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*Sexuality
and the Sense of Self
in the Works of Georg Trakl
and Robert Musil*

ANDREW WEBBER

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PREFACE

This book is a slightly revised version of a PhD dissertation submitted in Cambridge in December 1986. The revision might have been more substantial; a year's hindsight provokes a host of afterthoughts. However, I prefer to elaborate these within my follow-up study of the 'Doppelgänger' motif in German literature since Romanticism.

I would like to acknowledge the ready assistance of the following institutions, which put both published and unpublished material at my disposal:

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Above all thank you to my family and friends for their unfailing moral support.

Tübingen, May 1988

ABBREVIATIONS

Trakl

I, II = Georg Trakl, *Dichtungen und Briefe*, edited by Walther Killy and Hans Szklenar, 2 vols (Salzburg, 1969)

Musil

MoE = Robert Musil, *Gesammelte Werke in neun Bänden*, edited by Adolf Frisé, 9 vols (Reinbek bei Hamburg, 1978) I-V, *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*

T = Volume VI of the above edition, *Die Verwirrungen des Zöglings Törleß*. Volumes VII, VIII and IX are referred to by number alone.

Ta = Robert Musil, *Tagebücher*, edited by Adolf Frisé, 2 vols (Reinbek bei Hamburg, 1981)

Others

G&C = Otto Weininger, *Geschlecht und Charakter* (Vienna, 1903; reprinted Munich, 1980)

ULD = Otto Weininger, *Über die letzten Dinge* (Vienna, 1904; reprinted Munich, 1980)

StA = Sigmund Freud, *Studienausgabe*, edited by Alexander Mitscherlich, Angela Richards, and James Strachey, 11 vols (Frankfurt a. M., 1972)

I INTRODUCTION

Hier sind wir bei der Frage
die nicht alle wollen
Geschlechtlichkeit
(MoE 1953)¹

Sexuality: The Unwanted Question?

It is perhaps hardly surprising that Trakl and Musil have never featured in a joint study before now. At first sight there is little to recommend the pairing, the one generally regarded as the quintessential lyric poet, a creator of highly personal and hermetic poetic landscapes, the other best known for his epic depiction of a society's death-throes. Nor is there a biographical pretext: there is no evidence to suggest that the two ever encountered one another in Vienna's network of intellectual circles, or indeed read each other's work. My motive in bringing them together in spite of this apparent incongruence is that they do indeed meet in a common, central thematic preoccupation: their treatment of sexuality. The parallels are remarkable; in both writers there is a pursuit of a narcissistic ideal figured as a *unio mystica* with the sister; and in either case the ideal of androgynous union is beset by collapse into its antithesis, in the motif of the 'Lustmord'. It is my purpose to show that this sexual conflict is fundamental to the more general problematics of selfhood in both authors. Furthermore, it is extrapolated in both cases into the discursive fabric of the works, as the demands of sensuality disrupt both the characters' search for a sense of community within language, and the authorial pursuit of aesthetic sense.

The area in which the two writers meet is a strangely neglected one. In either case there is a history of marginalisation of the sexual thematic; its violent, often pathological character seems to meet considerable critical resistance.² This study takes implicit issue with the generality of critics who have given short shrift to the question of sexuality, and explicitly challenges readings which have sought to 'de-sexualize' specific texts.

In the case of Trakl the wilful neglect of the sexual thematic is most extreme in the crop of Christian existentialist readings which sought to consecrate the poet's work as, following Basil, the 'Trakl-Kirche'.³ Notwithstanding the general refutation of the 'Trakl-Kirche' approach, the tendency to underestimate the importance of sexuality has prevailed. This is perhaps best illustrated by considering the responses of a number of 'mainstream' commentators to a couplet from one of Trakl's best-known and most frequently discussed poems, 'An den Knaben Elis':

Dein Leib ist eine Hyazinthe,
In die ein Mönch die wächsernen Finger taucht (I 84)

The image has been iconized for the 'Trakl-Kirche'. Thus Focke sees the hyacinth as 'eine jenseitige Blume', a host 'an der sich der geschundene Mensch erquickt'.⁴ Lindenberger believes the 'hyacinthian and moonlike things' (i.e. Elis's body and the monk's fingers) to be 'images typical of the idyllic landscapes which Trakl contrasts with scenes of disintegration'.⁵ Heselhaus reads a scene of ethereal contemplation for 'die mönchische weltferne Existenz, die im Gebet und in der Betrachtung ... die Hände gleichsam in den ätherischen Leib des Elis eintauchen kann'.⁶ The consummate denial of the bodily in the engagement is achieved by Lachmann, who involuntarily furnishes a perfect allegory of his own idealisation of the act of reading: 'die asketischen Finger des Mönchs blättern in den Seiten des Buches'.⁷ The present study will show that there is more to the hyacinth than a scriptural icon, and more to the monk than Bolli's 'Inbegriff des unversehrten, göttlichen Seins'.⁸ The ritual enacted here in fact provides a model for the sacrificial 'Lustmord' in 'Verwandlung des Bösen' ('Du, ein blaues Tier, das leise zittert; du, der bleiche Priester, der es hinschlachtet am schwarzen Altar' (I 97), and in *Blaubart* (I 444). Wetzels idyllic 'Zeiten der Mönche',⁹ are far more volatile than any of these readers is willing to recognise. This study will show that when the 'Dichter des christlichen Schwermuts'¹⁰ gravitates under the sign of 'Schwermut', it is to do sexual violence to his array of transcendent figures. He is as it were compelled to become the iconoclast in his own church, to have his 'Mönche der Wollust bleiche Priester' (I 66) desecrate such iconic images as the 'blaue Blume'.¹¹

While Musil's works could never lend themselves to Christian existentialist interpretation, there has been a similar tendency to sublimate the elements of 'das Unanständige und Kranke' in his writing.¹² Critics have largely failed to see that any consideration of Musil's central thematic, aesthetic or philosophical preoccupations must remain incomplete if it ignores the constitutive function of sexuality in the fiction of this 'erotische Schriftsteller'.¹³ If a few lone critical voices speak for sexuality as 'the central ground for Musil's study of the potentialities of human consciousness',¹⁴ Rasch expresses the majority view when he writes of the 'Geschwisterliebe' in *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften* 'Ihre erotische Wendung ist nicht das zentrale Motiv'.¹⁵ Similarly Stopp, who performs an important service by insisting upon the interplay of form and content in *Törleß*, adapts a remark of Musil's in order to banish sexuality to the novel's margins; she claims that 'the adolescent erotic complications are merely peripheral' to the depiction of the 'hero's quest'.¹⁶ The principal contention of the present study is that the hero's (in some cases the heroine's) quest in the works of both Musil and Trakl is defined by, and inseparable from, its 'erotic complications'.

The marginalisation of sexuality is bound up with the vexed question of a psychoanalytic approach to the texts. Musil's own 'ambivalence' with regard to Freud's innovations has furnished an armoury of quotations for the dogmatically

intentionalist critics who would discount the centrality of sexuality and the application of psychoanalytic theory by the same token.¹⁷ The prime example is Reniers-Servranckx whose refutation of Freudian resonances in *Törleß* serves the more general strategic suppression of the sexual thematic: 'Die Textanalyse, auf die in diesem Rahmen verzichtet werden muß, bestätigt, daß Törleß' Problem vor allem ein intellektuelles, philosophisches und implizit ethisches ist'.¹⁸ The present study will counter Reniers's contentions with the sort of close textual analysis which is surely indispensable if such general statements as these are to be sustained.

The attempt to rehabilitate sexuality as an integral constituent of the works has been advanced by several recently published studies, generally operating within a psychoanalytic frame of reference. It seems that Musil's assertion that the principal contribution of psychoanalytic thought to civilisation was to liberate sexuality, to make it speakable,¹⁹ has only recently been validated by what has been called the second Freudian revolution. The works in question are those by Heyd and Henninger on Musil, and Kleefeld's extensive reading of *Trakl*.²⁰ The present study owes its principal allegiance to these, operating in a similar spirit, but largely on different material. The psychoanalytic readers have for instance overlooked the potential of such an approach for Musil's *Törleß*, and Kleefeld's work, however massive, leaves a wealth of suggestive texts untouched.

The need to redress the balance of opinion away from the weight of critical orthodoxy, combined with the limited space available to me for the discussion of two such complex authors, has resulted in a selective focus. If, however, the present study succeeds in reclaiming something of the central, constitutive function which is due to sexuality in the works of these two writers, then the reduced focus should paradoxically serve to broaden the scope of the prevailing critical consensus.

If the thematic focus of the study is necessarily a narrow one, the cast for material may seem inordinately wide. It encompasses examples ranging from *Trakl*'s earliest to his last work, incorporating his dramatic fragments as well as both lyric and prose poetry, and spans Musil's long writing career, so that the sexual thematic of *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften* has to be treated with the sparest economy. My strategic intent here is to chart a chronological development in the motifs under scrutiny, and to show that the sense/sensuality dichotomy is an abiding principle at the centre of both *œuvres*.

Clearly the explicit treatment of sexuality, more especially in its 'perverse' forms, will meet with resistance. Where the perverse flies in the face of aesthetic convention, the author is bound to collude, consciously or unconsciously, with the authorities. Authorial licence is never free of internal censorship. Accordingly, the central manifestation of the perverse is rendered to some extent oblique. Alternatively it may be banished to the periphery, where it may appear in its, in every sense, cruder form. This double movement accords with the Freudian notion of dream-censorship through 'Entstellung', whereby the censored act or image is both distorted and displaced. 'Entstellung' veils the perverse at the centre of the *œuvre*;

'Ent-stellung' removes it. The present study will pursue its thematic object both at the 'refined' centre and in the cruder margins, even at the risk of venturing on occasion beyond the aesthetic pale.

The question of textual sovereignty presents a further strategic problem. Thus, appended to the text of *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften* which the author sanctioned for publication, there is a vast corpus of sketches for the novel's continuation; the problem will be further compounded when the ongoing project to transcribe the extant 'Nachlaß' is complete. The status of the different versions and variants which were abandoned by Trakl during the process of composition, often only to be synthesised into other texts, is no less problematic. While a critical distinction must prevail between the two textual orders, the 'Entwürfe' can furnish invaluable insights as to the genesis of their finished counterparts.²¹ They open up a further potential dimension for the work of censorship. Seen as a sort of palimpsest, the discarded 'Entwurf' allows, as it were, for a vertical movement of 'Ent-stellung'. Beneath the finished surface of the poem there recurrently lurks a register of sexual trauma, which may provide important clues as to the analogical resonances of Trakl's poetic idiom. Cross-reference between these orders is undoubtedly a high-risk activity, but its controlled application can effectively reduce the sort of speculative, inductive readings which Trakl's most dense and enigmatic poems in particular have spawned. Here too then, my strategy has been one of a broad cast, in the belief that more will be gained than lost.

One of the most significant effects of the revolution in ideas about sexuality in Austria around the turn-of-the-century was that the questioning of sexual identity came to serve as symbolic ground for the exploration of more general, existential concerns in the literature of the period. On the one hand the essentialist conventions of sexual identity furnished a secure model of binary opposition which was exploited to ideological ends. The call for a return to 'männliche Strenge' at the crisis meeting of the 'Parallellaktion' in *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften* (1907) echoes the widespread denunciation of decadent 'effeminacy'. The most extreme manifestation of the division was in the depiction of mortal antagonism between the sexes. On the other hand the orthodox notions of sexual difference were seen as an obstacle to human understanding, so that the androgynous ideal of the mystic tradition was revived. In his survey of the obsession with sexual identity in both high and popular art of the period, Peter Heller sums up the dichotomy thus: 'while the internal and external pairs of opposites — Lulu, *Allgeschlechtlichkeit* ... and Jack the Ripper as extremity of the male ... the phallus as knife — pertain to the fantasy realm of polarised bisexuality, there is also the harmonious counter-image, the positive ideal of bisexuality, the hermaphrodite'.²² The statement begs an important question, however; the Lulu-Ripper paradigm can only be assigned to a fantasy realm of bisexuality if they are indeed conceived of as internal. Much art of the period in fact figured the model as purely external, that is, the sexes as quasi-allegorical,

immutably different, and riven by perpetual conflict; hence the preoccupation in both the literary and the figurative arts with literal or figurative variations on the themes of 'Lustmord' and vengeful castration: the recurrence of such myths as Judith and Holofernes, Samson and Delilah, Salome, Don Juan and Bluebeard; hence also the crude sexual polarisation of Kokoschka's early plays; and the lionisation of both the major literary champion of misogyny, August Strindberg, and its major philosophical proponents Nietzsche, Schopenhauer and Weininger.

Both Trakl and Musil clearly operate within this historical context. Both *œuvres* are, in one sense, documents of the febrile, sexual 'Zeitgeist' of turn-of-the-century Austria. The present study will nevertheless furnish no more than a selective account of the sources and traditions which lie behind the common ideas and structures. This is not because the author holds such considerations invalid; the discussion of Freudian influence in Musil and of Weiningerian resonances in both writers will confirm this. Clearly even such a very hermetic poet as Trakl does not write within an ideological vacuum. However, the limitations of space require stringent decisions. Thus, the relation of the psychosexual thematic to the immanent structures of the texts will be privileged over the contextual dimension.

In the conclusion to her study *The Androgyne in Early German Romanticism*, Friedrichsmeyer argues that 'the ideal of bisexual perfection has appeared in the works of many writers who followed the Jena group. In selected works of Rilke, Musil, Kafka, Thomas Mann, Hesse, Trakl and Brecht, for example, it is discernible. With the exception perhaps of Brecht, the ideal in these writers retains its Romantic trappings; the polarisation is unquestioned'.²³ This assignment to the external realm, in Heller's terms, is apparently confirmed in Musil's 'Frauenlob' essay. Here he identifies a repertory of archetypal male protagonists still prevalent in the sexual mythology of the time: 'Don Juan u. Quichote, Blaubart, Simson, der Misogyn' are all seen as 'Ausdruck des Verhältnisses der Geschlechter zueinander'. These 'immer wiederkehrende Männergestalten' are contrasted with the superannuated figure of the 'Frauenlob', the last example being Stendhal 'weil in seiner Poesie die Frau durch unendliche Hindernisse vom Mann getrennt wird' so that she takes on 'den bezaubernden Glanz der Vision' (VII 804). The works of both Trakl and Musil can be said to gravitate between these two alternatives. On the one hand the Don Juan and Bluebeard archetypes are indeed 'immer wiederkehrend'; their practice of the sexual act as 'Lustmord' proliferates in the narratives of both authors. On the other hand the quest after the idealised feminine figure is beset by the intervention of 'unendliche Hindernisse', which defer the realisation of the vision.

