unsettling proximity to the textuality of his positionality.

Castorp’s unease causes him to consult Settembrini, his trusted humanist mentor at the Berghof, about whether he should continue to participate in the séances. Settembrini warns him against experimenting with the supernatural, branding it a sort of brain-wrenching or a cerebrally murky pool (“die Hirnverrenkung, den geistigen Pfuhl!”) (917-8)—the wrenching also recalls the movement of the twisting or turning of the simulation. Consequently, Castorp decides to avoid the séances. Nevertheless, he overhears the latest news about Dr. Krokowski’s continuing experiments while attempting to resume his daily routine. Castorp mollifies his piqued curiosity

by concentrating on the light tra-la-la (“Dideldum”) of the gramophone. It is not until Castorp learns that Elly Brand, a spiritual medium of sorts, has promised to communicate with séance participants’ relatives from beyond the grave, that Castorp succumbs to temptation. After ruminating on the prospect of communicating with the dead for three days, Castorp listens to Valentine’s impassioned aria from Gounod’s *Faust*, deciding to abandon his remaining scruples and rejoin the séance.⁸⁷ The song’s impassioned lyrics, “And if, to him, God calls me back, I will watch over you loyally, O Margueriete” (“Et si, vers lui, Dieu me rappelle, Je veillerai sur toi fidèle, Ô Marguerite!), describe the prospect of the soldier Valentine watching over his sister Marguerite from beyond the grave. The analogy to Castorp’s brotherly relationship with his cousin or the parallel instantiation of dead soldiers should not pass unnoted.⁸⁸ The verb “veiller” in French literally means “to keep watch, look after,” but it is also used in the context of tending to the sick or in the sense of a death wake, offering another level of connectivity between the two texts. Life and death have been constant obsessions for Castorp since he first came to the Berghof, so it is hardly out of character for him to jump at the possibility of reconnoitering the afterlife, no matter the cost.

The song again reminds Castorp of his experiences in the x-ray lab in where Ziemßen had so conciliatorily granted his cousin permission to view the x-rays of his interior. In that section, there are several references to the occult, including Hofrat Behrens’s tongue-in-cheek remark as he turns on the x-ray machine to image Castorp’s body: “Jetzt fängt die Beschwörung [“Exorcism”] an” (301). There is even some focalized discussion of Castorp’s clairvoyant

⁸⁷ The three days may be a reference to the resurrection of Jesus Christ, which would again underscore the theme of the dead rising from the grave.

⁸⁸ Valentine’s aria is entitled “Avant de quitter ces lieux” and occurs in Act II of Gounod’s opera based on Goethe’s *Faust*. Interestingly enough, the lyrics of the song are always presented in German in the text, probably meaning that the recording was in German: “Und ruft mich Gott zu Himmelshöhn, Will schützend ich auf dich herniedersehen, O Margarethe!”

Tienappel relatives. Castorp's peering into Ziemßen's body seemed intrusive if not transgressive then ("Zweifeln an der Erlaubtheit seines Schauens") (303), but Castorp's thoughts about attempting to summon his cousin from the dead, conveyed through direct speech, are only superficially apologetic: "Müßig und sündig oder nicht, es wäre doch herzlich seltsam und ein sehr liebes Abenteuer. Er, wenn er damit zu tun hat, wird es nicht übelnehmen, wenn ich ihn kenne" (922). Castorp shows no scruples about exerting control over supernatural forces he does not fully understand, considering it an adventure he has to undertake. Castorp's cavalier attitude is also highlighted by his claim that Ziemßen would not mind if he "knows" him. It would not be out of the question to regard the claim as carnal knowledge in a biblical sense (especially considering the reference to sin "sündig"), i.e. sexual knowledge. This is also not out of character for Castorp, since it is clear that Castorp has displayed signs of bisexuality in multiple instances throughout the book (note the presence of another set of binary extremes).⁸⁹ Even if this séance does not constitute an overt sexual act, the prospect suggests an extremely transgressive invasion of another person's essence. The prospect fits with the title of this section in the superlative, "most dubious," since it proposes the coercive expansion of one mind into situatedness of the other, and it seems there is little Ziemßen could do to prevent this intrusion. Furthermore, such a sexual connotation of the experience is also supported by the fact that Elly Brand and Hans Castorp are characterized in the text as the father and mother of Joachim's apparition at the climax of the section.⁹⁰ The proposed transgression constitutes a rape of the mind.

As Castorp enters Dr. Krokowski's office for a second séance, the narrative comments on his state of mind and divulges another moment of sexual intimacy in Castorp's past life.

⁸⁹ See especially Downing 63, but the childhood vision of Přibislav Hippe early on in the narrative provides additional evidence of this claim.

⁹⁰ *ZB* 931, 934.

Vielmehr gemahnte dieser ihn selbst sehr lebhaft an die eigentümlich und unvergeßlich aus Übermut und Nervosität, Wißbegier, Verachtung und Andacht gemischte Verfassung, worin er sich vor Jahren befunden, als er sich, etwas bekneipt, mit Kameraden zum erstenmal angeschickt hatte, ein Mädchenhaus in Sankt Pauli zu besuchen. (923)

The associative connection that Castorp experiences upon entering Dr. Krokowski's rooms with his first visit to a bordello intensifies the lascivious nature of Castorp's transgression. The space is gendered masculine by means of the narrator, and the transgression here will be against another male. Women are not given much opportunity to speak in the séance scenes. They serve largely utilitarian roles in this section, specifically Elly Brand who is literally the medium, the means of enacting the volitions of the intrusive men (Castorp and Krokowski). Akin to the abridgment of technology and the paranormal appearance of the diapositive, these women are a means by which space can be condensed, where opposites can be synthesized, and where boundaries can be blurred. This suggests for the novelistic mind as presented in these novels that there is a high degree of bias toward the gender or the perceived gender of the voices in the text, as the narrator's masculine identification suggested despite his invocation of the first-person plural. Inasmuch as the séance constitutes a space for Castorp's masculine mind to unleash his most transgressive fantasies, at once along homosexual and heterosexual binaries, the amalgamation of these threads in a space that will destabilize the cohesive integrity of that space by breaking out into the paranormal belies the discrete parameters of the mind: the indiscrete/indiscreet extremization of Hans Castorp.

As Castorp awaits the beginning of the next séance, he performs a mental inventory of Dr. Krokowski's office. The narrator, through Castorp's eyes, describes the room in considerable detail, regardless of his or their previous familiarity with the room from discussions with the

doctor that occurred “behind Joachim’s back” (“hinter Joachims Rücken”) in previous sections of the book (adding another dimension to the transgression against Castorp’s cousin) (923). As the participants take their places around the table, Dr. Krokowski insists that Castorp sit next to the medium Elly (Ellen) Brand, who, with a sort of erotic horror (“Gruselreiz”), whispers Holger’s answers in Castorp’s ear—yet another ironic and remarkable confluence of apparent opposites. Initially, the group hesitates to summon the dead, because the wish to do so is perhaps more painful than the impossibility of recalling the dead itself (929). Despite these reservations, it is Hans Castorp who breaks the nervous silence and requests to speak with his cousin. After Elly grants his request, the narrator begins to detail the agonizing process that Elly undertakes—a sort of moaning, swaying, and shuddering that is described by the pluralized narrator as an “an act of birth” (“eine Akt von Geburt”) (931). To reiterate, this is the section in which the narrator adopts the masculine perspective (“Wir Männer”), relaying this process of birth while commenting on the strange act full of organic mysticism (“voll organischer Mystik”), a perfect coalescence of physical and supernatural, a hermetic or alchemical confluence.⁹¹

It becomes evident that, like a real birth, Elly’s communion with the spirits will take some time. While the participants wait, music and festivities begin, and Elly falls into a *Tief-Trance*. Elly’s convulsions intensify as she attempts to give birth to Castorp’s illicit request. As the second hour passes, a strange incident occurs, precipitated by Hans Castorp, (“Da ereignet sich ein Zwischenfall, - Hans Castorp war es, der ihn herbeiführte”) (934). The word “Zwischenfall” is particularly telling here, because it literally translates as “a case or occurrence between,” referring back to the either/or binary pattern, a constant pull toward a blending of opposites. In order to speed the process along for Elly Brand, Castorp makes a request for the

⁹¹ The use of birth as a metaphor will be discussed again in chapter three.

gramophone to play the “Prayer of Valentine” from Gounod’s *Faust*, the very piece he was listening to when he made the decision to summon his cousin from the dead. Unfortunately, Castorp believes the gramophone record is not in the room, and Castorp makes a request to Dr. Krokowski to briefly leave in order to obtain the record. Although Castorp is not forthcoming about his motivation for doing so, Krokowski categorically rejects the proposal on the grounds of scientific inscrutability, believing that any breach of the room will rupture the spiritual ambiance and taint the results of his experiment, which relates to the assumption of discrete space this chapter attempts to question.

Krokowski then exclaims, “Wo denken Sie hin!” (935). The comment implies outrage, “what are you thinking!” but “hindenken” literally means to think away from the speaker, to think out, a thinking beyond, an externalization of the thought.⁹² The word fits with the arguments made in this chapter thus far concerning the indiscrete limits of the mind because it suggests a direction to thinking beyond itself. And aside from the scene that is to come, the word is reminiscent of the double connotation of “Wendung” from the very first sentence of the section, a turn away. Indeed, it is a turn of phrase that is strangely literal, as Castorp wishes to expand his thought into materialization, to make his desires for his cousin come about. Just as the good doctor’s outrage reaches its climax, a Czech participant finds the record of Gounod’s opera, mistakenly albeit quite serendipitously placed in the wrong album cover. The narrator focalizes into the guise of the Czech participant, relaying in what could be free indirect speech, “Ja, hier. Margarethe, Gebet des Valentin. Bitte sehr. Sie hatte ausnahmsweise im leichten Album gesteckt und nicht im grünen Arien-Album Nummer II, wohin sie nach der Organisation gehörte” (935).

⁹² Thomas Mann described the materialization of a hand during the séance he attended as “Exteriorisation.” He describes the experience as a “jugglery” (“Gaukelei”) that made him sick to his stomach. See Mann, “Okkulte Erlebnisse” 647.

The inhabitation of the Czech participant by the narrator in order to make present the record of the very song that inspired Castorp to pursue this most dubious act overdetermines the space as a space without discrete limitations for the minds. The imminence of the narrator and the technological abridgment of the object foreshadow the violation of that space for this final turn that turns too far.

As the aria reaches its powerful finale with “O Herr des Himmels, hör mein Flehn, in deinem Schutz laß Margarethe stehn!” (though the text cuts this off at “mein Flehn”), Elly suddenly sits erect, gasps for air, and then sinks down. Castorp leans down to Elly’s head just as he hears her say in a squeaking whimper, “Ziem – ßen –!” (936). Castorp’s reaction is narrated by having him take in his surroundings: he straightens in his chair, senses a bitter taste in his mouth, and then hears the scratching needle of the skipping record player. (Castorp’s sensual perception of his surroundings is repeatedly emphasized throughout this section.) As he raises his head, the narrative informs us that his eyes somehow know where to look without even trying, as he gazes upon the new entity in the room. The position of Ziemßen’s ghost is precisely triangulated in the text, located in the visitor’s chair between the broad side of writing desk and the Spanish wall, where Elly had previously sat during the break. Ziemßen is in a relaxed position with one leg crossed over the other, his expression familiarly gaunt and formal, but he sits with a trace of suffering (“Stempel des Leidens”), the entire expression enhanced by his masculine beauty. There is indeed a strong element of attractiveness to the specter: his war beard, the gentleness of his countenance, and his grand, dark eyes staring with friendliness, which would seem to curiously meet Castorp’s expectations at coming to know his cousin in this way. It might be a welcoming sight for Castorp, a fulfillment of his “Übermensch”-like

expectations, quite literally the ability to transform his world according to his own volition, except for Ziemßen's anachronistic military uniform.

Though it is not listed directly in the text as the main offender, it is an apparently unsettling factor as the word "Kopfbedeckung" appears four times in the same paragraph and causes the narrator to stumble a bit—"Und wie war das mit der Kopfbedeckung?" Instead of the ornate helmets of the Wilhelmenian era (viz. the spike helmet, "Pickelhaube"), the text tells us that this militaristic headgear looks like a cooking pot, though it appears strangely becoming in a mercenary, antique, and militant fashion ("Doch wirkte das altertümlich und landsknechthaft und kriegerisch kleidsam, merkwürdigerweise") (937). In the preceding quote, the joining of the three adjectives by two conjunctions instead of by a comma suggests that the narrator may also be struggling with the image, apparently improvising a description. To the reader, the helmet and uniform are obviously anachronistic in their reminiscence of the late-WWI attire of a German soldier (e.g. the "Stahlhelm"). Like the feeling of seasickness at the appearance of the diapositive, this moment also provokes a twisting, disorienting feeling of nausea in Castorp, and we are informed that Castorp's stomach feels like it will turn upside down ("sich umkehren"). Yet, unlike the diapositive, this unanticipated actualization of Castorp's will—the materialization of his cousin on demand—not only infringes on the spatial integrity of the Berghof, it also constitutes an unintended conflation of temporal opposites—future and past. Ziemßen's ghost distorts spacetime by its transgressive presence. As the scene closes, the narrative conveys one last inventory of Castorp's surroundings—the feeling of Elly's breath on this hand, the incessant scratching of the gramophone needle—before returning to Castorp, as if to reorient the space after the viewing of the ghost. Following Castorp's bout of nausea, he convulsively sobs four or five times before he manages to utter a single plea for forgiveness ("Verzeih"), the only word he

utters to his cousin's apparition. He then closes his eyes, intentionally cutting himself off from the nauseating specter. Others in the room declare they can also see the ghost and implore Castorp to speak to Ziemßen, which precludes the possibility of this all being a figment of the imagination. Wordlessly, Castorp demands that Dr. Krokowski relinquish the key, after which he vacates the room.

The spectral appearance of Castorp's soldier-cousin clothed in the garb of a war that Castorp himself will ultimately fight in is perhaps the most diabolically twisted feature of his situated mind in the simulated space of the novel. The appearance of Castorp's cousin in the trappings of a future uniform signifies a diametric pushback against his volition—the situation discomfiting the situated; but this is not merely a psychological eruption. After all, Castorp is not the only one who saw the ghost. Furthermore, the apparent transgression of spatial and temporal conventions by Ziemßen's appearance cannot be regarded as merely a return of Castorp's repressed desires for his cousin because they are tinctured with elements from the future. That neither Castorp nor the narrator understand the significance of the helmet and the uniform discloses the machinations of another mind behind the curtain of the narrative: Thomas Mann, the author. After all, who else could be privy to such information? Writing in the years after the war, Mann is able to infuse the narrative with elements of a future know to him but not yet to the characters at the time of the narrative. In this way, Mann is able to play with the minds of the text, fulfilling contrived divinations by sending Castorp to war in the uniform his cousin foreshadows. This discloses one of the most challenging aspects of the prospect of uploading the mind; for without an author or a programmer to set the parameters, the situatedness of the mind in time cannot be perfectly transcribed. In other words, the future cannot be wholly incorporated in the program. Though one may not know what the future holds, it represents an intrinsic part of

our situatedness. Moreover, the blending of future and past (another binary twist) makes us aware of the complexity and dynamic dimensionality of the mind situated in spacetime; in effect, spacetime is necessarily conjoined with the not yet known and not entirely predictable expanse of the future.⁹³ As such, the future is a perfect example of the limit as beginning and not merely end as described by Heidegger, the mind dissipating into the context of the future. It is therefore impossible, whether human, transhuman, or posthuman, to completely account for the future extents of the mind in the fabric of our contextualized mind because that future, as an unknown variable, slips beyond the borders of observation or determination.

In the previous portion of my argument, Castorp's mind attempted to exert control over his cousin's in a Nietzschean usurpation of space by re-placing Ziemßen's mind in Castorp's presence. That Castorp initially succeeds in this desire but then experiences resistance to his desires in the form of an unwelcome portend of his own future establishes that the mind cannot exercise complete control over its environment. Ziemßen's persona overlaps with Castorp's in this section, distorting the borders between the two. This distortion was brought about by means of an escalation of events in *ZB*, resulting in negation and not advancement or betterment. For Castorp's encounter does not allow his mind to gain the additional knowledge he sought for, but instead foreshadows his own death on the battlefields of World War I—his own x-ing out.

In the next section of this essay, the consequences of reading the events of "Fragwürdigstes" as twists of extreme opposites, as points of indistinctness through negation brought about by the author, are pursued more closely. Ziemßen's ghost has typically been read

⁹³ For this analysis, I borrow the term "spacetime" from physics to more aptly describe Mann's depiction of the Berghof in Davos, Switzerland, which is articulated by both time and space. The word "spacetime" also captures the hermetic aspect of *ZB*, combining the two concepts into one, which is more copacetic to my reading. For other interesting examples in the text, see especially *ZB* 75, 95.

historically in terms of the occult and paranormal sensationalism that gripped the time period,⁹⁴ and in regard to Thomas Mann's own experiences with the occult.⁹⁵ These efforts have clarified the significance of magic in *ZB* and have contributed to our understanding of the novel's creation. But in explicating the elements highlighted in my reading above, I advance beyond historical contextualization and attempt to ground the narrative in its consequences for the future prospect of mind-uploading. That the mind of Thomas Mann must have also played a role in the construction of the spacetime of the minds in the novel is not so much a constricting circumstance as it is an expanding one. That is to say, it was only through the narrative that we know about Castorp's thoughts before the objects materialized magically before him. As such, the character's mind is exposed on multiple levels. This is a central part of the hermetic or magical element of text, the (con)joining of extremes or even impossibilities in the novel, while ignoring some of the details, such as the impossibility of knowing a person's thoughts for sure. That the narrative makes this blending of mind spaces possible in unexpected and disorienting ways can be regarded as a warning to those in pursuit of the uploaded mind.

⁹⁴ Rausch (2000) is one of the best examples of this kind of reading, specifically beginning at p.16.

⁹⁵ Thomas Mann's essay on the occult parallels the events described in *ZB* in several ways (King 1996). Mann described in his experience the operation or movement of several objects, *Taschentuch*, *Glocke*, *Leuchtringe*. Perhaps the most interesting was the typing on a *Schreibmaschine*, although what was written has not been passed on to us today. One of the rings hit Mann in the face, which he called a "humoristisches Scheusälchen" (642). The scene in *ZB* differs in that no objects materialized out of nowhere, like the diapositive or the record; but, akin to Joachim's apparition, Mann claimed to see the form of a stump of an arm and a closed hand ("eine Form eines Unterarmstumpfes mit geschlossener Hand") (644). Mann insisted that he saw no evidence of fakery or illusion (646). In the essay, Mann also attempted to philosophically explicate the experience using Plato and Hegel and also referred to supposed scientific evidence in photography and wax molds. In the end, he did not express a desire to experience a séance again but confessed, "Noch einmal möchte ich, gereckten Halses, die Magennerven angerührt von Absurdität, das Unmögliche sehen, das dennoch geschieht" (652). That Mann would wish for the feeling of encountering the impossibility and not the actual experience says something about the human relationship to simulation. Such an appearance is a recurring motif in Mann's works, and there is even some evidence that the author may have seen visions himself (Neumann 395-7). Despite these attempts to interpret the events historically or biographically, the scene in *ZB* is different, part of the narrative, and must be viewed within the boundaries of the work as a whole.

The Magic of the Magic Mountain

The “Wendung” mentioned at the opening of “Fragwürdigstes” constitutes a vital part of the magic in *ZB*, but it is more than merely paranormal activity and more than a plot twist. The inexplicable phenomena in “Fragwürdigstes” constitute the materialization of Castorp’s thoughts into physical space, an unsettling presence-ing of the mind that advances beyond their originator. This is demonstrated by the breakdown of verbal language in this section and Castorp’s hasty retreat from the room. After his plea for pardon, we read that Castorp “wollte sprechen, aber von seinen Lippen kam kein Wort” (938). This indicates either that he was so outraged and disgusted by the experience that he could no longer speak, or that he experienced some kind of internal, perhaps involuntary mental conflict that inhibited the realization of his will—a pushback of the narrative. This is made manifest by his mad gesticulations for the key instead of simply asking Dr. Krokowski for it. Sensing his muteness, Castorp voluntarily blinds himself, closing his eyes to the situation, but this is also more than it seems: “und dann gingen die Augen ihm über, so daß er nichts mehr sah” (937). This turn of phrase about his eyes “going over” figuratively indicates awe and astonishment, that the Castorp has seen something astounding or overwhelming. But in combination with the latter phrase, it draws upon a more literal meaning, that he saw something so amazing that his eyes went over, beyond, across, to the extreme, to such an extent that he could no longer see. This is not merely the loss of the visual sense but also the transgression of their boundaries, retreating inwardly through silence and willful blindness, while retreating outwardly by leaving the room, i.e. a step beyond, literally the supersensual.

In fact, it is his collapse of sensual orientation by means of extremization that clarifies the parallel between the most dubious element in this section and the radical negation of the sign in simulation. It is not only Castorp’s intention to penetrate into his cousin’s consciousness that is

transgressive, but the unexplained materializations of the diapositive, the record, and ultimately Castorp's dead cousin that violate in concert accustomed spatial conventions. For instance, the objects which mysteriously teleport into Hans Castorp's presence are media indicative of specific senses and epistemologies: the glass plate diapositive is visual and scientific, while the record is audial and aesthetic, at least in their contextual and purposive functions vis-à-vis *ZB*.⁹⁶ Even without their inexplicable appearances, these objects were regarded as technological marvels (as indeed they are by Castorp), magical in a way for their ability to preserve and disseminate simulations of other spaces, to transcend the corporeal senses.⁹⁷ Hence, these objects correlate with the primary means of sensing and comprehending, which Castorp's mind conveyed through the narrator, employs to orient himself in his surroundings; but as the transitive recipients (both grammatically and spatially) of paranormal phenomena, they also transgress the laws of spacetime. They are magical because they collapse spacetime technologically and mystically.

As suggested by the overwhelming of Castorp's senses, magic in *ZB* is the radical negation of the sign, the simulation of the mind as the re-placement of reality through extremification. As the statement of purpose suggested, it was always a matter of intensification ("Steigerung"), not necessarily improvement (development, not "Bildung"). Thus, the magic is a heaping up, an accumulation of magic (i.e. the mountain of the Magic Mountain), but to such an extent that it blurs its space—just as a gravity well curves and distorts space.⁹⁸ This is what was meant by the negation of reality by the simulation in Baudrillard's definition. Simulation is an

⁹⁶ The word "diapositive" etymologically means "to place between" and is a combination of Greek and Latin roots. As discussed in the opening, the phonogram record also marks the fusion between spaces, transporting a previous spacetime to another. Etymologically, it suggests a written sound, a theme that will be touched on again in chapter three.

⁹⁷ In the first séance, these sensual and epistemological binaries were echoed and reflected by other mysterious phenomena, at least with the turning of the aperture on the gaslight to extinguish the light by an unknown hand, and the knocking that seemed to come from the door and then the table—one a visual phenomenon and the other audial.

⁹⁸ The title for the novel comes from Nietzsche's *Die Geburt der Tragödie aus dem Geiste der Musik* (Brown 2). It should not surprise us to see Nietzsche's influence again on Mann's narrative.

abridgment of the space of the mind. The minds of *ZB* (Castorp, the narrator, and Thomas Mann) constitute an escalation of impact on the space. Castorp desires to exercise his will on his environment, but his environment resists his attempts to bend it to his commands. The narrator takes up such a close proximity to Castorp that he hesitates to complete his narration and in fact never brings himself to reveal the death of the protagonist. Even his hesitancy to take up a discrete *I*, deferring to the pluralized *we* instead, discloses the resistance of the mind to closure at the limit.

This points to the hermetic element of the story. The word “hermetic” evokes many connotations: the alchemist Hermes Trismegistus, the Greek god Hermes, hermeneutics, and hermetic seals.⁹⁹ As magic, the novelized mind is a transgression of the space it occupies. This transgression comes by means of abstracting the space. In the sense of sealing, this is best understood in the sense of merging or blurring. It is true that hermetic may also mean to cut off from outside influences, but this reading is not about the sublation or abrogation of all limits. It merely offers another understanding or another reading of limits. In regard to the interpretive arts, the story is always dependent on the proximity of reading. The connection to magic and gods should be understood as the necessary intensification in order to drive antipodes to their extremes, bringing about the suspended space where spacetime rules are broken and all things are possible. Limits are negations, twists of meanings. They are confrontations with opposites that blur at their meeting. The negation, the simulation of the mind, does not end, just as Heidegger suggested with the relationality of the fourfold. The uneasy contrasting of opposite pairings results in dissipating negations, negations which open up to limitless grayness at the

⁹⁹ For more on the Hermes theme in *ZB*, see Thayer, Terence K. “Hans Castorp's Hermetic Adventures.” *Germanic Review*, vol. 46, 1971, pp. 299–312.

middle. These indicate that the escalation (“Steigerung”) of Castorp’s narrative presents a mind that does not discretely fit within the limitations of its spatial situation.

Conclusion

This chapter opened with iCloud breaches, broaching the assumption that the simulative space of the mind is discrete. Situated cognition and Baudrillard’s concept of simulation were introduced to provide some shape of the trace that was undertaken by means of a close reading of *ZB*. The binary structure of *ZB* and its hermetic project suggested that the twist in simulation is akin to the hermetic point of the *ZB*’s binary structure. Overlapping themes and phrases in the statement of purpose and the conclusion of the novel disclosed the cyclical and intensification aspects of the narrative, pointing to the novelized mind as simulation. The close analysis of the section “Fragwürdigstes” showed how simulation, as the radical negation of the sign, exposed a hermetic element, a point of indistinctness or dissolution—an understanding of limits and borders which resists their common understanding as strict borders or containers. On this topic of the hermetic point, there is much more to consider, as will be shown in the course of this study. What is exactly at stake in the presence of these hermetic limits for novelized minds necessitates a comparison with other novelized minds of the period.

To be more precise, the magic of the magic mountain discloses an element of modernist literature that transgresses boundaries and disorients readers (recall Peter Childs’s “more real than realism”), but that transgression takes different forms in different novels. The role of the author in *ZB* demonstrated how the novel relies on the programmer for the structure of its narrative. Negating the problem of the open-endedness of the future by preprogramming an already-known element of that future, such as Ziemßen’s helmet and uniform, allows the text a

semblance of discreteness. Yet the hesitation of the narrator at the conclusion of *ZB* pointed back to the beginning, suggesting a resistance to the assumption that the novelized mind constitutes a closed system. The presence-ing of the author's mind in the text lends the novel's conclusion a semantic contextualization by referring back to previous occurrences in the novel—as Hollweck's gunshot suggested—creating a mind as feedback loop. That a self-awareness of the text as text may have transferred over to Hans Castorp in all this is a point that will be reiterated and further explored my reading of Hermann Broch's *Die Schlafwandler (SW)* in the next chapter.

In the next chapter, the blurring negation requires some additional explanation, and so the hermetic point in simulation will be more closely scrutinized. This will especially concentrate more on the trans-ness of the space of the mind in the novel. Examining and comparing another novel reveals additional contours of the simulated mind, elaborating more on dimensionality or relativity of these areas of indistinctness at the limits of the simulated mind. Many of the themes touched on in this chapter will be engaged again but under closer magnification. This reading will highlight an additional aspect of the mind's resistance to uploading, demonstrating how the textualized mind might inform the efforts to upload the mind. Where the dissipation of the novelized mind in *ZB* disclosed the situatedness of the mind as the radical negation or abridgment of the mind, in *SW* the dissipating limits of the mind will hint at the plurality of the mind.

Chapter Two

Hermann Broch's *Die Schlafwandler*: The Translation of the Mind*Introduction*

In the previous chapter, it was argued that the situatedness of the novelized mind is adumbrated by Möbius twists or hermetic points, which resist discrete articulation. It became clear that these areas of indistinctness occur where extreme opposites are blurred, as was found at the beginning and end of *ZB*, in the narrator's relation to the protagonist, and in the obfuscation of spacetime. The term "hermetic point," borrowed from the self-ascribed description of *ZB* as a "hermetische Geschichte," has been adapted in this text to indicate the same phenomenon. Hermann Broch's *Die Schlafwandler* (*SW*) also contains such hermetic points, but the metaphor of sleepwalking supplies an additional degree of insight into the simulative negation in the blurring of thematic and narrative binaries. Thomas Herold recently wrote, "Since sleepwalking is the 'central metaphor' (Osterle) of the trilogy, virtually every piece of scholarship on the novel contributes to the broad discussion of its specific meaning in the novel" (161). This chapter also contributes to this broad discussion on sleepwalking, but, in contrast to previous studies, this chapter shows how its meaning in the novel in regard to the mind informs the uploading of the mind outside the novel. Where the previous chapter focused more on the special and situational barriers of the novelized mind, this chapter pounds harder on the hermetic nail of the text that holds the simulation together, interrogating the transitional, indistinguishable dimensions of this hermetic point as a translation of mind into text.¹⁰⁰

¹⁰⁰ I remind the reader that translation was the next step in Bostrom's theory of mind-uploading.

The aim of this chapter is to outline plurality as another aspect of the mind resistant to uploading. In conjunction with the situatedness discussed in the previous chapter in terms of spatiality, this chapter argues that plurality is the aspect of the mind conjoined with other personae presented in the novel. It concentrates on how the translation of the mind into text opens up the mind, expanding the concept of radical negation beyond a solely binary configuration. This chapter begins by comparing a contemporary critique against AI with a notion of textual translation contemporary to Broch's time. After a preliminary exploration of this parallel in the basic story and titles of *SW*, the metaphor of sleepwalking is examined in its historical and narratological parameters for the novel. Zooming in on specific manifestations of this comparison, the "minds" or the literary simulations of two characters' minds in particular are examined: the Bertrand Müller figure and Wilhelm Huguenau. Bertrand has long been regarded as the central narrator-character who links all the novels in the trilogy together, despite his incarnation as two different characters: Eduard von Bertrand and Dr. Bertrand Müller.¹⁰¹ Huguenau is generally read as the new human of the modern age, displaying characteristics that anticipate features of the artificial mind: cold, calculating, materialistic, rational in a purely self-serving and single-minded sense. The closing step in this chapter zeroes in on how the treatment of the gender binary in the text destabilizes these masculine minds, disrupting and shattering the discrete construction of these minds in the novel. The possibilities opened up by these negations points to another aspect of the mind resistant to uploading, which I term plurality. The conclusion of this chapter then directs the current of this argument toward the problem of scanning in Döblin's *Berlin Alexanderplatz*.

¹⁰¹ Although Dorrit Cohn was not the first to make the connection, she lays out a substantial and convincing argument in its favor (61-98). It is worth noting that she uses several two-part subtitles in her argument, "The hunter and the hunted," "Demon and divinity," "Der Erkennende und der Erkannte," and "Prophet and aesthete."