The crucial point, however, is that in both cases, this twofold model of the deferred pursuit of the ideal, and of sexual violence is internalised. The conflict of sexual alienation, conventionally fought on the external battle-fields of the war of the sexes, is introjected in a condition of sexual self-alienation, which does indeed question the polarity of the sexes. By the same token the realisation of Heller's 'harmonious counter-image' is seen as the prerequisite for the recuperation of the

self's integrity. By taking as its object the sister as feminine alter ego, the pursuit of the androgynous ideal is fundamentally narcissistic.

The quest undertaken by Trakl's various poetic personae and by Ulrich in *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften* will also be shown to be collateral with the respective aesthetic quests of the authors. The disruption of the subject's narcissistic desire allegorises the disruption of the text's pursuit of an analogous ideal of self-referential integrity. This correlation will be seen as the key both to the visionary 'Endzeit' of Trakl's last poems and to Musil's failure to inscribe a conclusion to his magnum opus. It is within these two crucial, closely related areas of selfhood and textual discourse that the symbolic function of sexuality as, following Kermode, 'a figure for what is beyond sex', will be traced.²⁴

Textual Narcissism or Textual Double?

Before turning to a detailed reading of the two authors a brief exposition of theoretical premises will be given. The discussion of the narcissistic quest and its recurrent collapse into the self-reflexive violence of the 'Lustmord' will operate within a composite framework. The study will draw both on psychological and, more especially, psychoanalytical models contemporary with the writings of Trakl and Musil (principally Weininger, Freud and Rank), and on the post-Freudian theories of Lacan. The particular application of Lacanian theory to Musil's narratives is suggested by a gloss on Freud's 'Zur Einführung des Narzißmus' in Musil's diary: 'so fiel mir der Zusammenhang mit den Ichgefühlen auf. Diese bedingungslose Liebe zu den Sprachfehlern u. in weiterem Sinn -gewohnheiten, weist auf den nahen Zusammenhang von Sprache u. Ich hin. Die Grammatik ist der Geist der Allgemeinheit, bzw. ein wichtiger Teil davon' (Ta I 721). By identifying the relation between self and other as residing primarily in the subject's conformity to, or lapses within, the grammatical order of language, Musil touches on the essence of what has been called Lacan's 'Rückkehr zu Freud'.²⁵

Firstly Lacan returns to the theory of narcissism as a point of departure for his exploration of the dialectic character of desire and of its implications for the problem of the self. Secondly he applies a linguistic model to the operation of the unconscious and its symptomatic disorders. It is this correlation of the structures of language and the psyche that underpins the recent project of psychoanalytic criticism to chart the ground where psychosexual and psychotextual concerns meet. The present reading of both Trakl and Musil will turn on the problematic relation between 'Sprache u. Ich' within the narcissistic paradigm of desire. The theoretical variations on the narcissistic theme which will now be sketched will provide the arena for the interaction of the problems of sexuality, discourse and the self. There will then follow a discussion of the possibility of applying the criteria of desire to the workings of texts.

It is tempting to trace the exploitation of sexuality as symbolic territory in the arts

of the fin-de-siècle, to its primacy in what has been retrospectively construed as the epochal revolution of psychoanalysis. In fact the early influence of Freud was limited to a small number of his contemporaries. It was the work of Otto Weininger that had the most immediate, albeit ephemeral, effect. His immensely influential and profoundly self-contradictory tract on the character of sexual difference represents a comprehensive document of both sides of the great sexual debate of the time. *Geschlecht und Charakter* (1903) oscillates between the internal or bisexual idea of cooperative sexual principles ('M' and 'W') and the external, as witnessed by the vitriolic denunciation of 'das Weib'. The ready amenability of Weininger's misogynist polemics to the sloganising of the popular, phallogocentric imagination tended to obfuscate his original position of universal human bisexuality on a scale of 'Zwischenstufen' between 'W' and 'M'. This position is nonetheless sustained as a subversive undercurrent throughout all of Weininger's published writings, providing an implicit critique of his excesses. The conflict between male and female (for conflict is assumed a priori) is relocated within the self, so that in a particularly searching statement from the *Tagebuch*, misogyny is perceived as a strategy of projection: 'Der Haß gegen die Frau ist immer nur noch nicht überwundener Haß gegen die eigene Sexualität' (G&C 626). This key concept of projection may be seen as a crude avatar of Freud's theory of repression; it lies at the root of problematic dualism as 'Verdoppelung durch Externalisation des Psychischen' (G&C 609). Thus woman is assimilated with the figure of the 'Doppelgänger' which haunts Weininger's writings as 'das Ensemble aller bösen Eigenschaften des Ich' (G&C 611). Both 'Weib' and 'Doppelgänger' are seen as repositories for the desires which mitigate man's quest for monistic idealism.

The apparition of the double is, however, independent of woman, a consequence of Weininger's version of primary narcissism. He relates the cosmogonic myth of the *Ātman* as the first fall into the dualistic condition; the godhead creates the world by an originary act of narcissistic self-recognition: 'da sah er nichts anderes als sich selbst. Da rief er zu Anfang aus: "Das bin ich!"' (G&C 212). The words of creation echo the 'Iste ego sum' of Narcissus; the self recognises itself only as other (Iste/Das). This fall into the material condition of the other is the model for the self-alienation intrinsic to the subject's search for individuality through an illusion of self-creation: 'Der Spiegel ist das *Surrogat* für das Sichselbstschaffen. Er hat zur Eitelkeit ein Verhältnis ebenso wie zur Individualität' (G&C 612). It is paradoxically through the desire for individuality that the subject is split for Weininger into actor and spectator in a theatre of narcissism: 'Man braucht den Zuschauer, das Theater, die Pose. Darum entsteht der zweite Mensch' (G&C 612). The double is thus seen to embody the alienation which Weininger perceives as fundamental to man's sexual exigency. By identifying this self-alienating moment as primary ('zu Anfang'), he debunks the virulent misogyny of his text as a secondary symptom of man's estrangement from the double of his own sexuality.

For all its aberrations Weininger's work does share common ground with that of

the early psychoanalysts. When he lists the objects of man's existential fear, he aligns woman with both the 'Doppelgänger' and with the 'Unbewußten'; but these are all manifestations of an original fear, born of the primordial act of narcissism: 'das alles ist aber eines. Es ist Furcht vor dem Tode' (ULD 155). The correlation of narcissistic desire and death in the figure of the double prefigures the more subtle arguments of Freud and Rank. Equally *Geschlecht und Charakter* might have furnished another example of a 'case-book' which is a prey to the double's visitation for Rank's pioneering study.

Otto Rank's 'Der Doppelgänger' (1914) is a tour de force of classical psychoanalytic criticism, reading the text as a symptomatic construction of the author's psyche. First he draws on a wide range of Romantic and post-Romantic texts in order to set up a typology of the 'Doppelgänger' motif. Thus the double appears as shadow, or recurrently as mirror-image; it is seen as a projection of existential loneliness, an embodiment of past or future identities, or as the Homeric *psyche* or dream-self. Its most significant characteristic though, is that it is not merely a reflective alter ego, but essentially *reflexive* in itself. Initially embraced as entelechy, as a narcissistic device of 'Abwehr' against an antagonistic world, the double is unmasked as a potentially lethal aggressor. Similarly, while it seems to secure the self from sexual involvement with the other, its 'Aufgehen in der Geschlechtsliebe',²⁶ the double paradoxically comes to intensify the subject's desire for the other, precisely by inhibiting its satisfaction, classically intervening as rival:

Auf der anderen Seite kehrt aber in demselben Phänomen der Abwehr auch die Bedrohung wieder, vor der sich das Individuum schützen und behaupten will, und so kommt es, daß der die narzißtische Selbstliebe verkörpernde Doppelgänger gerade zum Rivalen in der Geschlechtsliebe werden muß oder daß er, ursprünglich als Wunschabwehr des gefürchteten ewigen Untergangs geschaffen, im Aberglauben als Todesbote wiederkehrt.²⁷

The mythical model for the disruption of desire and its eventual propulsion into death is Pausanias's version of the Narcissus legend which has the youth, 'der in seinem Ebenbild die ihm in allem ähnliche Zwillingschwester zu erblicken glaubt',²⁸ meet his death as a result of his desire for union with his reflection. This accords to a striking degree with the incestuous narcissism which will be charted in both Trakl and Musil. The transformation of the idealised 'Ebenbild' into the harbinger of mortality finds its expression in recurrent scenarios of sexual frustration, paranoia, and suicide, this last frequently in the surrogate form of the destruction of the double: 'Die häufige Tötung des Doppelgängers, durch die sich der Held von den Verfolgungen durch sein Ich endgültig zu schützen sucht, ist eigentlich ein Selbstmord'.²⁹ The act of suicide is merely the affirmation of the schismatic self-alienation which originates in the first narcissistic capture of the subject by its image.

If Rank's study does not stray from the orthodox bounds of authorial psycho-biography, it does suggest a more essential function for the double in literary terms.

At the head of his third chapter Rank places three mottoes which identify the creative writer as engaged in a narcissistic enterprise:

'Dichter sind doch immer Narzisse' W. Schlegel

'Selbstliebe ist der Anfang zu einem lebenswährenden Roman' Wilde

'Liebe zu sich selbst ist immer der Anfang eines romanhaften Lebens ... denn nur wo das Ich eine Aufgabe ist, hat es einen Sinn zu schreiben' Th. Mann³⁰

The implication that the literary work has the same narcissistic motivation as the double, is confirmed in another essay, as Rank sees 'the egoistic principle of self-perpetuation in one's own image' as superseded by 'the perpetuation of the self in work reflecting one's own personality'.³¹ The text as double in this sense is created out of a need for transcendence, as 'Abwehr', but will paradoxically be constrained to deny the narcissistic ideal, and to recount the experience of mortal self-alienation. Thus Rank's theory of the double intimates the sort of correlation between psychosexual and textual problematics which characterises the theory and practice of more recent psychoanalytic criticism. The manifestation of 'Doppelgänger' as what Kittler calls 'Schreibtischgespenster',³² presenting a threat to the author's textual enterprise, is of a piece with its disruption of sexual desire. In either case it subverts the self's desire to embrace the other in narcissistic self-fulfilment. It is a spectre at once of the traumatic separation between the subject and its external objects, and of the inner schism which opens up when the subject takes itself as an object of narcissistic desire.

The visitant always appears repeatedly; its periodic return is fundamental to its function, haunting protagonist and text alike with the prospect of death. Weinger makes the association between the double and the general principle of temporal recurrence, seeing the 'rückläufige Bewegung' as confirming the necessity of death: 'sie ist fürchterlich: denn es ist nur der *Doppelgänger*, zwar nicht in zeitlicher Koexistenz, sondern in der *Sukzession*' (ULD 107). Similarly, Freud sees the 'Doppelgänger', as outlined by Rank, as the archetypal figure of the repetition compulsion, embodying the drive towards annihilation which obtains beyond the pleasure principle. In the discussion of Lacan which now follows, the connections intimated here between narcissism, self-alienation, and the textual problematic, will be seen to be incorporated in a coherent theoretical programme.

The Mirror Stage

The much-vaunted theory of the 'mirror-stage' may be regarded as the keystone of the Lacanian edifice. Lacan's followers are nonetheless generally at pains to stress that the theory should not be taken too rigorously 'à la lettre'.³³ What Lacan seems to be doing here is to reinforce what is primarily a metaphorical model — the intervention of a narcissistic moment in every transaction between self and other — by couching it in a not entirely watertight theory of psychic development.

Whatever its degree of what Laplanche calls 'clinical verisimilitude', the theory establishes a blueprint for Lacan's most significant contribution to the understanding of the self: the recognition that the desire which constitutes the self is essentially dialectic in nature. The dialectical model which is first constructed in the mirror-stage is the common structural characteristic of the various forms of desire (Oedipal, scopic etc.) explored by Lacan, and applied below to the works of Trakl, and more especially Musil.

Lacan repeatedly emphasised that his project was continuous with Freudian theory, as much a return as a radical departure. Clearly the theory of the mirror-stage is informed by Freud's discussion of narcissism, though in a sense Rank's 'Doppelgänger' is a more authentic antecedent. The development of the theory of narcissism through a series of Freud's essays exemplifies the pattern of binary oppositions, set up only to be deconstructed, which Culler sees as characteristic of Freud's writings.³⁴ It is curious that, unlike Rank, Freud makes no reference to the Narcissus myth in 'Zur Einführung des Narzißmus' (1914), and glosses over the mortal threat that is fundamental to the mythic account. The connection which Rank makes in 'Der Doppelgänger', 'Die Psychoanalyse kann es keinesfalls als bloßen Zufall betrachten, daß die Todesbedeutung des Doppelgängers mit der narzißtischen ... eng verbunden erscheint',³⁵ seems to meet the same resistance in 'Zur Einführung' as critics have traced in 'Das Unheimliche' (1919).³⁶

Freud seems anxious to keep the two terms of Rank's connection apart in a clear dualistic scheme of things. The seeds of deconstruction are sown, however, in 'Jenseits des Lustprinzips' (1920). Although Freud still asserts the model of 'einer scharfen Scheidung zwischen Ichtrieben = Todestrieben und Sexualtrieben = Lebenstrieben' (StA III 261), he is compelled to dialectically modify the opposition. The theory of narcissism comes to realise its full potential only 'nachträglich' as it were. The phenomenon of primary narcissism, 'daß das Ich das eigentliche und ursprüngliche Reservoir der Libido sei' (StA III 260–61), is applied to revise the binary model of 'Ich-' and 'Sexualtriebe'. As Freud forges into the dark area beyond the pleasure principle in both 'Jenseits' and 'Das Ich und das Es' (1923), he comes to recognise the bilateral interference of the instinctual orders. As the pleasure principle may operate 'im Dienste der Todestriebe' (StA III 271), so the 'Destruktionstrieb' may be 'in den Dienst des Eros gestellt' (StA III 308). The opposition between the self-preservative and the self-destructive instincts is submitted to the principle of 'Ambivalenz': 'dann ist offenbar einer so grundlegenden Unterscheidung wie zwischen erotischen und Todestrieben ... der Boden entzogen' (StA III 309). By the time Freud composes a summary of his 'Trieblehre' at the end of his career the dialectic revision is complete. The sexual act is seen as 'eine Aggression mit der Absicht der innigsten Vereinigung', and the volubility of the interactive model is illustrated by an example which is of the utmost pertinence for the present study: 'Ein stärkerer Zusatz zur sexuellen Aggression führt vom Liebhaber zum Lustmörder'.³⁷ It is this loss of instinctual balance in the 'Lustmord' that Trakl and Musil are

compelled to repeat in their narratives. The 'Lustmord' is the ultimate enactment of the community of desire and destructivity beyond the pleasure principle, the ultimate denial of the narcissistic ideal.

It is clear that Freud's mutating 'Trieblehre' offers Lacan no precise point of return; in the case of the 'mirror-stage' he returns to the corporate example of the founding fathers of psychoanalysis. The mirror-stage is related to the notion of primary narcissism in terms of 'the dynamic opposition between this libido and the sexual libido, which the first analysts tried to define when they invoked destructive and indeed, death instincts, in order to explain the evident connection between the narcissistic libido and the alienating function of the I, the aggressivity it releases in any relation to the other'.³⁸

The dual movement of narcissistic self-fulfilment and mortal self-estrangement, which Rank isolated in 'Der Doppelgänger', is at the core of Lacan's theory. He describes the child's first recognition of itself as an apparently self-sufficient body in terms of a premature birth. The mirror-image, as semblance of integrity, is fundamentally at odds with the infant's lack of coordination and its dependence on maternal sustenance. The assumption of a holistic idea of self opens up a gap between real and imaginary identity; in as far as the 'Gestalt' in the mirror is an external construct, it 'symbolises the mental permanence of the I' only 'at the same time as it prefigures its alienating destination'.³⁹ It is not the self that is born in this confrontation but the ego, an identity which serves as a protective armature only by introducing an essential alienation into the self. By trying to conform to the integral form of the first imago, the self begins to construct itself in Lacan's terms 'by and for another'.⁴⁰ This 'Idealich' in the mirror is the primary manifestation of the other's desires, and by identifying with it, the self must become other to itself. As the self can never know and so satisfy the desire of the other, it is propelled into a course of desire's deflection and delusion. It fixes on a succession of imagos as objects of identification, but can never find a true sense of identity with or through them. This course through what Lacan calls the Imaginary (i.e. the visually determined, non-verbal order) merely compounds the armoured mask of the ego.

The mirror-stage also inaugurates a second process of self-alienation in the self's accession to Lacan's Symbolic order, that is, to an identity within language as a speaking subject. The 'I' which operates in discourse is constitutionally separate from the self for which it purports to speak. In order to be granted this token of identity, the self must submit to a series of proscriptive instances, the social exigencies which are intended to regulate desire, and so to defer its consummation. As long as subjective desire is mediated by the ego in the Imaginary, and by the 'I' in the Symbolic, the self can only desire in Lacan's terms 'qua Other'. As the ideal of pure subjectivity is represented for the jubilant infant by the image of its 'independent' body, so its dismantling into a dialectic transaction with the other, conceived as a traumatic self-alienation, is represented by the image of the body's mutilation (the 'corps morcelé'). Bodily mutilation does imaginary service for the

mutilation of subjective identity, an experience which will figure recurrently in the specular encounters in Trakl and Musil.

If the mirror-stage coordinates the sexual and discursive elements of self-alienation, it also suggests a model for the alignment of psyche and text, which is the chief legacy of Lacan's theory for the practice of literary criticism. It is not by chance that Lacan styles the mirror-stage a *drama*, which propels the ego into a *fictional* course ('une ligne de fiction').⁴¹ If Rank sees creators of fiction as exemplifying the narcissistic condition, their narratives by-products 'eines romanhaften Lebens', Lacan generalises the condition. For Lacan, as indeed for Weininger, we are all performers on a narcissistic mirror 'stage', all narrators of our own experience.⁴² The narrative agent is the ego, moving 'in a fictional direction, which will always remain irreducible for the individual alone, or rather, will only rejoin the coming-into-being ("le devenir") of the subject asymptotically'.⁴³ As the mirror-stage mediates the relation of self to other, 'Innenwelt' to 'Umwelt', only by opening up a gap, so the narcissistic illusion of the creative writer — to project a consummate identity of self and other in the mirror of art — is a prey to separation. Narcissistic reflection is displaced by the principle of self-duplication only through difference, that is, the principle of the 'Doppelgänger'. Thus Lacan lists a series of man's creatures which summon up Rank's typology of the double. The 'Gestalt' of the mirror-stage is generically identified with 'the statue in which man projects himself, with the phantoms that dominate him, or with the automaton in which, in an ambiguous relation, the world of his own making tends to find completion', with the dream-self, and finally with 'the appearances of the double'.⁴⁴

The narcissistic paradigm, which brings life and art together as a 'lebenswährender Roman', is revised here into that of the double, which insists that the life-story can be no more than 'lebenswährend', by returning to foreshadow its end. The recurrent appearance of the double, Rank's harbinger of death, can be seen as a symptom of the compulsion to repeat the premature birth into selfhood of the mirror-stage. The jubilant assumption of a sense of self masks an effective stillbirth: 'In effect, it is by means of the gap opened up by this prematuration in the imaginary, and in which the effects of the mirror-stage proliferate, that the human animal is *capable* of imagining himself as mortal'.⁴⁵ In this sense the return of the double may be seen as symptomatic of the need to rehearse the original moment of self-alienation, a need which takes the narrative beyond the realm of the pleasure principle. It is this repetition compulsion, 'the attempt to catch up retrospectively on this traumatic separation, to tell this happening again and again', that Wright sees as the essence of Lacan's understanding of narrative.⁴⁶ If the ultimate effect of the double is classically to lead his host into suicide, his appearances punctuate the text with the anticipation of death. The 'coming-into-being' of the 'Doppelgänger' narrative as life-story, is marked by the same recurrent prefiguring of death as is the 'fiction' of life in Lacan's terms. The paradox of Lacan's narcissistic 'ligne de fiction' is paraphrased by Lemaire: 'Each stage in the act of becoming ... is marked by a

sacrifice bordering on suicide. The narcissistic identification with the mirror-image already reveals this tendency on the part of man, as he alienates himself in a double, just as the Narcissus of legend fell into water and drowned through trying to rejoin his image'.⁴⁷

The alignment of being and fiction through their common subjection to alienation and the ultimate instance of death, will now be pursued in a brief discussion of a key contribution to post-Freudian literary criticism by Peter Brooks.

The Masterplot of Textual Desire

In his essay on 'Freud's Masterplot' Brooks gives a cogent account of a future project for psychoanalytic criticism, which means, in the first instance, defining the relationship between text and desire. Beyond the preoccupations of conventional psychoanalytic readings, where it is either the author, the character, or the reader who comes under psychopathological scrutiny within the text, Brooks envisages a new possibility in 'the superimposition of the model of the functioning of the mental apparatus on the functioning of the text'.⁴⁸ He takes his cue from Lacan and Derrida, their structural correlation of the unconscious and discourse. Following this correlation, the text can be seen, not only as an arena for transaction between the desires of author, narrator, reader, and characters, but as motivated by its own desire. In its narrative movements — progressions, circumlocutions, and peripeteia — the text is seen to yield symptoms of the repressions and repetitions of its desire.

Brooks considers the motive force of narrative, that which brings it into being and sustains its course, and invokes Lacan's notion of metonymic substitution as the *modus operandi* of desire. The desire to recount a story must be created by a lack, the lack which is the difference between the state of affairs at the beginning and at the end of the fiction. The narrator must be in possession of the knowledge of the end from the beginning, narration being of its essence an act after the event. Yet if beginning and end were to be given simultaneously, the narrative, and with it the desire provoked in the reader, would collapse. The desire of the narrative must thus be, not simply to inscribe its pre-ordained end, but to lead the reader to that end by way of a plot and a denouement that it ordains itself. The desire for the end is bound up with the desire for its deferral; the obstacles which the narrative presents to the direct acquisition of the end, the series of metonymic false-endings which it fixes upon, only to abandon them for the pursuit of the true end, are essential to the pleasure of the text.

In a bravura move Brooks uses a Freudian text — 'Jenseits des Lustprinzips' — both as a source for his theoretical positions, and as an illustration of how they operate in practice. The end of the narrative is aligned with death; it is beyond the pleasure principle in as far as it marks the exit of the reader from the authorial pleasure-dome. By discharging its cumulative desire, it returns to the condition of its 'pre-natal' quiescence. Beyond the pleasurable illusion of a world lifted out of

time, every text is caught up in time's onslaught, and must prescribe the necessity of propulsion towards death in spite of itself. As the child in Freud's essay contrives to master the inescapable prospect of loss (the necessity of death) by repeatedly simulating the painful separation from its mother, so the text binds back its generative energy, anticipating its eventual demise.⁴⁹ Rather than choosing the most direct route to the end it adopts strategies of postponement, principally by repeating itself, referring the reader back either formally (rhyme, assonance, alliteration and so on) or by introducing resonances of earlier events. Brooks would concur with Musil's assertion that 'der faktische Grundsatz der Literatur ist Wiederholung' (Ta I 913).

Brooks founds his argument for the principle of narrative deferral through repetition on the paradox at the core of what he calls Freud's 'masterplot' of being: 'Dabei kommt das Paradoxe zustande, daß der lebende Organismus sich auf das energischste gegen Einwirkungen (Gefahren) sträubt, die ihm dazu verhelfen könnten, sein Lebensziel auf kürzerem Wege (durch Kurzschluß sozusagen) zu erreichen' (StA III 249). The text too desires nothing more than to end, to discharge itself, but will retard its satisfaction until a commensurate narrative preparation for that end has been constructed. The instance which Brooks uses to illustrate the danger of the narrative short-circuit is precisely applicable to the works of Trakl and Musil, identifying, albeit in a different literary tradition, the moment which is the ultimate 'end' for both writers: 'Throughout the Romantic tradition it is perhaps most notably the image of incest (of the fraternal-sororial variety) which hovers as a sign of a passion interdicted because its fulfilment would be too perfect, a discharge indistinguishable from death, the very cessation of narrative movement'.⁵⁰

In both writers the desire for such a perfect consummation of desire is alloyed with the need to defer it, at least as long as the work is unable to actualise it creatively, to as it were justify the end by its narrative means. In each case the ideal end conforms to Freud's model of the restoration of an original state of things. For Trakl this is the epicene quiescence of a 'pre-existent' childhood; for Musil (MoE 902ff.), the androgynous reunion of the sexes is cast in the same myth from Plato's *Symposium* as Freud uses in lieu of biological evidence in 'Jenseits' (StA III 266).

Yet in both cases the narcissistic end in origins is countered by the other aspect of the 'Doppelgänger'. Brooks's textual short-circuit in the Romantic ideal of incest is doubled by another sort of incestuous short-circuit, where the 'too perfect' discharge of desire is supplanted by catastrophic disintegration. The merging of the erotic and the destructive, the assimilative and the dissimilative, will lead the narratives of Trakl and Musil into a type of textual repetition compulsion. The scene to which the narrative compulsively returns here is that of the coincidence of 'Sexual-' and 'Todestriebe' which Freud described in his 'Abriß der Psychoanalyse'. In Trakl and Musil the disturbance of the dialectic balance introduces the recurrent variations on the 'Lustmord' scenario. As the double becomes sexualised as an object

of narcissistic desire, so its mortal aspect is manifest in sexual violence. The double's intervention will lead both narrative enterprises into a confrontation with death, the threat of a 'Lust-mord' for textual desire.

In the case of Musil, the narcissistic programme of *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften* will be perpetually deferred; the story will never be recounted to its programmatic end. This is the ultimate 'life-story' of the novel: 'Die Geschichte dieses Romans kommt darauf hinaus, daß die Geschichte, die in ihm erzählt werden sollte, nicht erzählt wird' (MoE 1937). In the case of Trakl, the life-story related in the prose-poems, punctuated by the compulsion to repeat the traumatic 'Lustmord', is ultimately compressed into the unnarratable. The final sexual act of 'Offenbarung und Untergang' combines the death of the narrative subject and the birth into death of his child. This moment dramatises the ultimate threat to textual desire, the moment of narrative suicide; the figure of stillbirth offers no prospect of a new life-story.

In the close textual commentaries which follow, the works of both authors will be seen to oscillate between this mortal short-circuit of desire in the text, and the virtual accession to their narcissistic 'ends'. The compulsion to repeat confronts the works of both authors with the traumatic prospect of self-destruction. Yet it also imitates the gestures of the child from Freud's 'Jenseits' essay, reaffirming literature's 'faktische Grundsatz' of repetition, in order somehow to master that prospect.

NOTES TO CHAPTER I

1. For an explanation of this and other abbreviations used in the references and footnotes see p. viii.
2. Zuberbühler sums up Trakl's evaluation of sexuality as 'entartet, tierisch, schmutzig, verflucht'. Johannes Zuberbühler, 'Der Tränen nächtige Bilder': *Georg Trakls Lyrik im literarischen und gesellschaftlichen Kontext seiner Zeit* (Bonn, 1984), p. 111.
3. Otto Basil, *Georg Trakl in Selbstzeugnissen und Bilddokumenten* (Hamburg, 1965). Basil writes: 'der Dichter fiel einer grundsätzlich metaphysischen Denkmalspflege anheim, die seine grobstoffliche irdische Existenz, auch die Pathogenese seines Werks, geflissentlich sublimierte' (pp. 8–9).
4. Alfred S.J. Focke, *Georg Trakl: Liebe und Tod* (Vienna and Munich, 1955), p. 68.
5. Herbert Lindenberger, *Georg Trakl* (New York, 1971), p. 83.
6. Clemens Heselhaus, 'Die Elis-Gedichte von Georg Trakl', *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte*, 28 (1954), pp. 384–413 (p. 392).
7. Eduard Lachmann, *Kreuz und Abend: Eine Interpretation der Dichtungen Georg Trakls*, *Trakl-Studien I* (Salzburg, 1954), p. 90.
8. Erich Bolli, *Georg Trakl's 'dunkler Wohllaut': Ein Beitrag zum Verständnis seines dichterischen Sprechens* (Zurich, 1978), p. 118.
9. Heinz Wetzels, *Klang und Bild in den Dichtungen Georg Trakls* (Göttingen, 1968), p. 167.
10. Lachmann, p. 225.
11. This configuration is analysed in full in chapter V below.
12. Musil's essay 'Das Unanständige und Kranke in der Kunst' (VIII 977–83) is a *plaidoyer* for authorial licence in the depiction of the 'indecent'.
13. Musil was dubbed 'der erotische Schriftsteller' by one of his earliest reviewers, Robert Müller, writing in the *Prager Presse*, 28 August 1924.
14. Frank Kermode, in his 'Musil' chapter of *Modern Essays* (London, 1971), pp. 182–204 (p. 202).
15. Wolf Dietrich Rasch, *Über Robert Musil's Roman 'Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften'* (Göttingen, 1967), p. 127.