The Chinese Room and Translation

To prepare the ground for this argument, I introduce a parallel idea between John Searle's thought experiment (Searle uses the word "Gedankenexperiment") about the Chinese Room and Walter Benjamin's concept of the best translation in "The Task of the Translator." John Searle's well-known Chinese Room argument questions the ability of artificial intelligence to ever reach human-level intelligence by elaborating on the connection between mind and text. Searle's critic unfolds as a hypothetical situation:

Suppose that I'm locked in a room and given a *large* batch of Chinese writing. Suppose furthermore or (as is indeed the case) that I know no Chinese, either written or spoken, and that I'm not even confident that I could recognize Chinese writing as Chinese writing distinct from say, Japanese writing or meaningless squiggles. To me, Chinese writing is just so many meaningless squiggles. Now suppose further that after this first batch of Chinese writing I am given a second batch of Chinese script together with a set of rules for correlating the second batch with the first batch. The rules are in English, and I understand these rules as well as any other native speaker of English. They enable me to correlate one set of formal symbols with another set of formal symbols, and all that "formal" means here is that I can identify the symbols entirely by their shapes. Now suppose also that I am given a third batch of Chinese symbols together with some instructions, again in English, that enable me to correlate elements of this third batch with the first two batches, and these rules instruct me how to give back certain Chinese symbols with certain sorts of shapes in response to certain sorts of shapes given me in the third batch. Unknown to me, the people who are giving me all of these symbols call the

first batch “a script,” they call the second batch a “story,” and they call the third batch “questions.” Furthermore, they call the symbols I give them back in response to the third batch “answers to the questions,” and the set of rules in English that they gave me, they call “the program.” Now just to complicate the story a little, imagine that these people also give me stories in English, which I understand, and they then ask me questions in English about these stories, and I give them back answers in English. Suppose also that after a while I get so good at following the instructions for manipulating the Chinese symbols and the programmers get so good at writing the programs that from the external point of view – that is, from the point of view of somebody outside the room in which I am locked – my answers to the questions are absolutely indistinguishable from those of native Chinese speakers. Nobody just looking at my answers can tell that I don’t speak a word of Chinese. Let us also suppose that my answers to the English questions are, as they no doubt would be, indistinguishable from those of other native English speakers, for the simple reason that I am a native English speaker. From the external point of view – from the point of view of someone reading my “answers” – the answers to the Chinese questions and the English questions are equally good. But in the Chinese case, unlike the English case, I produce the answers by manipulating uninterpreted formal symbols. As far as the Chinese is concerned, I simply behave like a computer; I perform computational operations on formally specified elements. For the purpose of the Chinese, I am simply an instantiation of the computer program. (Searle 417-18)

From Searle’s thought experiment, a two-part problem in the assumption about the feasibility of mind-uploading can be derived. First, it is difficult to determine if the computer, like the person in the room in the Gedankenexperiment (or any person for that matter), ever really understands

the language communicated to it, because outside observers cannot directly observe the cognitive function happening in the mind of AI; we always observe only indirect evidence of that phenomenon.¹⁰² Adept as the person in the room may become at giving the correct answers, that person does not really understand Chinese. Instead, the experience was merely an exchange of opaque signs, transferring forms and shapes through a rubric from one space to another without any real recognition or understanding—garbage in, garbage out. The second part of the problem occurs with the tester situated outside the room. The person who supplicates the room’s occupant for translation can never definitively ascertain if the translation is accurate without being fluent in the language from the beginning. Of course, the testers could indeed be fluent in Chinese, but fluency, even for native speakers of a language, is always constricted in one way or another by the channels it transits; for instance, education, class, or other circumstantial barriers may restrict a native language communicator’s knowledge about her own language. Language is always growing and expanding beyond any individual speaker. An AI language speaker should be programmable for the entirety of the language, making it omniscient, but even the dictionaries which have been composed can never be entirely comprehensive because of the limitations of their authors. (The reader may recall that in the previous chapter that futurity was also a constituent of the situatedness of the mind, presenting an open-ended element resistant to discrete articulation. The vastness of language as it was described here must also relate to the problem of the unpredictability of the future in that it extends to a space beyond our scope.) Hence, because of the limitations of the language speakers (or the text-programmers), there will

¹⁰² This recollects one of the central problems in epistemology which Immanuel Kant termed “Ding an sich” or noumenon. Broch’s *SW* has been repeatedly analyzed for its philosophical approach to the theory of knowledge, or epistemology. (Thanks to Dr. Jason Martin Wirth at Seattle University who pointed this out to me.) The philosophical treatise imbedded in the third part of the trilogy, “Zerfall der Werte,” as well as the “Die Geschichte des Heilsarmee Mädchen in Berlin,” engage with both Kant’s and Hegel’s thought.

always be a limit to the supposed fluency of any language-knower, even if that figure is an artificial mind with access to seemingly endless amounts of information.¹⁰³

Yet programmers are able to transform this limitation into an advantage, as Searle's thought experiment demonstrates: Searle can narrate what he knows. Searle's assertion that he does not know Chinese is an act of narration that is necessary for the comprehensibility of the thought experiment, whether the statement is true or not. That the "I" of the experiment cannot understand Chinese is only discernable because of its position as a narrator. Without this ability to narrate what is known or not known, to speak about the inaccessible machinations of the mind beyond our perception, there could only be a description of external phenomena.¹⁰⁴ Searle is only privileged to make these claims about the state of the mind because of his position outside the narrative. Still, there could be some vague some awareness of the language gained by going through the motions of translation, meaning that perhaps Searle knows more than he thinks he does; but real comprehension can only be measured by removing the walls of the room and getting to the real person on the inside, a step that only a narrator can take.¹⁰⁵

The advantage of the narrated mind in the Chinese Room argument hinges on a matter of translation, a point that cannot be understated. The concept of translation assumes the transference of information from one system of comprehension (a language) to another, an ostensive binary configuration; but the very act of transference also suggests a point of

¹⁰³ See my comments in the conclusion for more on the consequences of this observation.

¹⁰⁴ The Turing test, a famous test for the intelligence of an artificial mind, hinged on how a person could discriminate answers given by a computer or by a human being. Searle's answer is only possible by the inclusion of a narrator who can tell us the hidden aspects of his thoughts, an ability that literature has always had. Döblin's anti-psychological approach to narration discussed in chapter three more overtly tackles this conundrum.

¹⁰⁵ Another lesson garnered from Searle's argument is that he emphasizes language as script, ignoring the oral elements of language in favor of the visual. Walter Ong's work on orality reminded literary scholars that language always has a spoken or audible element behind the sign. As will be argued later in chapter three, the oral element that is missing from Searle's example connected with the lyrical and poetic, further complicating the discreteness of language.

mediation, a point of passing through, where the transference of the essence of the words actually takes place, a turning of one word into another. Walter Benjamin described this in his essay on translation, “Die Aufgabe der Übersetzers.”

Was hiernach für das Verhältnis von Übersetzung und Original an Bedeutung dem Sinn verbleibt, läßt sich in einem Vergleich fassen. Wie die Tangente den Kreis flüchtig und nur in einem Punkte berührt und wie ihr wohl diese Berührung, nicht aber der Punkt, das Gesetz vorschreibt, nach dem sie weiter ins Unendliche ihre gerade Bahn zieht, so berührt die Übersetzung flüchtig und nur in dem unendlich kleinen Punkte des Sinnes das Original, um nach dem Gesetze der Treue in der Freiheit der Sprachbewegung ihre eigenste Bahn zu verfolgen. (60)

Benjamin explains in this passage the paradox of attempting to be loyal to the meaning of the original text while still being able to express the essence of that text freely and accessibly in the target language. Benjamin’s appeal to geometry to explicate this conception of translations sketches a conception with three elements: a circle, a tangent, and a point where the former elements intersect or touch (which is also an abstraction of an abstraction). The point of intersection signifies the essence of the idea: the ideal something that constitutes that idea. In the final lines of the essay, Benjamin explicates this point of intersection in greater detail: “Denn in irgendeinem Grade enthalten alle großen Schriften, im höchsten aber die heiligen, zwischen den Zeilen ihre virtuelle Übersetzung. Die Interlinearversion des heiligen Textes ist das Urbild oder Ideal aller Übersetzung” (62). As Benjamin points out, the ostensive paradox of translation is practically metaphysical, for no translation can ever perfectly access or encapsulate this point of intersection, precisely capturing the original meaning of the text. Some information is inevitably lost when moving from one language to another. Hence, when Benjamin talks of interlinear

versions of the text or an ideal translation between the lines, he is criticizing the possibility of an idealized translation, for there is literally nothing between the lines. This relates to Baudrillard's definition of simulation because it is a negation of opposites extremified so that they are twisted together in an obscure point meeting, a limit. The point of translation is evacuated of discernibility because it is located at the inaccessible reaches of the mind.

A few points of clarification are required. When narrators describe the "real" thoughts of their characters, the narrator only ostensibly obtains a god-like status because, at least to some degree, the thoughts of these characters are not discretely the thoughts of the author of the simulated text. The author is never completely situated outside the text (as chapter three will discuss in greater detail). The postmodernist critique of the author aids us in understanding that the individual is influenced by a variety of external processes (societal and cultural) that prevent the mind from obtaining complete autonomy.¹⁰⁶ Hence the author's mind cannot perfectly translate in the text, neither is the text an exact replication of that person's thought alone. In the

¹⁰⁶ Cohn and Lützel's work on *SW* preceded the postmodern critique of the author by just a few years, most famously advocated by Roland Barthes' "Death of the Author" (1967-8) and reinterpreted in Michel Foucault's "What is the Author?" (1974). Later studies, such as Gunther Martens' *Beobachtungen der Moderne in Hermann Brochs "Die Schlafwandler" und Robert Musils "Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften"* (2006), have extensively pursued this postmodernist critical approach in *SW*, discussing how the Broch-Bertrand connection might be interpreted in context of cultural-historical discourses. Much of this debate surrounding the critique of the author rests on one of the primary assumptions of structuralism, that the subconscious or unconscious is structured like language, as was theorized by Lacan, and which is still debated in linguistics, most famously concerning the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis (See "Structuralism" 2010). Whatever the nature of the subconscious, if it exists at all, it can only be stated for certain that it is a field of investigation that we do not fully comprehend. Even in developments in neuroscience, there is still a gap between the electrical impulses observed in the brain and whatever actually happens underneath the surface of our perceptions. Again, this problem must be traced back to Kant and the noumenon, which always suggest another layer of the mind just out of view and beyond our reach.

Daniel Dennett and others point to Descartes as the origin of this problem of cognition, also known as Cartesian theater, or the homunculus problem. For example, if I were to explain how our brain processes information, I might say something like "the brain sees a table or chair." One might then ask, "How does the brain see?" I might further attempt explanation by saying that the eye captures light through the retinas and the brain processes that light as an image. But all I have done is capture the processes of the brain to the retina: "How do the retinas see?" Like a Russian matryoshka doll (or my daughter forever asking "why?"), all I have done is move the verb into an inner level of subjectivity, a homunculus in the brain who does the actual seeing. This ascribes the task of tracing the agent of action to an infinite regression of indistinctness.

context of this argument, the problem of the author is obscured to another degree because of the situatedness of the mind. In a similar vein, what Benjamin's understanding of translation adds to the understanding of indistinctness in this argument is that the ideal translation, as an impossibility, is also indistinctness inasmuch as it is perfectly inaccessible. Translation is not invoked here in its traditional connotation, i.e. the transference of meaning from one language into another, but rather the translation of mind into text. As this translative aspect of indistinctness is adumbrated through my close readings of *SW*, a hue of multiplicity or plurality, an opening up of multiple personae will become more detectable. In the next section, trinary structures in the titles and story arcs of *SW* are contrasted with the structure of binary opposites proposed in *ZB* in order to highlight an additional dimensionality to these indistinct limits. This will prepare the ground for continued discussion about the plurality of indistinctness.

Binary or Trinary

The tension between binary or trinary structures can already be seen in the titles and structures of *SW*. The title of the first novel, *1888 · Pasenow oder die Romantik*, presents three different elements. It should be noticed that no place is disclosed in the title, though a few cities figure prominently (Berlin, Köln/Mannheim, and Kurtrier (Trier)). Yet despite the three elements (a time, a protagonist, and a theme), the conjunction "or" divides the title into two halves, grouping the time and the protagonist together against the theme. Before proceeding with this binary/trinary tension in the titles, it is necessary to discuss some major plot points and the narrative styles for each of the novels. This helps not only to give some context to the titles, but also to reveal some thematic dyads and triads in the story as well.

Pasenow is written in a realist style, which has been interpreted as an imitation of the style of Theodor Fontane.¹⁰⁷ In essence, the story tells of Joachim Pasenow's eventual embrace of traditional values over his own desires. This is demonstrated by his choice to marry the aristocratic Elizabeth instead of giving into his passion for the exotic, Bohemian barmaid Ruzena. Another dimension of Pasenow's choice in favor of traditional values is his embracing of Christian ideals and Prussian military order over the enticements of his Mephistopheles-like friend, Eduard von Bertrand. Bertrand, as a discharged military man and successful globetrotting entrepreneur, encourages Pasenow to pursue a bourgeois, libertine lifestyle, but to no avail. The closing scene seems to parody Pasenow's choice, depicting him in full military uniform falling asleep with his boots on the first night of their honeymoon, an overly chaste adherence to traditional institutions such as marriage, church, aristocracy, etc.¹⁰⁸ In contrast to Ziemßen's uniform, Pasenow's uniform must be regarded as relic of a bygone era, a symbol of strict adherence to decaying values (one of the central motives of the novel) and not a portend of future doom per se Pasenow does fall victim to the devastation of WWI, but he does not die.¹⁰⁹ Pasenow's fate differs from Castorp's in that he is rendered incapacitated by the end of *SW*, coming under the direct control of Huguenau. This is more likely a symbolic statement about the utility of value systems than of hesitation. The series of choices which Pasenow faces speak to dyad configurations, except that Pasenow's choice between two women is contrasted with Bertrand's alternative of a free lifestyle. In the second novel it becomes apparent that Bertrand's overtures may have also been romantic, complicating the field of choices.

¹⁰⁷ Carstensen sees *Pasenow* as a parody of Theodore Fontane's style (9).

¹⁰⁸ See Large (2012) for a discussion on the significance of the uniform.

¹⁰⁹ Lützel defines the decay of values as the "Aufsplitterung der menschlichen Lebenswirklichkeit in immer kleinere Rollen" (84).

Starkly different narrative styles are employed in the next two parts of the trilogy. The second novel, *1903 · Esch oder die Anarchie*, is supposed to represent the bridge to modernism, a sort of medial phase reminiscent of “Jugendstil” or the fin de siècle authors. The text maintains a mostly realistic style, but breaks out into more unconventional narrative techniques indicative of the modernist style, such as in part III where extended commentaries on sleepwalking are abruptly inserted into the text.¹¹⁰ In stark contrast to Pasenow’s aristocratic environment, August Esch is a laid-off accountant who decides to go into business for himself but is plagued by irrational attempts to seize control of the figures who embody the romantic values established in the previous novel. This becomes clearer during his possibly dreamed or hallucinated but in any case highly eroticized meeting with Eduard von Bertrand, Pasenow’s tempter in the first novel. To Esch, he is a mysterious figure, but one for whom Esch feels a significant degree of hostility. Esch discovers Bertrand’s homosexuality and threatens to expose him, but Bertrand commits suicide before Esch can inform the newspapers. Another indicative aspect of the story is Esch’s relationship with the tavern owner Mutter Hentjen, whom he rapes and eventually marries in order to outdo and replace her dead husband, whom Esch knows only from his portrait which hangs in the bar.¹¹¹ Esch also develops a love interest in Ilona, the wife of a knife-thrower from Mannheim, again positioning the protagonist between two women and Bertrand.¹¹² Esch also succumbs to decaying values, but unlike Pasenow, he turns toward mysticism and irrationality,

¹¹⁰ *SW* 328ff, 349ff. These commentaries emulate the decay of values essay in the third novel, both of which provide metafictional analysis of the story.

¹¹¹ This strangely irrational drive on Esch’s part is reminiscent of the concept of simulation as the radical negation of the sign, since Esch seeks to serve the function for Mutter Hentjen. The question of the portrait as a simulacrum deserves further investigation.

¹¹² Ziolkowski points out that Esch, as with Pasenow before him, faces a choice between two love interests: Mutter Hentjen and Ilona, a variety show girl, who is tied up while knives are thrown at her (138). There is more to this love triangle, and the dream of Bertrand complicates matters considerably, but, as Dorrit Cohn accurately indicated, “there is a marked tendency to minimize the importance of Bertrand in *Die Schlafwandler* (see Footnote 8, Cohn 63).

hence the mention of anarchy in the title. Of greatest significance for this argument is the breakdown of the realistic narrative mode because it offers us significant insights into the narrator of the trilogy and his mind, which will be touched on again in greater detail later in this chapter.

1918 · Huguenau oder die Sachlichkeit, the final novel, clearly takes the last step toward the modernist narrative style, telling the story of Wilhelm Huguenau, a ruthless, if rather single-minded, businessman, freed from the moralistic inhibitions and fallen values of past epochs. The narrative style is dramatically more complex than in the previous novels, alternating among seven parallel narrative strains and voices. While the majority of these strains occur parallel to each other and in roughly the same narrative, realist style, the philosophical commentaries in the “Zerfall der Werte” essay and the lyrical digressions in “Die Geschichte des Heilsarmee Mädchens in Berlin” are more difficult to orient vis-à-vis the realist narrative mode. Whereas *Esch* merely contains a breakout of extended commentary on sleepwalking, suggesting a binary configuration between a realist mode of narration and reflexive, exegetical mode, *Huguenau* comprises a three-part configuration of narrative modes: realist, exegetical, and lyrical.¹¹³ These modes become increasingly less discrete toward the end of *Huguenau*, a point taken up in greater detail later.¹¹⁴ The complexity of *SW*'s narrative modes in *Huguenau* ultimately transcends the binary and trinary structures discussed here, but the tension between the two provides the threshold into the realm of indistinctness, the Heideggerian limit as

¹¹³ Although I have emphasized the ambiguous arrangement of the titles, for brevity I will use a shortened version of the title.

¹¹⁴ The starkest examples in my mind are epitomized in the “Das Symposion oder Gespräch über die Erlösung” and the epilogue of the book, which is discussed later in this chapter.

discussed in the previous chapters.¹¹⁵ To gain a better vantage of these trinaries and binaries, I return to the titles to gain additional insights.

Each of the titles in the trilogy contains a triad of thematic elements: a year comes first, offset by a middle period from the other elements; second, the surname of the main character in each novel; which is then coupled by means of a conjunction with a third element, an intellectual or historical theme, relatable to the time indicated.¹¹⁶ The way to understand these titles is rather ambiguous, for there are three elements in a given title, but it is not made clear (by means of punctuation or otherwise) whether we should read it as a year with two different but equivalent alternative elements or as three elements together. However, the conjunction “or” (“oder”) gives us more direction on how to perceive their meaning. At first, one might be tempted to read the title elements successively: a year, a person, *and* a period, which is typical of the structure of narratives. Yet the conjunction “or” does not indicate a syntagmatic structure but a paradigmatic one, indicating that there is either a point of alternation between each pair or elements (“Huguenau oder 1918,” “Huguenau oder die Sachlichkeit,” “Die Sachlichkeit oder 1918”), or that there is a sort of triangular interrelation or among-ness of all three elements at once (“1918, Huguenau, die Sachlichkeit”—not necessarily in that order). According to this reading, this ambiguity of how to read the titles precisely mirrors the ambiguity of how to understand the simulation of minds in the text. In contrast to the linear or cyclical narrative trajectory discussed in *ZB*, the open ordering of the title elements suggests a strategy for reading the *SW* that relates the minds of the protagonists to the setting (time period) and the thematic staging of the work. Whether this is to be understood as a three-part structure, a two-part structure, or units of sundry

¹¹⁵ As was demonstrated in Searle’s Chinese Room thought experiment, narration provides us with a way to get to the impossible third space, or to access things as they really are.

¹¹⁶ On this historical aspect of the title, see Komar 114. This how the titles were set in the original printing as well.

elements, this sets the stage for a text that obscures our typical assumptions about how a text is to be read. The titles therefore reflect the ultimate dimensionality of the narrative style of the trilogy, even from the very onset, by presenting the initial introduction to the text as hermetic points, an indistinct space.

That the titles are structured in uncertainty raises questions about the role of the author in all of this, but the way to get at the author in *SW* requires some examination of the characters and ultimately the narrator. In the previous chapter, it became clear that Thomas Mann's *ZB* is a work that situates the mind in the radical negation of simulation, in particular vis-à-vis its context in spacetime.¹¹⁷ The mind in *ZB* was always present in conjunction with the narrator mind, which means that there was a certain abridgment of space in which the mind was presented. Castorp's nausea at confronting the indistinct limits of his situatedness came as he attempted to usurp his cousin's mind and was confronted with an ominous encounter with his own death, a warning made possible by the twisting of the narrator. The narrator insinuated that the protagonist, perhaps because of the close proximity of the focalized narrator, may have been made aware of this situatedness in the course of the text. Such moments of quasi-awareness on the part of the

¹¹⁷ See the section in Chapter 1, "The "Most Dubious" Möbius Twist in Spacetime." As in *ZB*, the *SW* trilogy is clearly focused on time. The title of each novel begins with a date: 1888, 1903, and 1918 respectively. Even the very first words of the trilogy locate us temporally: "Im Jahre 1888." Thomas Herold recently discussed this point in greater detail. His argument points to the suspension and annihilation of time and its symbols in the text, such as the destruction of the clock in the small, fictional town of Kurtrier in *Huguenau* and the repeated moments of hesitation ("zaudern") throughout the text, especially in reminding us that the main metaphor of the book, sleepwalking, is a suspension of time made possible by its inbetweenness, a creation of space between real time and dream time, not unlike the distinction between narrated time and narrative time. "Denn was immer der Mensch tut, er tut es, um die Zeit zu vernichten, um sie aufzuheben, und diese Aufhebung heißt Raum" (445). Leo Keutzer's earlier analysis of prophecy and knowledge theory in *SW* also deals with the novel's relationship between past, present, and future, serving as a basis for many of Herold's points. Keutzer sees sleepwalking as simply the inability to exercise freewill and the necessity of the characters to submit to historical forces, making the "Mensch als Medium" (199), a point of transition between will and history. This is part of the argument that all the characters in the book are more or less sleepwalkers and not merely protagonists.

protagonist also occur in *SW*, which is already inferred by the ambiguous relationality of the title elements from the very beginning.¹¹⁸

Huguenau experiences such a moment of awareness, providing us with an initial area of investigation. Even his name exposes another dimension to the ambiguity of the titles. In contrast to the opening sentences of the first two novels of the trilogy, which begin with time markers (“Im Jahre 1888 . . .” and “Der 2. März 1903. . .”) directly connecting them to the time period described, the first word of the third novel is “Huguenau.” The placement of his name at the beginning of the chapter gives his character added weight, positioning his name roughly at the halfway point of the trilogy (p. 385 in my edition, the halfway point would be p.353). His position as the third character of a trilogy at the center of the text and not merely as the third part or ultimate evolution suggests that he may be a medial character, a means of understanding the indistinct limits of the simulated mind.

Huguenau's Indistinct Limits

Though Huguenau may not be the most important character in the trilogy, he is clearly the most successful—literally the last man standing (although not the last woman). His success comes because he has abandoned moral inhibitions, unfettered from the decaying values of his predecessors in the trilogy, “ein wertfreier Mensch” (693). In order to achieve his aims, Huguenau commits socially reprehensible acts throughout the novel, murdering his business partner August Esch (the same Esch of the second novel), raping the much older Mutter Hentjen,

¹¹⁸ Perhaps this could be understood as an approach that rubs against the grain of Brecht’s *Verfremdungseffekt* since this hermetic point does not actually lead to a full state of reflexivity or a total reevaluation of one’s social status. Instead, it appears to intensify the illusion. In the next chapter, this possibility will be revisited and discussed to some extent, but it ought to be the subject of future research. Thanks to Sabine Wilke for helping me see this aspect of my project.

and finally absconding with Major Pasenow in order to conceal his crimes and escape retribution.¹¹⁹ At the conclusion of the novel, the narrator informs us that Huguenau ultimately forgets these heinous acts and that he thinks no more on them.¹²⁰ This ability to forget these acts, to sever experience from his memory, is conveyed to us by means of a rather long commentary on the part of the narrator. This has the effect of impersonalizing Huguenau, emptying him of empathy and alienating him from the reader; but it also oversimplifies the character, making him appear one-dimensional and self-serving. But there is much about Huguenau that is indistinct and reminiscent of the hermetic point or the translative ideal, especially in the narrative treatment of his character.

Many of Huguenau's indistinct qualities are established as he is first introduced as a deserting soldier in the early spring of the last year of World War I. Huguenau is the youngest of the major titular characters, but he is described contrary to the ideals of his youth: corpulent, stocky, wearing glasses, and possessing a demeanor that is devoid of strains of youth ("alle Züge der Jugendlichkeit") (385)—he is young but does not appear young. He comes from a bourgeois merchant family in the Alsace region and was trained in trade and commerce, but preferred school holidays to work. This places him in the middle of society, not only in terms of class but also of profession—trade (*Handel*) is the exchange of goods between or among various parties. Huguenau is driven by a yearning for freedom, especially freedom from the romantic work ethics espoused by Pasenow and Esch, and joining the army presents him with just such a chance to escape. When he becomes a deserter, we read that it is more because he has tired of the military lifestyle and seeks to go on holiday—a reluctant soldier and worker. At the point of desertion,

¹¹⁹ This is perhaps reminiscent of the terrors tolerated under the monarchy in Germany. Huguenau's first name is Wilhelm, which could also suggest that he is the embodiment of all the excesses of imperial Germany and the Wilhelmine age. See Osterle (947-8).

¹²⁰ Broch 689, 703

Huguenau's thoughts digress back to a school trip where he and his class viewed Grünewald's "Resurrected Christ," a painting that captures strong contrasts between light and dark, life and death.¹²¹ Returning to the present, the scene is described under a gray, leaden sky (neither a hue between light and dark), as Huguenau notices on the edge of the trench grass clumps and the first daisies of spring, just before he crawls from the trench to seek freedom. In these introductory ruminations, Huguenau's character is flanked by compromises between extremes: his eye-sight is impaired, neither 20/20 nor blind; he is young, but does not appear healthy; he works in trade; he searches for freedom, but not a permanent freedom, just a vacation; he himself comes from Alsace, a border region between Germany and France. Even the setting is the front of battle between two opposing forces, while the grass and daisies grow on the edge of the trench, indicating the onset of spring, a transitional season.¹²² And then, of course, it must be emphasized that he is in the midst of a transgressive act, desertion, a betrayal of his native country, switching sides without switching sides. Unlike Castorp, Huguenau does not naively sing amidst the din of war, holding on to romantic longings; but, like Castorp, Huguenau is a character shaped by the negation of binary opposites.

A particularly telling moment occurs as he wanders back to German territory just after his desertion. The narrative tries to explain how he managed to make it so far back into German territory without getting caught. The inexplicable luck of the feat is described as somnambulatory steadiness ("schlafwandlerische Sicherheit"), revealing again the indistinctness of Huguenau's mind.¹²³

¹²¹ See Cohn 147 for an insightful analysis on this scene.

¹²² The trilogy ends on November 5—not an equinox, but still in the transitional season between weather extremes.

¹²³ Hardly any of the analytical texts known to me have failed to discuss this passage: see especially Thompson (2013) for an insightful explication of the paradoxical term.

Aber damit ist noch nicht erklärt, daß Huguenau unbehelligt aus Belgien hinausgelangt; viel eher mag dies auf die schlafwandlerische Sicherheit zurückführen sein, mit der er sich in dieser Gefahrenzone fortbewegt: er schritt dahin in der klaren Luft des Vorfrühlings, er schritt wie unter einer Glocke voll Unbekümmertheit, abgegrenzt von der Welt und doch in ihr, und er machte sich keine Gedanken. (390-91)

That ever-troublesome modal particle “doch” embodies in one word the plethora of blurring extremes; for the word means “on the contrary,” contradicting a negative statement or question or sometimes signaling a hope for agreement despite lingering doubt. It is as if Huguenau is under some kind of divine protection from the scene he inhabits, cut off from the world but still in it. The somnambular steadiness is strictly evocative of this indistinct dimensionality. It is one of the most insecure states of being, wherein subjects lack an awareness of their surroundings but nevertheless move through it, exposing themselves to dangers without perception. Yet sleepwalking is paired with steadiness or security in the passage. The phrase “wie unter einer Glocke” underscores this exceptional state all the more; for as a bell-shaped glass cloche protects food from exposure to air and decay, Huguenau strides through the world as if he were somehow impervious to its dangers. The last element of the sentence, “He didn’t give any thought to the matter” (“Er macht sich keine Gedanken”), could merely mean that he was not worried about getting caught: but the literal rendering of the German (“he didn’t make any thoughts”) underscores a lack of apperception on Huguenau’s part of his physical surroundings.

For a novel where thought is so paramount, it seems strange that this ultimate character should be so absentminded and ultimately so successful. This moment of desertion is given considerable exegetical attention later in the “Zerfall” treatise in an attempt to explain the contradictory status.

Rebell und Verbrecher, sie beide bringen ihre Ordnung, ihre eigenen Wertgebilde an das Bestehende heran. Während aber der Rebell das Bestehende unterjochen will, sucht der Verbrecher sich ihm einzufügen. Der Deserteur gehört weder zu dem Bereich des einen, noch zu dem Bereich des anderen, oder er gehört beiden an. Dies möchte Huguenau fühlen, da er nun vor der Aufgabe stand, seine eigene kleine Welt und Wirklichkeit am Rande der größeren Ordnung zu errichten und in sie einzupassen. (465)

While Pasenow was considered the rebel and Esch the criminal, Huguenau is given special, tertiary status as an in-between: as the deserter, recalling the translative notion. Under this guise, he is either both rebel and criminal or neither of the two, which simultaneously casts him as a confusion or mixture of the two previous characters or consequently as a third alternative, belonging neither to the role of rebel or to the role of criminal.¹²⁴ In any case, all of the roles denote an element of transgression, a violation of values. Where Castorp was transgressive by inflicting his will on the mind of his cousin, Huguenau apparently defies the consequences of his action, at least the consequences according to his value systems. Huguenau ought to have been caught for deserting and he ought to feel guilt for the murders he committed, but instead we are shown a moral vacuum. This passage and its later commentary demonstrate that the mind of Huguenau is imbedded in the defiance of limits, and this defiance is conveyed by means of a narrator. Later in this chapter, it will be shown how the narrator of *SW* is in fact one of the characters, sharing many parallels with Broch himself. These relationships are not overtly stated in the text, indicating that somnambulatory steadiness may be applicable to the narrative style of the trilogy as well. These transgressions contribute a shade of configuration to the plurality of the

¹²⁴ Lützelers emphasis on utopia in his first major work on the novels recalls the etymology of the word as “no place.”

novelized mind; but before traversing these layers, let us stay with Huguenau to better appreciate his degree of connectivity to the narrator.

After arriving in Kurtrier, a German border town much like the city of Trier, Huguenau talks to Major Joachim Pasenow about acquiring the newspaper “Kurtrierische Bote” from August Esch in an attempt to increase his wealth by influencing the town’s elite class. (This Esch is the same protagonist from the second novel in the trilogy.) Huguenau is initially seized by a strong sense of fear as he realizes that Major Pasenow, the embodiment of military authority in the city, could potentially expose him as a deserter if Huguenau is not careful. Huguenau’s trepidation gives way to a strange sensation of almost felicitous, cool weakness (“eine fast beglückende kühle Schwäche”)—another paradoxical turn of phrase.

Ja, beinahe war ihm wohlzig zumute. Denn der Mensch glaubt zwar, daß seine Entscheidungen und Entschlüsse in einer großen Mannigfaltigkeit sich bewegen, und in Wirklichkeit sind sie ein bloßes Pendeln zwischen Flucht und Sehnsucht, und alles Fliehen und alles Sehnen gilt doch zum Tode. Und in diesem Schwanken der Seele und des Geistes zwischen Pol und Gegenpol fühlte Huguenau, der soeben noch zur Flucht bereite Wilhelm Huguenau, sich seltsam zu dem alten Mann dort drüben hingezogen. Mechanisch aß er, merkte nicht einmal, daß heute Fleischtage war, mechanisch trank er, und in der extremeren, sozusagen luzideren Realität, deren er nun schon seit Wochen teilhaftig war, zerfielen die Dinge, rückten auseinander bis zu den Polen rückten bis an die Grenzen der Welt, wo alles Getrennte wieder eins wird und die Entfernung wieder aufgehoben ist, - Furcht wird zu Sehnsucht, Sehnsucht zu Furcht, und der “Kurtrierische Bote” verband sich mit jenem weißhaarigen Major zu einer seltsam unlöslichen Einheit. Das läßt sich nicht viel präziser oder rationaler ausdrücken, denn auch die Handlungen

Huguenaus erfolgten unter Aufhebung jeglicher Entfernung, gewissermaßen irrational wie unter Kurzschluß und ohne Überlegungszeit; es war also auch kein eigentliches Warten, mit dem Huguenau zuwartete, bis der Major seine Mahlzeit beendet hatte, es war eine Art Gleichzeitigkeit von Ursache und Wirkung [. . .] Doch kaum hatte er sich geziemend vorgestellt, da hatte er auch schon unaufgefordert Platz genommen, und leicht floß es ihm von den Lippen. (408)

This passage is conveyed as explanation of Huguenau's thoughts by means of psycho-narration, but it does not deal in specifics, opting instead for generalizing commentary ("Der Mensch glaubt . . ."). This narration describes Huguenau's mind in this instant as a tension between opposites, marked by phrases such as "Pendeln," "Pol und Gegenpol," "Schwanken der Seele und des Geistes," and "zur Flucht bereit" and "dort drüben hingezogen." The text pushes the poles together to a place where concepts merge ("wo alles Getrennte wieder eins wird"), a move similar to the indistinct limits discussed in Mann's *ZB* and seen with the somnambulatory steadiness. And it is at this point of fusion that the language begins to flow forth from Huguenau. More governed by instinct than ration, Huguenau seems to be almost aware of this fluctuation between impulses, as his thought is expressed on the next page: "Ja, und – was werde ich jetzt sagen, dachte Huguenau, aber der Strom der Rede floß weiter; es war, als formte sie sich erst im Munde" (409). That Huguenau is narrated in this section more as a creature responding to external forces paints his mind as a scene without clear delineation or autonomy. Words, thoughts, and deeds effusively flow into him from a source beyond.

The phrase "like in a short circuit" ("wie unter Kurzschluß") markedly emphasizes how this kind of psycho-narration of thought-commentary transgresses boundaries between character and narrator. The phrase alludes to electricity, a short circuit, referring to the situation in which

an electrical current may jump onto an unintended path. The phrase, as in English, may also connote momentary madness, inferring that Huguenau automatically produced the answer needed to secure the cooperation of Pasenow without actively excogitating his response, as though he were possessed. The description of the phenomenon as a “Strom der Rede” (409) recalls the technique of stream of consciousness so commonly associated with James Joyce, but at the same time it connects to this idea of the short circuit as a loss of distance, or an omission of the connector between the two elements. The simultaneity of cause and effect, “eine Art Gleichzeitigkeit von Ursache und Wirkung,” recalls the abridgment of the space of the mind by the author in *ZB*. This points to the role of the narrator as a quickener of the mind of Huguenau.