16. Elisabeth Stopp, 'Musil's *Törleß*: Content and Form', *Modern Language Review*, 63 (1968), 94–118 (p. 96).
17. Karl Corino discusses 'die ungeheuer "ambivalente" Haltung Musils gegenüber Psychoanalyse und psychoanalytisch orientierter Interpretation von Dichtung von *Odipus oder Orest?*: Robert Musil und die Psychoanalyse', in *Vom 'Törleß' zum 'Mann ohne Eigenschaften'*, ed. U. Baur and D. Goltschnigg (Munich, 1973), pp. 123–235 (p. 126).
18. Annie Reniers-Servranckx, 'Törleß: Freudsche Verwirrungen?', in *Robert Musil: Studien zu seinem Werk*, ed. Karl Dinklage (Hamburg, 1970), pp. 26–39 (p. 34).
19. 'Die *Psy* hat bewirkt, daß über das Sexuelle (das bis dahin der Romantik u. der Niedrigkeit überlassen war) gesprochen werden könne: das ist ihre ungeheuer zivilisatorische Leistung.' (VII 832).
20. Dieter Heyd, *Musil-Lektüre: Der Text, das Unbewußte: Psychosemiotische Studien zu Robert Musils theoretischem Werk und zum Roman 'Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften'* (Frankfurt a. M., 1980); Peter Henninger, *Der Buchstabe und der Geist: Unbewußte Determinierung im Schreiben Robert Musils* (Frankfurt a. M. and Berne, 1980). The principal failing of Heyd's work is that he does not put his impressive theoretical arguments into practice by undertaking a 'psycho-semiological' analysis of the text. Henninger does apply the theory in a close reading, but confines his commentary to *Vereinigungen*. Gunther Kleefeld, *Das Gedicht als Sühne: Georg Trakls Dichtung und Krankheit: Eine psychoanalytische Studie* (Tübingen, 1985).
21. A particularly strong argument for this is made by Hans-Georg Kemper in his *Georg Trakls Entwürfe: Aspekte zu ihrem Verständnis* (Tübingen, 1970).
22. Peter Heller, 'A Quarrel over Bisexuality', in *The Turn of the Century: German Literature and Art 1890–1915*, edited by Gerald Chapple and Hans H. Schulte (Bonn, 1981), pp. 87–115 (p. 107).
23. Sara Friedrichsmeyer, *The Androgyne in Early German Romanticism* (Berne, 1983), p. 175.
24. Kermode, p. 201.
25. Samuel Weber, *Rückkehr zu Freud: Jacques Lacans Ent-stellung der Psychoanalyse* (Frankfurt a. M., Berlin and Vienna, 1978).
26. Otto Rank, 'Der Doppelgänger', in *Psychoanalytische Beiträge zur Mythenforschung* (Leipzig and Vienna, 1919), pp. 267–354 (pp. 353–4).
27. Rank, 'Der Doppelgänger', p. 354.
28. Rank, 'Der Doppelgänger', p. 342.
29. Rank, 'Der Doppelgänger', p. 347.
30. Rank, 'Der Doppelgänger', p. 299.
31. Otto Rank, *Beyond Psychology* (New York, 1958), pp. 98–99.
32. Friedrich Kittler, 'Romantik — Psychoanalyse — Film: Eine Doppelgängergeschichte', in *Eingebildete Texte*, edited by Jochen Hörisch and Christoph Tholen (Munich, 1985), pp. 118–35.
33. Thus Laplanche argues that 'the scenario of the child at the mirror is only the index of something that occurs, in any event, without that apparatus: the recognition of the form of another human and the concomitant precipitation within the individual of a full outline of that form'. Jean Laplanche, *Life and Death in Psychoanalysis* (Baltimore, 1976), p. 81.
34. Jonathan Culler, *On Deconstruction: Theory and Criticism after Structuralism* (London, 1983), pp. 160–1.
35. Rank, 'Der Doppelgänger', p. 335.
36. Here too the connections between narcissism and death via the figure of the uncanny double are marginalised by the discussion of castration. A concise account of the arguments is given by Elizabeth Wright in her *Psychoanalytic Criticism: Theory in Practice* (London and New York, 1984) pp. 146–49.
37. Sigmund Freud, 'Abriß der Psychoanalyse', *Internationale Zeitschrift für Psychoanalyse/Imago*, 25 (1940), pp. 9–67 (p. 13).
38. Jacques Lacan, *Écrits* (London, 1977), p. 6.
39. Lacan (London, 1977), p. 2.
40. Quoted by Anika Lemaire, in *Jacques Lacan* (London, 1977), p. 73.
41. Lacan, *Écrits I* (Paris, 1966), p. 91.
42. The theatrical and narrative metaphors for the narcissistic condition will be 'centre-stage' in the discussion of Musil below.
43. Lacan (London, 1977), p. 2.
44. Lacan (London, 1977), pp. 2–3.
45. Lacan (London, 1977), p. 196.
46. Wright, p. 113.
47. Lemaire, p. 181.
48. Peter Brooks, 'Freud's Masterplot: Questions of Narrative', *Yale French Studies* 55/56 (1977), 280–300 (p. 300).
49. This is the celebrated 'fort-da' game (StA III 224–27).
50. Brooks, p. 297.

PART ONE

TRAKL

II THE PROBLEM OF SENSE

The construal of sense in the act of reading can be said to depend upon the two scales according to which any narrative is coordinated: continuity (that is, a sense of development through time) and contiguity (that is, a sense of relative disposition in space). In Trakl's mature work these two scales are radically subverted, rendering the coordination of the reader's progress through the text intensely problematic. The shifts in tense and location, the *peripeteia*, *lacunae* and equivocation, which characterise his mature poetic discourse, are bound to militate constantly against the conventional expectations of a poem's sense of direction, thereby threatening any notion of a community of sense between poet and reader within the text. Furthermore the poetry resists the conventions of identity in the figures which move within it, and of the symbol as a reliable touchstone in the interpretation of poetic figures. The overriding impression is one of dislocation, of a poetic world progressively defamiliarised, on occasion to the point of senselessness.

The present reading will seek to show that the readerly trauma of radical disorientation, and the desire to arrive at a centred poetic meaning in spite of being dispossessed of most conventional points of reference, is collateral with the quest engaged upon by the characters within the poetry. These typically errant figures, epitomised in the ubiquitous 'Wanderer', must chart their course through the space of the poem; and in as far as the poetic landscape is 'die Landschaft der Seele' (I 387), their attainment of a sense of direction is contingent upon spiritual orientation. This quest for a path to follow is what Kleefeld would call a 'poetological' motif, in that it constructs an allegory of the poetic enterprise within the fabric of the poetry.¹ I chose rather to regard this allegorical strategy within the perspective of the theory of textual narcissism which is outlined below. My reading will concentrate on the way in which the tripartite quest for sense (by the poet, his poetic personae, and his reader) is confounded by the exigencies of sensuality, and particularly the desire for the other which arises out of sexual difference. It will call into question Detsch's thesis of 'unity through ambiguity' by challenging the main plank upon which it rests, the possibility of union between the sexes, which he sees in the 'fusion of brother and sister into one sex'.² I set out to show that there can be no privileging of unity over ambiguity, sense over non-sense, and that the fusion into one sex almost invariably collapses into confusion or diffusion. The sister-figure, for Detsch the 'embodiment of androgynous and numinous qualities',³ in fact becomes the focus for the dialectic interplay of integration and disintegration in the poetry.

The narcissistic text

In her *Narcissistic Narrative: The Metafictional Paradox*, Linda Hutcheon applies the mythical narrative of Narcissus's fate to the structures of metafiction which she defines as 'fiction about fiction — that is fiction that includes within itself a commentary on its own narrative and/or linguistic identity'.⁴ The text's ironic awareness of its own textuality is clearly not unique to certain kinds of 'post-Modernist' fiction; it is a model that is eminently applicable to the lyrical narratives of Trakl's poetry. For Hutcheon the natural emblem of the self-reflexive novel is the mirror, quintessentially in the function of a narrative *mise-en-abyme*, furnishing, that is, an image of the canvas/text within the canvas/text. The mirror assumes an active role in what she calls the diegesis, that is the re-productive function of the narrative: 'The familiar image of the mimetic mirror suggests too passive a process; the use of micro-macro allegorical mirroring and *mises-en-abyme* in metafiction contests that very image of passivity, making the mirror productive as the genetic core of the work'.⁵

The present reading of Trakl's poetry will recurrently focus on the mirror motif in just this role of the 'genetic core' within a text. Not only does the mirror, typically as the surface of the pool, bear an image of the poetic landscape, a reflective microcosm as *mise-en-abyme*, but it is specifically the screen wherein the text's semiotic configurations are projected. The protagonist of these poems, who will here be styled the poetic subject or persona, is paradigmatically caught in the posture of Narcissus over his speculum, engaged at once in self-contemplation, and in *speculation* upon the signs (i.e. the flocks of birds and constellations of stars) which are reflected with him. The poetic persona's interpretation of these signs, disposed in what is essentially a metatextual space (a microcosmic reflection of the 'Landschaft der Seele'), has the function of a double allegory. It at once represents the poet's creative activity as interpretative seer, dependent upon his literacy in the cosmic sign-systems in order to 'interpret' their legends into his own poetic language; and it allegorises the situation of the reader, presented with the problematic interpretation of that poetic language. Trakl's texts construct the same close analogy between the creative act of writing and the re-creative act of reading by which Hutcheon characterises her 'narcissistic narratives'. Narcissus is the figure in whom poet and reader conjoin. While the poet seeks to fashion the text after his own idealised image, the text's readers are always bound to seek their own image within the text, to find affirmation of their world-view in the poetic world. A poet whose work is as multi-referential, and indeed as eclectic, as Trakl's, can sustain the narcissistic desires of multifarious readers. Interpretations of every colour — Christian or pantheistic, transcendental or nihilistic, mythical or psycho-biographical, Jungian, Freudian or post-Freudian — have identified themselves in the poetry. The goal of the present reading is to illustrate that Trakl's text ultimately evades the reader's pursuit, resisting narcissistic capture much as did the beguiling image of legend.

If the mirror is to be conceived of as the genetic core of the text then the corruption of its own genetic make-up clearly has grave consequences for the creative process. The desire which can be said to motivate the text is the desire for a perfect self-reflexive integrity, that is, the poem as a body which corresponds to the soul in the manner of a mirror-image, and is thus abstracted by the beauty of its visions from the dictates of transience. It is the desire of Narcissus to become one with the beautiful shadow of his image which appears to be beyond decay. But as the insubstantial image is derived from the body, desired as a body, and bound to reflect its mortal condition, so the poetic mirror, conceived as an instrument of transfiguration, is made to confirm the disfigurement which is the body's lot. As the desire of Narcissus ended in the withering away of his corporeal beauty, the narcissistic paradigm is revised into that of the double. The body of Narcissus is supplanted by the poet's perception of his own body, its form disfigured by dint of reflecting the leprous state of both his own spirit and that of his age:

Ich sehe den Tag herbei, an dem die Seele in diesem unseeligen von Schwermut verpesteten Körper nicht mehr wird wohnen wollen und können, an dem sie diese Spottgestalt aus Kot und Fäulnis verlassen wird, die ein nur allzugetreues Spiegelbild eines gottlosen, verfluchten Jahrhunderts ist. (I 519)

The narcissistic text can only seek to redeem this 'Spottgestalt', to derive some sense of plastic beauty out of the derangement of the personal and universal condition of 'Schwermut'. The unpublished parody of 'De Profundis' (II 126–27) which is precisely such a 'Spottgestalt', revising the desire for the body to be infused with soul in the original into a brute form devoid of any metaphysical hope, illustrates the poet's insecurity in his own narcissistic constructions.

All too often the image of himself which the poetic persona perceives in the speculum is petrified, broken, wounded, or utterly absent. The waters which bear symbolic texts for the hydromantic seer to interpret, assume the sort of productive role which Hutcheon describes, as they put an interpretation upon the seer's brow, the metonymic figure of his spirit. The interpreter is subjected to the role of sign ('Dunkle Deutung des Wassers: Zerbrochene Stirne im Munde der Nacht,' I 308), signifying the inadequacy of his broken spirit to its exegetic function. The seer's body is disfigured by the same token as the metatexts, which are also images of transient bodies, and hence subject to the ravages of decay, so that these too fall into disarray and extinction.

The disparity of body and soul which afflicts both the poetic subject and his signs is most acutely felt in the interruption by sensuality of the quest for sense. The mirror, initially evoked as a figure of the soul and identified with the sister as anima, comes to be embodied and so a viable object for sexual desire. Sexuality forces its entry into the soulish mirror-space and transmutes the poetry's genetic core. The poetry that is generated by this corrupted mirror must compulsively revert to the original scene where the soul (represented by a series of blue figures, 'Weiher', 'Quell', 'Wild' and 'Blume') is ravaged by the figures of sexual aggression. As the

subject's descent to the waters is always in quest of both bodily and spiritual satisfaction, so sexuality must interfere with the procedures of reading and creative writing which that descent represents.

'Sinnbilder'

In the course of his controversial study of Trakl's 'Gedicht', Heidegger focuses in passing on the term 'sinnen', and taking characteristic recourse to the etymology of the word, draws attention to its connotations of journeying and the search for a path to follow, largely obscured in the now prevalent meanings relating to thought or contemplation, but still extant in the meaning of 'Sinn' as direction. Thus Heidegger suggests that the seminal idea of 'Wahnsinn' in the poetry is primarily experienced as the lack of a 'sense of direction'.⁶ The often quite striking use which Trakl makes of 'Sinn' and 'sinnen' encourages me to extend Heidegger's semantic exercise, in order to provide an exposition of the problems introduced by sensuality in the poetic quest for sense. The variety of meanings listed under 'Sinn' in *Duden* may be summarised thus:

Sinn (mhd., ahd. *sin*, wohl eigtl. = der eine Fährte Suchende)

1a. Fähigkeit der Wahrnehmung u. Empfindung (die in den Sinnesorganen ihren Sitz hat).

Bewußtsein; Wahrnehmungs-, Reaktionsfähigkeit ...

c. (Pl.) Geschlechtliches Empfinden, Verlangen.

2. Gefühl, Verständnis für etw.; innere Beziehung zu etwas.

3. jmds Gedanken, Denken.

4. Sinngehalt, gedanklicher Gehalt, Bedeutung die einer Sache innewohnt: der verborgene, geheime, tiefere, wahre S. einer Sache.

5. Ziel u. Zweck, Wert, der einer Sache (in einem metaphysischen Sinne) innewohnt.

The range of dictionary definitions can be broadly reduced to three essential areas: the sensual (specifically sexuality); sense as the meaning invested in objective reality by rational consciousness; and the relationship of understanding which is based on a more subliminal or intuitive feeling for an object or a state of affairs. These three correspond to the tripartite scheme of body, mind and soul, with all three clearly being involved in every instance of interaction between the sentient subject and the world. The members of the genus 'Sinn' — the senses, common sense, and sensibility — are inevitably prone to internecine conflict. The demands of sensuality will offend both reason and sensibility, while the free subjective flight of the latter is bound to be fettered by the dictates of common sense. The quest of the errant subject in Trakl's poetry as 'sin' ('Der eine Fährte Suchende') is continually subverted by the practical implications of this abstract model of senses in conflict. In the course of the quest one 'Sinn' ('Ziel u. Zweck') may be substituted by another,

the metaphysical telos abandoned in an access of sexual desire. The recondite sense 'die einer Sache innewohnt' does not enjoy a sacrosanct stability; rather the symbols deployed in the poetry are amenable to the pervasive aegis of 'Verfall'. Sense and image, the constituent parts of the 'Sinnbild' are submitted by the obfuscation of twilight to a process of exchange: 'Abend wechselt Sinn und Bild' (I 107). The 'Sinnbilder' offer no stable currency in the transaction between poet and reader, so that the sort of symbolic scheme which Goldmann constructs is bound to be undermined.⁷ The relationship between letter and spirit is organically ambiguous and fluid; not only may a certain 'Sinn' migrate from one 'Bild' to another, but the perception of the 'Bild' can, as we shall see, be transferred from its common sense 'Sinn' (the subject's sight) to his heightened sense of hearing.

This reformulation of the rules of reading undoubtedly bears witness to the example of Rimbaud, who, as the archetypal 'poète maudit', at once represented an ideal of existence for Trakl, and a creative model in the innovative forms and ideas of his poetic practice. A celebrated statement of Rimbaud's, playing on the semantic multivalency which the French 'sens' shares with its German and English equivalents, lends itself as a key to the poet's 'myth'. In his so-called 'lettre du voyant' Rimbaud defines his poetic enterprise thus:

Le poète se fait voyant par un long, immense et raisonné *dérèglement de tous les sens*. Toutes les formes d'amour, de souffrance, de folie; il cherche lui-même, il épuise en lui tous les poisons, pour n'en garder que les quintessences. Ineffable torture où il a besoin de toute la foi, de toute la force surhumaine, où il devient entre tous le grand malade, le grand criminel, le grand maudit, — et le suprême Savant!⁸

Rimbaud's express intent was to run the gamut of sensual experience, and equally to expand his sensibility in the simulated sensual derangement of narcotic hallucinations, and thereby to 'deregulate' conventional poetic 'good sense' by the creation of a new poetic idiom. A key element in this scheme, and one which particularly influenced Trakl, was the flouting of the rules of sensual apprehension by virtue of a pervasive synaesthesia in 'un verbe poétique accessible, un jour ou l'autre, a tous les sens'.⁹ Rimbaud's alchemical poetics sought to strike a new immediacy in the relation of the senses to sense. Trakl's letters bear ample witness to the emulation of this ideal. The metamorphic derangement of identity as he submits himself to 'tous les poisons' is experienced as a violent transmutation in the bodily shape: 'Seltsame Schauer von Verwandlung, körperlich bis zur Unerträglichkeit empfunden' (I 503). Most strikingly the poet casts his soul's sense of anguish in verbs which suggest a powerful and comprehensive sensual experience, locating his madness in flesh and blood: 'Ich habe die fürchterlichsten Möglichkeiten in mir gefühlt, gerochen, getastet und im Blute die Dämonen heulen hören, die tausend Teufel mit ihren Stacheln, die das Fleisch wahnsinnig machen' (I 472). Conversely, the poet's return to the sonorities of his soul is experienced as the senses transported in metaphysical flight, the body's organs become 'beseelt': 'ich lausche, ganz beseeltes Ohr, wieder auf die Melodien, die in mir sind, und mein beschwingtes Auge träumt wieder seine

Bilder, die schöner sind als alle Wirklichkeit!' (I 472). Trakl's letter makes a bravura reconstruction of the 'dérèglement de tous les sens' in Rimbaud's famous letter, tracing the same process through the agony of madness into the rarified realm of the poet's sixth sense.

The confusion of poetic sense and the senses (as the seat of 'Wahnsinn') which the letters record is constantly at work in the poetry. It subjects the demarcation of reading and misreading for poetic persona and reader alike to a dialectic flux. The organic discrepancy between the apparent sense of the texts and their essential sense means that the sort of interpretation they require is analogous to that of dreams. The poetry must be read with an awareness of the principle of 'Entstellung'; as in Freud's *Traumdeutung* the patent form (i.e. the sensually apprehended shape) of the poem embodies a sense only by submitting it to a process of distortion, in Rimbaud's terms a 'dérèglement'. However, Trakl's interpreter is no psychoanalyst schooled in the regulated methods of positivistic science, but the more archaic figure of the mantic seer. The prerequisite of correct interpretation for such a seer is the experience of the very derangement that informs the semiotics of his texts. In terms of the threefold quest outlined above, the model provided for the poet as 'umnachteter Seher' (I 149) and the reader alike, requires the suspension of common sense. The reader's orientation in these poetic landscapes, that is, the perception of their 'Sinn', is to be achieved only in as far as he/she is able to empathise with the poetry's experience of 'Wahnsinn'.

This abstract model, and in particular the antagonism between sense and sensuality, will now be applied to the poetry, first in considering the function of 'Sinn' and 'sinnen', and then in the discussion of the two most significant 'Sinbilder'.

The notion of the poetic subject as oneiromantic is introduced in 'Drei Träume', each of the three sections evoking the discrepancy between apparent and concealed sense. In the first the self is projected into the poetic landscape, the split between the cognitive and the active selves being marked, as so often in the early poetry, by the formula: 'So sah ich mich' (I 215). The dream-self is assimilated by the senseless patterns of repeated falling and echoing, made to move to and fro in a state of disorientation:

Wie Blätterfall, wie Sternendall,
So sah ich mich ewig kommen und gehn,
Eines Traumes unsterblicher Wiederhall —
Doch konnt' ich seinen Sinn nicht verstehn. (I 215)

The second dream has the poet's soul not as the echo of a dream, but as the mirror ('meiner Seele dunklem Spiegel') in which his fantasies are projected; this mirror is conceived not as a passive, mimetic surface, but as the genetic core of the poetic process ('meine Seele gebar' I 215, 'Schuf Bilder' I 216). But the soul can only gain an unclear sense of itself in these visions of cosmic destruction which resist rational

purchase (being 'namenlos' and 'unergründlich'). The narcissistic ideal is revised into a vague and disturbed 'sense' of recognition: 'Meine Seele schauert erinnerungs-dunkel,/ Als ob sie in allem sich wiederfände —' (I 216). The shift from the quatrains to the tercets in the final sonnet underpins the senselessness of going through the motions of rise and fall. Out of the grotesque visions of cosmic, human, artistic and divine oblivion, the second quatrain is elevated on the hope of regeneration, 'Ein neues Leben zum Tage schwellen', but all that is renewed is the fall into decay: 'Zum Tage schwellen und wieder vergehn' (I 216). The cyclic patterns of coming and going, as the 'ewig gleiche Tragödie', dramatise Weininger's theory of 'rückläufige Bewegungen', as the sort of movements which, by denying the 'sense' of temporal direction, deny the sense of existence.¹⁰ The laurel as recognition of the poet's Apollonian creations of sense and beauty, is replaced by a crown of thorns as adjunct to the 'Wahnsinn', the lack of coherent direction, in the poet's nightmarish visions:

Und deren wahnsinnsnächliche Qual
 Der Schönheit sanfte Gloria
 Umkränzt als lächelndes Dornenall. (I 216)

If the interpreter of his own dreams can derive no consolatory sense from these catastrophic landscapes (nor it should be said the poet, his alter ego, any more than a modicum of poetic beauty or originality from such early works as 'Drei Träume'), a sense of proportion does of course emerge in his more mature writing. Here the poet recognises that the narrative body of a poem, no matter how dark or discontinuous, may impart a sense, that it may as it were embody a soul of transcendent meaning. The soul, being analogous to the moment, and so inimical to the time-scales of the narrative, can only find expression through the mediation of movements within the landscape it projects (i.e. the 'Landschaft der Seele'). This idea of meaning as interior, rather than equal to exterior appearance — the metaphysical 'Bedeutung, die einer Sache innewohnt' — informs the lines from 'Elis' (1F): 'Ein heiterer Sinn/ Wohnt in der Winzer dunklem Gesang' (I 372). Like the vintners, Trakl sings a dark song which furnishes a home ('wohnen' invariably carries connotations of the inviolate matrix of childhood innocence) for a core of light.

This model of the co-existence of apparent polarities led Rilke to make his analogy between the poetry and the fate of Li-Tai-Pe, which sees the essence of Trakl's poetic enterprise as the paradigm change out of descent into elevation: 'Es fällt mir ein, daß dieses ganze Werk sein Gleichnis hätte in dem Sterben des Li-Tai-Pe: hier wie dort ist das Fallen Vorwand für die unaufhaltsamste Himmelfahrt'.¹¹ Rilke's formula, written it seems with 'Helian' in mind, certainly identifies a programmatic movement through 'Wahnsinn' into 'Sinn' in the poetry. His analogy is all the more apposite in that it evokes a variation on the figure of Narcissus, whose image is correlated with the moon's reflection in the water. However, the statement underestimates the compulsive force of the descent as 'Vorwand', which in many poems overwhelms the programme of eventual

ascension, leaving it submerged in visions, albeit more complex than those of 'Drei Träume', of 'wahnsinnsnächtige Qual'.

A complementary pattern of light and dark also characterises the use of 'sinnen', which might be defined as the conscious activity of making sense of things. The verb form is used variously with a direct or indirect object, intransitively, or as a compound with 'nach' or 'hinab'. In 'O das Wohnen . . .', 'sinnen' is intransitive (literally unmoving, with no 'Sinn'): looking is given the full sense of contemplation by the unusual use of the verb, and at the same time cognition is transferred to the eyes: 'Tief sinnt aus wissenden Augen ein dunkles Geschlecht' (I 314). In this way the purely spiritual sense of 'sinnen' is amplified by the sensual connotation ('Sinnen') which also attaches to it. What the eyes, which in the first stanza betokened the incestuous conjunction of brother and sister, know, is the loss of innocence; the depth of the 'sinnen' is commensurate with the depth of the fall from grace into darkness of the 'dunkles Geschlecht'. The particular kind of knowledge that 'sinnen' implies is thus the sexual knowledge ('Geschlecht' always carries this second connotation for Trakl) which came to the siblings in the garden. Similarly the faculty of 'sinnen' of the poet-priest in 'An Angela' is born of pain (the agony of the 'Sinnen'), with darkness once more the necessary context for the activity: 'Schmerzvolles Sinnen in der dunklen Kühle' (I 287).

These examples provide no explicit indication of a predicate for 'sinnen'; elsewhere though, where the use is transitive, a 'Sinn' does emerge. In 'Dämmerung', 'sinnen' is once more transposed to the sense of sight: 'Ihr wächserner runder Blick sinnt goldner Zeiten' (I 48). In accordance with the nature of the subjects ('weiche Kranke'), the activity is relatively passive, the object ('Ziel u. Zweck') indirect. The association of 'sinnen' with the absent Golden Age is thus an ambivalent one; it is unable to take the object directly as its 'Sinn' and thereby to recuperate the loss.

This ambivalence is sustained in the majority of cases where the direct object is used, and with it a more robust attempt at appropriation. The predicate in these more immediate examples might seem to be analogous with the forfeited innocence elegiacally evoked in 'Dämmerung'; thus the 'Vergessenes sinnend' (I 90) of 'Sebastian im Traum', or the 'Gerechtes sann' (I 119) of 'Abendländisches Lied'. However, the notion of justice is not simply the unequivocal light of a prelapsarian age, but is inextricably bound up with the perpetration of sin and the experience of death as the concomitant of the fall. If there is consolation to be found in justice then it is dependent upon the recognition of the sensual body's mortality: 'O wie ernst ist das Antlitz der teuren Toten./ Doch die Seele erfreut gerechtes Anschau' (I 69). In the same way the 'Vergessenes' of 'Sebastian im Traum' is not the Golden Age which has been involuntarily lost, but the subsequent descent into darkness which is voluntarily repressed: 'Die Drossel ein Fremdes in den Untergang rief' (I 90).

The alternative notion of 'sinnen' as the immediate relation to a metaphysical order, the desire to bring what is remote or absent to mind, cannot be realised as

long as the body and its sensual requirements asserts the priority of its presence. So for instance in 'Ein Herbstabend':

Doch immer ist das Eigne schwarz und nah.
Der Trunkene sinnt im Schatten alter Bogen
Den wilden Vögeln nach, die ferngezogen. (I 61).

The motif of migrating birds will be discussed in detail below; here 'sinnen' is used with the same connotations as 'folgen' elsewhere: the birds furnish a model of movement, a direction to be followed (i.e. a 'Sinn'), yet the heavy presence of the body frustrates any prospect of an authentic 'nachsinnen'. The migration of the soul can only be simulated in the 'paradis artificiel' of the poetic subject's intoxication.

In 'Träumerei am Abend' the demands of the senses are apparently suspended as the body is dissolved: 'Dem einsam Sinnenden löst weißer Mohn die Glieder,/ Daß er Gerechtes schaut und Gottes tiefe Freude' (I 290). Yet once more the insight, courtesy of the amnesic drug, is a limited one. As in 'Helian' this 'Gerechtes' is coupled with the spectre of death; even as the lonely 'Sinnende' enjoys his epiphany, his alter ego, the shade released by the simulated, opiate-induced death, engages in an act of narcissism. His gaze is focused not on 'Gerechtes' but on the reflection of the 'Glieder' which the subject had seemed to resolve: 'Vom Garten irrt sein Schatten her in weißer Seide/ Und neigt sich über trauervolle Wasser nieder' (I 290). In 'Abendmuse', the identity of this white shadow is revealed as the scene is rehearsed: 'Endymion taucht aus dem Dunkel alter Eichen/ Und beugt sich über trauervolle Wasser nieder' (I 28). This is a prime example of Trakl's synthetic use of mythological material; Endymion has actually become his lover, the moon-goddess Selena here, and he bends over the speculum in imitation of their son Narcissus.¹² Thus the moon's reflection is not the ungraspable, transcendent figure which Li-Tai-Pe or Li Po (also a drunk poet) seeks, but the image of a human body enacting the myth of narcissistic desire. Accordingly Rilke's formula is inverted, the apotheosis for the 'Sinnenden' is 'Vorwand' for the fall into sensual desire.