In one of the final scenes with Huguenau, just after we learn that he has managed to force Mutter Hentjen to pay him 8000 francs for his share of the newspaper, Huguenau’s thoughts blend with the narrator’s final comments. As the text shifts towards broad epistemological conclusions, one of the last comments on Huguenau’s thought is rendered as follows:

Der zartgraue Nebel traumhaften silbernen Schlafes hatte sich über das Geschehene gebreitet, immer undeutlicher wurde es ihm, immer dunkler, als schöbe ein rußgeschwärztes Glas sich davor, und schließlich wußte er nicht mehr, ob er jenes Leben gelebt hatte oder ob es ihm erzählt worden war. (698)

The description is a poetic one: the grayness of the scene recalls the scene on the trenches, discussed earlier in this section. The sleepwalking metaphor, which had been commented upon many times prior to this, is once again evoked. Huguenau’s mind is painted in fading hues of obscuring grayness, soot-stained, glass, tender-gray fog, dreamlike silver. These provide a final dimension of indistinctness, even to the degree that Huguenau falls into existential uncertainty: has he lived, or was his life just a story? The moment is redolent of Castorp’s nausea and his

narrator's insistence that he might have some recognition of the story he was in.¹²⁵ This metafictional moment is a key example of the hermetic point, which almost jogs the character into a realization of the simulated situatedness of his mind. It suggests that Huguenau could be a character in a novel, which indeed he is.¹²⁶ This demonstrates further that Huguenau's mind is rendered with an extensive degree of indistinctness, for this mind is so connected to the contextuality of the narrative as narrative that his mind begins to blur with the thoughts of the narrator. This moment of quasi-realization has been regarded as an expression of Nietzsche's idea of the return of the same.¹²⁷ This idea in conjunction with the interrelatedness of Huguenau's mind with the narrator requires some elaboration, and the metaphor of the sleepwalkers explains how this plurality of minds is confounded and expanded in other portions of *SW*.

Sleepwalkers: The Author and the Narrator

The title for the whole trilogy, *The Sleepwalkers*, presumes a dimension of plurality for the entire text. Examining Broch's sleepwalking metaphor, especially vis-à-vis the tension between narrator and author, speaks to this dimension in the indistinct limits of the novelized mind. In its most basic sense, sleepwalking is a state of performing conscious acts while actually being in a state of sleep.¹²⁸ Sleepwalking has played a substantial role in almost every reading of

¹²⁵ Dorrit Cohn compares Joachim Ziemßen's ghost with the Bertrand figure as "a radical moment, in which the occult, like a foreign body, breaks into the realistic framework of the novel" (82).

¹²⁶ This realization is realized in the film, *Stranger than Fiction* (2006, dir. Marc Forster).

¹²⁷ As with many writers in this time period, Broch was a reader of Nietzsche (Lützeler 40). Osterle's argument in favor of apocalypse as a dominant theme in *SW* appeals to Broch's rejection of Hegelian thought, in favor of Nietzsche's eternal recurrence of the same (953). Zeller's recent study also emphasizes how Broch's "Zerfall der Werte" is a new take on the Nietzschean principle, "Die Umwertung aller Werte" (50).

¹²⁸ *Merriam-Webster's Dictionary* gives two definitions of sleepwalking: 1) "To walk while or as if asleep" and 2) "to proceed in a passive often lethargic manner." *Duden's* definition encompasses the broad contemporary understanding of the term but emphasizes the role of memory in the concept: "im Schlaf aufstehen, umhergehen und verschiedenerlei Handlungen ausführen (ohne sich später daran erinnern zu können); nacht wandeln." Walking is the

Broch's *SW*; for the concept is imperative to his literary thought and oeuvre.¹²⁹ In the larger cultural context, sleepwalking is also significant for German studies, but my comments are concerned primarily with this text.¹³⁰ Hitherto, the trope of sleepwalking has mostly been regarded as a means of describing the malaise and uncertainty of the postwar era in Weimar Germany.¹³¹ Various scholarly endeavors have taken up this connotation of sleepwalking, examining the irrationality,¹³² alienation,¹³³ and misguided efforts of the age.¹³⁴ In my view,

most common form of sleepwalking, but sometimes complex actions can also be performed, such as speaking, cooking, driving, or even in extremely rare cases committing violent actions against another person such as murder (See "Homicidal Sleepwalking" in *Wikipedia*, for example). Sleepwalking is differentiated from dreaming by the fact that a sleepwalker's dream state influences and interacts with the real world to the extent that it becomes increasingly difficult to discern whether a person is asleep or awake. In other words, it is contingent on the degree of externalization. Inherent in the concept of sleepwalking is the difficulty of perceiving the authenticity of a sleepwalking situation or experience.

¹²⁹ See Rainer Pütz's 1975 dissertation, *Die Figur Des 'Schlafwandlers' Bei Hermann Broch*, which was one of the earliest works to examine the sleepwalker in Broch's work.

¹³⁰ As a metaphor in German history, art, and literature, sleepwalking, also known as somnambulism, has a rich tradition—consider for example the figure of "Der deutsche Michel," often depicted with his bedcap. Overt allusions to sleepwalking can be found in Franz Anton Mesmer's work and Sigmund Freud's hypnosis experiments, in German cinema, such as in *Das Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, in children's novels such as Johanna Spyri's *Heidi*, especially in German Romanticism (See Christian Drösch's *Somnambule Schwärmerei und wunderbarer Magnetismus: Künstlerischer Somnambulismus und ähnliche Phänomene im Prosawerk Ludwig Achim von Arnims*) and even in Kleist's *Der Prinz von Homburg*. Christopher Clark's argument against the national war guilt of WWI also invokes the metaphor: *The Sleepwalkers: How Europe Went to War in 1914* (2012). A comprehensive investigation of the theme of sleepwalking in German culture is not known to me and deserves further research.

¹³¹ Herold, Ernestine Schlant. – Historical readings. "The Sleepwalkers is a novel in which the protagonists never fully awaken to consciousness, but act under the compulsion of forces which they do not recognize and to which they, therefore, fall victims" (Schlant 203).

¹³² Kate Schachter summarized one of the most dominant interpretations of sleepwalking metaphor in her dissertation: "The symbol is used to support the inner axis of the work, the theory of the disintegration of values and to demonstrate the various stages of growing irrationalism in the lives of the diverse protagonists" (122). Heinz Osterle also suggested that "the central metaphor suggests that man is slowly turning into a sleepwalker moving in the twilight world of his irrational impulses" (948).

¹³³ Paul Michael Lützel, who has clearly been the most prominent advocate for the work of Hermann Broch, defined the disintegration of values from Broch's perspective: "'Zerfall der Werte' heißt für ihn [Broch] ja nichts anderes als Aufsplitterung der menschlichen Lebenswirklichkeit in immer kleinere Rollen . . . bis jeder Einzelmensch nichts Verbindendes mehr zum Nebenmenschen kennt." (Lützel 86)

¹³⁴ Thomson further argues that "all of Broch's characters are more or less sleepwalkers, in the sense that their idea of the path they tread is pathetically misguided" (164). Thomson goes on to suggest, "By demoting consciousness to a modality of sleepwalking, Broch has undermined the chances of agency from the word go, constructing a system whose job it is precisely to make defeat seem inevitable" (172). Accordingly, sleepwalking suggests a didactic message for the novel warning against the ills of the sleepwalker. But this would seem to conflict with concluding quotation of the trilogy from Acts 16:18, which states, "Tu dir kein Leid! denn wir sind alle noch hier!" As in the biblical passage, this closing remark is also a plea to refrain from suicide, that despite the hopelessness of the human condition, comfort can be found in the collective existence of humanity, that human beings may be fatalistic, nihilistic, and impotent, but at least still present and co-existing. Lützel attributes this paradox between hope and despair back to the Ernst Bloch's fear and hope dichotomy, of which Broch was especially fond (94). Hence,

Stephen Dowden described it best as orientation-less stumbling around (“orientierungsloses Dahindämmern”).¹³⁵ Despite the angst and negativity of this historical approach, sleepwalking in *SW* is generally seen as a grave but necessary step in a positive direction, linking the metaphor with historical themes of apocalypse and political utopia necessary for a new beginning.¹³⁶ Even Alice Stašková’s new variation on this interpretation of *SW*, “Text als Opferstätte,” suggests that *SW*, as a place of imagination, serves a cathartic function, purging evil from the age in the imagined third space (291). All of these ways of reading sleepwalking are dependent not only on the text as a description of the historical framework in which it was written but also of the author Hermann Broch.

Broch’s decision to use sleepwalking as a metaphor was not his original intention. Broch ascribed the title particularly late in the writing of the novel, as he said in a letter to his publisher: “Ursprünglich wollte ich den Roman auch ‘Bertrand’ nennen, halte aber den jetzigen Titel buchhändlerisch für besser” (Brude-Firna 47).¹³⁷ Bertrand is a name that is ascribed to two

Lützeler’s interpretation of sleepwalking—that in the mutual hopelessness of the human condition, a certain reassurance can be found due to the shared human condition—points to a life-affirming political agenda for the novel.

¹³⁵ Dowden’s full comment says, “Einsamkeit, Mangel, Vitalität und orientierungsloses Dahindämmern, das Gefühl der Leere und Gleichgültigkeit, die die Menschen in allen drei Romanen erleben” (96).

¹³⁶ For apocalypse, see Osterle (1971). For the theme of utopia, see Lützeler (1973). Paul Lützeler articulated Broch’s *SW* in binary terms, for example, the contrast between negative and positive utopias, accenting the political tinge of the novel. Lützeler identifies several levels of sleepwalking, but what all the forms of sleepwalking have in common is “im Grunde nur das ‘Wandeln’, das Sich-Fortbewegen vom schlechten Jetztzustand” (101). Lützeler claims that the psychological aspect of sleepwalking serves best as a metaphor for the internal conflicts of the character “im geistigen Raum” (102). After all, in Lützeler’s view, Broch’s attempt with the novel is to provide a phenomenology of utopian expectations of the people of his time (92). This aim is akin to *ZB* in that Broch constructs a historic simulation of his time, especially through the lens of Bertrand. Lützeler’s approach emphasizes the positive, humanistic elements of the novel, understanding the metaphor of sleepwalking in the novel as a sort of trudging through life torpidly, without self-reflection. After all, Utopia’s etymological meaning renders it as ‘nowhere’.

¹³⁷ Christoph Zeller regards this comment as good evidence that Broch was also deeply concerned with making money as an author—something Broch never really managed to accomplish with his writing. Zeller’s recent interpretation of *SW* emphasizes Broch’s financial and economic intentions with the novel, building on the double meaning of the German “Wert” in the essay, “Zerfall der Werte”. Zeller follows in the vast tradition of scholarship on the novel by centralizing Broch’s role in crafting and constructing the novel. Even today, Broch is not a well-known author in the German-speaking nations, especially in his native Austria. Despite the advocacy of his contemporaries, such as Hannah Arendt, Broch is mostly read in academic circles at the time of this writing.

figures who are generally regarded as the same persona, the latter of which (Bertrand Müller) is revealed to be the narrator of the novel. Due to these factors, the original title of the novel has also been given considerable weight in scholarship. Broch wrote much about how the novel came about and his writing process, and there is broad agreement that his essay on James Joyce is a veiled commentary on *SW*.¹³⁸ This concentration on Broch is in part attributable to the philosophical tract included in the novel, “The Decay of Values” (“Der Zefall der Werte”), which parallels much of Broch’s own philosophy and is understood as a precursor to Broch’s posthumously published philosophical work, *Massenwahntheorie*.¹³⁹ That Broch’s philosophical persona is so clearly identifiable in the text suggests that he was a writer playing two different roles, perhaps insinuated by Broch’s self-described dictum as a “Dichter wider Willen.”¹⁴⁰ This could explain why Broch invents the character-narrator Bertrand to act as the character-author of *SW* in order to create distance between his modes of thought.¹⁴¹ That Bertrand has been serving as narrator is revealed very late in the trilogy and only subtly (Broch 450), which is why the connection between Bertrand and Broch was discussed fairly late in the scholarship concerning

¹³⁸ See Ziolkowski 130, Lützel 77.

¹³⁹ See Kreuzer (1966).

¹⁴⁰ Erstine Schlant attempted to explore this dichotomy by especially examining the question of *SW* as a form. She tried to reflect this disintegration of values in *The Sleepwalkers* by allowing the conventional novelistic framework to disintegrate and by including progressively more abstract material. The question has consequently been raised whether *The Sleepwalkers* can still be considered a novel. Whatever term one may choose to categorize *The Sleepwalkers*, one must never lose sight of the fact that its endeavor to render totality corresponds precisely with Broch’s demands of any work of art: “Jedes Einzelkunstwerk ist Spiegel der Totalität” (202).

¹⁴¹ Cohn suggests that Bertrand serves a mythological function in the novel, as a character which Esch and Pasenow admire or worship, and the revealed creator of the fiction in *Huguenau*. Dorrit Cohn’s groundbreaking analysis of *SW* left a profound mark on all studies of *SW* because she argued convincingly that this mysterious Bertrand figure is actually the author of the book (Cohn 26ff). More specifically, she linked the figures of Dr. Bertrand Müller in “Huguenau” and Eduard von Bertrand from “Esch” and “Pasenow” by placing him on a mythological level, as a sort of messianic figure. This link is made possible by demonstrating how the meeting between Esch and Eduard von Bertrand at the end of the second novel likely takes place in a dream. Despite the subtlety of his portrayal, Cohn places Bertrand ahead of many of the titular figures of the novel in importance, citing the fact that Broch’s original plan for the title for his single novel was “Bertrand” (see above).

SW.¹⁴² Broch the philosopher masquerades as Bertrand the philosopher in the narrative, who then masquerades as all the other characters in describing their thoughts, the guise of simulation.

Because of the complexity of narrative personae in *SW*, it seems hardly surprising that one of the most influential scholars in narratology in the twentieth-century, Dorrit Cohn, would also have played an influential role in understanding the sleepwalker metaphor.¹⁴³ In Cohn's taxonomy of narrative techniques presented in *Transparent Minds*, narrated monologue or free indirect speech ("erlebte Rede") is proposed as the exemplarily narratological performance of sleepwalking or the hermetic point in the novel as simulation. This is because narrated monologue, as an equivocation of the speech or thoughts of the narrator and character, lends itself well to the idea of sleepwalking. Moreover, sleepwalking is a state between conscious, overt volition (character) and subconscious or indistinct internal machinations (narrator).

Cohn contradicts the assumption that free indirect speech is a closer blend of the minds of narrator and character. This is demonstrable, at least in part, because of Broch's atypical and infrequent use of free indirect speech or narrated monologue in the trilogy (Cohn 1966, 38).¹⁴⁴ The lack of free indirect speech may seem odd, as it was heavily employed and popularized by James Joyce in his well-known novel, *Ulysses*, which was a major source of inspiration for

¹⁴² Dorrit Cohn connects Bertrand, the "puppeteer of this *theatrum mundi*" (102), to the author Hermann Broch himself and argues that in the second and third novels, "Broch's tendency is not so much to enter into his own characters as to replace their consciousness entirely by his own" (48). In another influential work on the *SW*, *Hermann Broch - Ethik und Politik*, Paul Michael Lützel adjusts this connection between Broch and Bertrand by clarifying that Broch steps into the role of Bertrand in the novel to represent the author's beliefs (75).

¹⁴³ Cohn's work *Transparent Minds* laid the initial groundwork on how textual minds are understood and constructed in the text. Before her work on literary minds, Cohn wrote her dissertation on *SW*, later expanding it into a full book, but the seeds of her thought on literary minds already present in her first major study.

¹⁴⁴ Cohn argued against a strict definition of *erlebte Rede* as "die Wiedergabe der Rede im Präteritum und in der dritten Person" (Cohn 1966, 38), which is why *SW* appears to lack free indirect speech. "The problem is resolved when we remember that the past tense can be replaced by a historical present in narration: the same change can occur within *erlebte Rede*" (ibid). Even at this early stage in her thought, she claimed that the primary source of reporting thoughts in the book is through "description of consciousness," a term that later became psycho-narration (35).

Broch while writing *SW*.¹⁴⁵ Cohn explained that although free indirect speech represents a strange fusion of the narrator's speech and the protagonist's, psycho-narration, or the simple description of the character's thoughts, is a much richer and freer way to render the deepest, private, and most unconscious thoughts of characters (Cohn 1978, 55-56). Psycho-narration is also the most commonly employed narrative mode; it was even the mode used in Searle's Chinese Room thought experiment, discussed above. Whatever the narrative mode, the guise of the narrator allows Bertrand to assume the persona of the author (Broch) in the space of the text. (In *Welt am Draht*, the real Eva Vollmer also controlled her simulacrum in the Simulacron.) As such, Bertrand's role as the narrator and compiler of *SW* (mirroring Broch) creates an indistinct relationality between the simulated mind and the author, the consequences of which will become clearer as they are discussed in the next section. Suffice it to say at this stage of the argument that the choice against narrated monologue or "erlebte Rede" speaks in favor of the situatedness of the mind in the text and, by extension, that indelible relationality that is alleged to exist in all texts.¹⁴⁶

Taking into consideration this relationality among Broch, Bertrand, and the other protagonists, the metaphor of sleepwalking applies not only to the malaise of the modernist

¹⁴⁵ See Martens 232, but the connection between Joyce and Broch has been and continues to be an ongoing theme in Broch studies, for example: Durzak, Manfred, "Hermann Broch und James Joyce. Zur Ästhetik des modernen Romans". In: Richard Brinkmann, Hugo Kuhn (Hrsg.), *Deutsche Vierteljahrschrift für Literatur und Geistesgeschichte* XL, 391—433. Stuttgart: Metzler, 1996, and Weninger, Robert. "'The Homer of Our Time': The German Reception of Ulysses, 1919–1945." *The German Joyce*. U of Florida, 2012. The German Joyce, Chapter 3. Web. *Ulysses* was also influential for Alfred Döblin's *Berlin Alexanderplatz* (see chapter three).

¹⁴⁶ Monika Fludernik's *Einführung in die Erzähltheorie* emphasizes that, "Die Betonung auf 'menschliche' Figur ist ausschlaggebend. Ein Kriterium für das, was Erzählung ausmacht, ist die Notwendigkeit, menschliche oder menschenähnliche Protagonisten in den Mittelpunkt zu stellen . . . Auch wenn nicht alle Erzählungen die Gedankenwelt der Figuren in den Mittelpunkt der Geschichte stellen, so ist die Darstellung der Innenwelt von fiktiven Figuren für die fiktionale Erzählung charakteristisch, denn nur in der Fiktion ist es möglich, die Gedanken von anderen Personen einzusehen" (14-15). It cannot be underestimated how vital the mind is in narrative and how the human perspective is still the primary agent of relaying that mind in text. In *SW* in particular, the role of Bertrand as a mediating narrator reminds us of the fact that there will always be a third element between the mind and the author, or the mind and the reader, that is subtle and not always conscious in the text.

protagonist, but also to the volition and agency of the personae involved in the novel. This chapter now moves on to an investigation of this relationality among these minds in *SW*. The next section concentrates specifically on Bertrand as the author of the text and a character in the text. It is not my aim to attempt to directly expose Broch's presence in *SW*, lingering like a ghost consciousness behind the words.¹⁴⁷ Instead, the next section outlines the instances of indistinctness in the simulation of Bertrand's mind, especially in relation to other minds including Broch's (at least in potential). As was argued with Benjamin's ideal translation concept, the interlineal space is a radical negation, a space of nothingness. In what follows, the hermetic point, this ideal of translation will disclose, even in its negation, a departure toward more complex possibilities for dimensionality for the mind, toward plurality.

Bertrand's Mind Gap

It is not until well over halfway through the trilogy that the identity of the narrator and author of the events in *SW* is revealed as Bertrand Müller. Bertrand's mind exerts considerable influence throughout the trilogy, especially on the simulation of minds in the text. In the case of Huguenau, Bertrand can be regarded as the source of a sort of instinctual or premonitional current of speech, the manifestation of sleepwalking as a sort of mind-inhabitation or mind-possession: Huguenau as sleeper-agent. In the next two sections, Bertrand's influence on the unfolding of the plot and the situation of the other characters' minds in the text is investigated in order to continue to adumbrate the aspect of plurality in the indistinct limits between characters.

¹⁴⁷ Gilbert Ryle's *Concept of the Mind* (1949) coined the phrase "Ghost in the machine," which is used to describe how we ascribe intelligence to our external world. He works with the mind-body problem and attempts to argue that there really is no separation between the mind and body, but that we are making a categorical mistake by separating the two parts of the human being (Ryle shared Wittgenstein's approach to philosophy, based in language games). As a contemporary of these authors and even Heidegger, Ryle's thought in relation to these novels constitutes another potential avenue for future research.

Aside from the happenstance that all these characters come together in the same space and time at the end of the trilogy and that Bertrand narrates each of them, the one thing that connects the primary protagonists (Pasenow, Esch, and Huguenau) is this newspaper, “der Kurtrierschen Bote.” It is curious that another literary medium within the novel is utilized to unite the three major most prominent minds in the trilogy, one that focuses on credibility and realism, literally a messenger bringing news to the people of its community. It is also curious that the narrator, Bertrand, presents the readers with only one opportunity to read from that newspaper in section 33 of *Huguenau*. Esch, who is editor and joint-owner with Huguenau, invites Major Pasenow, the character of the first novel, to write the lead article on 1 June 1918, but the text is presented to us with major gaps. The article begins as follows:

Des Deutschen Volkes Schicksalswende

Betrachtungen von

Stadtkommandant Major Joachim v. Pasenow

Dann verließ ihn der Teufel und sieh, die Engel traten

hinzu und dienten ihm.

Matth. 4, 11

Wenn auch der Wechsel in der Leitung dieser Zeitung nur ein geringeres Ereignis ist neben dem gewaltigen, dessen Jahrestag wir nun in Bälde zum vierten Male werden begehen können, so dünkt mich, daß, wie so oft, wir auch hier die kleinere Begebenheit als Spiegel des größeren Geschehens zu betrachten hätten.

Denn stehen wir auch mit unserer Zeitung an einem Wendepunkt und haben wir auch die Absicht, einen neuen und besseren Weg einzuschlagen, der uns näher zu Wahrheit führen soll, haben wir auch die Zuversicht, daß uns dies, soweit menschliche Kraft zu

.

 wo ist der Teufel, den es aus der Welt zu jagen gilt, wo die Engel, die wir zur Hilfe herbeirufen wollen? Einem alten Soldaten geziemt es, seine Meinung geradeheraus zu sagen, auf die Gefahr hin, daß sie manchmal als unzeitgemäße Sprache klingen. (466)

The article meanders through a variety of other topics, addressing the history of the German tribes, WWI, Lutheranism, white and dark races, war philosophy, the apocalypse, etc, while quoting extensively from a variety of texts: the Gospel of John, the Revelation of John, the Gospel of Matthew, the Apocrypha, Luther’s “Freiheit eines Christenmenschen,” and the writings of Carl von Clausewitz, the famous general and war historian. As Alice Stašková concluded, the article is a quotation consisting of quotes (“Der Artikel Pasenows, selbst ein Zitat, besteht fast nur aus Zitaten”) (298). Bertrand interprets this passage by connecting it back to the metaphysical tradition of Western philosophy. The text tells us that what Pasenow is describing is that sublime idea (“diese erhabene Idee”) of the city of God, connecting Pasenow back to Augustine, Zeno, Seneca, and the Pythagoreans; but the idea as it is manifested in Pasenow is only a faint twilight (“Dämmerlicht”), following an indistinct and sometimes distorted but still traceable path.¹⁴⁸ Such an emphasis on the philosophical ideal recalls Benjamin’s perfect

¹⁴⁸ “Dämmerlicht” is translated as “vague divination” in the original English-language translation by Willa and Edwin Muir (422). The original German is as follows: “Aber was Augustinus als Heil der irdischen Welt vorgeschwebt, was vor ihm die Stoiker schon erträumt hatten, die Idee des Gottesstaates; der alles in sich aufnimmt, was Menschenantlitz trägt, diese erhabene Idee, sie leuchtete durch das Bild herzerreißender Gefahren und Leiden, sie war – eher ein Gefühl denn eine Verstandesüberzeugung, eher ein Dämmerlicht als eine tiefe klare Einsicht – auch in der Seele des alten Offiziers aufgekeimt, und so zog sich eine zwar verschwommene und manchmal

translation, an impossible interlineal space, but it also touches on the discussions of twilight in *ZB*. Even the idea of a twist or turning is present here in the article, but only in the sense of a transition in ownership (“Wendepunkt”). Considering the indistinctness of the article in connection to its referentiality, as a quotation of quotations, the article serves as a negation of the discrete limits of the mind. Pasenow’s voice is severely obscured in this passage by the philosophical inheritance he excogitates, and that point is confounded by the gaps in the article.

These gaps, like the page break in “Donnerschlag” in *ZB*, contribute to the disorientation and indistinctness of the text. How these blank lines are supposed to be interpreted is not directly divulged elsewhere in the novel. One might consider the possibility of censorship except for the unnatural breaks interrupting the quotes mid-sentence, beside the fact that a major in the German imperial army would probably not be censored. Knowing that the text we do have access to functions as apparent excerpts or quotes, as Stašková asserted, suggests that these gaps stand in place of the missing text, which would also explain irregular length of these gaps. Yet the gaps are not entirely empty but are instead filled by a series of regularly placed periods, though the total of periods varies from gap to gap.¹⁴⁹ The period is nothing more than a point in space, but it is a coordinate through which infinite tangents of possibility can be traced. Although the space may stand for an absence and by analogy the absence inherent in all text, the points reflect this vague, twilight-like aspect of indistinctness identified throughout this dissertation. These gaps are barriers, limitations, negations, especially when attempting to gain access to the mind in the

verzerrte, aber immerhin verfolgbare Linie von Zeno und Seneca, vielleicht sogar schon von den Pythagoräern bis zu den Gedankengängen des Majors v. Pasenow” (470).

¹⁴⁹ Stašková sees the missing spaces as representative of nature of text, always a reference back to an undisclosed origin. This reflects the fundamental problem posed in *SW* of accountability, guilt, and responsibility for the what has occurred (299).

text; but even this lacking space maintains a trace which can only point back to the narrator and author of the text, Bertrand Müller. Bertrand is the messenger of the text.

Bertrand's ultimate accomplishment with these gaps is the textual performance of the sleepwalking metaphor; a demonstration of how the mind in the text is a simulation. As discussed previously, sleepwalking is a gray area, a point of indistinctness, that is not necessarily sleep, dream, or consciousness. It is only by seeing the gaps through the eyes of Bertrand as if he were reading the article and skipping over what he interprets as non-relevant material that their presence begins to make sense. We, the readers, must imagine that Bertrand is reading this material to us, omitting material in real-time—as if the periods were the blah-blah-blah, or yada-yada-yada of the reader. This text is not merely an article by Pasenow, it is a redaction of the article through the mind of Bertrand; for, no matter the effect, we must ultimately place the blame for the way the text is presented squarely on the shoulders of the narrator, Bertrand. These gaps remind us that it is Bertrand's mind that filters through by means of indistinct relatedness to the other characters of the contextuality of the novel.

Later, Bertrand explains the importance of the article for the thought processes (“Gedankengängen”) of the other major characters (470). We learn that Huguenau's only interest in the major's article was so that he could increase the circulation of the newspaper and make more money (i.e. his philosophy of objectivity), but for Esch the article was life-changing: “Zwar hätte er [Esch] den Artikel Satz für Satz auswendig hersagen können, doch er zwang sich weiterzulesen, und er wußte nun wieder, wohin er auf dieser Welt gehörte” (479). The gaps take on a form of irony with this revelation because the words so cherished by Esch that they could have been recited line by line are only presented to us, the readers, indistinctly. The article even inspires Esch to found a Bible study group, dedicated to the major's teachings in the article. This

leads to a sort of jealousy on the side of Huguenau and eventually becomes a factor in Esch's murder and Huguenau's disremembering of that crime (677). Thus, the punctuated text becomes a narrative impetus for the momentum of the storyline and a wedge driven in the relationship between the three major characters. This also hints at the diversity in the relationality of this gap, because each of these characters can ascribes vastly different significance to the article.

Just as when Broch's thought poured through Bertrand by means of psycho-narration manifesting itself through Huguenau as he solicits Pasenow's support in the acquisition of the newspaper, Bertrand conveys Pasenow's thoughts in an abbreviated fashion. The newspaper article, which would otherwise connote a conveyer of reliable information, becomes a text full of holes and a holy newspaper, a newspaper with significant religious meaning, especially to Esch. The article with gaps undercuts the mind of Pasenow, bringing the mind of Bertrand to the forefront, obscuring the argument while adumbrating the agent of the message. The carefully crafted construction of a text lacking complete ideals conveys a specific message about the abilities of text, i.e., that any text will also house some gray areas, some indistinct spaces, that mark the limitations of those thoughts. This discloses the limits of the simulated mind in the text to such an extent that these gaps and areas of abbreviation, like the abridgments through negation in *ZB*, are not distinct containers for thought or, alternatively, the traces of the mind. Hence, the text enacts the transience of the sleepwalker because it performs and preforms the thoughts of the author, but always with decaying scrutability and conspicuousness. These gaps are the negating limits of the text because they present text with obscured meaning, although the process of the obfuscation discloses the obscurer.

Like the gaps in the Pasenow's article, the figure of Bertrand himself is also quite obscure. Much of what can be garnered about the character is found in the "Story of the

Salvation Army Girl in Berlin” (“Geschichte des Heilsarmee Mädchen in Berlin”). Of the several narrative strands in *SW*, this one reveals much about Bertrand and his intentions as the author of the novel, “Bertrand Müller, Dr. phil.” (450). It stands out in particular by assuming a first-person perspective, casting doubt on the objectivity and reliability of the narrator.¹⁵⁰ This narrative stands in stark contrast to the decay of values essay, in which Bertrand presents an epistemological argument about the dissection of values into endlessly smaller positings (“Setzung von Setzungen von Setzungen”) in a serious, scholarly tone (622). In “Salvation Army Girl,” Bertrand expresses many doubts about this philosophical project and his attempt to describe the process. Bertrand’s self-questioning uncertainty apparently undermines the conclusiveness of the “Decay of Values” philosophical treatise and the final conclusions of its epilogue (which is also the conclusion of the novel). The subversion of “Salvation Army Girl” is not only articulated by subjectivity and self-skepticism, it also features various digressions into lyrical and poetic forms, which will be discussed in some detail in the next section.

Despite its diffusive features, it can be discerned that this particular narrative strand follows Dr. Bertrand Müller’s encounters in Berlin with a Salvation Army girl and some Jewish refugees from Lodz, Poland, at the end of WWI. As such, this portion of the story stands explicitly outside the time period of the rest of the novel in WWI, in contrast to *ZB*, where only the uniform of Ziemßen’s ghost disrupted the temporal integrity of the narrative. In the eyes of Bertrand, one of the young Jewish refugees, Nuchem, and the Salvation Army girl, named Marie, form a sort of romantic relationship, but there is no evidence, despite Bertrand’s wishes to the

¹⁵⁰ Irmgard Keun’s novel *Das Kunstseidene Mädchen* is also written in first-person, but it is not imbedded in a collection of competing strands. Keun’s narrative may seem more honest presented in this way, but, like Bertrand’s story, this mode of narration can actually be quite opaque.

contrary, that a love affair is ever consummated.¹⁵¹ That Nuchem is married with children and Marie is a “fallen” girl demonstrating her penitence by enlisting in the Salvation Army does not dissuade Bertrand from his desire to bring them together. To the deep disappointment of Bertrand, each adheres chastely to the moral codes of their respective religious systems, foiling his plan to play God with their lives (compare Castorp’s intentions with his cousin in chapter one). As a dethroned God (“ein entthronter Gott”), Bertrand is frustrated by his inability to read their thoughts: “[ich] weiß nicht, was sie denken”; and a little later, talking specifically of Marie, “Oh, hätte ich in ihrer Seele lesen können, wissen können” (576-7).

Bertrand’s doubts undermine his role as the narrator-author, preempting his power over the thoughts and acts of the characters of his own writings. This limits Bertrand’s role as author by endowing the characters of the “Salvation Army Girl” with an agency beyond his own. The failure of the narrator to narrate his characters in the manner he wills suggests that he too is a sleepwalker, an agent acting without complete control over his situation. Unlike the narrator in *ZB*, Bertrand exposes himself to the reading, disclosing the indistinctness of his mind even as he steers the actions of other characters, as discussed in Huguenau’s acquisition of the newspaper and in the redaction of the Pasenow’s newspaper article.