The lunar double is surely derived from the theosophic concept of the astral body. Spence describes the astral body thus: 'It is the instrument of passions, emotions and desires . . . When it separates from the lunar body — as it does during sleep, or by the influence of drugs . . . it takes with it the capacity for feeling . . . the astral body is an exact replica of the physical.' The appearance of the astral body, and in particular its colour, is said to be an indication of the self's spiritual state. The astral body is a progenitor of the 'Doppelgänger' and as such it is perceived as an ambivalent figure, out of phase with the self. Spence writes that the stage of evolution of the astral body's life 'is that of descent, the turning point not yet, as far as it is concerned, having been reached. He who possesses the body has, on the other hand, commenced to ascend, and there is, therefore, a continual opposition of forces between him and his astral body'.¹³ Endymion performs precisely this role here, released by drugs, embodying desire, his descent subverts the spiritual ascent of the subject. It could be said that the astral body represents the 'Sternengeschlecht'

(II 245), that is, he actualises the secondary meaning of 'Geschlecht' and signals the binding of the ill-starred 'line' to the exigency of sexuality.

'Vogelzeichen'

Prima facie the flight of birds might seem to fulfil a more or less ornamental function as a component in the complex of autumnal decay. The mechanics of migration effect a displacement away from the centre of the 'Landschaft der Seele', and thus implicitly from the locus of the poet's soul; the eye of the poetic subject and that of the reader alike are drawn out of the frame of the present towards a vanishing point. The motif modulates between progressive distancing and ultimate absence, such as in the final version of 'Untergang' where the focus of the poem is located in a void which has been evacuated by an action in the past: 'Über den weißen Weiher/ Sind die wilden Vögel fortgezogen' (I 116).

The birds as an image of passing away are related to the mood of melancholy, proper to autumnal evenings. Their movements in the early poetry are not, however, seen as infected by transience, but rather as underpinning it as apparent emblems of escape to another spatio-temporal dimension: 'Ein Heer von wilden Vögeln wandern/ Nach jenen Ländern, schönen, andern' (I 19). Migration is thus sublimated out of the seasonal cycle of passing away and renewal to which it clearly belongs — there are no references to the return in spring — and into a transcendent order. These lands are the homeland of which the gypsies, as representatives of man's Romantic uprootedness, have been dispossessed: 'Die Sehnsucht glüht in ihrem nächtigen Blick/ Nach jener Heimat, die sie niemals finden' (I 240).

As emblems of melancholy — a mood invariably associated with passivity — the birds offer only an illusion of consolation. Thus in 'Verfall' the motif appears in its recurrent context of the autumn evening, yet the initial effect is not of evanescence, but of the virtual suspension of time: 'Träum ich nach ihren helleren Geschicken/ Und fühl der Stunden Weiser kaum mehr rücken' (I 59); this is achieved not by identification with the movement of the birds, but with the extrapolated eternity of their goal. The quatrains are virtually fixed in this idea of anticipated extra-temporality, and yet the virtual nature of the stillness ('kaum mehr' is both temporal and spatial in as far as it attaches to the metonymic representation of time's progress by the hands of the clock) provides the seeds for a radical change of paradigm in the shift to the tercets. The minimal movement in the quatrains is taken up in the opening irruption of 'Da' and with it the awareness of time into the apparent state of suspended animation. The sort of animation that is introduced, however, is as illusory as the stillness; it is an agitated movement ('schwankt', 'erzittern', 'fröstelnd') which never goes anywhere, but is fixed in a spatial axis in which it merely repeats an oscillation, that is, it is 'rückläufig' in Weininger's sense. The suspension achieved in the first half of 'Verfall' is based on the illusion of the stretched moment; the flight of birds is incapable of furnishing more than a reference point, isolated

within the poetic narrative, and its immanent movements. The birds are not at home within the landscape of the soul.

In later poems, the motif is imbued with a more complex function within the general economy. An example of this is the mystical harmonics attributed to the flight of crows. The movement of flight is often apprehended synaesthetically as musical ('Voll Harmonien' I 144). In the prose-poem 'Verwandlung des Bösen', 'der Krähen mystische Zeichen' of 'Ein Teppich ...' are composed into sonata form: 'Krähen, die sich zerstreuen; drei. Ihr Flug gleicht einer Sonate, voll verblichener Akkorde und männlicher Schwermut' (I 97). It seems probable that Weininger was Trakl's model for this complication of the role which the number three played in the mystical tradition. Weininger relates this 'masculine number' to his ideal of male monism: 'Die Dreizahl hat einen *monistischen* Charakter' (ULD 105), and the idea is epitomised for him in the 'Appassionata' sonata, which he celebrates as the resolution of three movements into the unmitigated triumph of the first: 'Der sieghafte Schluß des dritten Satzes bringt nur mehr den ersten, nicht mehr den zweiten Teil' (ULD 118). The melodic rendering of 'männlicher Schwermut' in Trakl's prose poem provides a contrapuntal accompaniment to the broken rhythms and discordant tones of the narrative line.

The musical composition of the signs of bird-flight furnishes an ideal for the process of signification in the poetic text, by plotting a course in the upper regions of the poetic landscape which the poetic persona, earth-bound as he is, is nevertheless called upon to follow. His pursuit is threefold; he follows with his step and with his eyes, 'Am Abend folgen ihren Vogelzeichen/ Die Augen' (I 429), and traces a spiritual model. These three are coordinated in the activity of 'nachsinnen': 'Der Trunkne sinnt im Schatten alter Bogen/ Den wilden Vögeln nach' (I 61), the eyes being, as we have seen, the seat of 'sinnen', the organs which derive 'Sinn' from 'Bilder'. As the birds inhabit the evening landscape, the visual 'Sinn' is subject to exchange, with the ear following not only the song of birds, but also the 'Klangbild' of their flight.

In 'Verfall' the steep fall from one half of the poem to the other was the consequence of the subject's self-deceit, his voluntary misreading of the flight. As the passive lament of the melancholic is replaced by the mood of 'männlicher Schwermut' so the disparate movements of soaring transcendence and dissolute agitation are brought into a dialectic relation. In this more authentic mode, bird-flight becomes a genuinely significant semiological system rather than an arbitrary and anomalous symbol. The birds prescribe sibylline narratives which may not be rendered in language ('Unsäglich ist der Vögel Flug' I 385), but whose meaning may yet be *sensed* by the subject who has gained literacy in their metalanguage. The narratives can be seen, heard or felt to communicate the ancient legends, to give voice to the paradox of unspeakable sagas, 'Der Flug der Vögel tönt von alten Sagen', and to offer a response to their enigmas: 'Erfüllt von leiser Antwort dunkler Fragen' (I 109). These are the sort of ancient legends which Tiresias, the archetypal ornithomantic seer, was called upon to foresee, and which the modern poet is called

upon to recall. They tell of the fate of Narcissus and of Oedipus, the ancient dramas — the 'dunklen Sagen seines Geschlechts' (I 197) — which all turn on the catastrophic denial of desire. This is the common denominator in these legends, in the latter-day myths which Trakl dramatises (Bluebeard, Don Juan), and in the mythopoeic treatment of the poet's personal narratives, played out by such figures as Orpheus and Ophelia. The demise of the 'Geschlecht' which these, its mythical sons and daughters experience, is bound up with the perverse and/or violent course which their experience of 'Geschlecht' takes.

The legends (in both senses) traced out by the birds are literally read as texts: 'Des Vogelfluges wirre Zeichen lesen/ Aussätze, die zur Nacht vielleicht verwesen.' (I 29). By virtue of the mythopoeic dimension to the poetic subject's experience, the cryptic or 'deranged' cyphers, impart a sense which has a timeless significance. The latter-day seer at once re-reads the legends which his ancient counterpart predicted, and in his turn extracts a premonitory sense from them. The interpretation of the past ('dunkle Deutung des Vogelflugs' I 84) is equivalent to divination of the future, the 'Vogelflug dunklere Vorbedeutung' of a variant to 'Stundenlied' (II 139). In accordance with the darkness of their concealed sense the texts are only properly read by interpreters already marked out by disease or death, by lepers or by the blind of 'Psalm': 'Stille; als sanken Blinde an herbstlicher Mauer hin,/ Lauschend mit morschen Schläfen dem Flug der Raben' (I 346). The seer undergoes a derangement of the senses (the loss of sight being equivalent to the 'Umnachtung' of 'Wahnsinn') in order to gain insight into the derangement of sense in the 'wirre Zeichen'. He must continuously suffer the fate that he divines for the 'Geschlecht', just as Tiresias could foresee the blindness of Oedipus only by being blinded himself. He must constantly 'keep in touch' with the texts, in order to bring what is repressed or remote to mind:

Doch immer rührt der schwarze Flug der Vögel
Den Schauenden, das Heilige blauer Blumen,
Denkt die nahe Stille Vergessenes, erloschene Engel. (I 113)

Elis's mantic visions are cast in the metaphor of an open wound:

Laß, wenn deine Stirne leise blutet
Uralte Legenden
Und dunkle Deutung des Vogelflugs. (I 84)

The poet's eye is necessarily a bleeding eye, hence his transformation in the first version of 'Passion' into 'ein Wild äugend aus eiternder Wunde' (I 394), the emulation of Tiresias is combined with an *imitatio Christi*. In the third version of this poem the wounded eye is the precondition of melodic movement, as emblem of the subject's 'Wahn-sinn':

Denn immer folgt, ein blaues Wild,
Ein Ägendes unter dämmernden Bäumen,
Dieser dunkleren Pfaden
Wachend und bewegt von nächtigem Wohllaut,
Sanftem Wahnsinn. (I 125)

Elis rejects the call to passive resignation ('Laß') by following into the night, not with unequivocal bravura, but with a demeanour which shows that he has partaken of and comprehended the dark decay of death: 'Du aber gehst mit weichen Schritten in die Nacht' (I 84). Elis has as it were become significant, his movement imbued with 'Sinn', not only directing himself towards an end, but assuming the role of the semiotic texts in tracing a path for others to follow; the seer undergoes a Passion of his own. The dark years which had followed on from the portentous flight, 'Unsäglich ist der Vögel Flug, Begegnung/ Mit Sterbenden; dem folgen dunkle Jahre' (I 108), come to pursue the seer who has become the perfect disciple of the birds' model: 'da jener im grünen Schatten des Ölbaums erscheint. Dem folgt unvergängliche Nacht' (I 98).

'Sternenzeichen'

The same sort of ambivalence can be traced in the other main semiotic motif: the figure of the star, in itself a stock emblem of human fate, transcends the role of ornamental adjunct to the night, or of a symbol of the hope of rebirth out of darkness ('Stern und rosig Erwachen' I 425). The remoteness of the sidereal order from the corporeal which this symbolic role suggests is radically foreshortened in more striking examples of the motif, where the stars are brought into proximate or indeed immediate contact with the human figures. Thus stars are typically placed adjacent to the forehead; in 'An die Schwester' they seek the sister's 'Stirnenbogen', and in 'Ruh und Schweigen' the lunar figure sleeps 'die Wang' an seine Sterne gelehnt' (I 113). The pool as speculum brings the stars and moon as it were down to earth, relocating them in the same reflective space as the human figure; the night sky is thus rendered co-extensive with the pool:

Auf schwarzer Wolke
Befährst du trunken von Mohn
Den nächtigen Weiher,

Den Sternenhimmel. (I 118)

The two are even conflated in the neologism 'Sternenweiher'. The transition from naturalistic to specular disposition is on occasion made implicitly, to striking effect: 'Langsam beugt die heiße Stirne/ Sich den weißen Sternen zu' (I 25). The phonetic similarity between 'Stirn' and 'Stern'/'Gestirn' underpins their essential relationship (in the versions of 'Untergang' they are even exchanged for one another). The 'Stirne' as metonymic representation of the subject's spirit takes possession of the stars as personal signs, hence the recurrent use of possessive pronouns to define their relation.

As with the birds, the stars furnish a musical model to be followed: 'Das Ohr folgt lange den Pfaden der Sterne im Eis' (I 128); their mystical constellations ('Angelens Sterne, fromm zum mystischen Bild geschlossen' I 290) effect the familiar suspension

of conventions of 'Sinn': the 'Sternbild' (I 279) is synaesthetically apprehended as 'Klangbild'. However, the mystical apprehension of these constellations is subverted by the collusion of sexual desire in their acquisition. Thus in 'Afra' the stars of the canonised prostitute agitate the blood of the monk with sexual guilt: 'Wenn ihre Sterne durch sein Blut gespenstern' (I 108); and in 'Psalm' the subject's stars are appropriated as counters by the ludic sexuality of the 'fremde Schwester', so that his dream-self as double is enthralled:

Die fremde Schwester erscheint wieder in jemand's bösen Träumen.
Ruhend im Haselgebüsch spielt sie mit seinen Sternen.

Der Student, vielleicht ein Doppelgänger, schaut ihr lange vom Fenster nach. (I 55)

This sexualisation of the celestial body allows it to become a surrogate lover in the subject's ostensible 'Einsamkeit'; thus the scenario of sexual encounter between man and woman is juxtaposed with the subject's isolation in 'Im Dunkel 2. Fassung': 'Wandelt mit seinen Gestirnen der Einsame' (I 143). In the most explicit embodiment of the star it locks the subject in an erotic embrace: 'Umfängt den Tönenden mit purpurnen Armen sein Stern' (I 87). Here the star is conceived as an astral body, its purple colour an indication of its affective nature. As double, cast in the self's physical form, the astral body is an object of narcissistic desire; in the variants to 'Rote Gesichter ...' it can therefore fulfil the same role as the specular nymph: 'Blauer Quell Purpurner [Stern]/ Nymphe darüber sich schweigend der Liebende neigt' (II 435). Equally it assumes the function of the double as 'Todesvorzeichen'.¹⁴ The apparition of the 'Sternengestalt im mächtigen Weiher' (II 249) is but a prelude to its sinking away as emblem of the subject's fate: 'Zeichen und Sterne/ versinken leise im Abendweiher' (I 86). The 'Sternenbild' or 'Sternengestalt' is at once a constellation and the sidereal image which the subject's soul perceives in the mirror of the 'Sternenweiher': 'Finster ihr Bild im Sternenweiher beschaut' (I 421).