Toward the end of the “Salvation Army Girl,” Bertrand recounts the apex of his existential crisis in a moment of self-awareness akin to Huguenau’s fading contemplation at the close of the novel, “whether he had lived that life or if it had all been narrated to him” (“ob er jenes Leben gelebt hatte oder ob es ihm erzählt worden war”) (698):

Ist dies Resignation? ist es Abkehr von allem Ästhetischen? wo stand ich einst? mein
Leben verdämmert hinter mir, und ich weiß nicht, ob ich gelebt habe oder ob es mir

¹⁵¹ Robert Halsal interprets this failed affair allegorically “as the failure of an abstract, aesthetic philosophy in the face of the irrational, unfathomable possibilities of faith as represented by Nuchem and Marie” (240).

erzählt worden ist, so sehr ist es in den fernen Meeren versunken. Trugen Schiffe mich dorthin zu den Gestaden des fernen Ostens und des fernen Westens? (617)

This point, on the cusp of realizing the simulation of the narrative, points back to the presence of the author in the work and outside the work. It exposes Bertrand, the character-author, at the bounds of his character-ness. The turn to the lyrical in this passage—the distant seas, the distant east, and the distant west—divulge a pattern of extremization like in *ZB*. The nautical images of exploration constitute a recurring theme throughout the poetic expressions of the “Salvation Army Girl” story. The binaries of east and west in this passage and the twilighting or fading of his life (“verdämmern”) recollect more than the sleepwalking motif, in that they also imply themes of obscurity and indistinctness associated with the limits of the simulated mind. The sea as well is a duplicitous symbol suggesting life and death, comprising a realm in which human life cannot be sustained, which can only be crossed with difficulty, but also associated with the origin of biological life. The uncertainty, the questioning, the distance, the sea all embed the text with an element of absence or nonexistence, an unreachable and unbridgeable gap, a point of indistinct nothingness.

That Bertrand also experiences this existential crisis of contextuality in which he becomes semi-aware of the possibility that his life may be a story divulges the dissipating limits of the mind in its contextuality.¹⁵² Bertrand is frustrated with the un-narratability of Marie and Nuchem. This suggests that they are either real to him, meaning that his world or his level of existence is analogous to reality, or that their personae are beyond or resistant to his narrative will. Since we have no access to that world, to know for sure whether Marie and Nuchem are

¹⁵² The idea is reminiscent of the famous line in Act 5, scene 5 of *Macbeth*: “Life’s but a walking shadow, a poor player that struts and frets his hour upon the stage and then is heard no more. It is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury signifying nothing.”

merely figments of his imagination or alternatively independent of his mind in a real world, the best we can make of this existential speculation is that it constitutes a pushback against Bertrand's infringement upon the minds of his characters, his desire to exert his opinions, an undermining of his will to power by means of textualizing the mind, parallel to Hans Castorp's experience with his cousin. In Bertrand's role as author and narrator, this moment of awareness extends the application of this existential textuality of the mind to the one who attempts to create those minds. To the extent that Bertrand can be regarded as the fictional avatar of Hermann Broch, as an extension of Broch's mind in the novel, then these doubts are also relevant to the level of existence of reality, our reality, whatever that may be. *ZB* pointed out the resistance of the future to contextualization because it cannot be discretely known. Bertrand's hesitancy or inability to narrate the characters implies that the resistance of novelized minds extends beyond the confines of the novel, reaching out to our relationality. Like in *Welt am Draht*, there is no limit to the questioning of the simulative substance of our situatedness because we cannot be certain where the Simulacron ends—one layer of potential simulation divulges the potential of another. Indistinctness extends endlessly because of our potential at the limit. This undeveloped aspect of indistinctness is explicated below.

Machine and Marguerite: Undeveloped Indistinctness

Much of *SW* is composed from a masculine perspective—written by Broch about three titular male figures. The masculine-centric nature of the text does not mean that *SW* is entirely devoid of female characters or of alternative genders or sexuality. Though the storylines of female characters in *SW* often end in rape or death (Mutter Henjen and Hanna Wendling), the fates of Marie, the Salvation Army girl, and the orphan Marguerite have alternative outcomes.

Marguerite in particular represents one of the most liberated female characters in the novel, but it is because she is regarded as undeveloped and sexually immature that she achieves an alternative fate in the narrative. From the perspective of Huguenau, the printing press also maintains female aspects which are regarded as indistinct, which are strongly associated with Marguerite.

Marguerite and the machine constitute a blurring of the feminine as an indistinct other, which discloses a layer of Bertrand's mind resistant to discrete narrative configuration.

In section 42 of *SW*, we learn that Huguenau has become bored with the job of a newspaper editor. Finding solace his interactions with the orphan child Marguerite, who has been semi-adopted by Esch, Huguenau relishes showing Marguerite the printing machine and playing a sort of game with her by imitating the motions of the machine.¹⁵³

...und es mag sein, daß sich dann in ihm jenes liebevolle Verhältnis zur Maschine herausbildet, wie man es bei Knaben und jungen Völkern fast immer findet, ein Verhältnis, das die Maschine heroisiert und sie in die gehobene und freiere Ebene eigener Wünsche und mächtiger Heldentaten projiziert. Stundenlang kann der Knabe die Lokomotive am Bahnhof betrachten, tief erfreut, daß sie die Waggons von einem Gleis auf das andere überstellt, und stundenlang konnte Wilhelm Huguenau vor seiner Druckmaschine sitzen und mit ernsthaftem leerem Knabenblick hinter den Brillengläsern ihr liebevoll zusehen, restlos befriedigt, daß sie sich bewegt, Papier schluckte und wieder herausgab. Und das Übermaß einer Liebe zu diesem lebendigen Wesen erfüllte ihn so sehr, daß kein Ehrgeiz in ihm aufkeimen oder gar der Versuch entstehen konnte, diese unverständliche und wunderbare Maschinenfunktion je zu begreifen; bewundernd und zärtlich und fast ängstlich nahm er sie hin, wie sie war. (491).

¹⁵³ This love for the machine is one of many instances which ties Huguenau to the concept of objectivity (the alternative theme in the title of his novel in the trilogy), focusing his interest on things.

This description of Huguenau's fascination for the printing "machine" is evocative of the technology fetishism of the twenty-first century. It is almost a perfect reiteration of the tech-nerd cliché, especially when we recall that Huguenau is corpulent, stocky, and wears glasses. Huguenau romanticizes the machine, daydreaming of its power to accomplish heroic deeds and fulfil his wishes. The machine arouses his own desires for mighty heroic deeds. The narrator is quick to generalize the mesmerizing power of the machine, asserting not only that all boys are interested in machines but that all young people ("jungen Völkern") share in this masculine perspective of the machine. The passage speaks of Huguenau's relationship to the machine as love, but the analogy of the boy-like glance ("Knabenblick") seems to be an attempt to distance himself from an erotic fascination. Still, the printing machine is closely associated with femininity: the machine ("Maschine" or "Druckmaschine") is grammatically feminine in German. It produces, gives birth to newspapers, and Marguerite is almost always present when Huguenau regards its operation. On top of these associations, Huguenau's transfixed and empty gaze at the machine captures the sense of ogling. A short time later in the narrative, there is more evidence of his fetishizing of the machine: "Die Maschine war sein Eigentum, sie gehörte ihm" (491). His overdetermined possession of the machine (it was his property, it belonged to him) supports a reading of this glance as a chauvinist attempt to dominate the machine. That Huguenau does not attempt to understand the machine, letting it tenderly yet almost terrifyingly entrance him, discloses a mind that has not yet completely developed its sexual limits.

Huguenau is innocent because, as the new modernist protagonist, the new human, he also is undeveloped, still childlike, irrational in his obsession with the machine.¹⁵⁴ His infatuation

¹⁵⁴ As Dowden points out, Huguenau as "der Mensch als Unmensch" means that his unfettered stance to value systems allows him to pursue his goals without restraint or consideration of whom he hurts in order to obtain what he wants. Dowden suggest that this is why he identifies with the printing machine and the child Marguerite so well, because the machine fulfills its tasks without hesitation (*zweckmäßig handeln*) and the child because "er ist

with the machine is paradoxical because it is an irrational love for a machine that is the product of rational, analytical thought. It is an apparatus that allows him to create symbols that manipulate others.¹⁵⁵ That those symbols are whole within the world of the text, but presented with gaps to the reader, suggests that Huguenau's utilization of text is calculated and exacting, while Bertrand's filtering of the article casts doubts on the efficacy of the text. Indeed, Huguenau ultimately satisfies his sexual urges by visiting local brothels or raping his business partner's wife, never from developing reciprocal relationships. In this aspect, the text characterizes Huguenau as an adherent to the traditional binary of sexual desire, but in an immature way, reminiscent of Freud's early stages of sexual development—the oral and anal stages, further substantiated by how the machine swallows and ejects printed pages.¹⁵⁶ Hence, the machine remains untouched, merely an object to ogle, an entity at once resistant to eroticism in Huguenau but also transfixing.

Like Huguenau's lecherous fascination with the dynamicism of the undulating printing press, Marguerite is also regarded with fascination, particularly for her undeveloped-ness. Marguerite is an eight-year-old girl, the daughter of a German mother and French father. Her mother has died, but the text does not explain how. Her father was an electrician in Esch's factory before the war began but was interned with the outbreak of war. The child sleeps at her aunt's house, but she evidently spends much of her time playing in the vicinity of the printing press. Esch and Mutter Hentjen express a desire to adopt Marguerite, but she displays more affection for Huguenau. Each of the characters regards Marguerite with different symbolic

gleichsam ein unfertiges Wesen, unmündig in ethischer Hinsicht und daher auf eine unangenehm seltsame Weise schuldlos" (99).

¹⁵⁵ "The machine is a modern construction that creates symbols and allows Huguenau to manipulate the psyches of his fellow citizens" (Komar 117). Zeller also connects the machine to the inflation crisis in Weimar (39).

¹⁵⁶ "Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality" in Gay, Peter. *The Freud Reader*. Norton Paperback ed. New York: W.W. Norton &, 1995.

utility. To Pasenow, she embodies colonial otherness and the physical characteristics of racial difference: “Ich hätte sie für eine Sklavin gehalten, so ein kleines schwarzes Tatarenmädchen,” he comments to Huguenau upon his first glance of her during a tour of the printing facilities (546). Later he calls her little slave (“Kleine Sklavin”) and refers to her as a female Tatar again (Tatarin) as he runs his hand through her black locks of hair (604).¹⁵⁷ Whether she is actually black is not specifically clarified by the text—the child is unkempt and unsupervised; she runs around barefoot much of the time, playing near the ink and dyes of a printing press. When she first appears, the narrator is largely focalized through Huguenau, and he does not describe her physical appearance. In any case, for Pasenow she embodies the underpinnings of the imperialist society he embraces and the romanticizing of the colonial spirit of that society.

Huguenau also ostensibly emphasizes her otherness, seeing her as a little French girl, even though she does not speak a word of French (424). His emphasis on her Frenchness is more likely because he identifies with her as the child of two nations—Huguenau is after all from a border region, speaks French, and has a French surname. Later, he associates her with the printing machine: “da ergab sich für Huguenau mit einem Male eine unerklärliche Verwandtschaft zwischen dem Kind und der Maschine, gewissermaßen eine geschwisterliche Beziehung” (426). Considering his ogling of the machine above, the sisterly connection he sees between the two emphasizes her underdeveloped status as a girl. Over time, he becomes “Uncle Huguenau” to her, which strengthens the familial bond between Marguerite, the Machine, and Huguenau. Marguerite represents for Huguenau, like the printing press, an undeveloped potential.¹⁵⁸ For Esch, Marguerite represents a mystical hope in the future, a symbol of the

¹⁵⁷ See Herold 165 for more on her otherness.

¹⁵⁸ See Lützeler 100f, Dowden 99—Marguerite has been firmly established as a symbol of underdevelopment and by extension an example of the sleepwalker. Aside from Huguenau’s affinity to Marguerite, he also uses her to

necessary rebirth and regeneration of society after Germany's (now) inevitable defeat—these ideas spring from Pasenow's article and are further developed for Esch in the meetings of his Bible study circle. For all of these characters, Marguerite holds some symbolic currency; but, because of her undeveloped potential, her gender and individuality are subverted.¹⁵⁹

As her narrator, Bertrand overwhelmingly describes Marguerite as the child (“das Kind”) and only infrequently calls her a girl (“Mädchen”). This neutered characterization points to how the narrator characterizes her against her femininity, especially in Section 82 of *SW* (the only section in which Marguerite is exclusively featured). In this section, this neutered characterization continues to be manifested in Bertrand's privileging of the neutered pronoun “es,” but the neutering is intensified as the description of Marguerite turns into generalizations about all children. In an earlier section, Marguerite runs away from our trio of titular figures during the prisoner rebellion at the end of the novel. The adult protagonists fleetingly wonder what has become of her, but none of them actively attempt to search for her or rescue her from the dangers of the mob. When she next appears, we read that the child (“das Kind”) intends to wander out into the world, and instead of developing her individual identity, her childness is emphasized: “Das Naturgefühl der Kinder ist geringer und trotzdem intensiver als das der Erwachsenen” (654). The smaller but more intense connection of children to nature obscures Marguerite's individuality and gender, separating her from the world of adults and casting her as more unpredictable and animalistic. Furthermore, children do not pause to reflectively regard the landscape; instead they cast themselves into it, meandering in incessant and futile motion (“in

manipulate Esch and his wife. Hence, like the printing press, she represents a way to make money and escape his precarious position as a deserter.

¹⁵⁹ In a later scene, Huguenau contemplates shirking his duty as a civilian guard at the bridge by going into a Bordello. Marguerite then pops up out of nowhere, and he says, “Ich kann dich nicht brauchen . . . du bist noch nicht vierzehn . . . schau, daß du heimkommst” (663). Huguenau's refusal to make her the object of his sexual release demonstrates how he regards her as undeveloped, against her inherent femininity.

steter, oftmals nutzloser Bewegung”) (654). It is not until the end of the section that the child is revealed to be Marguerite, and relegated to the category of a sleepwalker: “Fast ist es gleichgültig, wie weit Marguerite gelangte, ob sie zurückgebracht wurde oder ob sie das Opfer eines Landstreichers geworden ist, – das Schlafwandeln der Unendlichkeit ist über sie gekommen und wird sie nie mehr freigeben” (657). The narrator does not even seem to care whether she lives or dies, insisting that she has now become a slave to infinity. By turning the gaze of the reader away from Marguerite as an individual and focusing instead on generalizations about children, associating them with the incomprehensible concepts of nature, perpetual motion, and infinity, the narrator consigns Marguerite to an inaccessible and indistinct realm—in his eyes, not only is she just a child, but all children are primitive, unmediated, unpredictable, and bound to the chaos of endlessness.¹⁶⁰ That Bertrand attributes endlessness to Marguerite characterizes her in the neutered and generalized position of the child, and that he calls her a sleepwalker also indicates something about the limits of Bertrand’s narration.

Marguerite and the machine are marked by indistinctness in similar ways, connected by a sisterly bond as Huguenau observed. They both have some degree of femininity—some of it is ascribed to them by others, some of it inherent in their sex, but that femininity is also subverted by the masculine gaze, the masculine focalization of the narrator.¹⁶¹ Through this subverting gaze, the narrator also extends this indistinct limit back onto his own mind. In achieving a moment of wonder and incomprehensibility before these feminine others, he is marking his limits. Those limits are defined by the indistinct qualities of the undeveloped, the neutered, the

¹⁶⁰ In this regard, it is also noteworthy that sleepwalking is largely a childhood phenomenon, often outgrown in adulthood. As a disorder of the human psyche, it is most commonly found in children and probably affects about 15% of children in the United States, although many children grow out of it as they come into adulthood. Even after childhood, it is estimated that 1-6% of the adult population suffers from the condition. See Simonds, John and Humberto Parraga, “Prevalence of Sleep Disorders and Sleep Behaviors in Children and Adolescents.” *Journal of the American Academy of Child Psychiatry*, 21, 4:383-388, 1982.

¹⁶¹ Laura Mulvey first coined the term “male gaze” in 1975.

generalized, and the infinite, and their applicability maintains a twofold directionality, projected onto the female other and back onto the masculine gaze. After all, Marguerite and the machine are also defined by motion—Marguerite in her meandering through nature, her coming and going as she pleases, and the machine in its operation and function.¹⁶² Casting the gaze of indistinctness establishes a dynamic of instability and relationality at the limit, affecting the actor and the acted-upon.

In an earlier, untitled section of *Huguenau*, this undeveloped-ness or indistinct childness is foreshadowed in one summation among a collection of statements about the characters of the novel. “Das Kind ist mit jedem Ding sofort vertraut: es ist ihm unmittelbar und in einem Atem doch Gleichnis. Daher die Radikalität des Kindes” (597). The statement is redolent of Baudrillard’s simulation as the radical negation of the sign because it combines two opposing conceptual elements: literal and figurative meaning. The child’s radicality invokes the escalating dynamic of negation as the two elements converge in the open and vast terrain of indistinctness, which is housed in the undeveloped potential of the child. This too is reminiscent of the decay of values, the aim of Bertrand’s philosophical writings, to expose the infinite progression of division in thinking, the positing of positings, the division of life into smaller and smaller roles, the artificiality of inscribing the mind in analytical discreteness. The decay of values is also a form of escalation that dissipates into the unending, which is another attribute ascribed to Marguerite’s wanderings. Such indistinctness has been found in the stream of consciousness by the narrator in *Huguenau*, in the redacted spaces of Pasenow’s article, in Bertrand’s own self-doubt, in the beloved machine, and in the neutered and imminent childness of Marguerite. It

¹⁶² The two in combination are reminiscent of Kant’s two forms of the sublime, the mathematical and the dynamic. The sublime moment is supposed to remind us of the superiority of the faculty of reason in its ability to apprehend all things. Kant, Hegel, Fichte, Schelling, and others are the subject of criticism in the “Decay of Values” essay.

presents a sketch of a novelized mind that attempts to ascribe the open-indistinctness of reality into the minds of the characters created, but that indistinctness also reverberates back out on projector of that indistinctness. The masculine bias of the narrator and the characters also constitutes a limit that dissipates into indistinctness, ascribing to the feminine other an incomprehensibility which discloses an indistinctness in Bertrand as well. This reactionary dissipation of indistinctness is divulged in *SW* through poetic manifestations in the novel.

Poetic Plurality

The narrative strand of the “Salvation Army Girl Story” contains a considerable number of poetic forms, some of them as song texts and lyrics to hymns, others presented without much context. It is significant that here too a female character constitutes the major titular element and is also regarded in an undeveloped manner: she is called a girl (“Mädchen”), a diminutive and grammatically neutered categorization, despite the fact that Marie is a sexually mature adult working for the Salvation Army. This demonstrates again how a female figure is used to mark the limit of the mind, but that limit extends back toward Bertrand. Dorrit Cohn observed that employing poetic forms in the text is “one of the more radical means [Broch] applied to explode the closed form of the well-made realistic novel,” suggesting that it probably strikes most readers as a “daring and disruptive formal device” (104). In the concluding section of this chapter, I rely on Cohn’s reading of the text to form a basis for how indistinctness discloses an aspect of plurality, by which I mean the manner in which the mind is dissipated by its limits. I build on her reading by exploring how Bertrand’s mind is opened up by this exposure.

Cohn identifies two poems in particular as “exegetical enigmas” in *SW*: the Ahasverus poem and a sonnet that bears no heading, situated immediately following the sixteenth and last

section of the “Salvation Army Girl Story.”¹⁶³ The poem is presented in a separate section from the “Salvation Army Girl Story.” Although it shares many stylistic and textual parallels to the “Salvation Army Girl” poems, it is not designated as a part of that storyline.¹⁶⁴ The placement of the poem as such, just prior to the eighty-eighth and last section of the book, in between the epilogue of the “Decay of Values” essay and the final part of the “Salvation Army Girl” narrative suggests a buffering or border position between the two antithetical storylines.

Des Schiffes breiter Kiel, des stummen Schiffes, welches niemals landet,
 gräbt schwere Furche in die Nebelwellen,
 Die Flach und Küstenlos unendlich fern zerschellen,
 oh, Meer des Schlafs, das uns im Nichts umbrandet!
 Oh Traum voll blinder Fracht, Träume der nackten Quellen,
 oh Traum, der nach dem Du auf jenem Schiffe fahndet,
 oh Wünsche! Furchtbare! – furchtbarer noch geahndet,
 durch das Gesetz, an dem sie küstenlos und stumm zerschellen:
 Kein Traum hat je des anderen Traum getroffen,
 einsam die Nacht, und ist sie auch gehalten
 von deines Atems Tiefe, ausatmend unser Hoffen,
 daß wir dereinst verklärt zu höheren Gestalten
 uns nähern werden auf der licht-erhöhten
 Stufe der Gnade, uns nähern werden, ohne uns zu töten. (688-9)

Connecting the maritime legends of the Flying Dutchman and the Ancient Mariner with the Ahasverus, wandering Jew or Eternal Wanderer, Cohn interprets the poem by concentrating on

¹⁶³ See Cohn (1966), 105

¹⁶⁴ See Cohn (1966), 87

the archetypal significance of the ship as a metaphor for the book itself: “The ship which leaves a broad and deep wake in ‘Nebenwellen’, but reaches no final port may, on one of its levels of meaning, represent the book we are reading, which can receive no final, closed and smooth shape or ending” (160). Following this reading, the imagery of a sea without coasts or limits and a ship that is never able to reach safe haven recalls the open-ended possibilities of hermeneutics, that there is no end to the ways in which one could read the book (or any book for that matter).¹⁶⁵ Starting with Cohn’s reading of the poem as a sign of the open-endedness of novel’s interpretive potential, the poem also marks an element of indistinctness, especially in its interpretive potentiality and its alternative and more opaque form of expression compared to other narrative strands. Cohn remarks on the impact of this poetry in the narrative flow of the novel: “Broch’s poetry in the third novel of this trilogy cuts into the narrative continuity even more discordantly than one prose section does when it alternates with another, if only because it demands of the reader yet an additional shift of literary perspective” (105).

That disruptive effect is exemplified in the central idea of the poem, which occurs at the approximate middle of the poem: no dream has ever met (or struck) another’s (“kein Traum hat je des anderen getroffen”). The passage seems highly conclusive, leaving little wiggle room for interpretation, which would seem to clash with Cohn’s interpretation. It seems strangely at odds with the metafictional moments of self-awareness, where Bertrand and Huguenau contemplate the potential narrative-ness of their lives. It appears to set up an insurmountable limit between the dreams of individuals, but that can only be concluded if the phrase is taken in isolation. The

¹⁶⁵ Markus Gabriel said in a presentation in April 2017 at the University of Washington that one of the beauties of literature analysis is that it can produce practically limitless credible interpretations (I am paraphrasing his remarks). Hence, this is one reason why the study of literature can go on indefinitely. For more on Gabriel’s philosophy, see his books, *Ich ist nicht Gehirn: Philosophie des Geistes für das 21. Jahrhundert*. Berlin: Ullstein, 2015; *Warum es die Welt nicht gibt*. Berlin: Ullstein, 2013.

temptation to do so is understandable: it is the most lucid idea presented in the poem and can be more easily comprehended and abstracted than the rest of the poem. Considering Bertrand's role as author and narrator, it seems to be a definitive statement about the singularity of the novel: that the novel is only a simulation of one mind, an outcropping from the mind of the author. Yet the phrase is also a clear reference to dreaming, which, in the context of *SW*, suggests a connection to the sleepwalking metaphor. Moreover, the phrase does parallel Kant's thoughts on sleep, dreaming, and sleepwalking in §37 of his *Anthropology*, where Kant seems frustrated with these concepts because they are inaccessible to our common perception. He ultimately defers to the Greek philosopher Heraclitus for enlightenment: "When we are awake we have one common world; but when we are asleep each turns aside to a world of his own." Sleepwalking is not merely one end of the binary; it is a state between sleep and consciousness, a hermetic point that opens up to indistinctness. In light of Heraclitus' maxim, sleepwalking as a compromise would also imply a breach between the common world, or reality, and the idiosyncratic world, or fantasy of the mind. But the non-touching of dreams is not an isolated phrase: it is not bound by a period, but continued with a comma. The greater context of the poem requires some extensive explanation, beginning with thematic insights from the rest of the text.

The poem alludes to Bertrand's failed apotheosis and his attempt to unite Nuchem and Marie in his desired roles for them as a new Adam and Eve. The non-touching of dreams may be a reference to the irreconcilable irrationality of the Nuchem's and Marie's theologies, which Bertrand had tried so hard to somehow unite. The "Salvation Army Girl Story" primarily associates Nuchem with the Ahasverus legend of the Wandering Jew, the Mosaic Law, and also Zionism with his repeated mention of "jetzt werden wir gehen nach Jerusalem" (688). Marie, on the other hand, embodies the Christian emphasis on mercy, an exception to the rule, and

Christian liberty. Both the law (“Gesetz”) and mercy (“Gnade”) are mentioned in the text (the former at the end of the first half and the latter at the end of the second half), alluding to the competing religious systems. The words, and by extension the systems, could allegorically serve as placemarkers for Nuchem and Marie: the former characterized by duality, especially in line with Martin Buber’s theology in *Du und Ich*, while in Marie the Christian Trinity and the concept of grace suggest mediation as a necessary way to bridge the gap between God and his creations. This thematic framework is repeatedly upheld by various aspects of the poem. The religious tension between the binary of Judaism and the trinary of Christianity, a tension that was also extant in Broch as a converted Jew, reminds of the trinary and binary tension of the titles of the novel—a fusion or negation of opposites.

Punctuation also bears this reading out: the colon in this poem marks the divide between the two halves of the poem, marking the limit between Nuchem and Marie and the poetic allusions to their theologies, while also connecting them. In general, colons signal the coming of an additional phrase or an elaboration of the antecedent, but they can also indicate summation, implication, or even ratio or proportions, as in logic and mathematics. That the entire poem comprises one single sentence wherein the single colon is located approximately in the middle may suggest that the colon forms a relational connection between the two sides of the poem. Indeed, the law through which and on which dreams shatter into pieces mutely and without coasts (“das Gesetz, an dem sie küstenlos und stumm zerschellen”) is separated by a colon from the degree of grace (“Stufe der Gnade”) which draws the poetic *we* nearer to a state of transfigured light at the end of the poem.

Many other binaries are manifested in the poem. Adjectival contrasts relating to voice or speech are manifested in the text: mute (“stumm”) is used twice in the first half, while the second

half invokes breath twice in “Atems Tiefe” and “ausatmend unser Hoffen.” Another binary is topographical: the flatness and endlessness in the first half contrast with a sense of elevation and progression in the second half—“Tiefe, höheren, Stufe”—a combination of infinity and escalation. The contrast between consonants and vowels also reflects this dynamic: in the opening two lines of the poem, there is an alliterative repetition of the unvoiced postalveolar fricative “sch” alternating with the alveolar fricative “s”. This is reminiscent of the shush sound used to quiet babies or still a noisy crowd.¹⁶⁶ That a sound used to calm a child would be used at the onset of this poem not only recalls the sleepwalking metaphor (even the sh-sound is present in the word “Schlafwandler”), encouraging sleep and dreams (the word “Traum” and its plural are repeated five times in the poem), but it also evokes the discussion of undeveloped-ness in the previous section. Transitioning from the fricative shushing sound to the initial repetition of the interjection “oh” in the first half could either refer to the emotional outrage provoked by Huguenau’s unpunished stab-in-the-back of Esch or to Bertrand’s inability to narrate the fates of Marie and Nuchem as he desired. Closed and opened vowel alternate throughout, but closed vowels seem more dominant in the opening and closing lines of the poem, while open vowels are more pronounced in the middle lines: the “Oh’s,” the repetition of “Traum”, “Du”, “einsam die Nacht, und ist sie auch gehalten” and “ausatmend unser Hoffen”. The effect of this is to draw our attention again to the middle of the passage and the colon.

If we read the sequentially and regard the colon as elaboration or implication, then it functions as a bridging point of connection between the two halves of the poem. Alternatively, the colon can be regarded as a ratio, a marking of limitation between the non-arrival of the ship

¹⁶⁶ Huguenau uses these very sounds to quiet a lost three-year-old child at the end of the novel: “ssss sssschtschschschschkrach” (680). In the scene, Huguenau also imitates the explosive sounds from the exploding munitions. The two imitations do not seem incompatible, as they are both bursts of sounds designed to assuage and distract children.

and the non-meeting of dreams in the second half, both of which defy the distinct localization of the poem. The colon is surrounded by a bursting, dissipation into pieces (“zerschellen”) on one side and a negation on the other (“kein”), marking a point of indistinctness that affects both sides. The colon consists of two points, which signals an alternative to the singularity and definitiveness of the period. The unfolding progression of pronouns also converges at the colon: the *you* (“du”) in the first half is preceded by the lyrical pronoun *us* (“uns”), while in the second half *we* (“wir”) and *us* (“uns”) follow after the *yours* (“deines”), placing two forms of the second person at the middle, dissipating out toward the beginning and ending of the poem into plural forms: undefined and indistinct at the middle. The closing line of the novel also repeats this pronominal escalation, again a quotation of a Pauline exhortation: “Tu dir kein Leid! denn wir sind alle hier” (715). This pluralization as the position of the colon, at the place of negation and non-meeting, suggests that there is a plurality to the limits of the poems—the doubled *you* (second person) in the middle and bookending *we* pronouns suggesting plurality at the limits of the poem.

As Cohn suggested with the explosive role of poetry in the narrative flow of *SW*, the turn to a pluralizing element manifested by poetic pronoun “wir” marks a definitive turn away from the psychological novel of the nineteenth century. Broch’s thoughts have been connected to Carl Jung’s theories of the collective unconscious, which he studied around the time *SW* was written and with whose author he would have more contact after its publication.¹⁶⁷ The collective unconscious as the collection of universal archetypes inherited by each individual was often described in archetypes of binaries, such as the great mother and the terrible mother, or the anima and the animus, all circumscribed in the hidden realms of the mind. As such, the collective

¹⁶⁷ See Ritzer 434f.

unconscious is a psychological theory that points back to the plurality inside the mind as disclosed through these poetic outbreaks in this text.¹⁶⁸ The collective consciousness corroborates my idea of the novelized mind as simulation, bounded by an indistinctness of multiple manifestations of potential personae, but the simulated mind in *SW* gives us more than historical and psychological insight.

If the poem is indeed a reference to Nuchem and Marie and also a comment on the relationship between Judaism and Christianity, then the poem also informs our understanding of Bertrand's mind in the text. Bertrand as the character-narrator functions as an avatar for the Broch's ideas, but the inability to narrate the characters as desired points to an element of resistance in the act of narrating. The poem suggests with its plural pronouns at its indistinct edges or limits of the poem indicates how the mind dissipates into the plurality of otherness. The plurality, especially recalling Bertrand's inability to narrate Nuchem and Marie in the manner he desired that Bertrand is neither autonomous nor self-determining. The metaphor of sleepwalking, the gaps in the text, the moments of existential reflectivity about the possibility that reality could be a narrated simulation indicate that no text can truly be isolated or diluted down to one voice. Hence, the shift to the first-person plural is also an attempt to expand the potentiality of consciousness in the text to a multiplicity of voices. This aspect of the situatedness of the mind in the text divulges another aspect of how the mind resists uploading. Programmers of the uploaded mind must also account for the resistance of the mind to be a single voice. The lyrical expressions in the text point to the open-endedness of the mind in the novel to assume other voices and to question underpinnings of existence.

¹⁶⁸ See Tacey 104. Tracy explains the prophetic nature of literature as an individual ability to tap into the collective unconscious and apply the symbols and archetypes to the current situation. See Monika Ritzer's "Das Experiment mit der Psyche: Hermann Broch und Carl Gustav Jung." In: Michael Keßler (Hg.): Hermann Broch. Neue Studien. Perspektiven. Tübingen 2003, S. 524-553.

Conclusion

In this chapter, the theme of translation was introduced in order to broach the topic of how the simulated mind in the novel is reliant upon the narrative voice. *SW* contributes to the indistinctness of the mind in the novel by divulging the indistinctness and unobtainability of that idealized point of translation. In other words, translation aided this argument by exposing the how the hermetic binary not only signifies a point of fusion and indistinctness but also an infinite and indistinct border space around the novelized mind, which can dissipate into a multiplicity of potential voices, i.e. plurality. This was demonstrated by the instability of the tension between binary and trinary structures. The interaction between these structures challenges the discrete simulation of the mind in the text, suggesting that the inclusion of gender and poetry with the single mind can be challenged and opened up to a multiplicity of outcomes. This argument is not an attempt to apologize for masculine bias in the novel; on the contrary, the argument suggests that masculinity is also bound by indistinctness. Coming to an awareness of the potential plurality of the masculine mind in the text reminds us that limits are bi-directions, affecting both sides.

Indeed, the very structure of the trilogy represents an outburst toward pluralism. Beginning with the single narrative strand in *Pasenow*, advancing to the breakout of philosophical discourse in *Esch* and ultimately resulting in seven parallel narrative strands in *Huguenau*, it can be inferred that the trajectory of the trilogy is toward complexity and diversity. Additionally, in *Huguenau*, the alternating text strands interrupt the sequential flow of the text, making it difficult to follow and interpret. *Huguenau* in particular is difficult to read sequentially, which is one reason why it has been difficult for the novel to find a broad audience beyond

academia. One strategy for dealing with this interrupted flow of the narrative is to read each narrative strand one at a time, or, after completing a first reading, to go back to each strand individually and analyze each more closely. This makes Bertrand's position in the text an invitation for a deeper, closer reading that departs from a sequential approach to the text. This may tempt the reader to completely extract a given narrative strand, such as the "Salvation Army Girl," from its situation in the text for closer analysis, which is completely natural and necessary for understanding the novel; but, in order to read one strand in isolation, one must skip the others and disregard the surrounding passages and context. This skipping is similar to the gaps in Bertrand's reading of the Major Pasenow's article in the "Kurtrierischen Boten" that specifically left regular gaps in the text. As such, reading *SW* engenders a performance of indistinctness, of abridging the situatedness of the mind, namely an opening up toward the multiple, the inexplicable, and the complex. In this light, translation means that as texts are brought in close proximity to each other, they can never perfectly transcend the boundaries between them and perfectly maintain their integrity, but rather will transgress and breach each text, opening them up at the limits.

That these texts are so heavily broken up and interspersed throughout should make it clear the *SW* is at odds with the traditional construction of the book, but that does not mean that it undermines all of the dimensionality of the mind. If *SW* tests the stress points in the form of the novel, which has often been taken as evidence for readings of the novel as an early post-modern work (Carstensen 1), then it provides support for the indistinctness of the mind while shying away from clear delineations. And while *SW* remains engaged in the fusion of the binaries, opening the hermetic point of the simulation into multiplicity is also an attempt to force us to recall that minds are always defying the analyses, regulations, and discrete limitations that they

have established to understand themselves (as the idea of the decay of values suggests). Hence, the conflux of narrated thoughts through Broch to Bertrand, Huguenau, Marguerite, Marie and others is what the sleepwalking metaphor has suggested all along: that the mind is not confined to a brain or a single potentially uploadable definition, because the unmistakable element that the defines our mind eludes an exact triangulation, existing rather in relationality to other voices and coordinates in its dimensionality.

In the next chapter, Alfred Döblin's *Berlin Alexanderplatz* continues this investigation of the situated mind in high German modernist novels. In Döblin's novel, the focus shifts to how reading, scanning, and perceiving creates a false feeling of omnipotence within the simulation of the mind; in other words, electing to operate in simulation necessitates our abstraction or exclusion of some of our own abilities and faculties, but we are able to adapt to those circumstances. This divulges a third aspect of the mind that is resistant to mind-uploading: our ability to deal with ambiguity and double-meanings. By sinking to the level of the simulation, we strive to master it, and, in that space, we believe that we have become all-powerful. As demonstrated in *ZB* and *SW*, there is an element of pushback or resistance from the attempt to narrate the mind and exert the will in this unlimited space, and that pushback receives greater examination in Döblin's novel.

Chapter Three

Alfred Döblin's *Berlin Alexanderplatz: Die Geschichte von Franz Biberkopf*: The Adaptability
of the Mind

Introduction

Like *Der Zauberberg* (*ZB*) and *Die Schlafwandler* (*SW*) in the preceding chapters, *Berlin Alexanderplatz* (*BA*) also attempts to capture the mind in its temporal and spatial situatedness in the novel; but *BA* employs significantly different stylistic techniques in order to render the mind.¹⁶⁹ These consist of a variety of visual and audial elements, often extracted from materials found by Döblin. These techniques seem to more authentically capture the situatedness of the novelized mind than *ZB* or *SW* because of their coexistence on other media such as newspapers, magazines, advertisements, and personal correspondence, which can be regarded as credible informants of the time. The employment of popular song lyrics and imitations of Berlin dialect also seem to bolster the unmediated relationship of the text to its time period. All of these elements seem to privilege the space of the novel over the mind of the novel, but it is through the narrator, who interweaves these extracted elements with biblical and Greek mythologies, that a distinct sense of mind is retained in the novel.

Indeed, the very title of *BA* invokes a place, not a person. The subtitle of Döblin's novel, *Die Geschichte von Franz Biberkopf*, was inserted against Döblin's wishes because the publisher believed that focusing on an individual would help the novel sell better.¹⁷⁰ In so doing, the publisher inadvertently reinserted the presence of a fictional mind, which Döblin did not want to

¹⁶⁹ Although *BA* was published three years before Hermann Broch's *SW*, it is treated last in this dissertation because of these distinctive styles which complement the final aspect of the mind resistant to mind-uploading.

¹⁷⁰ See Becker 103 for an explanation of these techniques.

emphasize, back into the novel. This attempt to personalize the text was antithetical to Döblin's own anti-psychological narrative theory, and scholars generally agree that Biberkopf is a superficial character.¹⁷¹ Despite this argument, the narrator of *BA* invites us to directly identify with the protagonist, Franz Biberkopf, and assume his position in the novel as if we were assuming his role in a simulation.¹⁷² In this reading, it will become apparent that Biberkopf cannot be regarded as the only mind at work in the text, for Döblin also makes use of a narrator, just as Mann and Broch did but in a more conspicuously equivocal manner. Where Castorp, Huguenuau, and Bertrand experienced moments of existential awareness, realizing that they could be characters in a book, in *BA* the consequences of such a realization are more openly acknowledged on the part of the narrator. In this novel more than in the ones previously analyzed in this dissertation, the mind of the narrator constitutes a simulation of the mind of the author. Elements of Döblin's biography and thought will be examined in close relation to *BA*. The common thread that continues from the previous chapters into this one is that even in *BA*, where the mind of the author is closely instilled in the text, the mind is still bound by limits of indistinctness. This will lead to a third aspect of indistinctness of the novelized mind: an ability to adapt to its ambiguous placement and to persist in the narrative. It will be demonstrated that even the moral of the novel, presented in its final pages, speaks to this adapting to ambiguity, a plea to apprehend the mind in a context of situatedness.

¹⁷¹ Klaus-Detlef Müller argues that Berlin is the main protagonist while Biberkopf is merely a "Hilfkonstruktion" (15), and Moritz Baßler even says that the name "Biberkopf" as a made-up name underscores his contrivance (326). Devin Fore, building on Günther Anders's arguments, went so far as to say that Biberkopf represents a sort of "textual prosthesis for Döblin" (198). Biberkopf is often criticized for his lack of psychological depth, a quality which forces the reader to look at either the city or the narrator (only thinly-veiled as Döblin) for a more fruitful field of inquiry.

¹⁷² See *BA* 217 and the subsequent discussion of this passage in section of this chapter, "The Seriousness of the Narrator."

In this chapter, the third step in Bostrom's theory of mind-uploading—scanning—is figuratively put under the microscope, examined in the light of the fictional mind in the novel. Scanning is the rendering of a perfect image of the mind, allowing for the (re)creation of a perfect reproduction of the mind in cyberspace. The perfect scan or the successfully uploaded mind would theoretically be an augmentation of the mind, enhanced with the limitless computing capabilities of artificial intelligences. What the transhumanist theory of mind-uploading fails to take into account is analogous to what Benjamin meant by the perfect translation: that is, the incorporation of the idealized space in between the lines of text. In the case of mind-uploading, this space in between appropriates the situatedness and plurality already discussed in chapters two and three; but it must also hold jurisdiction over the mind's ability to coexist with the indistinct limits, to deal with multiple paradigms of potential meaning at once, to negotiate with uncertain, to adapt to ambiguity. This constitutes the final aspect of the mind resistant to the prospect of uploading. Ambiguity has already been hinted at in the themes of situatedness and plurality in the previous chapters, but it is the aim of this chapter to increase the degree of magnification and focus this close reading on the most basic aspect of this indistinctness.

BA supplies the best field of investigation for this ambiguity because of its experimentality with narrative techniques, the paradoxical but conspicuous meddling of its narrator, and its nocuous treatment of the book as medium. Because of the emphasis of narrative and the medium of narration, Döblin's own theoretical work written at roughly the same time as *BA*, "Der Bau des epischen Werks" (1929), is much employed throughout this chapter. The argument of this chapter proceeds as follows: first, the anomalous presence of pictograms in the opening of book two of *BA* is investigated. These pictograms perform a specific narrative function that manipulates and distorts the verisimilitude and clarity of fictional minds. This leads

to a discussion on Döblin's choice to place a narrator in the text and what consequences this has for the text's relationship to reality and the structural integrity of the mind. The function of the narrator in creating the textual mind as simulation is then examined. From that point, the medium of the book is juxtaposed with the role of what Döblin terms "real" language in the task of conveying the mind. Finally, the consequences of using the medium of the book as a vessel for the resistant aspects of the mind are listed. This brings the argument to the position of being able to discuss how the novelized mind in modernist novels informs and anticipates the prospect of mind-uploading, which will be undertaken in the conclusion. The grounds for further investigation is then elucidated by a brief consultation with Irmgard Keun's *Das kunstseidene Mädchen*.

Pictograms

BA is multimedia experience. The text is inundated with imagery and sound, meaning that it is a text that reproduces images, sounds, and materials associated with Döblin's Berlin by reproducing them in the text. This may be one reason why *BA* has been so readily adapted in other media, such as radio and film.¹⁷³ Indeed, the novel has often been analyzed for the visual aspect of its composition, most commonly in association with its filmic techniques, in particular its montage effect. Döblin used the term "Kinostil" (literally cinema-style) in early writings about his narrative theory, such as the famous "Berliner Program." To what degree these narrative techniques correspond to filmic techniques, such as montage and jump cuts, is up for

¹⁷¹ Döblin was enthusiastic about translating his story into other media. In *Der Bau des epischen Werks*, he said: "Dem Epiker ist die Buchform gegeben, aber ein Buch ist zwar ein Anfang, aber nie ein Ende" (124). *BA* appeared first as a radio drama (1930) and then as a film starring Heinrich George (1930) not long after it appeared in print. For more information: Jelavich, Peter. *Berlin Alexanderplatz: Radio, Film, and the Death of Weimar Culture*. Berkeley, Calif: University of California Press, 2006.

debate.¹⁷⁴ Yet despite the strong interrelation between media, the pictograms at the beginning of book two of nine seem to get less attention from scholarship, even though they constitute images extracted directly from the real world and inserted into the text. Although the presence of these images in the text has been discussed in the literature about *BA*, there has been relatively little discussion on what their utilization in the text is supposed to mean in relation to the narrator.¹⁷⁵ In a text that inserts so much found material, the use of pictograms at only one point in the text seems particularly conspicuous. The insertion would seem to undermine the vivid visual descriptions of Berlin, deferring to another paradigm of meaning. What it says about the narrator and the narration of the text ultimately speaks to the transhumanist assumption of the perfect scan of the mind and the ambiguity of the icon.

An answer to the riddle of the pictograms must begin with the inception of *BA*. Döblin began writing his fifth and most successful novel in the late 1920s, although the idea of writing a *Großstadtroman* goes back to before World War I.¹⁷⁶ For inspiration, Döblin began gathering and collecting materials for the novel, probably beginning in the summer of 1927, though the date is a best guess. It is difficult to say what exactly inspired him to insert visual material in the text itself. Perhaps Döblin was inspired at least in part by James Joyce, as the German translation of Joyce's *Ulysses* had appeared in print in Germany in early 1928, which Döblin read in translation during his work on *BA*.¹⁷⁷ Judging from Döblin's materials and papers in the Marbach

¹⁷⁴ Dollenmayer thought that Döblin's description of his writing as "Kinostil" in the Berliner Program was purely a metaphor, which may have been taken too literally by critics (74). On the other hand, Ekkehard Kaemmerling systematically identified film techniques applied in *BA* and read the novel as a screenplay. It is hard to find a scholarly approach to *BA* that does not recognize the book's indebtedness to film and visual culture.

¹⁷⁵ Most analyses of these pictograms offer only cursory hints at their meaning or pass over them without discussion. A few scholars have advanced theories as to what their function in the text could mean, which will be discussed in later footnotes, but Dollenmayer's study has been the most helpful.

¹⁷⁶ See Becker 102-3.

¹⁷⁷ Joyce's novel includes a single pictographic image of medieval musical notation, "Glo-o-ri-a in ex - cel - sis De - o" (Joyce 197); see Müller-Salget 117 for more details.

archive, much of the manuscript of *BA* was subsequently revised after reading *Ulysses*, but it is impossible to know if these visual elements had been included before the revisions.¹⁷⁸ Walter Ruttmann's *Berlin—Sinfonie der Großstadt* (1927) and the photo collection by Mario von Bucovich, *Berlin* (1928), might have also inspired Döblin to include actual visual images in the text (Sander 2007, 20), although none of these inspirations present any apparent explanations as to why these specific pictures and not others were chosen.

The text surrounding the pictograms suggests some possible reasons for their inclusion. The placement of these ten or eleven pictographic images comes at a point in the novel where the protagonist, Biberkopf, temporarily fades into the background of the story, and descriptions of Berlin become paramount.¹⁷⁹ Two paragraphs of text precede their insertion: the first offers a fairy-tale-like account of the Adam and Eve story from the Bible, which is a prominent leitmotif in *BA*, while the second paragraph is an apparent quotation of the dancing song “Mit den Händchen klapp, klapp, klapp,” written by Engelbert Humperdink for his 1890 children's opera, *Hänsel und Gretel*. Immediately following the pictograms, there are what appear to be public service announcements concerning land development near Spandauer Brücke, the commission of a certain Herrn Bottich for animal control at the Fauler Seepark, and an announcement concerning the retirement of the head of the public welfare committee for Berlin. This is followed by a page break and a new section beginning with the infamously anthropomorphic phrase, “Der Rosentahler Platz unterhält sich” (51). The Adam and Eve motif and the retirement announcement bookend the section with a beginning bedded in the mythological and an ending couched in the realism of the mundane—one is the beginning of beginnings and the other an all-

¹⁷⁸ See, for example, Müller-Salget 117ff and Sander, 2007, 20-21

¹⁷⁹ The count differs depending on if one counts the bear with chevron located at the top of the collection in the center of the page as separate from the other pictograms (see Figure 2).

too finite end. The grammatical tenses even reflect this progression, with the preterit form in the first paragraph followed by the present tense in the next paragraph.¹⁸⁰ This suggests a sort of timeline structure with the pictograms at the center of this introductory section.¹⁸¹

This central position of the pictograms in this section invites us to regard their situatedness in the text a bit closer. In the original 1929 edition of *BA*, the images are introduced by four words centered on the page in a larger typeface than the standard text of the novel: “Franz Biberkopf betritt Berlin” (49), while the actual word “Berlin” is in turn printed in a slightly larger text size than the rest of the sentence. The typeface for “Franz Biberkopf betritt Berlin” is in the gothic script, which was commonly used at the time of publication in a variety of media and publications, as is the rest of the text. In contrast to this font, a larger Latin script is used for the text accompanying the pictograms, employing the long s (ſ) at the beginning or in the middle of syllables, but not at the end; see, for example, “Gefundheitswefen.” The difference in typefaces not only provides a visual contrast to the rest of the text, distinguishing it from the rest of the novel, but it also implies that the pictograms came from another source. Evidently, the pictograms were clipped directly from the *Amtsblatt der Stadt Berlin* (1928), a weekly publication released by the municipal authorities of Berlin on Sundays for public service announcements.¹⁸² The context of these pictograms from an announcement adds another layer to the emphasis on the centrality of these pictograms in this section. That centrality, that focusing of our attention, arouses our curiosity about their purpose and relation to the rest of *BA*.

¹⁸⁰ The paragraphs after the pictograms are in present and present perfect tenses, but there is an implied future tense from the content and also from the sentence, “Der Abschluß muß im Sommer, vom 1. April bis 20 September bis 7 Uhr, im Winter vom 1. Oktober bis 31. März bis 8 Uhr beendet sein” (51).

¹⁸¹ What the shifts from mythology to song text to pictograms to official announcements all suggest is a departure from standard narration—as mentioned before, *BA* is a multimedia text. These different media, by means of their difference, call our attention to the space.

¹⁸² Sander 1998, 14. This may connect the pictures back to their origin in the *Amtsblatt*, but this is never clarified for certain, again pointing to their anomalous function in the text.

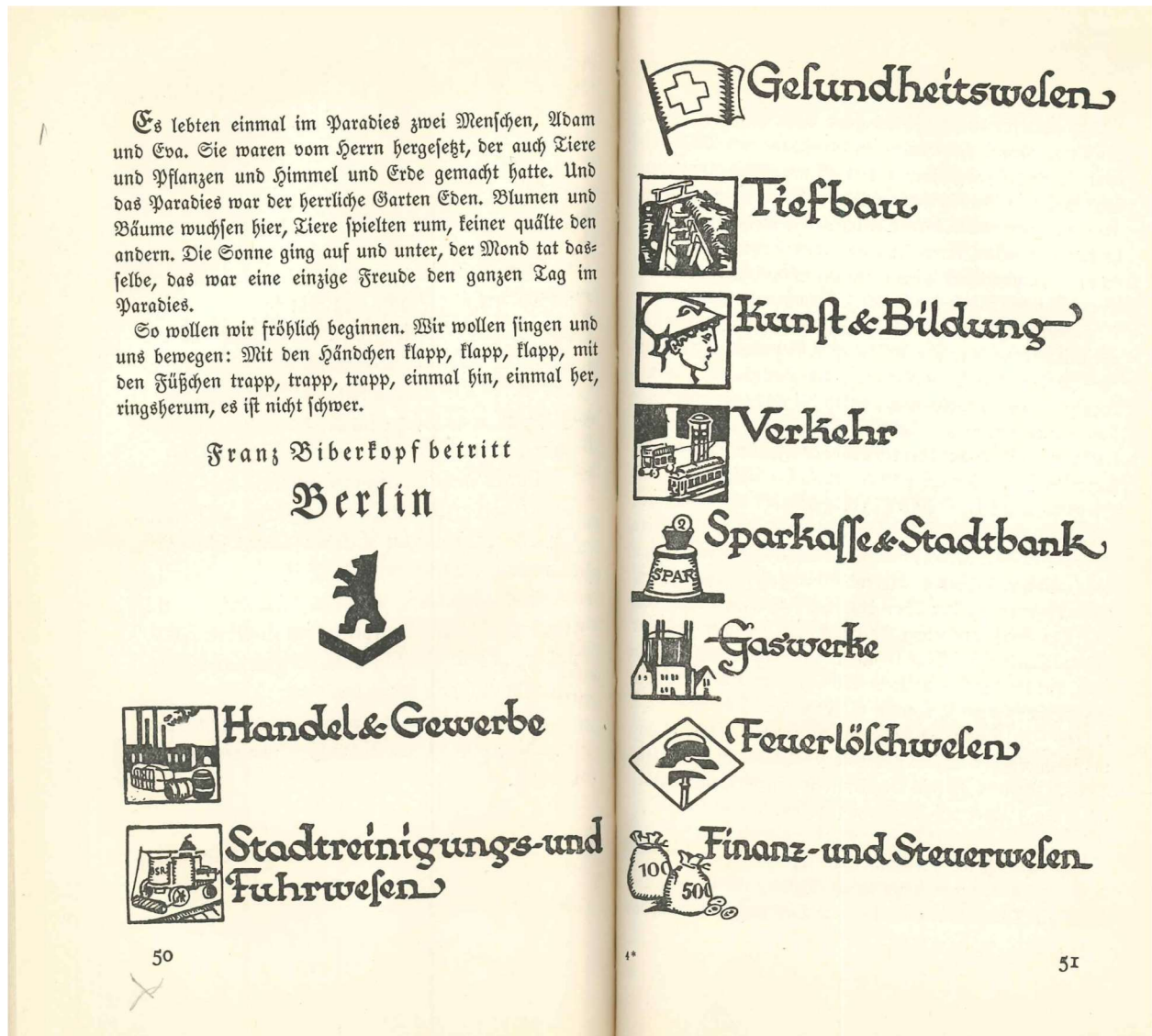


Fig. 2 Pictograms as they appear in the 1-10th editions of Alfred Döblin's *Berlin Alexanderplatz: Die Geschichte von Franz Biberkopf*, Fischer Verlag: 1929, 50-51.

As a clipping from another source and as pictograms, not letters, the selection of these images in particular seems strangely anomalous. Apparently, many other images from a variety of sources—magazines, newspapers, and even junk mail—were collected by Döblin, but for

unknown reasons, only these pictograms found their way into the final edition of *BA*.¹⁸³ The Greek origins of the word “anomaly” suggest that something is not the same or not even (“an + homalos”).¹⁸⁴ A closer observation of the pictograms divulges more about their anomalous presences in a text otherwise devoid of images. The first, or uppermost, pictogram is the abstracted image of a bear with a chevron placed beneath it (pointing down), reminiscent of the crest or code of arms of Berlin. The bear appears roughly one centimeter below the large printing of “Berlin” in the direct center of the page in the original edition.¹⁸⁵ In contrast to the *Amtsblatt*, it is probably no coincidence that the word “Berlin” occupies the exact center of the page in the first edition of *BA*, placing it at the center of our reading and our glance.¹⁸⁶ Like the central positioning of the word “Berlin,” the pictograms quickly draw our gaze because of their stark visual contrast in form and appearance to the text. The silhouetted bear in particular is visually the blackest spot on the page (or any page in *BA*), which, in combination with the chevron, functions as a kind of visual anchor or perhaps arrow, simultaneously interrupting the flow of the text and dragging or enticing our gaze to the rest of the pictograms.

¹⁸³ Gabriele Sander mentions that many images were clipped from illustrated newspapers and a variety of other sources, including postcards, personal correspondence, and even wine advertisements. In Döblin’s original manuscript, a bundle of 1200 pages and another 500 unorganized but probably related materials, there are clippings pasted, clippings loose, and hand-written notes, some in stenography and some in Erna Döblin’s hand-writing. Apparently, the original manuscript with its many clippings and pasting was heavily redacted. Even some materials pasted in were left out of later drafts, but it is unclear how much of this made it into the typed script since it has not survived for study (Sander 1998, 112). Aside from the original dust jacket by Georg Salter with “Moritatenstil” images, no other images are represented in *BA*.

Sander ultimately envisions the creation of a digitalized version of the novel with corresponding links to material preserved in the Marbach archives, but, due to copyright concerns, this project will not be realizable until 2027 at the earliest (2014, 133).

¹⁸⁴ See “Anomaly.” *etymonline.com*. 2018. <http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=anomaly>.

¹⁸⁵ An identical image of the bear can be seen on the first page of this edition of the *Amtsblatt der Stadt Berlin*, just below the title, centered in the top third of the title page, marking the officiality and authenticity of the publication. <https://www.zvab.com/servlet/BookDetailsPL?bi=17411883392&searchurl=hl%3Don%26sortby%3D20%26an%3DWeimarer>

¹⁸⁶ Later printings of *BA* have changed not only the typeface accompanying these symbols, but also the position of the pictograms in relation to the text. For example, the bear and word “Berlin” in my edition (dtv 2008) are not positioned in the direct center of the page, while empty space is.

The centrality and prominence of the bear icon discloses a certain weight and dynamic importance to it. This phenomenon could be regarded as a movement, echoing a syntagmatic style of narrative, flowing in linear progression, a metonymic “totum pro parte,” or, simply put, the predominate order of reading in Western Civilization: from top to bottom. The oldest origin of the word “scan” come from the Latin “scandere,” meaning to climb or ascend.¹⁸⁷ It referred to the careful reading of the text—to climb it with your eyes in pursuit of a specific word or phrase. In that sense, the bear icon could be regarded as the climax of the novel, the symbolic culmination of the novel. The bear crest is particularly important to Dollenmayer because it is completely devoid of text: “With this one image Döblin evokes the city in its entirety, lending heraldic ornament to the mock solemnity of the alliteration in ‘Franz Biberkopf betritt Berlin’ and anticipating in abstract the chapter and the novel to come” (Dollenmayer 76). But this reading of the pictogram grants this singular image too much importance by ignoring the surrounding text and the pictograms that immediately follow it. So, too, the chevron may not exclusively constitute a syntagmatic connectivity, but may infer a paradigmatic relationship, that the bear pictogram and the remaining pictograms constitute two representations of the same thing. The additional pictograms present a visual order to the city, just as one might see in a directory. This may at least indicate that the other pictograms belong to Berlin; but if succession can be assumed, it is difficult to understand how that organization is reflected in the visual presentation of the other pictograms.

If the bear constitutes a singular emblem of the city, then the other ten pictograms resist that unanimity. They are positioned on the left side of the page, about two centimeters from the fore edge or one centimeter from the gutter of the book. To the right of the pictograms, large text

¹⁸⁷ Duden 701.

has been placed in the same line as the top of the pictograms, which apparently function as accompanying titles for the pictograms. No apparent arrangement of the images can be discerned from the accompanying text: alphabetical, chronological, historical, etc.; if there is mnemonic ordering, then it is not readily decipherable.¹⁸⁸ Furthermore, some of the pictograms are not purely visual but intermesh text and image, such as in “Stadtreinigungs- und Fuhrwesen,” where a street cleaning vehicle is depicted with a figure of a human at the wheel and the letters ‘BSR’ on the back of the vehicle, perhaps indicating an acronym for “Berliner Stadtreinigungswesen.”¹⁸⁹ An order by visual association or similarity is also not apparent.¹⁹⁰ In terms of medium, it can also be stated that the pictograms are not photographic but likely woodcut printings or some kind of lithographic illustrations, which seems to emphasize abstraction instead of realism.¹⁹¹ Although the pictograms themselves seem resistant to any self-revealing interpretation, there is some agreement on what they resemble and how they relate to *BA*.

The prevailing view among scholars is that these pictograms are akin to icons in a directory of a city hall or official directory, which seems to originate in their historical association with the *Amtsblatt*.¹⁹² Often this is understood as a visual order for the city, albeit an

¹⁸⁸ I have even considered chiasmus, a poetic system found in old testament book of Isaiah, wherein items are repeated in reverse order after reaching a central idea or climax.

¹⁸⁹ Both the *Sparkasse&Stadtbank* and the *Finanz- und Steuerwesen* also contain script such as the word *Spar* and numerals: 2, 100, 500. The cross accompanying *Gesundheitswesen* and the *Feuerlöschwesen* are signs in their own right.

¹⁹⁰ Half of the pictograms have square borders, while the rest do not seem to be bounded in this way, although one could argue that “Gesundheitswesen” and “Feuerlöschwesen” are also enclosed but by other geometrical shapes.

¹⁹¹ Peter Bekes observed that the images should be understood allegorically, namely that, as abstractions, they reflect the lack of narrative reflection in the text: “Hier herrscht also nicht das Prinzip der Sukzessivität der Handlung, sondern das Nebeneinander der Bilder. Was folgt, sind Piktogramme, Schilder mit Titeln, Wappen und Emblemen, die die amtlichen Ressorts einer Stadt anzeigen, Tafeln, wie man sie etwa am Eingang eines städtischen Verwaltungsgebäudes sehen kann . . . Die Geschichte Biberkopfs, verläuft sich in der Fläche, wird unkenntlich in der abstrakten amtlichen Topographie der Stadt. Dieses wird – ohne erzählerische Reflexion – einfach zitiert und ausgestellt” (66).

¹⁹² See Klotz 376, Dunz 57

incomplete one; for, as David Dollenmayer astutely observed, the police are not represented among the pictograms.¹⁹³ As the very entity charged with maintaining order in the city, the police signify a conspicuous absence from the pictograms, not to mention the critical role they play in the denouement of *BA*.¹⁹⁴ Coupled with the lack of arrangement discussed in the previous paragraph, the missing police icon at this juncture suggests more than an absence of political order in Weimar Berlin and more than the chaotic nature of the urban space in general. Furthermore, the police are not the only entities of a city missing: restaurants, plumbing and water works, public parks, media, and religious and memorial spaces are also lacking. Even if this were akin to directory icons for the city hall or administrative services, political and administrative or bureaucratic entities are also missing. Without any apparent order to these pictograms, it is difficult to determine for certain what their function is in *BA*.

The pictograms are indistinct; they cannot be analyzed separately or extracted as distinctly separate phenomena. They are at odds with the traditional conveyance of the mind through text, especially as performed in the previous novels through psycho-narration. Each pictogram, as a graphic representation, seems to inform their accompanying title and vice versa; but if they are regarded in a simulative function, then they are part of the larger whole of the novel, granting us only the impression of order. It is true that both text and pictograms constitute

¹⁹³ Dollenmayer's book was published just prior to D.A. Miller's 1989 book *The Novel and the Police*. Basing his argument on Foucault's treatment of the panopticon in *Discipline and Punish*, Miller argues in his book that the novel itself (especially in Victorian England) functioned as an ordering mechanism for society. Miller's argument supports Dollenmayer's implication that the missing police should be regarded as part of the chaotic undercurrent of the *BA*.

¹⁹⁴ David Dollenmayer offered the most detailed and apparently most widely accepted interpretation of the pictograms in his 1988 analysis, *The Berlin Novels of Alfred Döblin*, arguing that they enable Döblin to eliminate the narrator by abandoning "linguistic for graphic representation"—an important element in Döblin's anti-psychological approach to the novel. Dollenmayer's study is an attempt to gain a "longitudinal perspective" on Berlin in the novels of Alfred Döblin and what that tells us about him as an author in his time (7). The scenes, montages, and conversations in the rest of chapter "counterpose a negative to the positive image of the city" (Dollenmayer 76), lending a counterweight to the episode in which Georg laments fate and Biberkopf's despair at the end of book two.

visual ordering mechanisms, signs that reference some not-entirely accessible substructure of deeper meanings; but it is their placement together in paradigmatic juxtaposition, an equivocation of semiotic systems, that makes their presence in the novel so remarkable.¹⁹⁵

Although they originate from another textual source, they can assume multiple semiotic systems beyond their original situation. Their placement in *BA* reminds us that the mind too can operate with multiple forms of ordering at once (even without any obvious cipher to that order) and still sketch a coherent impression of the city. As will be discussed in the next section, the selection of these pictograms and not others can only be regarded as part of the narrator's role in the novel, an overt attempt on Döblin's part to position the narrator as a co-creator of the novel in the novel. This ambiguous ordering—or, more precisely, the combination of multiple ordering systems at once—speaks to the ability of the novelized mind to deal with ambiguity and reside in

¹⁹⁵ Gabrielle Sander calls these pictograms “eine intermediale Kombination von Bild und Schrift” (Sander 2014, 125), meaning that the pictograms transgress boundaries between linguistic and pictographic systems, just as Dollenmayer had suggested with a visual order for the city. If the presence of these pictograms indeed indicates code switching, then it is also an uneasy tension between two forms of conveying information. Henrietta Schoonover attributes this to humor: “These pictures are not illustrations added to the text, reinforcing the written word; they are themselves part of what the author wants to say. Döblin extracts the humor of contrasting written and pictorial media and humor of having a modern up-dated form of heraldic device” (40). Schoonover went so far as to say, “When drawings appear in *Berlin Alexanderplatz*, language has failed to perform its normal function of communication. Pictures must replace the printed word” (39). This argument suggests that visual supersedes the textual, granting one dominance over the other.

Armin Leidinger also emphasized this point when he suggested the contemporary connection between these pictograms and icons in computer applications or the internet: “Die visuellen Zeichen, die Teilsysteme einer Gesellschaft repräsentieren, sind eine moderne Variante des ‘Blicks von oben,’ der eine Überblick über die Stadt gibt und gleichzeitig ihre Tiefenstruktur durscheinen lässt”; and, writing in a footnote, “Insofern ist die Funktion der visuellen Zeichen in *Berlin Alexanderplatz* Computer-Icons ähnlich: beide verweisen auf eine Tiefenstruktur” (38). Leidinger's invocation of the view from above also references a position of authority. But if this is true for text as well as pictures, as has been proven by the structuralist-poststructuralist discourse of the twentieth century, then these icons or pictograms could just as easily be interpreted as logographs, such as hieroglyphs or Chinese characters, representing a single word, phrase, or sound, in which case they would function just as the rest of the text does—this is, in fact, exactly how they function in their common interpretation as a directory for city departments. Moreover, the deep structure of *BA* cannot be accessed by the text or these pictograms but only hinted at and never entirely triangulated. The arguments point to the deceptive claim to power of the visual sense, recalling the inherent problem of simulations as the radical negation of the sign as value. For the simulation, according to Baudrillard, moves in “spiraling negativity” wherein the simulation at first reflects reality, then masks it, and finally bears no relation to any reality, making it “impossible to isolate the process of the real, or to prove the real” (179). Intermedial or superstructural readings of these pictograms underscore deceptive power of the visual elements in the text, apparently robbing us of access to reality by convincing us that we have full access to it.

indistinct situatedness. Dollenmayer concluded, “It is, in the end, not possible to separate Biberkopf from the Berlin in which he lives. Only taken together do they constitute the novel” (Dollenmayer 83). Dollenmayer is right about the relationship between Biberkopf and Berlin. My argument extends that interrelatedness of the protagonist and the city to include the narrative mind that brings them together.