The oscillation between the idealised role and the sexual is in evidence in the poem 'An Luzifer' which evokes the fate of Christ (the star as emblem of hope) only to negate it in the fall of Lucifer as a burning star: 'die Finsternis flammenden Sturzes' (I 335). Lucifer's fall prefigures the extinction of the 'Sternengeschlecht'; once more the sexual connotations of 'Geschlecht' are crucial in this neologism, as the star's 'Geschlecht' causes its fall. The double function of the star corresponds exactly to the symbolic role which Weininger posits for it. While on the one hand he separates the star from the exigencies of 'Geschlecht', 'Das Verhältnis zum gestirnten Himmel ist darum *asexuell* ... weil der Stern der Engel ist, und der Engel ohne Sexualität' (ULD 138), he also sees the star's fall, the fate of the fallen angel, as symbol of the fall from grace: 'Der Fall des Sternes ist der Sündenfall' (ULD 140). Weininger's neo-Kantian idealism sets up the stars as cosmic guides in their constancy, 'Die Fixsterne bedeuten den Engel im Menschen. Darum *orientiert* sich der Mensch an ihnen' (ULD 71), and yet he must acknowledge that they may succumb to the aegis of gravitation as '*Symbol des Gnadenlosen*' (ULD 140).

For Trakl the stars are progressively subjected to gravitational pull as their role as

sexual body prevails. In the early 'Nachtlied' the star can still soar up in ecstatic rebirth out of suffering, 'Sieh aus meinen Wunden blüht/ Rätselvoll ein Stern zur Nacht' (I 261), but in the more mature poetry the star, far from blossoming out of wounds, is drawn into the analogical chain which is centred on them, and informed by the principle of gravitational fall. The extinguished star is initially linked with the morning dew in an ambivalent admixture of black and gold: 'Auf deine Schläfen tropft schwarzer Tau,/ Das letzte Gold verfallener Sterne' (I 84). The stars falling as dew upon Elis's temples are correlated with the sense of the flight of birds which his temples bleed. The resonance is taken up in 'Das Grauen', where dew falls as blood, 'Aus dem Geäst fällt wie aus einer Wunde/ Blaß schimmernd Tau, und fällt, und fällt wie Blut' (I 220), and developed further in 'Erinnerung', where the tree as recurrent scene of acts of immolation, bleeds the falling stars as dew: 'Und es waren die Sterne Tropfen Blutes schimmernd im kahlen Geäst des alten Baumes und sie fielen in der Nächtigen härenes Haar' (I 382). A further analogical link between 'Blätterfall' and 'Sternenfall' in 'Drei Träume' serves to elucidate the most elliptical statement of this complex of falling substances in 'Im Osten':

Den wilden Orgeln des Wintersturms
Gleicht des Volkes finstren Zorn,
Die purpurne Woge der Schlacht,
Entlaubter Sterne. (I 165)

As in 'Grodek' ('Unter goldenem Gezweig der Nacht und Sternen' I 167), the stars are metaphorically transmuted into the branches from which they fell elsewhere in the manner of dew or autumn leaves. These stars which have shed (or indeed bled) their leaves thus signal a corporate fall; the drops of blood shed individually as portents of the fall of the 'Sternengeschlecht' are now resolved by analogy into the cataclysmic wave of blood shed in the final battle of the 'Geschlecht'. In these final poems the absolute purport of the star is realised; the astral body is not only the personal double but the 'Todesvorzeichen' of the race, signalling the sexual and martial orgy in which it is bound to end. It is the other astral body, encountered earlier as the narcissistic Endymion, that enacts the bloody sexual crimes of male affect run amok: 'Von blutenden Stufen jagt der Mond/ Die erschrockenen Frauen' (I 165).

The wild unleashing of these instinctual forces devastates the ideal of the interpretative pursuit of signs. The clairvoyant faculty whereby the blind seer may follow the sense of his signs even after the extinction of their apparent light ('Leise folgt der magische Finger des Blinden/ Seinen erloschenen Sternen' I 422) is denied, as the semiotic texts are swept away by the iconoclastic wave. The failure to sustain the metatextual figures implies a similar fear for the poetic texts. In such poems as 'Helian', the 'Wahn-sinn' of the seer had been measured and measurable, in Rimbaud's terms his 'dérèglement' was 'raisonné'. Its figure was the melodic 'Saitenspiel', which accompanies Helian's movements as a sign of their lyrical 'Sinn'. The seer's derangement was graduated, the voluntary descent of 'die Stufen des

Wahnsinns' (I 73) rather than a catastrophic fall; and the gradual descent into darkness afforded a commensurate process of measured illumination, marked by the recurrent use of comparatives: 'Denn strahlender immer erwacht aus schwarzen Minuten des Wahnsinns/ Der Duldende' (I 144). This piecemeal recuperation of sense could take metaphorical recourse to the stars; the finite bodies set in the infinite space of the night are the units of time accrued towards the ultimate goal of transcendence: 'Liebe, Nacht, der Schwermut kristallene Minuten/ Hinüberschimmernd, Sterne, schon stilleres Anschauen' (I 413). In the progressive mode of 'Strahlender' and 'stiller' the seer takes as his 'Sinn' a *darker* end. In 'Helian' the two senses of 'sinnen', as contemplation and directed movement, are amalgamated: 'Ein erhabenes Schicksal sinnt den Kidron hinab' (I 72). The activities of body and spirit are no longer in conflict here; sense and senses are one in significant movement: 'Da der Enkel in sanfter Umnachtung/ Einsam dem dunkleren Ende nachsinnt' (I 73).

This sense of lyrical movement is suppressed in the epic conflicts of the last poems, the Orphic lyre drowned by the martial trumpet. The poet can it seems no longer emulate the creative model of the underground artisans of 'An die Verstummten', who work on in virtual ('stummere') mutism in spite of the screaming visual cacophony of 'der Wahnsinn der großen Stadt' (I 124), in order to forge a redemptive figure: 'Aber stille blutet in dunkler Höhle stummere Menschheit,/ Fügt aus harten Metallen das erlösende Haupt' (I 124). There is apparently no underground resistance to the apocalyptic madness in which the landscapes of such poems as 'Im Osten' are steeped. Trakl's poetic vision gravitates into the sort of unreasoned 'dérèglement' which he had eschewed in a letter to Buschbeck of November 1912. In a rare commentary on one of his own texts Trakl writes that the final line of 'Trompeten', 'Fahnen von Scharlach, Lachen, Wahnsinn, Trompeten', is to be read as 'eine Kritik des Wahnsinns, der sich selbst übertönt' (I 495). These images, a paratactic assault on the senses, with no sense of direction, are compulsively repeated in the battle-scenes of the last poems; their more radical kind of 'Wahnsinn' overwhelms the 'sanfte Saitenspiel seines Wahnsinns' (I 70) that Helian derives out of the pursuit of his 'Sinnbilder'.

NOTES TO CHAPTER II

1. Gunther Kleefeld, *Das Gedicht als Sühne*.
2. Richard Detsch, *Georg Trakl's Poetry: Toward a Union of Opposites* (University Park, 1983), p. 4.
3. Detsch, *Trakl's Poetry*, p. 41.
4. Linda Hutcheon, *Narcissistic Narrative: The Metafictional Paradox* (London, 1980), p. 1.
5. Hutcheon, p. 42.
6. "'Wahn" gehört zum althochdeutschen *wana* und bedeutet: ohne ... "Sinnan" bedeutet ursprünglich: reisen, streben nach ..., eine Richtung einschlagen.' Martin Heidegger, 'Die Sprache im Gedicht: Eine Erörterung von Georg Trakls Gedicht' in *Unterwegs zur Sprache* (Pfullingen, 1959), pp. 37–82 (p. 53).
7. Heinrich Goldmann, *Katabasis: Eine tiefenpsychologische Studie zur Symbolik der Dichtungen Georg Trakls*, Trakl-Studien, IV (Salzburg, 1957).

8. Arthur Rimbaud, *Oeuvres*, edited by Suzanne Bernard (Paris, 1960), p. 346.
9. Rimbaud, p. 228.
10. Weininger also plays with the ambiguity of 'Sinn': 'Das Problem der Einsinnigkeit der Zeit ist die Frage nach dem Sinn des Lebens' (ULD 113). Walter Ritzer, in his *Neue Trakl-Bibliographie* (Salzburg, 1983), p. 132, confirms that Trakl was acquainted with *Über die letzten Dinge*.
11. In a letter to Buschbeck of 22 February 1917. *Briefe aus den Jahren 1914–1921*, edited by R. Sieber-Rilke and C. Sieber, (Leipzig, 1938), pp. 126–27.
12. According to the version of the legend related by Nonnus. Robert Mühlher asserts Narcissus's 'Zugehörigkeit zur Mondwelt, da Endymion und Selene ihn gezeugt haben'; 'Narciß und der phantastische Realismus', in *Dichtung der Krise* (Vienna, 1951), pp. 407–540 (p. 511).
13. Lewis Spence, *An Encyclopaedia of Occultism* (London, 1920), p. 41.
14. 'Auch galt bei den Griechen als Todesvorzeichen, wenn man im Traum sein Wasserspiegelbild erblickte'. Rank, 'Der Doppelgänger', p. 333.

III THE POETIC MIRROR

The progressive derangement of the poetic landscape that is prefigured in the metatextual configurations, can also be traced in the development of the mirror which so often functions as the screen for their appearance. The mirror, by virtue of its associations with the myth of Narcissus, coordinates the three types of desire with which this study is concerned. It provides a space at once for sexual encounter, for 'reflection' on the self, and for textual figures. Sexual desire, the desire for an integral sense of self, and the desire for poetic authenticity are all at stake when the mirror is under threat. All three locate their ideal, narcissistic object within the transfigured space through the looking-glass. This section will chart the resolution of the mirror as figurative device, out of a role of poetic transfiguration into one of radical disfigurement. This process will be seen to correspond to the dialectic character of the 'Doppelgänger' as posited by Rank, its gravitation between narcissistic entelechy and corrupt 'Spottgestalt'.¹

The primary object of the threefold, narcissistic desire is the sister, as, to borrow Musil's formula, the 'Doppelgänger im anderen Geschlecht' (MoE 905). The sister as specular manifestation of the poet's soul is the idealised embodiment of the 'Landschaft der Seele', its perfect double. Her role accords with the version of the Narcissus myth which had the youth infatuated with his 'Ebenbild' in 'die ihm in allem ähnliche Zwillingschwester'.² The progressive dismantling of the poetic mirror will be seen to coincide with the sister's transformation, as the idealised anima assumes the role of 'Todesbote'. The sexual abuse of the sister, which is such a striking leitmotiv in Trakl's poetic narratives, will be shown to introduce the disfigurement of sexual wounds into the mirror, and by way of the traumatised 'genetic core' into the general fabric of the 'Landschaft der Seele'.

Before focusing in detail on particular examples from Trakl's later period where the consequences of the genetic core's corruption can be observed, an overview of the motif's genesis from the earliest poetry onward will be given. In the early poetry the mirror has a fairly conventional role, in keeping with the largely stock poetic forms and imagery which Trakl deploys at this stage. The denial of the integrity of the mirror as metaphor for the poetic text, and the split in the self's sense of identity as introduced by sexual desire, develop here more or less independently.

The first trend has already been illustrated in the discussion of 'Drei Träume' above, where the self's projection implies an alienation from the original. In the gap between the subject and his echoes, his reflections, and the play in which he sees himself acting, meaning is suspended. As an empty reiteration, 'eines Traumes

unsterblicher Wiederhall' (I 215), the subject's movements may be eternal but they are inimical to the eternalising language of the poet. The narcissistic paradigm is reformed as the soul is made to confront itself in its dreams, plays, reflections (all analogues of the poetic text) as a universalised double: 'Als ob sie in allem sich wiederfände' (I 216). The subjunctive tense of this formulation, poised between the infinite reduplication of the self and the impossibility of the soul actually retrieving itself, expresses neatly the deferring of the quest, played out between mirrors, for the original.

The traumatising of the self by sexual desire can be illustrated in the first poem of the 'Gedichte' collection, 'Die junge Magd'. The maid of the title is initially enthralled by her image in the well, 'Oft am Brunnen, wenn es dämmert./ Sieht man sie verzaubert stehen' (I 12), but the mirror-image, the projection of the soul as entelechy, significantly usurps the role of the soul as grammatical subject in the act of looking. The narcissistic trance is resolved into a dramatisation of self-alienation:

Silbern schaut ihr Bild im Spiegel
Fremd sie an im Zwiellichtscheine
Und verdämmert fahl im Spiegel
Und ihr graut vor seiner Reine. (I 12)

Confronted with this image of her soul, the girl's response is seemingly anomalous: the 'Grauen' which, as we will see, is the effect elicited by the apparition of the double as murderer elsewhere. The estrangement of the soul and the bodily self prefigures the imminent scenario of sexual aggression, where the sexual act is depicted as a 'Lustmord', the maid violated by the phallic figure of the 'Schmied' and dying from her sexual wounds. Even as she falls victim to the stylised figure of male libido, the verb which mediates her ostensible helplessness carries suggestions of solicitation: 'Und mit hilfloser Geberde/ Hascht sie nach den wilden Funken' (I 14). The oblique suggestion of complicity will be taken up with regard to the more complex rehearsals of this scene in the later poetry. The alienation of the double as a transfigured image of purity ends in the radical disfigurement of the girl's bodily form. The disfigurement is realised metonymically in the infliction of oral aggression.³ Its agent is the smith's laugh ('Wie im Traum trifft sie ein Lachen' I 13), and its wound suffered by the maid's mouth as metonym for her sex. The sort of analogies which operate implicitly in the more mature poetry, are explicitly constructed under the aegis of 'wie' here, with the assimilation of the girl's mouth and the carcass of the 'Wild' hanging as an emblem of violated innocence: 'Wie ein Aas in Busch und Dunkel/ Fliegen ihren Mund umschwirren' (I 14).