The juxtaposition of these pictograms with text discloses a peculiarity about Döblin’s narrative style, which Devin Fore called a “grammatical transitivity [that] also collapses the boundary between narration and narrator” (202).¹⁹⁶ This conflation of visual and audial modes of narration speaks to ambiguity created by the insertion of the mind into the text. The pictograms remind us of the perceptual tendency in the mind to implement order upon the world, or more precisely to scan it and through that scanning produce an apprehendable unity that leaves out the aberrant details. This recalls Heidegger’s notion of the fourfold, a constant relationality between a thing and the fourfold of earth, sky, immortals, and mortals. It is a non-finite state, but the ability to focus on the finite is akin to the ability to scan an image. The mistake is in thinking that the scan, or the thing focused on, can be infinite by also being non-finite. It is therefore ironic that, as material directly extracted from reality, the pictograms could, on the one hand, lend the novel an added sense of authenticity, but, on the other hand, jog the reader out of the textual mode. It need not be an either-or scenario. Moreover, each of these pictograms could also be interpreted as thematically relevant or perhaps emblematic of events and developments in the

¹⁹⁶ Devin Fore connects Döblin’s narrative style to Fritz Mauthner’s concept of the verbal world picture, which suggests it is a collapsing of the narrative modes of showing and telling. Fore also connects the notions of *flâneur* and *erlebte rede* as parts of this unique narrative style (194-5). The last quarter of Fore’s argument is build on Günther Anders’s reading of the visual elements in *BA* found in his article, “Der verwüstete Mensch: Über Welt- und Sprachlosigkeit in Döblins Berlin Alexanderplatz” in *Mensch ohne Welt: Schriften zur Kunst und Literatur*. Munich: Beck, 1993.

story of *BA*, opening up their function into broader relationality.¹⁹⁷ In other words, the choice to mix text and pictograms, instead of using pure text (or status quo) or pure imagery (a radical difference in stark contrast), diverts our attention back to the indistinct limits of the mind.¹⁹⁸

To understand more about the narrative function of the pictograms in the text, some explanation of the Döblin's narratological approach is required. As with *SW* and *ZB*, the narrator often channeled elements of the author in one way or another. In *BA*, the narrator is very closely associated with Döblin himself. He plays an unapologetically intrusive role in the novel, guiding our reading, the development of Franz Biberkopf, and the instantiation of Berlin in the novel. Yet, as will become apparent from reading one of Döblin's theoretical texts alongside *BA*, the narrator is also lost in the indistinct areas of the text. In fact, the very presence of such an interactive narrator marks a paradoxical development compared to Döblin's previous style of

¹⁹⁷ Probably all of the pictograms could be connected to various elements of the story of *BA*. On a mythological level, the human head with *Kunst und Bildung* appears to be wearing a Greek helmet, which would connect with the Orestes-thematic, destiny theme, and Bildungsroman discourse throughout the novel and especially in chapter in which the pictograms appear. The *Feuerlöschwesen* contains a *Beil* or ax, which is one of the repetitive leitmotifs throughout the novel, but fire is also a repeated motif (for example see pages 95, 100). Money is a constant concern throughout the novel as well as health, life, and death, referring to *Finanz – und Steuerwesen*, while Tiefbau could refer to the ongoing construction of Berlin Alexanderplatz, which parallels Biberkopf's internal psychological development, often depicted by images of slaughter and rebirth. Döblin also considered his project of novel writing as construction ("Der Bau des epischen Werks"). The presence of gasworks may seem a little opaque, but at the time of *BA*, various gasworks were being consolidated after the incorporation of smaller towns around Berlin into the city itself after World War I. Many were closed, including one plant near Tegel, where Biberkopf had been incarcerated. Natural gas was especially used in lanterns throughout the city and, as such, is mentioned often in the course of the novel in connection with turning on lights (118, 127, 212, 358). Especially significant is the supposition that Reinhold had almost blown up a gasworks (177-8), an accusation that Biberkopf cannot accept in his naïve, esoteric attraction to Reinhold.

¹⁹⁸ That the pictograms are simultaneously text-conformant and text-resistant tells us something about the mind behind their creation, or rather the role of the mind in the text. This ability to still process the images, to read them or to not read them but regard them as something completely different without regarding them as useless information, speaks to an ability of the mind that challenges the possibility of mind-uploading. For example, CAPTCHA encryptions have become popular as a second-tier form of password protection because malware and intelligent computer programs designed to steal personal information and passwords have difficulty distinguishing the ununiform and distorted images of words from standard text, even though a human being could, with a little extra effort, recognize the letters depicted (CAPTCHA stands for Completely Automated Public Turing test to tell Computers and Humans Apart.) This points to a human need to understand and interpret in general. This human ability or disability to operate with ambiguity, to still attempt a reading with obvious unevenness, anomaly, indistinctness, or gray areas, also points back to situatedness of the novelized mind.

narration. And it is this paradox which is central in disclosing the ambiguity of the fictional mind in *BA*.

The Author and the Epic Work

As early as his quarrel with the futurist Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, preserved in the publication of an open letter in the March 1913 edition of *Der Sturm*, Döblin had been attempting to radically differentiate his narrative style from other influences. “Pflegen Sie Ihren Futurismus,” he wrote to Marinetti, “Ich pflege meinen Döblinismus” (Döblin, *AzL* 15). Döblin had shown early interest in some of the anti-historical trends of Marinetti’s movement, especially its fetish for technology and its “hostility to the psychological analysis characteristic of nineteenth-century realism.”¹⁹⁹ The movement’s radical approach to language (such as abandoning basic syntax and grammar) and its sympathies toward fascism also soured Döblin’s enthusiasm, especially as Döblin had often fashioned himself as a spokesman for the political left, writing for *Der Sturm* under the pseudonym of Linke Poot and often advocating the cause of the working class. After his split with Marinetti, Döblin attempted to remove the psychologizing element in the novel, a reflexive, interpretive role often played by the narrator through the elaboration or mediation of the thought processes of the characters—a technique employed by both Mann and Broch.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁹ Dollenmayer 18

²⁰⁰ This was part of Döblin’s lifelong allegiance to the concept of naturalism instead of realism or modernism per se. Not to be confused with the naturalism of Émile Zola, Gerhart Hauptmann, or Clara Viebig, Döblin employed the term of naturalism, as in his essays “Das Ich über der Natur” and “Der Geist des naturalistischen Zeitalters,” to attempt to be more natural, to be more real than realism, as in Peter Child’s definition of modernism. The literary form of naturalism in the nineteenth century was largely focused on scientism and observing the real, which still implies a narrator, but Döblin’s approach attempted to obscure the narrating presence in the novel. By the publication of *BA*, his thought had taken another turn, which will be discussed more in this section.

In particular, Döblin focused on the reduction and minimization of the role of the narrator as the conveyer of the protagonists' minds. For Döblin, this approach would ultimately culminate in the revival of the epic genre, the predecessor of the novel, which he attempts to execute with the publication of *BA*.²⁰¹ Paradoxically, this would also signal the return of the narrator in the novel in a very pronounced and conspicuous position. The composition of his theoretical essay "Der Bau des epischen Werks" ("Bau"), written at roughly the same time as *BA*, contains many relevant insights into the development of Döblin's narrative theory.²⁰² "Bau" has often been analyzed side by side with *BA*, as a means of explicating Döblin's theories about the epic work and the paradoxical return of the narrator after attempting to reduce it for so long. Returning to the text once more in this analysis is warranted in order to sketch how any scan of the mind will always be shrouded in ambiguity.

"Bau" is a paradoxical and openly contradictory text. In its opening, Döblin says that the successful epic artist has to meet two criteria: first, "he must draw quite close to reality, to its matter-of-fact-ness, to its blood, to its scent, and then he must pierce the matter through" ("er muß ganz nahe an die Realität heran, an ihre Sachlichkeit, ihr Blut, ihren Geruch, und dann hat er die Sache zu durchstoßen") (*AzL* 107).²⁰³ ²⁰⁴ Such a close proximity to reality, as "close to reality as possible" ("möglichst wirklichkeitsnah") is required in order to endow Döblin's idea of

²⁰¹ Becker 102-3

²⁰² Döblin's concept of the epic is certainly related to Brecht's theory of epic theater. Brecht, who was twenty years younger than Döblin, admired the novelist, especially for his earlier works such as *Wadzeks Kampf mit der Dampfmachine*, and, beginning in the early twenties, the two began a lifelong friendship (Schoeller 220f).

²⁰³ All translations from "Bau" are my own. In this quotation, it is worthy of note that the word "Sachlichkeit" could also be translated as objectivity or practicality.

²⁰⁴ I use the pronouns "he" and "his" for the author throughout this chapter because it corresponds with Döblin's own decidedly masculine conception of the epic author. As discussed previously, the minds presented in these novels are problematically skewed masculine. Although the masculine bias is not overtly recognized in the novels, the indistinctness they adumbrate also points to the limits of the masculine, which also cannot and should not be distinctly delineated.

the epic work with high level of credibility (*AzL* 110).²⁰⁵ The second criterion that the epic author must achieve is to then reject reality, a contradiction Döblin openly confesses. This contradiction seems only to be reconciled through the narrative mode of reporting (“berichten”), which would normally imply the imparting of facts in a lucid detailing of reality; but for Döblin’s epic author, the only matters reported are non-facts (“Nichtfackte”), the products of one’s own fantasy. This reporting of non-facts is defined by Döblin as fabulating (“fabulieren”), literally the spinning of tales, the creation of fables, which is “the play with reality” (“das Spiel mit der Realität”) (109). Döblin elaborates:

Die Berichtform zeigt den souveränen Willen des Menschen an, zum mindesten des Autors, dem Wissen und der Wissenschaft zum Trotz mit der Realität zu spielen. Da wird nun alles möglich, was sich denken läßt, die Schwerkraft wird abgeschafft, alle physikalischen Gesetze werden abgeschafft – aber im selben Augenblick wird gewußt: es gibt die Schwerkraft und alle Gesetze, aber wir, wir können alles erzählen in der Berichtform von einer ganz anderen Welt. (*AzL* 110).

Hence, the close proximity to reality and the departure from that reality are reconciled through the referential relationship between the two. The epic author may suspend the laws of gravity, but that suspension remains bound to our understanding of it in the real world. After all, the prospect of flying or floating, of defying gravity, is only amusing if one understands the rules of gravity—that is, if we know what it is like to fall. At the other extreme, Döblin criticizes some authors who do not attempt to imitate reality at all but simply “fantasize in the air” (“phantasiert

²⁰⁵ Döblin is hesitant to use the term novel (“Roman”) in referring to his work, preferring instead the term “epic work.” As will be explained later, Döblin was in favor of a more fluid and open form than his understanding of the novel. Despite Döblin’s convictions, current editions of *BA* describe the book as a novel, suggesting that the novel may now be understood as the all-encompassing form he hoped it would be. Out of respect to Döblin, I keep his terminology in this section, but I make no differentiation between the novel and the epic work for the purposes of this dissertation.

in der Luft herum”) (*AzL* 110). Without a connection to real-world rules, fiction becomes unenjoyable, pure phantasmagoria without comprehension, the punchline of a joke without the set-up. This type of writings lacks the “play” of fiction, the amusement of reading events contrary to reality, the irony of knowing how reality resides in irreality. Even in this passage, with the absence of a grammatical subject in the passive phrase “aber im selben Augenblick wird gewußt” and then the doubling of the pronoun “we, we” (“wir, wir”) a few phrases later, Döblin is performing this sense of play between fiction and reality in the same moment he explains it. This is because the passive sentence, which already removes the emphasis from the subject, and the pronoun “we” (is he referring to epic authors only or is he referring to all authors, or is he including the readers as co-creators?) disclose a sense of ambiguity in the declaration. The author shows the sovereignty of the human will, the ability to create worlds in fiction in the same Nietzschean manner discussed in *ZB*, but then the simultaneity of knowing is camouflaged in indistinct or absent grammatical agents.

This foreshadows another aspect to the paradoxical tinge of “Bau” on top of the relationship between fiction and reality; namely, that Döblin’s assertive and chauvinist tone in the novel will eventually be undermined. The opening sections of “Bau” aggressively distinguish between the epic author and the average, run-of-the-mill author; consider, for example, the hunting metaphor quoted earlier in its reference to blood, scent, and impaling (“er muß ganz nahe an die Realität heran, an ihre Sachlichkeit, ihr Blut, ihren Geruch, und dann hat er die Sache zu durchstoßen”). Later, he employs the hunting metaphor again as he discusses how lesser authors have succumb to scientific realism: scientists have given the epic writer a stab in the neck (“Genickfang”), which specifically refers in hunting to a stab which ends the animal’s life (*AzL* 110). He also talks of tackling reality (“anpacken”), which suggests the need of physical

prowess in order to dominate. The sense of playing with reality might also then be interpreted from this metaphor of hunting, a sort of playing with the prey. The notion of playing with reality is discussed by Döblin specifically in connection to Nietzsche: “das Spiel mit der Realität, mit Nietzsches Worten ein Überlegenheitsgelächter über die Fakte, ja über die Realität als solche” (109). The laughter of superiority over reality refers to the idea that truth is not a pre-existing or meta-existing entity, in contrast to German idealism and especially with Kant’s “Ding an sich.” Accordingly, truth cannot be discovered but is something that should be created through one’s own will to power.²⁰⁶ At another point, Döblin elaborates on the play with reality as the “Negation der realen Sphäre” (*AzL* 111), which is reminiscent of Baudrillard’s point about simulation as the radical negation of the sign. In Baudrillard’s configuration of the simulation, the sign ultimately results in the replacement of reality with the simulation. Döblin contributes to our understanding of Baudrillard’s simulation by stating that, although fiction may radically negate its predecessor, there must inevitably remain some kind of a trace back to the original perception of reality outside the simulation or, in this case, fiction. This predatorial and chauvinist tone in conjunction with the Nietzschean approach to fabulizing provides a blueprint for novels that reminds of how the simulation replaces and subverts reality. As with Bertrand’s poetic plurality and the ambiguous pronouns above, however, this pronounced hegemony of the narration ultimately yields to dissipation, as the author takes up the guise of the narrator in the text.

²⁰⁶ Döblin’s reading of Nietzsche’s laughter of superiority (“Überlegenheitsgelächter”), according to Michaela Spreng, is a reaction to Nietzsche’s anti-metaphysical argument as presented in fragments of *Der Wille zur Macht*, posthumously published in 1901 and 1906 (208, 214). For Michaela Spreng, this indicates that Döblin sees the epic poet as a philosopher in disguise. The essay is a part of Döblin’s reading of Nietzsche, which she traces back to his earlier essay “Gespräche mit Kalypso” and to his early fable “Die Helferin,” among other works. Poetry and music can preserve myth and legend as fact in the poetic realm.

As “Bau” unfolds, Döblin explains that the author creates the epic work by means of this realistic reporting of non-facts. Döblin consciously continues to employ contradictions in his argument, such as when he recommends that the epic authors be “lyrisch, dramatisch, ja reflexive” as they report from their fantasized realities to make “the epic form a completely free one” (“die epische Form zu einer ganz freien”) (*AzL* 113, 115).²⁰⁷ This becomes particularly apparent as he rejects the play with reality which he had previously insisted upon, and discusses instead the “serious” role of the author in the text. The author himself serves as a vehicle for these digressions from form, becoming “a fact and piece of reality” (“Faktum und ein Stück Realität”) in his stories, a presence inside and outside of the text. Citing the role of Dante in his *Divine Comedy* as an example, Döblin describes how the epic author functions in his work:

er [der Dichter] ist selber durch sein Gedicht gegangen, er hat seine Figuren beklopft, er hat sich in die Vorgänge eingemischt, und zwar nicht spielerisch, sondern mit allem Ernst, jeder zu seiner Zeit hat ihn verstanden in dem wichtigsten Punkt seines Gerichts. Er hat teilgenommen am Leben seiner Figuren. Er hat wie König David vor dem siegreichen Heer seiner Figuren getanzt (*AzL* 114).

Döblin’s insistence upon the seriousness of the author’s presence ostensibly contradicts the play with reality which Döblin had previously emphasized, but it can be understood in Döblin’s assertion that the author functions as a participant in his own work. The terminus technicus “beklopfen” is likely borrowed from Döblin’s medical training as a doctor. In English, it is the equivalent to the word ‘percuss,’ meaning to gently tap in order to diagnose, such as when a doctor taps a hammer on the knee to test the reflexes of a patient’s deep tendons. At first, this statement seems to suggest an invasive interaction with the fantastic space, rather like the image

²⁰⁷ As mentioned previously, Döblin hoped the epic work would be a more open form than the novel.

of punching through reality mentioned previously. But this image is less violent, espousing more precisely the idea of sounding in order to probe or examine, instead of puncturing. Like sonar for marine and naval vessels, the mind of the author in his own text traces out the contours of his characters. Döblin sees the role of the author as intrusive but beneficial, a prophylactic means of constructing the text. The reference to a court “Gericht” in this statement complements his percussive image because it paints the author as the wise arbitrator, like a referee who intercedes only when necessary.

The image of the biblical King David dancing before his troops, most likely a reference to the scene in 2 Samuel 6 in which the Ark of the Covenant is transferred in royal procession to Jerusalem, relates to the other metaphors inasmuch as it is at once intrusive but also necessarily tolerable.²⁰⁸ In the original story, David’s dancing is rather scandalous because he unapologetically assumes a celebratory role usually preserved for women in ancient Judaism. He is chastised in the scene by Michal, his first wife and daughter of his rival Saul, for dancing in an undignified manner, but Yahweh evidently takes David’s side, punishing Michal by giving her no children for the rest of her days. Hence, the infiltration of the author into the novel, like David’s dancing, is a transgressive but ultimately forgivable act because of its propriety and uprightness. As David tested the bounds of cultural norms by dancing, so the role of the author under the guise of the narrator in the epic work justifiably probes the characters and events by sounding them out. All of these metaphors describe the role of the author from a position of power: doctor, judge, jubilant king—which is still consistent with the playful, Nietzschean role of the author. Döblin, however, turns against the author’s volition as he describes the creative process in crafting the epic work.

²⁰⁸ Döblin also employed a dancing thematic throughout *BA*, as was cited in the previous discussion of the pictograms, which are introduced by the lyrics from Humperdinck’s dancing song from *Hansel und Gretel*.

Döblin begins his discussion of the creative process for the epic work by discussing his perception of how this functioned before his time. He authoritatively claims (without evidence) that in ancient and medieval times the epic storyteller or singer reaped his inspiration from traveling around among the people, observing the world, listening to stories from the people, and reworking and testing these stories through a co-creative interaction with the audience (“Kollektivarbeit von Author und Publikum”), i.e. sounding off his ideas among the masses (*AzL* 116). With a degree of nostalgia, Döblin laments that in the modern age the author has a readership instead of an audience. Economic, political, and technological developments have forced the author to scrawl out his works in the isolation of his study instead of out among the people. The creative process of the modern author is an externalization of internal machinations (“[eine] innere Beschäftigung, [einen] inneren Vorgang”) in lieu of being able to wander from court to court in search of a patron. It begins subtly; “something separates itself within the author at a providential period” (“[Etwas] sondert sich in einer günstigen Epoche im Innern des Authors” (*AzL* 118). At this point in the argument, Döblin’s language begins to emphasize the gradual passivity of this process: at first it is an agglomeration (“etwas ballt sich zusammen”), next a stage of incubation (“Inkubationsstadium”), then a thinking without thoughts during the mundane routine of the day which gradually evolves into a gathering of material by the author until it culminates in the spontaneous appearance of an image (*Bild*) in his mind, which grips the author in fascination. The appearance of the image is a moment of special brilliance (“einer besonderen Helligkeit”), not a vision or a hallucination but a moment where everything is deciphered (“enträselst”), just like when Siegfried tastes dragon’s blood and “one understands all

matter and absolutely everything” (“man versteht alle Sachen und überhaupt alles”) (*AzL* 119).²⁰⁹ Although Döblin invokes one of the classic figures of masculine power, the process is clearly marked by passive developments, processes beyond the author’s full control.²¹⁰ The introduction of a new metaphor of incubation should also not go unnoticed, for this implies the impregnation of the author by an outside factor, a shift to a female stereotype. This is made all the more manifest by the consequences of this moment of clarity, which results in the abstraction of two entities or instances (“Instanzen”) from the mind of the author: the observing I (“das beobachtende Ich”) and the poetizing entity or work (“die dichtende Instanz”).

Both of these entities adopt a certain degree of dynamism and vitality as they are separated but not detached from the author. With the appearance of the poetizing entity to the observing I, there is a moment of recognition between the two, in which the observing I sees what or who it has been nursing on its breast (“Jetzt sieht das Ich, was es vor sich hat, sozusagen, wen es da an seiner Brust genährt hat”) (*AzL* 120).²¹¹ The observing I is identified with the author and the image becomes associated with the poetizing entity, but both are alienated from the author in significant ways. As stated before, the I assumes the position of mother to the incubated image, but curiously *das Ich* is grammatically neutral in German, creating a tension in terms of gender, forcing the heretofore masculine author to now assume a grammatically neutral position in a figuratively feminine role—a blurring of genders and levels of gender. The poetizing instance or work also evolves from being a “what” (“was”) to a “whom” (“wen”), adopting the role of a person, a child. If there was an insemination to this process, then the

²⁰⁹ Döblin repeats this reference in his essay on the historical novel, *AzL* 181. In this instance, the author understands his time and his world, being able to replicate them in a credible way in the novel. However, this replication differs from history, becoming another kind of reality, “in eine echte, nämlich ziel- und Affektgeladene Realität.”

²¹⁰ Even the tasting of dragon’s blood is by accident, at least in Wagner’s version of the story.

²¹¹ Döblin inserts the metaphor of mother and child, while insisting upon his distaste for the comparison. See *AzL* 118.

fatherhood is not clearly divulged.²¹² Hence, the inception of the observing I and the poeticizing entity constitutes a blurred and distending instantiation of the mind. The interaction between the two entities is a dissipation of clear identity for the author, which is even expressed as a breakout in the physical presence of the author, as the very next sentence indicates: “in this moment, the author no longer sits alone in his parlor” (“in diesem Augenblick sitzt der Autor nicht mehr allein in seiner Stube”) (*AzL* 120). This line could refer merely to the poetizing entity, but the observing I could also be included in this statement, endowing the entity or entities with spatial presence. It is a moment reminiscent of the appearance of Joachim Ziemßen’s ghost and Bertrand’s inability to narrate. Later in the essay, Döblin is reticent to call this creative moment an unconscious process, “keine Rede von einem blinden fessellosen Trieb, einer Bewußtlosigkeit, die dichtet” (*AzL* 121), which lends more gravity to the externalization of these entities, presence-ing them more vividly into the realm of consciousness. This realization hints at what Döblin means by the shift from play to seriousness because this breakout of entities transgresses the traditional confines of the mind. For Hans Castorp, his cousin’s appearance was seen as most dubious, and, for Bertrand, the threat was an existential crisis. Later, it will be shown how this serious externalization of the mind will reverberate in *BA*.

The breakout of the observing I and the poeticizing entity sketch the constitution of the author’s mind in plurality and indistinctness because the entities occupy multiple positions in relation to the author. Immediately following the statement that the author is no longer alone in his parlor, Döblin refers back to his discussion of the medieval storyteller (epic poet) co-creating his stories among the masses and declares that “in this instant the author carries the people inside

²¹² Possibly this process is an autoerotic act, such as when Döblin writes, “Jetzt sitzt ein Autor in seiner Stube, lutscht an seinem Bleistift oder Federhalter und ihm soll etwas einfallen” (*AzL* 116). But there are no other references that might support this reading. The discussion of the appearance of the image as light and the amalgamating of that image suggest something more involuntary.

himself” (“Aber der Autor trägt von diesem Augenblick an das Volk in sich”) (*AzL* 120). Like Broch’s poetic we and the collective unconscious, the outbreak of these entities establishes the mind of the author in dissipating plurality. The next sentence begins a new paragraph, indicating that the I can assume multiple positions, masquerading as the various participants in Döblin’s description of the historical process of the epic poet creating his work among the masses: “That observing I assumes in our time the role and function of the people as it was with the old vagrant storytellers. *The I becomes the public, the audience member, and the co-creative audience member*” (“Jenes beobachtende Ich übernimmt in unsere Zeit die Rolle und Funktion des Volkes bei jenen alten Vaganten. *Das Ich wird Publikum, wird Zuhörer, und zwar mitarbeitender Zuhörer*”) (*ibid.*)²¹³ With these lines, as with the prudent metaphors of percussing and dancing, Döblin adumbrates the parameters of the simulated mind of the author, transferring the creative process of the medieval epic poets into the space of the mind. This simulation of the creative process houses a plurality of possible personae in indistinct relatedness beyond the text. As with Alan Palmer’s situated cognition discussed in chapter one, the epic artist also interacts mentally with his surrounding objects in his parlor—recall the gathering of materials into the writing parlor—but that interaction discloses indistinct situatedness. The I becomes multiplied, donning a variety of masks as audience, listener, and collaborative listener, thereby creating ghosts of his split personality as he images his own feedback process.

From the assertive and chauvinist epic author as hunter, “Bau” has advanced to a passive, plural, and indistinct composition of the authorial mind vis-à-vis his text. This trajectory of

²¹³ Döblin goes on to say that he is not referring to Goethe’s “idealer Zuhörer.” What Döblin meant by this is not clarified later in “Bau.” It is possible that Döblin was thinking about Goethe’s ideas on the reciting his works. See for more information: Meyer-Kalkus, Reinhart. “Goethe Als Vorleser, Sprecherzieher Und Theoretiker Der Vortragkunst.” *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft Und Geistesgeschichte*, vol. 90, no. 4, 2016, 529–565. An attempt to find a corresponding phrase among Goethe’s collected works proved inconclusive.

dissipation continues in the closing comments of Döblin's essay, as he describes the ultimate fate of the externalized entities. The vitality that the I draws from the image assumes multiple perspectives and personae: "It dons masks, it sustains its work, it dances round about its work" ("es legt Masken an, es erleidet sein Werk, es tanzt um sein Werk herum" (*AzL* 121). Again, the metaphor of dancing is raised as the mind of the author attempts to find the indistinct boundaries of this mind in the text. The author's fascination with this creative process draws his observing I into the mental projection of the work or image, causing not only the I but also the author himself to lose control, climaxing at a point "where the work, the author, and his conscious [observing] I are swallowed up" ("wo das Werk den Author und sein bewußtes Ich verschluckt") (*AzL* 122). In this regard, the creative process itself preserves a simulacrum of the creator's mind in the work itself: a scan of the author's mind. And, at last, this is why the narrator has returned in Döblin's narrative style: that is, because the author's mind is consumed in the story itself. The trace of the author could therefore be detected in all the characters and events of the epic work, but the utilization of a narrator allows for the manifestation of the observing I.

To recapitulate, the author's initial state of superiority dissolved into a swallowing up of the author's mind into the epic work. Instead of the limitless possibilities of reproducing the mind in the fantasy world of the text, the process seems to spin out of control, creating new presences in the author's creative space and causing him to be simultaneously subsumed and scattered. Instead of scanning reality, the author is everywhere impinging it, sowing the remnants of his own thoughts and feedback throughout the work. This seems to echo the movement of the notion of a play with reality mentioned in Döblin's theory of the construction of the epic work, as a back-and-forth or giving-and-taking, indicating that the process of scanning and gathering material for the creative process is not a discrete transfer of the mind of the author to the written

page but a dissipating one. That the creative process and not the novel alone can be thought of in simulative terms foregrounds the role of the narrator in *BA* as a sort of apparition of the author. As with Broch before, the masculine and assertive portrayal of the author results in dissipation, a radical negation of the authority of the author. Döblin's thoughts anticipate many of Baudrillard's definition of simulation. Now we can return to the relationship between the pictograms and the novelized mind, which also grants us some insight into Döblin's insistence on the seriousness of the author in percussing his characters. In the coming sections, the seriousness of the author as narrator will be discussed in some detail. It bears noting that in much of the previous discussion there was a constant emphasis on the visual and audial: the I is an observing extraction of the author; the inception of the participating entities is marked by brilliance ("Helligkeit") and an image ("Bild"); while the percussing of characters and the participation of audience members ("Zuhörer")—not readers—culminated in the almost onomatopoeic swallowing of the author ("verschlucken"). In what follows, these sensual aspects help explain the mounting ambiguity of *BA*.

The Seriousness of the Narrator

In the previous section, Döblin's supposition that the author of the epic work is a "a fact and a piece of reality" ("Faktum und ein Stück Realität") expressed a profound paradox about his relation to the work. This is because of the mind of the author is projected in multiple places and under multiple guises at once.²¹⁴ When Döblin claims in "Bau" that the epic artist meddles in the course of the novel, "and not playfully, but with all seriousness" ("und zwar nicht spielerisch,

²¹⁴ For a detailed study of the theme of paradox in Döblin's work through 1933, see Birgit Hooock, *Modernität als Paradox: Der Begriff der "Moderne" und seine Anwendung auf das Werk Alfred Döblins (bis 1933)*. Tübingen: M. Niemeyer, 1997.

sondern mit allem Ernst”), he is giving us a clue about how to deal with this paradox (*AzL* 114). That clue is expatiated throughout the rest of this chapter in order to explain the ability of the mind to adapt to the ambiguity of contextuality. This seriousness in the face of Döblin’s contradictory admonition for the author to play is a performance of how the author deals with the ambiguity of his mind in the text. The presence of an unnamed but significantly intrusive narrator in *BA* obstructs the reader’s ability to read and orient herself with the novel, which may be one reason why the text is so difficult to read. Yet the narrator presents a peculiar balance between fiction and reality—just as Bertrand’s narrator role indicated in *SW*—which discloses the indistinctness of the novelized mind in *BA*. The narrator entices the readers to interact with the novel and its characters in certain ways, distorting the distinctness of these characters by abstracting their complexity. This is not necessarily a deception, but it is an invitation to recognize with the ambiguity of the text, to deal with the simultaneity of the narrator’s relatedness in the novel and in the real world—just as Döblin proposed in “Bau” with the narrative mode of reporting.

A word on the story of *BA* before continuing with this analysis provides some orientation before concentrating more on an interpretation of the narrator. *BA* traces Biberkopf’s attempt to be a reformed member of society, to remain a proper (“anständig”) individual after his release from Tegel prison in 1927. Biberkopf was sent to prison for manslaughter after beating his girlfriend Ida to death. Biberkopf’s various adventures and misadventures in and outside Berlin cause him to break his vow to remain a proper individual. He ultimately becomes entangled in the the black-market dealings of the Pumps gang, experiencing a particular attraction to its leader Reinhold. Biberkopf loses his arm after Reinhold pushes him from the getaway car in book five. Biberkopf returns to the gang anyway and continues to work with Reinhold. Biberkopf has

complicated relationships with a variety of women throughout *BA*, while Reinhold tries dump his girl, Mieke, on Biberkopf. Reinhold decides one night that he wants to have Mieke back; she refuses, and Reinhold kills her in a forest scene outside Berlin near Bad Freienwalde. Both Reinhold and Biberkopf are eventually arrested for the murder—Reinhold is sent to prison and Biberkopf is released, free to start his life over again. Throughout the text, there are a variety of metaphysical or mythological passages, the most prominent of which is Biberkopf's dialogues with the figure of death, which will be discussed in the section "Irrenanstalt Buch." Such a multifaceted and diverse story points back to Döblin's theories on narrative, as discussed in the previous section, but what I hope to clarify in this chapter is that this variety is contributable to the simulation of the mind as Döblin describes it in "Bau."

Each of the nine chapters of *BA* begins with a brief commentary by the narrator, a report on what happened previously and what is expected to come. These reports always pertain specifically to Biberkopf, but they also reveal some of the most telling insights into the narrator. The tone of these reports is consistent with the candidness of the opening words of the preface to *BA*: "Dies Buch berichtet von einem ehemaligen Zement – und Transporarbeiter Franz Biberkopf in Berlin" (*BA* 11). They are direct and establish the mode of narration as reporting. At the beginning of chapter two, the section in which the pictograms occur, the narrator gives us some additional insight into the seriousness of the story.

Damit haben wir unseren Mann glücklich nach Berlin gebracht. Er hat seinen Schwur getan, und es ist die Frage, ob wir nicht einfach aufhören sollen. Der Schluß scheint freundlich und ohne Verfänglichkeit, es scheint schon ein Ende, und das Ganze hat den großen Vorteil der Kürze.

Aber es ist kein beliebiger Mann, dieser Franz Biberkopf. Ich habe ihn hergerufen zu keinem Spiel, sondern zum Erleben seines schweren, wahren und aufhellenden Daseins. Franz Biberkopf ist schwer gebrannt, er steht jetzt vergnügt und breitbeinig im Berliner Land, und wenn er sagt, er will anständig sein, so können wir ihm glauben, er wird es sein.

Ihr werdet sehen, wie er wochenlang anständig ist. Aber das ist gewissermaßen nur eine Gnadenfrist. (47)

Referring to Biberkopf's turbulent adjustment to life outside of prison narrated in the previous chapter, the commentary opens in a matter-of-fact manner.²¹⁵ The narrator assumes a first-person-plural mode, perhaps intended to incorporate the reader, similar to what was done in the statement of purpose in *ZB*.²¹⁶ But in the section paragraph, the narrator shifts mode, switching to the first person singular. The movement could allude to the plurality of entities established in the creative process of the epic author, in which the we-narrator is not strictly a reference to the reader but instead subsumes the observing I, the poetic entity, the audience members and the author. The shift to I seems to fit best with the author, as the verb "to call forth" ("herufen") is an active summoning of Biberkopf into existence. This would evoke the play of the author as narrator with his characters, controlling and dominating the circumstances. The word "arbitrary" ("beliebig") also maintains such a reading because the negation of in the term "kein beliebiger Mann" suggests that the narrator has a specific intention with Biberkopf.

²¹⁵ Some of the highlights include: his interactions with the two Jews in the opening book of the novel; his frustration over his initial sexual impotence; his overcoming of that impotence by raping Minna, the sister of Ida, his dead girlfriend, whom he killed in a fit of rage, i.e. the reason for his incarceration; and his oath to live a decent life.

²¹⁶ The narrator also speculates on possibly keeping the text short, which recalls the discussions of "Kurzweilig" and "Langweilig" in *ZB*.

The adjoining statement that Biberkopf has been called forth not to participate in a game but to experience a difficult, true, and enlightening existence gets at the seriousness of this intention, which seems at odds with the play of the narrator.²¹⁷ But the seriousness does not refer merely to the circumstances of Biberkopf's situation but also discloses the task of the narrator. Returning to the verb "to call forth" ("herrufen") in combination with the difficult but enlightening existence ("dasein") of Biberkopf, a narrative situation is established that extends beyond the complete control of the narrator. If the task of the author is to summon his character to a certain existence, then that summoning suggests a certain restriction of agency in the task because the thing called for does not exist in isolation but is from elsewhere, somewhere beyond. Indeed, the narrator could have ended the story after book one as suggested in this passage, but the use of the future tense in the last paragraph suggests that the task will happen no matter the agency involved. The plural informal address "You will see" ("Ihr werdet sehen") points back to the plurality of the creative process and also implies the inclusion of the creative entities of the audience members from the creative process described in "Bau." As such, the calling forth into existence is evocative of Heidegger's fourfold in that the narrator and Biberkopf are brought together into a relationality with the other entities at play in the creative process of the epic author.

In addition to the extending dynamic of calling forth, the seriousness functions as a negation of play ("zu keinem Spiel"). The seriousness is the radical negation of play, like Baudrillard's twist of meaning in simulation. This connects play and seriousness at a point of indistinctness, which is the narrator's task. The narrator provides the means of outlining the

²¹⁷ Such a contradiction—to say this is no game to the reader and then play with that claim—seems to point directly to Döblin's remarks in "Bau": "[der Dichter] hat sich in die Vorgänge eingemischt, und zwar nicht spielerisch, sondern mit allem Ernst" (*AzL* 114).

indistinct limits, the realistic reporting of non-facts. Comparing the opening and closing lines of *BA* also testify to this indistinctness at the physical limits of the book: “This book reports” (“*Dies Buch berichtet . . .*”) (*BA* 11) supports this strategy with a very clear declaration of reporting, which is also the opening topic in “Bau.” Contrasted with the closing words of *BA* “widebum, widebum” (454), we find a different claim to authenticity in the form of onomatopoeia. The straight-forwardness or seriousness of the former is indicated by its common, easily-understood syntax and open, authoritative declaration of the purpose of the book, while the onomatopoeia is a more playful imitation of sound. In context of the conclusion, the onomatopoeia serves as an end rhyme for the *um* in the previous line, “der andere fällt um, der eine rennt weiter, der andere liegt stumm, widebum, widebum,” which further divulges the onomatopoeia as part of a rhyme—the broader context contextualizes the rhyme as part of a march. The meaning of the lines “The other falls over, that one runs farther, the other lies silent” depicts an image of soldiers in battle; some marching on, others dying. Hence, even the playfulness of the closing words divulges the grave consequences of war.

The negating dynamic of the narrator’s seriousness is demonstrated in another passage later in *BA*. This is not one of the opening reports to a chapter, but the comments come at the beginning of book six of *BA*, where the narrator attempts to comfort the reader about the impending hammer fall against Biberkopf.

Es ist kein Grund zu verzweifeln. Ich werde, wenn ich diese Geschichte weitererzähle und bis zu ihrem harten, schrecklichen, bitteren Ende geführt habe, noch oft das Wort gebrauchen: es ist kein Grund zu verzweifeln. Denn der Mann, von dem ich berichte, ist zwar kein gewöhnlicher Mann, aber doch insofern ein gewöhnlicher Mann, als wir ihn genau verstehen und manchmal sagen: wir könnten Schritt um Schritt dasselbe getan

haben wie er und dasselbe erlebt haben wie er. Ich habe versprochen, obwohl es nicht üblich ist, zu dieser Geschichte nicht stille zu sein.

Es ist die grausige Wahrheit, was ich berichte von Franz Biberkopf, der ahnungslos von Hause wegging, wider seinen Willen bei einem Einbruch mitmachte und vor ein Auto geworfen wurde. Er liegt unter den Rädern, der unzweifelhaft die redlichsten Bemühungen gemacht hat, seinen ordentlichen erlaubten und gesetzlichen Weg zu gehen. Aber ist das nicht grade, um zu verzweifeln, welcher Sinn soll denn in diesem frechen, ekelhaften, erbärmlichen Unsinn liegen, welcher verlogene Sinn soll denn dahineingelegt werden und vielleicht gar sein Schicksal für Franz Biberkopf daraus gemacht werden? Ich sage: es ist kein Grund zu verzweifeln. Ich weiß schon einiges, vielleicht sehen manche, die dies lesen, schon einiges. Eine langsame Enthüllung geht hier vor, man wird sie erleben wie Franz sie erlebt, und dann wird alles deutlich sein. (217)

The dominant message of this passage is an assumption of identification with Biberkopf. That assumption is not discretely directed at the reader. As seen previously, the narrator switches between first person singular and plural pronouns, including the imagined audience members and other entities involved in the simulation of the creative process for the epic artist in the invitation to assume Biberkopf's perspective. Even the indefinite pronoun "one" ("man") ascribes the addressee in ambiguity—it could be any of the co-creative entities, or this could be a direct reference to the reader. It is significant that this identify with Biberkopf is constructed in negation, as the narrator claims that he is both ordinary and not ordinary, but ordinary enough to be understandable, even identifiable. But understandable to whom? This ability to identify with Biberkopf is predicated on the character's plausibility (we would act step for step the same as he does), but the basis for comparison is opaquely distorted.

The phrase “there is no reason to despair” is repeated three times in this passage, which is also directed at ambiguous addressees (Is this referring to Biberkopf, the simulated audience members, the observing I, the narrator, the reader?). Even when he rhetorically inverts the admonition not to despair into a question, “But isn’t that actually to be despaired . . . ?” (Aber ist das nicht grade, um zu verzweifeln . . . ?), the question encourages us to continue to descend into the simulation. When the narrator says, “a slow unveiling is happening here” (“Eine langsame Enthüllung geht hier vor”), the claim is also valid for the degrees of subtlety he employs to coax the ambiguous addressee into the simulation. Even the seriousness of this existence is announced, leading to the “difficult, terrible, bitter end” (“harten, schrecklichen, bitteren Ende”). It is also significant that the narrator does not even call the experience of assuming Biberkopf’s position reading, referring to it instead as experiencing (“erleben”). Thus, the narrator sketches the way to understand the meaning of the novel, by following the slow, unfolding path of the protagonist and experiencing what he experiences in simulated form, to follow him along the radical negation of the sign.

The engulfment of the ambiguous addressee into the simulation discloses the impossibility of full verisimilitude with reality, which is also declared in one of the most extensive descriptions of Berlin. In book five, the narrator describes a scene in Berlin as if it were happening in real time. The narrator relates, “There are men, women, and children, the latter mostly holding hands with women. To enumerate them all and to describe their destiny is hardly possible, it could be done by only a few” (“Es sind Männer, Frauen, und Kinder, die letzteren meist an der Hand von Frauen. Sie alle aufzuzählen und ihr Schicksal zu beschreiben, ist schwer möglich, es könnte nur bei einigen gelingen”) (168). The impossibility of conveying the stories and minds of all the characters involved is called very difficult but possible by very

few. By preserving the possibility of narration, the narrator discloses a strategy of adapting to the ambiguity, of dealing with the ambiguity by opening it up to other indistinct possibilities, possibilities that seem to extend to reality. Later in the same paragraph in regard to these people, the narrator states, “What occurs in them, who can relate it, a terrible chapter. And if one did, whom would it serve?” (“Was in ihnen vorgeht, wer kann das ermitteln, ein ungeheures Kapitel. Und wenn man es täte, wem diene es?”) (ibid). It would be impossible to relate all the information that is relevant to explain these people. Yet, we, the readers, are forced to think of them as if they were real persons to be described in the text. In essence, thinking of the impossibility of narrating real people invites us to assume that they are real people, but all of this is in actually the simulation of the author, and we are interacting with his playfully constructed world. By preempting the readers’ doubts about the plausibility of emulating the real world, the narrator entices us to treat the epic work with seriousness while continuing to play with us on conditions of reading the text.

Instead of attempting to pursue the possibility of narrating these countless participants in the simulation of the novel, the narrator digresses into random observations. Directly after the above-quoted question about the monstrous chapter that would have to be written to describe these fictional people of a fictional Berlin, the narration continues as follows:

Neue Bücher? Schon die alten gehen nicht, und im Jahre 27 ist der Buchabsatz gegen 26 um soundsoviel Prozent zurückgegangen. Man nehme die Leute einfach als Privatpersonen, die 20 Pfennig bezahlt haben, mit Ausnahme der Besitzer von Monatskarten und der Schüler, die nur 10 Pfennig zahlen, und da fahren sie nun mit ihrem Gewicht von einem Zentner bis zwei Zentner, in ihren Kleidern, mit Taschen, Paketen, Schlüsseln, Hüten, künstlichen Gebissen, Bruchbändern über den

Alexanderplatz und bewahren die geheimnisvollen langen Zettel auf, auf denen steht: Linie 12 Siemenstraße DA, Gotzkowskistraße C, B, Oranienburger Tor C, C, Kottbuser Tor A, geheimnisvolle Zeichen, wer kann es raten, wer kann es nennen und wer bekennen, drei Worte nenn ich dir inhaltschwer, und die Zettel sind viermal an bestimmten Stellen gelocht, und auf den Zetteln steht in demselben Deutsch, mit dem die Bibel geschrieben ist und das Bürgerliche Gesetzbuch: Gültig zur Erreichung des Reiseziels auf kürzestem Wege, keine Gewähr für die Anschlußbahn. Sie lesen Zeitungen verschiedener Richtungen, bewahren vermittelt ihres Ohrlabyrinths das Gleichgewicht, nehmen Sauerstoff auf, dösen sich an, haben Schmerzen, haben keine Schmerzen, denken, denken nicht, sind glücklich, sind unglücklich, sind weder glücklich noch unglücklich. (168-9)

Very little in this passage seems to necessarily follow when analyzed from a logical standpoint: there is no reason why the narrator should talk about train tickets after discussing the possibility of accurately narrating the people of this fictional world. The list of random materials is evocative of gathering inspirational materials in order to feed the agglomerating image of the text in the creative process of the author. In fact, the common thread that seems to hold the passage together is an observation of things, especially things imprinted with text. Almost everything listed in the rest of the paragraph refers to a text of some kind; books, money, train tickets, and newspapers. The train ticket, the signs printed on it, and even the holes punched into it are conveyed to the reader as mysterious signs, as if these examples of text were in an unknown language, inaccessible to us, marked three times for its indecipherability: “who can guess it, who can name it, and who avow it” (“wer kann es raten, wer kann es nennen und wer bekennen”).

Instead of attempting to interact with the incalculability of the people, the narrative mind turns toward sheer observation of things, but not all things.

Instead of detailing everything in existence, the narration moves toward a scan of things in Berlin. This scanning is equivalent to the montage technique, the “Kinostil,” often discussed in scholarship on *BA*.²¹⁸ The concept of montage denotes selection, a cutting and piecing together, a focusing on one thing while disregarding the details. Thus, the key to the ability to adapt to ambiguity is to continue in relatedness and not stray into detailing. The narrator’s mind stays on the edge of description, only listing instead of detailing, in order to mark the possibility of detailing without delineation. This indistinct listing is described at first as balance, the maintaining of one’s equilibrium by means of the inner ear, and then shifts to a series of negations: pain, no pain, thinking, not thinking, are happy, are not happy. The final statement is even a negation of happiness and non-happiness. The negation signals the continuation of the narration, the stringing along of the narrative. The punctuation in this passage supports this idea: there are only two periods in this passage, and the rather long concluding sentence is connected by a string of commas and colons. Instead of detailing the image, piercing through to its true essence, the narrator merely marks the complexity going on under the surface of these fictitious individuals and the text. This listing is only a vague outlining or hinting at the potential details. It is like the percussing mentioned previously in that it only intrudes into the narration to mark that it cannot capture the entire image.

The scan is what this passage ultimately expresses about the narrator’s narrating strategy; that it is about maintaining the narration through continuing indistinctness, instead of elucidating

²¹⁸ See for example, Jähner, Harald. *Erzähler, Montierter, Soufflierter Text: Zur Konstruktion Des Romans “Berlin Alexanderplatz” Von Alfred Döblin*. Frankfurt am Main; New York: P. Lang, 1984, and Hage, Volker. *Collagen in Der Deutschen Literatur: Zur Praxis Und Theorie Eines Schreibverfahrens*. Frankfurt am Main; New York: P. Lang, 1984.

reality. The narrator is not omnipotent in his ability to recreate reality because he cannot say what that reality is in the first place. He may constantly invite us to perceive the story as reality, but he is also aware that he is limited to his perceptions; they distend out. The observing I is only ever adumbrating, sounding out, sketching the contours of the agglomerated image, and this sketching is only possible when the seriousness is asserted but not actually presented. Hence, the scanning of the narrator is the ability to adapt to the ambiguity of the other entities in the simulated space by focusing on one thing at a time, but in succession. Thus, the simulation of the creative process is duplicated through the narrator's listing and assembling of things. These things relate to each other, especially through their textual connection. As such, the narrator's admonition that we will experience text as Biberkopf is a cutting off, an abridgment of the experience. In the next two sections, this narration of the novelized mind is traced in its interrelatedness to the book as medium of that mind.

The Book and the Sound of the Simulated Mind

As was seen with the insertion of found material like the pictograms in book two, Döblin's *BA* acts as a vehicle for criticizing the limits of the book to capture the mind. In previous chapters, these limits were read not as discrete containers but as markings of indistinctness, or beginnings instead of endings. The next two sections constitute an attempt to understand these beginnings as radical negations, as the Möbius twists that mark a dissipation of the mind into indistinct potentiality. In the introduction to this chapter, the third aspect of the mind resistant to uploading was described as an adaptability to ambiguity. This adaptability in relation to Döblin's thought is contingent upon the relationship between the sonic elements of the text and the book. Establishing this link requires some considerable exposition.

Returning to Döblin's discussion of the creative process for the medieval epic artist in "Bau," Döblin details how the creation of the epic work has been transferred from a public interaction with his audience to a mental exercise practiced by the author in the isolation of his writing parlor. During this description, we encounter this digression:

Auf den heutigen Autor ist das Unglück des Buchdrucks gefallen. Ein Buch ist endlos lang, man kann ein Buch noch immer länger machen, man kann zwei Bücher machen, drei Bücher, woran soll ein Autor, ein epischer, merken, wann er aufzuhören hat? Im Grunde braucht er doch erst aufzuhören, wenn alle Papiervorräte erschöpft sind. – Und das ist also die fehlende Bedingung zu einer äußeren Form für uns heute. Und wie sollen wir sprechen, wer reguliert unsere Stimme – wir haben plötzlich gar keine Stimme, man nimmt uns die Stimme und gibt uns dafür traurige Drucktypen. Wie sollen Drucktypen unseren Sprachrhythmus beeinflussen, wo doch gerade das wirkliche Sprechen, das wirkliche Einatmen und ausatmen, die Kadenz des Tonfalls nach dem Sinn den Satz baut und die Sätze hintereinander reiht. – Und soll der heutige Autor schreiben, für wen schreibt er denn? Wohin die Bücher gehen, weiß er nicht; vielleicht bleiben sie in Leipzig auf dem Speicher des Verlegers, er spricht überhaupt für niemand, er spricht ins Leere, es ist kein allgemeines Volksdenken mehr da, die Maschine und die Wirtschaft hat alles zerrissen. Ein vollkommen katastrophaler Zustand. (*AzL* 117)

The first point to notice in this passage is an emphasis on the unlimited length of a book, that there is no limit to the amount the author can write. As was seen with the listing of things in the previous section as a strategy for dealing with the ambiguity of simulating the situatedness of the mind in relation to other minds, the book is a medium that may continue without end. This ire of this passage about the unlimited quantity of text and the lack of sonic quality mirrors the

narrator's inability describe all the people of Berlin and their destinies, discussed in the previous section. The beginning of that quote criticizes the creation of new books because they do not sell well. In that passage, the narrator lamented that no one would read these continuing texts, even if one tried to write them, while in this passage from "Bau," Döblin is concerned that there is no limit to the demand for the length of a story, or at least there is no audience like in medieval days to tell him what a good end to the story is. In all of these observations there is an emphasis on a lack of definitive endings.

But Döblin's major lament in this passage is for the lost voice of the epic artist, whose voice would indicate beginnings and ends by tone, even insinuating subtlety and hidden meanings according to his intonation. This passage may simply be indicative of the author's enthusiasm for reincarnating the story of *BA* through different media such as radio and film, but considering the mental simulation of the creative process of the medieval epic storyteller in the mind of the modern epic author, Döblin seems to long for a medium akin to our contemporary visions of virtual reality or digital cyberspace, where reality can be more authentically simulated beyond the confines of the printed text. This may also clarify Döblin's comment later in the essay: "The form of the book is given to the epicist, but a book is only a beginning, never an end" ("Dem Epiker ist die Buchform gegeben, aber ein Buch ist zwar ein Anfang, aber nie ein Ende") (AzL 124).²¹⁹ Aside from the fact that this comprehension of the book speaks to the limits of the mind as beginnings and not discrete endings, it may also be possible that Döblin is connecting the lack of voice in the text with his notion of the author percussing and dancing around the figures and events of his story. This conceptualization of narrating as a form of sounding out rather than perfectly rendering characters suggests that the book, like the author's

²¹⁹ Döblin also betrays his Marxist leanings in his complaints about the market forces and technology that have deprived the epic author of his connection to the masses.

presence in the book, is an open-ended relatedness that advances beyond its own initial impression.

Such thoughts about the sonic aspect of the printed word in the book harmonizes with Walter Ong's thoughts on orality, which he also discussed in the context of ancient epics.

Written texts all have to be related somehow, directly or indirectly, to the world of sound, the natural habitat of language, to yield their meanings. "Reading" a text means converting it to sound, aloud or in the imagination, syllable-by-syllable in slow reading or sketchily in the rapid reading common to high-technology cultures. Writing can never dispense with orality. (Ong 8)

For Döblin, there are advantages to the oral capacity of language, such as rhythm, inhaling and exhaling, prosody, etc. For Ong, the oral dynamic of text is indispensable, a constant given no matter the circumstances of reading. Both Ong and Döblin are concerned with a quality of the text that is being lost or abridged, an aspect that has been redacted for the sake of managing the complexity of the thoughts behind the text. The nature of text itself is resistant to the sounds from which they originated, unless, as Ong suggests, one duplicates those sounds in your mind as you read them, simulating them, as it were. Still, even if the sound is simulated in the mind, access is forever cut off from the original voice of the author, obscuring the sonic quality of the author's mind in the epic work. Extending Döblin's point to mind-uploading, even computer programming languages may also be haunted by a sonic trace.

Because of this lack of sonic quality, Döblin advocated a distancing from the book, an attempt to find another medium for the delivery of the epic story.

Ich will auch nicht davon sprechen, daß ich die Befreiung des epischen Werkes vom Buch für schwierig, aber nützlich halte, nützlich insbesondere in Hinsicht auf die

Sprache. Das Buch ist der Tod der wirklichen Sprachen. Dem Epiker, der nur schreibt, entgehen die wichtigsten formbildenden Kräfte der Sprache; ich habe seit langem die Parole: Los vom Buch, sehe aber keinen deutlichen Weg für den heutigen Epiker, es sei denn der Weg zu einer – neuen Bühne. Und dies schlägt mit in dieselbe Kerbe, was ich oben gesagt habe von der Renaissance und Regeneration des epischen Werks. (*AzL* 132)

What this new “stage” could be, Döblin does not indicate in this essay, but the use of the term suggests that the epic extend back to the realm of the dramatic. Previously in the essay, Döblin used the concept of drama to distinguish the epic as a freeform that incorporates others. Still, Döblin attempted to distinguish the two—the the dramatist’s creations are to be performed before the eyes and ears, while the epic author claims the human fantasy as his “Darstellungsort” (112). Later, he discusses the distinction in terms of continuation and beginnings: “Im Drama stirbt ein Mensch prompt nach zwei Stunden, der Epiker ist gemütlicher, er läßt ihn heute sterben, aber morgen kann er wieder aufstehen” (124).²²⁰ But despite the potential invocation of the dramatic, Döblin concludes that only the pseudo-epic-authors will imitate drama (*AzL* 125), while the true epic authors take the symphonic form from music as a pattern for emulation, especially in its repetition of themes and leitmotifs, demonstrated throughout *BA*.²²¹ This is due to literature’s link to music as a “temporal art” (“Zeitkunst”) (*AzL* 127). Hence, the stage that Döblin is referring to provide both music and drama. As asserted at the opening of the section entitled “Pictograms,” *BA* is a multimedia experience.

²²⁰ Döblin’s own attempts as a dramaturge were never successful. His only play, *Luisitania*, was a complete flop, labelled by critics as a “wreck” (Schoeller 259).

²²¹ For more on the musical themes in *BA*, see Ogasawara, Yoshihito. “Verdrängt und wiedererinnert. Das Lied vom Schnitter Tod: ‚resemiotisierter‘ Intertext im Roman Berlin Alexanderplatz.” In *Evokationen. Gedächtnis und Theatralität als kulturelle Praktiken. Beiträge der Tateshina-Symposien 1998 und 1999*. Japanische Gesellschaft für Germanistik. München: Iudicium 2000, 117–139; as well as Ogasawara, Yoshihito. *Literatur Zeugt Literatur: Intertextuelle, Motiv- Und Kulturgeschichtliche Studien Zu Alfred Döblins Poetik Und Dem Roman "Berlin Alexanderplatz"*. Frankfurt am Main: P. Lang, 1996.

The sonic aspects of the text that Döblin advocated in “Bau” are exemplified through a variety of techniques too numerous to list in this study. In addition to the percussing role of the narrator previously elaborated, there was also a quotation of a song from the Humperdink opera situated with the pictograms. Song quotations and leitmotifs are replete in *BA*, but there is one particular leitmotif that is beneficial to the argument of the mind’s adaptability to ambiguity. In the next section, Berlin dialect will also be addressed, and onomatopoeia will be commented on further. Even if *BA* must still be confined to the bounds of the book, there is also a strong sonic component to the text.

In one of the final exchanges between Franz Biberkopf and a figure identified as Death, the leitmotif of the ax is particularly explicit. Throughout *BA*, such leitmotifs may be inserted into the narration at sundry moments. This scene in the *Irrenanstalt Buch* is one of the many apparently psychic showdowns between the mysterious figure of death and Biberkopf depicted throughout the development of the narrative. The dialogues of death are sometimes reminiscent of dramatic scenes, just as Döblin suggested in the openness of the epic as a form, but this one tends toward the poetic:

Franz schreit.

Es schreit Franz, kriecht an und schreit.

Er schreit die ganze Nacht. Ist in Marsch gekommen Franz.

Er schreit in den Tag hinein.

Er schreit in den Mittag hinein.

Schwing fall hack.

Schreit in den Mittag hinein.

Schreit in den Nachmittag hinein.

Schwing fall hack.

Schwing, hack, hack, schwing, schwing hack, hack, hack.

Schwing, hack.

Schreit in den Abend, in den Abend. Die Nacht kommt.

Schreit in die Nacht, Franz in die Nacht. (432)

The repetition of the words “schwing” and “hack” in this passage signify two of the most frequently-used words used to depict the ax leitmotif (“Beil”). Two sounds are especially frequent in this passage: the unvoiced fricative “sch” sound, and the voiceless velar plosive “k,” manifested in both the word “hack” and in the devoicing of the “g” in the final position at the end of “Tag.” They are jarring contrasts and seem to also be onomatopoeias of the sound of an ax chopping into wood. In addition to the sonic connection of the ax leitmotif, there was previously a visual representation of this leitmotif (at least potentially); for the ax was also depicted in one of the pictograms previously discussed (the one accompanied by the title “Feuerlöschwesen”). When Döblin declares in “Bau” that the new epic “hits in the same notch” (“dies schlägt mit in dieselbe Kerbe”), it may also be a relation back to the hacking of the ax.

The swinging of the ax is contrasted by the screaming of Franz Biberkopf, a sonic blending that conjures a gruesome image. The section depicts a clear temporal progression from night to day, to midday, to afternoon, to evening and then back to night, suggesting that the sound-image is not an outright negation but a slower, progressive process of negation. Moreover, the repetition of the adverbial “hinein” implies a movement into something, a slow unfolding. Taken together, the cyclical temporality of *ZB* and in turn the Möbius loop of simulation is evoked. The last phrase of the passage, “Franz in die Nacht,” gives the impression of either movement into the night by Franz or possibly a sort of absorption of Franz by the night.

Altogether, the effect of the passage is one of dismemberment or disintegration, which recalls an additional leitmotif of the slaughterhouse (“Schlachthof”) employed in *BA*, which is emblematic of the slow death of the old Franz Biberkopf over the course of the novel and his eventual rebirth as Karl (it is Franz’s middle name, which he adopts after his departure from the insane asylum in book nine).²²² The theme of dismemberment in connection to this leitmotif evinces the negation of the Franz Biberkopf, a gradual negation, which will be discussed more in the next section.

To be sure, the leitmotif of the ax most apparently speaks to the death and transformation of Franz Biberkopf, but it may also be possible to regard it as a metaphorical representation of Döblin’s criticism of the limits of the book as a vehicle for the epic work. Recalling that the epic work is a paradox of the realistic reporting of fictional events, the ax leitmotif indicates that the book abstracts its sonic elements. In essence, Döblin employs a highly sonic description in order to evoke a connection between the confinement of the book and the sonic poverty of the book as a medium. (In terms of confinement, this becomes clearer in the next section in regard to the *Irrenanstalt Buch*.) To recapitulate, although the book may be infinitely long, only restricted by the amount of paper supplies, it is always cut off from real language and the voice of the author by the printed text. When Döblin says the epic author writing his books “spricht ins Leere,” it seems that he is pointing to some element that cannot be completely captured by the book. The sensual faculties of the mind—the ability to read images (pictograms) as one would read the alphabet, finding meaning in all things observed; the capacity to abridge the complexities of other minds by listing the things surrounding them instead; and the aptitude to simulate sound in one’s mind from visual stimulus—all these can be demonstrated by means of the text, but they are also always incomplete in the confines of the text. Hence, the sound-image of the ax-cry is

²²² For examples of the slaughter motif, see *BA* 136, 146, 224, 284, 351, 353.

indicative of the attempt to hack, dig, or penetrate deeper into that certain aspect of the mind that is clouded in its situation in the mind. In the next section, we see how the limits of the book play out in the finale of *BA* and ultimately in the simulation of the mind.

Irrenanstalt Buch

In previous sections of this chapter, the adaptability of the mind to ambiguity was defined by the author's relationship to the narrator and the text. In each case, there was a trace of Döblin's thoughts in these aspects of *BA*. In *ZB* and *SW*, such traces were related back to the authors by means of Ziemßen's anachronistic uniform and Bertrand's existential crisis. An additional piece of evidence of Döblin's intrusion into the book comes with his metafictional and equivocal comments on the book itself as a medium. Toward the end of *BA*, the narrator reveals the very title of the novel: "Die Dinge in diesem Buch Berlin-Alexanderplatz vom Schicksal Franz Biberkopfs sind richtig, und man wird sie zweimal und dreimal lesen und sich einprägen, sie haben ihre Wahrheit, die zum Greifen ist" (414). Revealing the title does not absolutely implicate Döblin as narrator, but the assumption that one will read this text two or three times speaks to the ability of the reader to adapt to the truth of the novel as an ambiguity of consequential meanings. Just as the "one" may refer to the actual reader of the novel and to an imagined reader in the novel's simulation of the creative process in the mind of the epic artist, so the narrator is and is not the author. The consequences of this ambiguity reflect back on the very book through which the story is presented. The passage is another example of the narrator's assumption of the simulation of the text. Ambiguity is the possibility for more than one interpretation, to deal with the indistinct possibilities of meaning. At the conclusion of the novel, this ambiguity is made apparent by Biberkopf's internment in a mental asylum, which, as the

pinnacle of Biberkopf's transformative experience, holds deep personal significance for Alfred Döblin and Franz Biberkopf.

The climax of *BA* is set in the "Irrenanstalt Buch," the mental institution in which Franz Biberkopf is committed after he suffers a mental breakdown caused by his false arrest for Mieke's death (his last girlfriend in the novel). This insane asylum from the book is based on an actual institution in northern Berlin called Berlin-Buch in which Döblin worked as an assistant doctor from October 1906 to June 1908. The institution's name yields a wealth of ambiguity and irony for *BA* and Döblin. The word *Buch*, like the English equivalent, has its origin in the proto-Indo-European word *bhago- for beech tree.²²³ It seems that at first the word referred to the runes and letters that could be easily inscribed in the tree's bark, and over time the name came to signify a collection of such markings, culminating finally in the medium utilized today. The leitmotif of ax-chopping, identified in the previous section, is also relevant to the double meaning of "Buch" in relation to its etymological connection to beech wood, for the inscriptions into the page are reminiscent of the ax chopping into wood, literally inscribing a space for the mind. The city district for which this mental institution is named takes its name from the beech tree, but the double-meaning of the place name was likely not lost on the young doctor stationed there at the turn of the twentieth century.

Döblin's position at Buch was his first professional appointment after medical school, allowing him to return home to his native Berlin after extensive schooling in Freiburg. According to his biographer, Döblin expressed some apprehension about whether anti-Semitic hostilities would prevent him from obtaining a position at the institution, but, in the end, he was hired and seemed to thrive there professionally. He used his time at Buch to continue the work he

²²³ See Duden 117.

had begun in medical school, sketching an outline of the pathological mind by observing his patients' obsessions, ticks, surrealistic tendencies, and cover stories. Döblin wrote four professional papers on psychological disorders and two of his early narratives at Buch, indicating that it was a productive time for both Döblin the author and Döblin the doctor (Schoeller 90). Another significant event at Buch was Döblin's affair with the nurse Frieda Kunke, whom the 29-year old Döblin apparently wanted to marry; however, his mother forbade the marriage on the grounds of Kunke's economic, religious, and social status. Still, Döblin did not immediately break of the relationship. Sexual relations between nurses and doctors were strictly prohibited by the institution, which caused Döblin to apply for a transfer to a position in a different district of Berlin (Kreuzberg) before the affair could be exposed. He was offered and accepted the position at Kreuzberg in the summer of 1908, but nevertheless continued his affair for additional two years after his departure.

Buch's location in *BA* not only marks a connection to the medium of the book, but also relates to mixed period in Döblin's professional and personal life. The choice of incorporating the institution and its name in *BA* compels us to consider its appearance as informative to Döblin's own ideas about the limitations of the book as a medium of the mind. Considered from the perspective of Franz Biberkopf, the mental institution has many parallel themes with the medium of the book as a potential space for the mind to expand. Buch is a confined space where Biberkopf's mind is supposed to regain its composure, be rehabilitated in order to interact with society, and again inhabit the outside world. It is a proving ground for the re-instantiation of the mind. Buch was also a confined place of trial for Döblin in the sense that he was compelled to hide his romance with Kunke and establish his professional competence amidst potential anti-Semitism and social criticism of his sexual expression. Similarly, the book *BA* serves a similar

function for the mind of the author under the guise of the narrator, percussing his characters and intervening in the narrative flow of the novel as he sees fit. Irrenanstalt Buch serves a similar function for Biberkopf as he attempts to purge himself of his past demons. The sections in Buch demonstrate this by depicting, among other things, a discussion between doctors about how to treat Biberkopf; a vision of Ida;²²⁴ a conversation with a fellow inmate; observations of or perhaps interactions with mice in Biberkopf's cell; and, most pronounced, the final confrontation with the figure of Death in which multiple leitmotifs from the rest of the book are repeated, ending in the "death" of Franz Biberkopf—at least in mind or perhaps spirit.²²⁵

That Döblin's mind is the one behind all of *BA* is demonstrated by the thematic parallels with the author's real-life experiences. For example, Buch was for Döblin a period marked by literary and scholarly productivity, close observations of pathological criminals, and a period of sexual and relational intrigue. Döblin's thwarted love affair with Frieda Kunke can be associated in Irrenanstalt Buch with Biberkopf's frustrated erotic relationships: Biberkopf has a vision of his murdered girlfriend Ida and confesses his culpability in her death; Biberkopf is incarcerated at Buch because he suffers a mental breakdown after being arrested for allegedly murdering another girlfriend, Mieze; and, shortly after his release, Biberkopf learns that Eva miscarried the child they were to have together, even though Eva was not especially in love with Biberkopf. Aside from frustrated sexual and personal relationships, Biberkopf's incarceration in Buch is due to his association with his relentless attraction to the criminal world, despite his oath to remain a proper individual. Döblin's professional task at Buch was to study the criminal pathology; one

²²⁴ Ida was Biberkopf's female companion before the main storyline of *BA*. We learn at various stages in the text that she was murdered by Biberkopf in a drunken rage, for which Biberkopf was sent to Tegel prison on a four-year term for manslaughter. The opening of *BA* begins with Biberkopf's release from prison. Her appearance to him represents a final confrontation with his guilt at her murder and could be regarded in that sense as the final, critical test of Biberkopf's character.

²²⁵ *BA* 442

wonders how much of these observations went into Reinhold's clearly pathological personality. Although Biberkopf is not himself scholarly or professional in any way or prone to writing, the passages in *Buch* are among the most poetic and climactic of the novel, encompassing the culmination of many themes and leitmotifs from throughout the novel as demonstrated by the exchange with death above. Even the death of the old Biberkopf in *Buch* could share a common thread with the death of an alternative life path for Döblin, in which he could have married Frieda Kunke in defiance of his mother and risked alienation from his family. The novel is, as discussed in the introduction, the play place for the imagination of the mind, an appropriate place for the imperfect play with reality, to explore alternatives and ideas in simulation. The intermeshing of elements from Döblin's personal life into the narrative relates to the simulation of the mind in the text precisely because of the ambiguity of *Buch*.

Buch reminds us of the radical negation of the sign as value because it blurs the distinction between a metafictional commentary on the book as medium, just as Döblin was apt to do in his critical essay by declaring that the author is absorbed in the epic work. By means of the ambiguous referentiality of *Buch*, the simulation of the mind is extended in three ways: to a place in the text (Biberkopf's insane asylum), an analogous place outside the text (the institution of Döblin's employ), and to a place that is the medium between the two (the book as insane asylum, i.e. a space for the mind to let loose and to probe different possibilities).²²⁶ Establishing this kind of ambiguity recalls the earlier quoted statement about the veracity of the things that happen in *BA*: "Die Dinge in diesem Buch Berlin-Alexanderplatz vom Schicksal Franz Biberkopfs sind richtig, und man wird sie zweimal und dreimal lesen und sich einprägen, sie haben ihre Wahrheit, die zum Greifen ist" (414). The phrase "sich einprägen" means to brand

²²⁶ Fore argues that Döblin tended toward the medial when it came to narrative, not the subventive or adjectival according to Mauthner's definition (200ff).

something into one's memory; it is connected with the verb "prägen," which means to coin or stamp and etymologically meant to engrave or impress.²²⁷ This evokes the leitmotif of the ax vis-à-vis the text discussed in the previous section and the intrusion of the author into the text as narrator in order to percuss or dance about his characters. Hence, the graspability of the truth is brought about by the sonic and visual intrusiveness of the author's mind in the text. After all, the simulation of the creative process of the epic artist was built around visual and sonic instantiations of the mind, an observing I, and a co-creative audience. Furthermore, when Döblin asserted that the book is only a beginning and never an end, the statement discloses a resistance of the book to the discrete finality of the narrative.

The final exchange between the figure of death and Biberkopf in *Irrenanstalt Buch* helps to clarify the connection between *Irrenanstalt Buch* and the ideas raised in the previous section about orality. Döblin was able to escape his predicament at Buch, while Biberkopf was only released once he confronted Death and confessed his culpability in Ida's death. While still confined at/in Buch, the figure of Death spitefully confronts Biberkopf, questioning his very existence. In Job-like fashion, Biberkopf pleads to understand what he could have done to avoid this fate, not yet understanding, as he would at the end, that one does not cower to destiny.²²⁸ Death and Biberkopf's conversation is apparently only partially written in Berlin dialect:

Brüllen des Todes: "Nischt sag ick dir, quatsch mir nich an. Hast ja kein Kopp, hast keine Ohren. Bist ja nich geboren, Mensch, bist garnich uff die Welt jekomm. Du Mißgeburt mit Wahnideen. Mit freche Ideen, Papst Biberkopf, der mußte geboren werden, damit wirs merken, wie alles ist. Die Welt braucht andere Kerle als dir, hellere und welche, die

²²⁷ see "Prägen," *Duden* 623

²²⁸ "Da werde ich nicht mehr schreien wie früher: das Schicksal, das Schicksal. Das muß man nicht as Schicksal verehren, man muß es ansehen, anfassen und zerstören" (*BA* 454).

weniger frech sind, die sehen, wie alles ist, nicht aus Zucker, aber aus Zucker und Dreck und alles durcheinander. Du Kerl, dein Herz her, damit es aus mit dir ist. Damit ichs in den Dreck schmeiße, was hingehört. Die Schnauze kannst du vor dir behalten.” (*BA* 434)

Death responds imperfectly to Biberkopf, not quite reproducing Biberkopf’s dialect, translating the initial “g” as “j” in “jekomm” but not in “geboren” or “hingehört”; and shortening the diphthong “au” in “uff” (“auf”) but not in “aus.” The imperfect delivery of the “real language” of Berlin reminds us of Döblin’s criticism of the book as “the death of real language” (“Das Buch ist der Tod der wirklichen Sprachen”) (*AzL* 132). Even the personification of death can only speak imperfectly because of the limitations of the text, that is, the dissipating limits of the mind in the text. But it is the criticism of Biberkopf’s epistemological sensory that divulges the crux of Death’s bellowing. The means of determining one’s existence, Biberkopf’s senses and thinking, are specifically criticized here: he is told not to speak (“nonsense”), that he has no head, has insane ideas, has no ears (to hear); the world needs people unlike Biberkopf, who can see, can taste (the difference between sugar and garbage), who can feel (out with the heart) and even sense of smell (the snout). Even the appellation “Papst Biberkopf” may be meant to criticize his sixth sense or religious sense. Death attacks Biberkopf’s sensual perception piece by piece, hacking it up and negating its potency. The speech is one of negation, a negation of the mind of Biberkopf.

Furthermore, the reprimand that the world needs better people (“Die Welt braucht andere Kerle als dir”) serves as the central criticism of the passage. At first glance, it seems to merely recall the final message of the novel, to be aware of other people and one’s surroundings: “Ein Schiff liegt nicht fest ohne großen Anker, und ein Mensch kann nicht sein ohne viele andere Menschen” (453). It also supports the unnamed voice that bids Biberkopf to be aware of his

surroundings and situation, that he must allow his world and its other participants to be a part of him: “Herankommen lassen . . .” (435f). This supports readings of Döblin’s epic novel in relation to Bertolt Brecht’s notion of epic theater and the alienation effect, accenting the didactic element of *BA*.²²⁹ But the undoing of his character (“Bist ja nich geboren, Mensch, bist garnich uff die Welt jekomm”) also speaks to the fact that Biberkopf is not a real person from the real world but a superficial characterization, a part of the image in the simulated mind of the epic artist, a mind that is negated into indistinct potentiality at its limits.²³⁰ The narrator had earlier tried to convince us that we could act as if we were Biberkopf and that we would experience things in *BA* that have their graspable truth, but how can such a contrived mind produce tangible truth? The statement that the world needs other characters than Franz Biberkopf discloses the mind of the novel as incapable of adapting to the negation of that mind in the text. The contours of the mind in the novel are shrouded in indistinctness, as was shown in the plurality in *SW* and the situatedness in *ZB*. To concretize this point, the character making this attack on Biberkopf is an unreal personification of death, who speaks only partially in Berlin dialect, disclosing a certain variation away from the focalized character and even the author and narrator. This in turn discloses the fact that he is not even really speaking; but we, the readers, give the text voice as we see and decipher the words on the page and speak them aloud in our minds. The message that the world is chaotic is chaotically delivered in order to demonstrate the indistinctness of the mind at its limits.

²²⁹ For more on Brecht’s relationship to Döblin, see Müller (2008) cited previously and Stauffacher, Werner. Stauffacher, Werner. “Alfred Döblin Und Bert Brecht: Zwischen Berlin Alexanderplatz und dem Badener Lehrstück Vom Einverständnis.” *Germanisch-Romanische Monatsschrift*, vol. 26, 1976, 466–70. Brecht was also apparently a fan of Döblin’s work, they exchanged some correspondence, and both disliked Thomas Mann, see Schoeller 220f.

²³⁰ See footnote 171.

The final utopian message of the book may be tarnished by these indecipherable contours of the mind, but there was also some suspicion inserted into *BA* from the very beginning. The opening words, “*Dies Buch berichtet . . .*” are italicized—in German, *schräg geschrieben*, literally meaning written askew—casting misapprehension on the authenticity claim of the novel to graspable truth, which is a point Döblin had tried to make in “Bau” as well when he referred to the paradox of playful and serious imitation of reality. Even the final words of the book are written in italics and are not even real words at all, but onomatopoeia. But the final sentence of the book before these italics makes an indefensible knowledge claim from a pluralized perspective: “Wir wissen, was wir wissen, wir habens teuer bezahlen müssen” (454). It, like the entire book, is masked in distortion, skewed intentionally as a comment on the novelized mind. There is, after all, no *we* here but only the author.²³¹ Despite the severity of Biberkopf’s experiences, there is no guarantee that Biberkopf will not fall back into old habits and unlearn all that he is supposed to have learned. The end of the novel is scarcely even an end.

As Döblin conjectured in “Bau,” the book is limitless, always capable of a sequel or a continuation by another author. Devin Fore attributes this lack of ending in *BA* to Döblin’s criticism and rejection of proairetic organization as Roland Barthes argued in *S/Z*, or the willful teleological closure of the text, “that a story portrays a course of action always oriented toward the action’s necessary result” (197). Fore observes that there were multiple versions of *BA*—early releases in newspaper articles, alternative drafts, and later versions for radio and film—which meant that Döblin was constantly reworking and rewriting the story, subverting the ending of the novel. In essence, Döblin “ended the book with a beginning” (198). That beginning is a denial of closure, a radical negation of beginning with an ending that is simultaneously a

²³¹ The only thing the reader had to pay, if included here, was the price of the book—or less if checked out from a library.

beginning, an indistinctness of the mind in the narrative, or a twist of the simulation of the mind as Möbius loop. As readers, we can pretend to experience *BA* as if we were Franz Biberkopf, we can assume his narrative mode; but we know that it is arbitrary, that it is only a make-believe positionality. In isolation, we can deal with the ambiguity of the text, just as Döblin attempted to demonstrate by dividing the process of the epic artist into multiple entities, lending a degree of pliability to the mind in juxtaposing forces. The adaptability of ambiguity is the ability of the mind to scan its surroundings, ignore extraneous matter, and focus on only one element, to abridge experience so that it is more manageable, to experience life in contrivance as if one were Biberkopf. As such, Döblin anticipates the scan of mind-uploading by collapsing the narrative difference between telling and showing, by insisting on seriousness when he is playing the narrator, and by accenting visual and sonic aspects in order to expose the text as abstraction. This is the negation of a narrative binary as value, a scan as the adaptability of ambiguity. If the mind is to be uploaded, then its artificial counterpart will have to learn to alternate between these two experiential modes, the ability to deal with ambiguity and the ability to simultaneously entertain the possibility of multiple trajectories of meaning in the impression of a single word like “Buch.” It will have to adopt the ability of the mind to adapt to indistinctness and project potentiality onto it.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined how *BA* exposes the indistinct limits of the mind by introducing a third element resistant to the uploading of the mind: the adaptability of the mind to ambiguity. A discussion of the pictograms in *BA* prepared the ground for an extended discussion on the Döblin’s unique narrative style. In subsequent sections, the mind of the author was

elaborated vis-à-vis the narrator. Döblin's ideas on the creative process of the epic artist disclosed a type of simulation of the mind that intrudes upon the integrity of the narrative and the discreteness of fictional minds. This was further elaborated by Döblin's criticism of the book as a vehicle for the aims of the author. Themes pertaining to sound were then investigated in order to elaborate how the novelized mind adapts to ambiguity. This explanation culminated in a discussion concerning the ambiguity of "Buch" in *BA*.

As the bounds of the mind cannot be discretely defined, so the products of the mind in simulation can never be definitively described, especially in the case of text. This exposes the limits of the novel as a vehicle for the creative forces of the mind. *BA* contributes to the argument of this dissertation by explicating the way in which the modernist novel simulates the mind and identifying how the simulation of the mind undermines the discrete programmability of the mind. Whether in textual simulation or computer simulation, the (con)textuality of the mind plays a significant role in indistinctness of the mind. The ostensive omnipotence of mind in text is always limited by the author or programmer, which is exposed to ambiguity at its limits. Much as a computer programmer might assert that a rendering of the mind, if accurate enough, would be indistinguishable from the original, the assertion is always predicated on the assumption that one fully understands what the mind is and that our senses, in this case a visual scan, can produce, with full fidelity, whatever the mind truly is.

As particularly critical as Döblin, Broch, and Mann have been in establishing how the text functions as a simulation of the mind, there has been a lack of female voices or even gender-skeptical voices in these modernist portrayals of the mind. This discloses a skew toward masculinity when it comes to simulation. There are socio-historical reasons for this lack of diversity in the twentieth century modernist canon in Germany, but there are works from a

female perspective which can also inform the utilization of simulation in understanding the rendering of fictional minds. In previous sections, there was some preliminary discussion of how the masculine mind is deconstructed in the novelized mind. By way of concluding this dissertation, these voices and their contribution to this argument will be broached.

Conclusion

The Mind's Resistance to Uploading

Summary of Chapters

In the chapters of this dissertation, I investigated how the mind in German modernist novels is simulated. Close readings were undertaken in order to better adumbrate the contours of the mind in the text; more specifically, I read select passages in a search for aspects of the mind imitated in the text that are resistant to discrete substantiation. Although the sheer complexity of the mind can never be fully captured in text, the attempts to convey minds through narration discloses some aspects of the mind that are resistant to uploading, that is, the digital encapsulation of the mind in cyberspace.²³² These resistant aspects of the mind are situatedness, plurality, and an adaptability to ambiguity. That is not to say that the uploadability of the mind is unachievable—that would, after all, contradict the plea of this argument to consider the unknown future in the situatedness of the mind—but these aspects present certain hurdles that have to be considered in the crafting of minds through artificial intelligence. That literature is able to identify these aspects of resistance speaks to the importance of readability and textualization in the future expansion of technology. If transhumanist theorists such as Bostrom and Kurzweil expect this theory to be put into praxis, then there must be a coming to terms with the incalculable indistinctness that has accompanied the literary attempt to encapsulate the mind.

²³² The birth of modern psychology in the theories of Freud still constitutes one of the best arguments in favor of the intricacy of the mind, in particular the unknown workings of the mind, located in the unconscious. See, for example, Henriques, Gregg. "What Is the Mind?: Understanding Mind and Consciousness via the Unified Theory". *Psychology Today*, 22 Dec 2011. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/theory-knowledge/201112/what-is-the-mind>

Situatedness provided a preliminary examination of how the mind is captured in a book and established some of the basic conceptual currency for crafting minds in literature. Situated cognition, Baudrillard's simulation, the wonder of technology, and the abridgment of spacetime pointed to indistinct aspects of the relational situatedness of the mind in the text. The mind of any individual in *ZB* is never discretely captured. The mind of the narrator always left certain traces, most significantly evinced by the appearance of Ziemßen's ghost and Mann's indiscrete disclosing of the future. Such a disclosure of the future divulged the artificiality of the novelized mind, which always depends on the foreknowledge of the author. Ziemßen's uniform expresses a strange blending of author, narrator, and protagonist, comparable to the tainting of a programmed mind in digital space. This reminds us that the mind is situated in such a way that it dissipates into spacetime, meaning into the indistinct limits of the space it occupies and the limits of past and future as well. *ZB* often employed binary opposites in order to disclose the mind, but those binaries suggest a radical negation of the sign, resulting in the extremization of signs into obscurity or indistinctness. This situatedness with its distorted limits anticipates the problems with the transhumanist prospect of mind-uploading by showing that the confines of the mind extend onto other objects and individuals, that space is abridged and transgressed in our thinking, and that the narrator or programmer always impinges on the thing it programs, just as the Heidegger's fourfold asserts relationality among the thing. Thus, the hermetic magic ("Zauber") of the Hans Castorp's mind in *ZB* is parallel to the "trans" of transhumanism, crossing the indistinctness of boundaries and exposing the resistance of situatedness to the Nietzschean determination to shape the world as desired.

In chapter two, the narration of the mind came into closer focus, discerning its relationship to the novelized mind as one akin to translation, which was the second step in

Bostrom's theory of mind-uploading. It also became apparent that one cannot speak of any single mind in the novel, that the mind is prone to plurality, the second aspect of the mind resistant to uploading. As such, there are inevitably multiple minds as work in the novel. Sometimes, as with Bertrand, these minds are incongruent with each other. The perfect translation and the perfect enclosure of the mind in the text constitute ends which are impossible to meet because they depend on the intrusion of the narrator into the text. Pursuing this line of reasoning, I then examined the protagonist Huguenau and the relationship between his mind and the narrator. The metaphor of sleepwalking in light of this relationship was then discussed. Bertrand, the narrator-author of the novel, was investigated and subsequently contrasted with other characters. His depiction of femininity in the printing press and Marguerite suggested an indistinct othering of these characters, which ultimately extended on him, a sort of narrative backfire. Bertrand as both narrator and author served as an informant for Broch, disclosing an indistinctness and relationality to multiple personae in the novel, a certain plurality that functions in tandem with the indistinctness of the situatedness of the mind. Ultimately, it was the poetic mode of narration that demonstrated that the mind bears a significant aspect of potential plurality that cannot be discretely articulated in the novel.

This poetic ambiguity complements the more radical modes of narration that arose in *BA*, in particular the insertion of pictograms and the sonic elements in the words of the novel. Considering the pictograms' vague presence in the text, the novelized mind's ability to adapt to ambiguity discloses a third aspect of the novelized mind resistant to uploading. The pictograms served as a form of code-switching in the narrative, a collapsing of narrative modes between showing and telling. In order to explain Döblin's unique narrative approach, his essay "Der Bau des epischen Werks" was introduced and analyzed at length alongside *BA*. In this critical work,

some critical parallel informants to *BA* were disclosed in particular. It became apparent that there was an ambiguous tension in the way that Döblin described his narrative mode. Scanning, the third step in Bostrom's theory of mind-emulation, was then related to this narrative strategy because of its parallel to the notion of abridgment discussed in chapter one, which is brought about by the intrusion of the narration. The scanning technique, or the ability to adapt to ambiguity by focusing on and reading select elements, is maintained by the binary negation of the playfulness of the author's will in the seriousness of the narrative act. This established that the narrator occupies a complex position in the novel, which must intrude in order for the novelized mind to be sustained as a narrative constant. The narrative mind manages to maintain this constant by abridging details and sustaining the narration. As such, the novel subsumes a simulation of the creative process of the epic artist, which encompasses the narrative entities of the poeticizing image: the observing I, audience members, and the author himself. The identification of sonic aspects in Döblin's work established that there is an additional level of meaning in the text needed to sustain the simulation of the mind. Finally, the book itself is presented as a point of indistinctness or ambiguity, a scan that stands for the abridgment of the mind at its limits. This discloses the author's mind in the novel as a simulation, a radical negation of the sign, a final twist in the simulation as Möbius strip that divulges the limits of the novelized mind into dissipating indistinctness.

The remainder of my remarks in this conclusion will touch on the consequences of these close readings for the prospect of mind-uploading and also discuss some avenues for continuing research concerning the notion of the simulated mind in the novel. In the previous novels, I hope it has become obvious to what extent the masculine skew of their narrations distorts the simulation of the mind. These minds ultimately gravitated toward a Nietzschean determination to

assert their will upon their worlds, but they ultimately experienced a pushback from the limits of the mind's situatedness. This pathway of development for the novelized mind at first seems to suggest a sort of masculine self-annihilation, but, it is also clear that there is a certain topography to the limits of such a mind in as much as it is bound in indistinctness, that is, to the simulation of the mind as the radical negation of the mind in the novel—a deconstruction that ends in a potential for relationality. What a female perspective or a non-gender conforming perspective might add to this argument cannot be satisfactorily pursued in this dissertation; but, in the next section, I offer one preliminary sketch of what ideas might be reaped from such a line of inquiry.

The Artificial Silkgirl and Beyond

As mentioned in the introduction, there has been an appalling lack of female authorial voices from the high modernist period, although there were female authors at the time. There have been many comparisons of Mann's, Broch's, and Döblin's works beside each other, including other modernist authors not addressed in the works, such as Robert Musil and Franz Kafka. There have been very few attempts to compare these works with other female writers of the time, despite the rise of females and non-conforming persons in Weimar society. More comparisons of these texts ought to be pursued in contrast to these other voices. Irmgard Keun's *Das Kunstseidene Mädchen (KM)* and her other works have enjoyed increased attention in the twenty-first century, and there is no reason why it could not be compared with the works analyzed in this dissertation. *KM* could divulge several additional aspects of the indistinct limits of the mind, and I offer one possibility in nuce.

KM is a first-person journal narrative centered around the character of Doris (her family name is not given in the text). Doris's story is a glimpse into the Weimar period exhibiting the

priorities of the period and culture: glamour, a better life, the new, the erotic and exotic. Doris leaves her family and hometown in Cologne to become a famous starlette in Berlin; she dreams of becoming a star (“Glanz”) or one of the fashionable women she sees in films or illustrated magazines. Doris has learned to use her sexuality as a commodity, manipulating men in order to maintain her life as a New Woman—that is, a woman in Weimar society who does not conform to the societal norms of either a married woman or a prostitute. As such, Doris floats from male to male, attempting to achieve star status and manipulating them to attain sufficient monetary means to sustain her alternative lifestyle. Her anchor in this endeavor is her journal, which she writes like a film: “Ich schreibe wie im Film,” “Und wenn ich später lese, ist alles wie Kino – ich sehe mich in Bildern” (*KM* 4). Like Döblin’s description of the epic creative process in his mind, Doris simulates her life when she reads through filmic means.

In the opening of the third and final part of Irmgard Keun’s *KM*, Doris is out on the street after attempting to find her way in the Weimar metropolis of Berlin. It could not be worse for Doris; it is winter in Berlin, just after Christmas; she is without friend or family and has recently witnessed the death of one close acquaintance named Hulla, a prostitute who committed suicide. She is taking refuge in the waiting room at the Zoo train station in Berlin with only a suitcase and the clothes on her back. She writes, “Ich schreibe, weil meine Hand was tun will und mein Heft mit den weißen Seiten und Linien ein Bereitsein hat, meine Gedanken und mein Müdes aufzunehmen und ein Bett zu sein, in dem meine Buchstaben dann liegen, wodurch wenigstens etwas von mir ein Bett hat” (84). The interaction between her hand, the pen, her journal, and her mind reiterate the relationality often touched upon in this dissertation: there is a lack of distinct autonomy or volition in this act of inscription but instead a certain positionality among elements. Doris states a desire for the text to absorb her thoughts, depicting her text as a receptacle for her

mind—more specifically a bed that can house some part of her, a place to extend her situatedness. The readiness of the white pages and lines is reminiscent of the calling and gathering of the fourfold, sketching a habitation for her thoughts among its unfilled space. But the inclusion of her tiredness (“Müdes”) side by side with her thoughts divulges another aspect of the mind that defies uploading. The extension of her fatigue onto the pages allows for the inabilities of the mind to find a positionality in the simulation. This discloses a vulnerability akin to Bertrand’s inability to narrate the characters in the way he desired, and it recalls the glance into the future with Ziemßen’s ghost in *ZB* which reminds us that the future cannot be completely accounted for. Beyond these consequences, Doris’s fatigue represents an inability, a confessing that there is a limit to the mind that does not necessarily dissipate into indistinctness but instead persists as incalculable.

At the end of the novel, Doris is taken in by a man named Ernst who sees in her a replacement for his wife, Hanne—albeit only in the role as housewife (Doris and Ernst never have sex). Hanne is also seeking a life as a New Woman and has run away to become a dancing girl; but she writes a letter to Ernst, begging him to take her back so she can have better financial security. Doris hides the letter from Ernst, hopeful that her relationship with Ernst will supplant his marriage. When they finally kiss, Ernst calls out Hanne’s name instead of Doris’s, which ultimately convinces Doris that Ernst will never love her for who she is. She is at first so indignant that she contemplates taking her life, to which she concludes: “Aber ich glaube nicht. Ich bin ja auch viel zu müde für Selbstmord und mag ja auch gar nichts mir tun mehr” (124). Doris eventually re-delivers the letter, allowing Ernst to discover it anew, and, on top of that, goes to Hanne directly to tell her that Ernst wants her to come home. Hanne confesses that she does not particularly love Ernst but states that it is a better than dealing with the difficulties of

the life of a New Woman, beyond the security of societal norms: “Es ist nämlich so schwer draußen” (127). And so Doris resigns herself to the uncertainty of life as a New Woman, a life that Hanne rejects. At the conclusion of the novel, she finds herself again at a train station waiting room (this time at Friedrichstraße), not entirely convinced that being a star is the course she wishes to pursue.

That Doris is too tired to commit suicide or pursue any course of action is demonstrative of her desired self-ascribed condition as “the girl from the waiting hall” (“das Mädchen vom Wartesaal”) (125). As such, Doris is a woman on the edge, a woman forced into the no-woman’s land of the alternative and innovative lifestyle, refusing the stereotypical societal roles imposed on her. She adores film but finds a means of introspection in her writing, blending the two media in one. Her journal entries also vacillate between extremes, often ecstatic in one entry and despondent in the next. It is her fatigue that seems to be the element of her mind that stirs her determination to continue despite all opposition. At the conclusion of the novel, she speaks of having corks in her belly that will not let her sink (“aber ich habe Korke in meinem Bauch, die lassen mich doch nicht untergehen?”) (130), but the statement is cast as a question, adding more stress to the tentative nature of her situation at the end of the novel. One of these corks is surely the fatigue itself, which is perhaps more than a lethargy from resisting societal pressure. Her tiredness constitutes a part of her mind that resists the complete discreteness of her mind in the text. When Doris speaks of being able to see her life in pictures as she reads, she is speaking to an ability to preference the situatedness of her mind in her journal over the world she lives in.²³³

²³³ Patrizia McBride sees both the filmic and written modes as indicative of a “delusion of immediacy” (235). On the subject of Doris’s *weltanschauung*, she writes, “For Doris the visible world has no essential form, but is rather a mosaic whose pieces can be reassembled at will by playing with their refraction through endlessly mirroring appearances” (229).

Though she may be tired of that world, that tiredness keeps her tethered between situations—at least, that is what one cork indicates. What the other corks may be deserves further attention in future investigations.

Concluding Remarks

This dissertation began with a discussion of minding the X in Fassbinder's *Welt am Draht* and the limits of the fictional simulation of the mind that have become so popular in our contemporary society. Like the replacement of Fred Stiller by a tamer imitation of his mind, simulations of minds are imperfect renderings of the mind, as Alan Palmer defined them, "presentation[s] of fictional mental functioning" (5). The artificial mind that Kurzweil and Bostrom propose is anticipated in German modernist novels by their demonstration of how the author's mind is situated in the text. In *ZB* it was Ziemßen's anachronistic uniform that betrayed Mann's mind. In *SW*, it was Bertrand's philosophy and existential doubts. In *BA*, it was the admonition to assume the experience of Biberkopf in the novel. It is not my intention to suggest that simulations be regarded as adverse or detrimental developments. Simulations are instructive; they allow for speculation about and preparation for real-world situations, such as disaster simulation, classroom simulations, healthcare, and virtual reality simulations. But in the case of Fred Stiller, where a real and ill-defined entity is replaced by simulation, the glorification of simulation as a potential replacement or augmentation of the mind must be treated with caution. Baudrillard spoke of Disneyland and Watergate as prime examples of simulations because they disclose how "the real is no longer possible" (177). That impossibility of the real is predicated on the unknown parameters of existence, our epistemological limits.

The belief that the novel or any simulation can serve as the play place of human fantasy and thereby lead to an unbridled and exponential empowerment of the mind is not bounded by discrete limitations, but rather by unknown limitations. The mind is undivorceable from the unknown aspects of its situatedness. It is always mired in its context because of its reliance on and relationality to what is not yet known. The only way to overcome the boundaries of the unknown is to pretend that those limits are discrete and discernable, that they are abstractions of the unknown. Herbert Dreyfus explained it this way:

People have begun to think of themselves as objects able to fit into the inflexible calculations of disembodied machines: machines for which the human form-of-life must be analyzed into meaningless facts, rather than a field of concern organized by sensory-motor skills. Our risk is not the advent of superintelligent computers, but of subintelligent human beings. (280)

When Dreyfus speaks of the subintelligence of human beings, he means that there is a compromise that must be made in order to embrace a simulation. We have to buy into the terms of the simulation in order to empower the simulation, meaning that we focus on one set of circumstances while ignoring the unknown, a constant assumption of *ceteris paribus*. Thinking of computer games, Lev Manovich has drawn a conclusion similar to Dreyfus's:

In short, computer characters can display intelligence and skills only because the programs put severe limits on our possible interactions with them. Put differently, the computers can pretend to be intelligent only by tricking us into using a very small part of who we are when we communicate with them. (34)

Manovich may not have considered that this also includes what we do not (yet) know about who we are. We are situated not only by what we know about ourselves but also by what we do not

yet know about ourselves. No matter the simulation, there is always more unknown beyond our own perceptions, which is precisely what the fourfold of the thing suggests.

One additional anecdote helps to illustrate some of the points raised in this conclusion. At the time of this writing, advertisements for virtual assistants such as Siri, Alexa, Watson, Cortana, etc. seem to be saturating the market. On 10 February 2016, an article appeared in a British newspaper *The Guardian* about a man from Houston, Texas, and his difficulties with Apple's Siri, disclosing one of the ongoing problems with voice recognition software. In order for the voice recognition software to understand him, the man had to drop his accent; for example, Siri had difficulty understanding kolaches, called "Colotchies" with the Texan drawl. Aside from American accents, Australians and Indians had to reportedly "fake an American accent" in order to get the program to recognize some requests. Lars Hinrichs, a native of Germany and a sociolinguist at the University of Texas at Austin who was interviewed for the article, categorized the phenomenon among the effects of globalization, concluding that in addition to accents, "a frontier for speech processing is to deal with multilingualism – switching between English and Spanish." Speech processing is a type of weak artificial intelligence, and, as remarkable as it is, its limitations with dialects and different languages parallels the problems of focalization and narrative perspective in the German twentieth century novels analyzed in this project. On the one hand, there are challenges for artificial intelligence on the scale of the group interaction, such as language or culture, but dialects or linguistic idiosyncrasies compound the difficulties for AI programmers. Additionally, my personal observations of my children attempting to interact with such devices has also suggested that children's developing speech is not easily recognized by these virtual assistants. While programmers devise solutions to these problems, users of voice recognition will have to shed their eccentricities to be able to operate

new devices; dumbing down for artificial intelligences, or, in other words, restricting the levels of meaning inherent in a language. Such paradigm shifts prove especially challenging for artificial intelligence developers. To ignore them is to smooth over the subtle surface variations of our essences and, at our peril, to belie the differences among us instead of celebrating their benefits.

As with students in my own elementary German language courses who use Google translate for every attempt at communication in the target language, the translation program only selects the most likely way to translate the word, i.e. the primary connotation. And they, not actually knowing German, cannot know if the translation is accurate for the given situation because they (and the computer) do not have a comprehension of the polyvalence of language. What Dreyfus and Manovich and others describe correlates to the problems of uploading the mind raised in the readings of these novels. Humans or posthumans intentionally adapt their interactive intelligence in order to utilize the technology at their disposal; they have to dumb it down in order to operate “smart” voice recognition programs. Marshall McLuhan argued that human faculties were just as much modified by the technologies they utilized as they were enhanced. More than a gaggle of luddites, these scholars have merely pointed out that there is always a cost to our situatedness, which is proper and necessary, but we are more than the sum of our interactions with our apparatuses.²³⁴

A final word about the posthuman to conclude. There is always a remnant of our essence left in a simulation or a presentation of ourselves, suggesting that our minds are messy and imprecise. When the situatedness of the mind pushes back, it sickens, terrifies, and disorients us. Perhaps this is why the tales of artificial intelligence running amok are so prevalent in science

²³⁴ See again Agamben, “What Is an Apparatus?” 2009.

fiction, and, for the same reason, why the claims of transhumanists such as Ray Kurzweil seem so difficult to embrace. Whatever we program into the computer will not be discretely us, but rather a simulation that will always be tainted by the original programmer, just as there will always remain a trace of the author in the novel. Simulation of the mind in this regard is not an improvement, as Kurzweil argues, but merely a reminder of the impossibility of the real. As Baudrillard said, “Illusion is no longer possible, because the real is no longer possible” (177)—or perhaps it never was. What this initial critique of the transhumanist project of mind-uploading has clarified is a deeper understanding of the interrelatedness of our position in existence and the price of turning our personae into texts. At the very least, I hope that this work offers a place-marker for that which we cannot fully relinquish: our positionality in that which is not yet known.

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