The girl's 'Grauen' is thus justified as a pre-emptive reaction to her 'Lustmord'; her alter ego is identical with the mirror-image as fratricide in the poem which is entitled 'Das Grauen'. Here the 'ich sah mich' formulations which abound in the poems of 1909 are given a lethal twist, as the double takes on the role which Rank attributes to it: 'Da bin mit meinem Mörder ich allein' (I 220). Here too the murderer's appearance is situated within the metaphorical context of sexual

violation, with the threefold alignment of mouth, wound and the immolated beast, implicit in the 'bleeding' from the branches:

Doch plötzlich: Stille! Dumpfe Fieberglut
Läßt giftige Blumen blühen aus meinem Munde,
Aus dem Geäst fällt wie aus einer Wunde
Blau schimmernd Tau, und fällt, und fällt wie Blut. (I 220)

The conjunction of the sexual fall and the existential threat of the estranged 'Doppelgänger' is extrapolated in another poem of 1909, 'Dämmerung', into a mortal threat to the aesthetic enterprise.⁴ The double as 'Feind' and 'Mörder' reappears to extinguish the sparks of creativity in the poet's soul and thus to render the world disfigured and sexually prostituted:

Wer hat den Feind, den Mörder dir bestellt,
Der deiner Seele letzten Funken stahl,
Wie er entgöttert diese karge Welt
Zur Hure, häßlich, krank, verwesungsfahl! (I 218)

The separate moments of narcissistic trance and sexual violation come to be conflated, as the mirror, in particular as pool, becomes the locus for attempts at sexual engagement. Thus the synecdochal, purple mouth of the male subject in 'Jahr' is drawn down towards the silent waters, 'Im Hasellaub wölbt sich ein purpurner Mund,/ Männliches rot über schweigende Wasser geneigt' (I 138), the same waters which are elsewhere specifically identified as a sexual counterpart: 'Liebe neigt sich zu Weiblichem,/ Bläulichen Wassern' (I 337). This patently narcissistic configuration (the subject drawn down towards the red mouth of his image) must remain in the virtual mode of 'neigen'. Similarly in 'Leuchtende Stunde' the water as the reflective element of the nymphs (described elsewhere as the 'nymphischen Spiegel' I 178) seems set to become the scene for transitive, erotic relations. The fauns duly adopt the posture of the predatory male, and the nymphs as still waters lie a passive quarry:

Faune lauern an den Sümpfen,
Wo versteckt in Rohr und Tang
Träge ruhn die schlanken Nymphen. (I 270)

However, the conventional model is undermined in the next stanza by a striking use of the reflexive form in the reflective self-gratification of the butterflies: 'In des Weiher's Spiegelglas/ Goldne Falter sich verzücken' (I 270). The nymphs have become a medium for narcissism, a shift which is then underpinned by the image of the copulating beasts borrowed from Shakespeare's *Othello*; the 'Tier mit zweien Rücken' is as it were coupled with itself, a union which is denied the fauns and nymphs as they remain suspended in virtual fulfilment.

If these two examples illustrate the frustration of desire by the mirror's intervention, then a further instance serves to show that where narcissistically-inflected desire does find its object, it inflicts the same sexual wounds as in 'Die junge Magd'. In 'Sonniger Nachmittag' the purple mouth of 'Jahr' and its image find

themselves in a sadistic kiss: 'In roten Beeren verbeißt sich mein Mund' (I 264). While the mirror, the apparent object of desire which in fact mediates an auto-erotic movement, is apparently absent in this case, its reflective agency is instead incorporated into the extraordinary use of the reflexive verb-form. The reflexive form is only commensurate with the essential identity of subject and object here; red fruits serve on several occasions as sexual metaphors for the mouth, so that it is indeed biting itself. The analogical chain which associates red fruit with lips also involves the vulva as wound in the recurrent scenes of sexual aggression, so that the stock metaphor of biting into forbidden fruit is reformulated, to striking effect, as an image of self-violation.

Similarly in 'Klagelied' (I 280), the mouths of the lovers which meet in ecstatic imagery redolent of *The Song of Songs*, pass out of fruition into bleeding decay. The subject's lips are cast metaphorically as ringing stars over the reflective waters of the Kidron: 'Und sie erklingen wie die Sterne/ Über dem Bache Kidron', but are then made to sink away by the same metaphorical token: 'Aber die Sternennebel sinken über der Ebene'. The lips with which these 'stars' are joined in a sustained kiss have an equally ambivalent metaphorical identity as 'Granatapfelflippen'. The metaphorical complex traced around the star in the introductory section, where it was seen to bleed from the branches of trees, indicates the essential identity of these two pairs of lips. The poem duly draws blood from the narcissistic meeting of stars and fruits in the mirror-space over which they are located. The ominous setting for the kiss (the plain of Kidron as the scene for the Last Judgement), and the apocalyptic association of falling stars with fruit,⁵ are borne out, as ecstasy is resolved into the overwhelming guilt of slaughtered innocence. The blood which was seen before to fall from the stars, here envelops their space:

Zum Himmel dampft das Blut
Der von Herodes
Gemordeten Kinder.

This highly-charged image is taken up once more in 'Traum und Umnachtung' where the moment of traumatic, reflexive desire is extrapolated into a structuring motif, in the recurrent encounters of the subject with the sister figure. In her first visitation, appearing as a projection of the self in a mirror-space, she adopts the role of the fratricide in 'Das Grauen', so that the subject 'stürzte wie tot ins Dunkel' (I 147). The next line qualifies this simulated murder as sexual in its motivation, by evoking once more the analogical grouping of mouth, wound, fruit and female sex. While the earlier version had the boy thirsting for carnal satisfaction ('Ihn verlangte nach dem roten Fleisch von Früchten' II 265), in the final version he is made to suffer a violation cast in the metaphor of the female 'wound': 'Nachts brach sein Mund gleich einer roten Frucht auf' (I 147). It is the same reversal of roles in the 'Lustmord' as in 'Sommer. . .', where the sister's visitation arises out of another form of the double: 'Da aus Sebastians Schatten die verstorbene Schwester trat,/ Purpurn des Schlafenden Mund zerbrach' (I 425).

In accordance with this inversion, when the subject does play the predatory role, the sisterly victim is cast in his own image: 'da er im grünenden Sommergarten dem schweigenden Kind Gewalt tat, in dem strahlenden sein umnachtetes Antlitz erkannte' (I 148). There is more to this encounter, grist to the mill of psychobiographies, than an admission of incest. The mirror is implicitly at work here; the recognition of identity between the brilliant and benighted faces, invokes simultaneously the dual aspect of the double. As in 'Die junge Magd' the vision of the soul's transcendent purity is a vehicle for the recognition of its self-destructive desires. When the subject recognises himself in the object of his violent desire, the 'Lustmord' must become, in Musil's coinage, a 'Lustselbstmord' (MoE 622).

The subject's ultimate 'Umnachtung' is a reprise of the scene of childhood violence, as he is overwhelmed by a purple cloud and falls upon 'sein eigenes Blut und Bildnis' (I 150). His sisterly image has become a lunar figure ('ein mondenes Antlitz' I 150), the purple cloud which shrouds his head is reflected as 'Blut' around the lunar 'Bildnis', just as clouds cast the image of the lunar form of the sister Johanna in 'blutende Schleier' elsewhere (I 455). Not only does blood intervene to disfigure the 'Bildnis', but the figure emerges from a broken mirror. The sister as 'mondenes Antlitz' and the brother as 'sterbender Jüngling' achieve identity in syntactic apposition, but only within the frame of a shattered speculum.

As soon as the subject seeks to actively partake of the narcissistic object, to go through the looking-glass, he breaches its plenitude, introducing disfiguring wounds. In Lacanian terms the apparent integrity of the specular 'Gestalt' collapses into a vision of the 'corps morcelé'. The rest of the chapter will pursue detailed readings of poems from the later period where the consequences of the personal trauma for the poetic 'body' are in evidence, that is, where the disfiguring 'Blut' of violation is transposed to the form of the poetic 'Bildnis'.

The Melodic Sister

In a critical article on Gustav Streicher's play *Monna Violanta* Trakl praises the playwright's ability to communicate, through the music of his poetic language, meanings which would otherwise be unamenable to the rational purchase of words:

Es ist seltsam, wie diese Verse das Problem durchdringen, wie oft der Klang des Wortes einen unaussprechlichen Gedanken ausdrückt und die flüchtige Stimmung festhält. In diesen Versen ist etwas von der süßen, frauenhaften Überredungskunst, die uns verführt, dem Melos des Wortes zu lauschen und nicht zu achten des Wortes Inhalt und Gewicht; der Mollklang dieser Sprache stimmt die Sinne nachdenklich und erfüllt das Blut mit träumerischer Müdigkeit. (I 208)

The melodic beauty in the minor key of the author's language, with its direct appeal on the senses ('Sinne'/'Blut'), is thus characterised as feminine. The analogy once more effects a 'dérèglement . . . de tous les sens' by lodging the spiritual activity of 'sinnen' in the 'Sinnen', which are rendered 'nachdenklich'. The implicit

attribution of 'eros' and 'logos' to female and male respectively, is hardly an original one, but it does give an indication of the function of sexual difference in Trakl's poetry, as a model for the disjunction between sense (the realm of ideas), and the senses. While the female paradigm of 'melos' furnishes a poetic ideal, its suppression of rational meanings, that is, its gravitation into the mode of 'Wahnsinn', leads the poetry into a precarious domain. The melodic song of the poet, attuned to the gentle descent into madness ('Tönend von Wohllaut und weichem Wahnsinn' I 40), is perpetually in danger of being resolved into senselessness, tonic control overwhelmed by an utter anarchy of sound and image.

The female ideal of 'melos' is represented in the poetry by the nymph Ophelia, who transforms her madness, born of sexual violence, into the beauty of her song. Ophelia is the poetic persona of the sister, as Orpheus is of the brother; her song is epitomised in the first of the 'Rosenkranzlieder', 'An die Schwester':

Wo du gehst wird Herbst und Abend,
Blaues Wild, das unter Bäumen tönt,
Einsamer Weiher am Abend.

Leise der Flug der Vögel tönt,
Die Schwermut über deinen Augenbogen.
Dein schmales Lächeln tönt.

Gott hat deine Lider verbogen.
Sterne suchen nachts, Karfreitagskind,
Deinen Stirnenbogen. (I 57)

The poem imitates formally the rosary of the trilogy's title; its reiterations and resonances, not least in the identical rhyme-words in each stanza, give an impression of extreme self-reflexiveness. Two of the rhyme-words provide the key to the different types of elliptical repetition in the poem, both of them being reiterated in the second line of another stanza: 'tönt' and 'Bogen'. The one establishes the idea of assonance and the other furnishes a blueprint at once for the poem's imagery and for the principle of reflexive curvature in its form, whereby it always comes back on itself.

The poem was spawned by the 'Gedichtkomplex' 'Lange lauscht ...' where the prototype for the personal figure of the sister was the nymph Ophelia, located by the pool as the scene of her death by drowning. The figure of the 'Bogen' characterises the sinking moment of Ophelia's melancholy, 'die kindliche Schwermut ihrer verbogenen Lider', which is then transposed into the decay of the soul in madness as it is filled with 'Schnee und Aussatz' (II 450). In 'An die Schwester' this figure of melancholy is extrapolated into a poetic sequence as the shape common to the various features of the sister's face (eyes, eyelids, lips, brow) and to their metonymic representations in the poetic landscape. As the first stanza apparently identifies the sister with both the 'blaues Wild' and with the pool of water (both recurrent manifestations of the soul), so she transmutes the landscape in which she

moves as 'Landschaft der Seele' into the time-scale proper to her soul's condition of melancholic decay: 'Wo du gehst wird Herbst und Abend'. The features of the landscape reverberate with her song (the flight of birds 'harmonising' with the sound-shape of her 'schmales Lächeln' in the rhyme-word 'tönt') and are bowed in imitation of her. Here as elsewhere the brow as 'Stirnenbogen' is implicitly identified with the crescent moon and thus sought out by its attendant 'Gestirne': 'Sterne suchen nachts, Karfreitagskind,/ Deinen Stirnenbogen'. The stars as it were seek to rejoin the figure with which they are identified, by making an internal rhyme ('Stirne'/ 'Sterne'). A further doubling is made in the variants, between the vaulted shapes of the cemetery and the sister's 'Augenbogen', 'Gräber unter dunklen Bogen/ Sind deine weißen Augen Charfreitagskind' (II 110), the cemetery being the inevitable location of the 'Karfreitagskind' as lamenter of dead souls.

These reflexive patterns would seem to be derived from the sister's identity with the mirror-space of the 'Weiher', where the various features dispersed through the space of the poetic landscape are united with the human figure as 'blaues Wild', the stars redispersed in the proximity of the sister's brow. Within this poetic space the landscape is made to conform to the beauty of Ophelia's madness ('Schön ist Opheliens Wahnsinn' II 149). The figure of the arc, by aligning the dual moments of rise and fall in a single curve, thus serves as a supportive arch, ensuring, that is, both the poise of the poem's architectonic structure and the euphony which is its corollary (a variant reads 'Unter tönenden Bogen' II 110). The almost autistic 'tuning' of the mirror-space, with the poem's images and sounds continually encountering themselves as it were narcissistically, cannot be sustained elsewhere with such consistency.

The irruption of discord in the form of the other into the closed circuit of poetic self-reflexiveness can be traced in the later poem 'Wind, weiße Stimme...' (I 319). Ophelia's grace is now a thing of the past, an absence, as the poem traces the path 'wo mit rührenden Schritten ehedem Ophelia ging/ Sanftes Gehaben des Wahnsinns'; her song has become the white voice of the wind (this the voice that the sister as Johanna adopts in the *Dramenfragment*). The subject who could address the nymph as sister and invoke her melody is now buried in bleeding decay, like the protagonist of 'Traum und Umnachtung' immured in his purple hair as the condition of sexual guilt. This closed-off state is apparently derived from the memory of Ophelia's violation which emerges in the second section of the poem, a scene which re-enacts that of 'Die junge Magd' where the girl is sexually overwhelmed in the smithy. Here the phallic aggression of the blacksmith is transferred to the figure of the rearing horse: 'Gewaltig bäumt sich ein schwarzes Pferd'; and as the 'junge Magd' grasped at the spark in the earlier poem, 'Hascht sie nach den wilden Funken/ Und sie stürzt betäubt zur Erde' (I 14), so here the girl's hair grasps at the horse's 'inflamed' nostrils: 'die hyazinthene Locke der Magd/ Hasch(t) nach der Inbrunst seiner purpurnen Nüstern'. The purple hair as emblem of the subject's consuming guilt imitates the transference of the purple colour of 'Wollust' and 'Wahnsinn'

(purple being also the colour of the horse's madness in 'Offenbarung und Untergang') to the erstwhile innocence of the girl's hair, so that he adopts the wounded condition which he inflicts upon her. The violation removes the nymph from the realm of the hyacinth as 'blaue Blume' (as a manifestation of the soul, the corollary of the 'blaues Wild' and 'Weiher' of 'An die Schwester') into that of disfiguring wounds and burning sexuality. The inflaming of her hair prepares for the role of burning hair as an image of Johanna's consuming sexuality in the *Dramenfragment*.

The sexual disfiguring of the body is transposed to the body of the poem. 'Wind, weiße Stimme ...' leaves the architecture of 'An die Schwester' in ruins, even as it submits its symbol to sickness and decay: 'O Tod! Der kranken Seele verfallener Bogen'. The consolatory figures which attend the measured affirmation of 'An die Schwester' make way for the familiar repertory of dissolution: a loosely-structured confusion — the inarticulate whisperings of the wind — where images of sinking away and of floating, of frenzied motion and of petrified stillness, succeed one another. The final line refuses the idea of containment in an end, erupting as an image of random movement out of the body of the poem. The harmonious flight of birds is displaced by the noisy anarchy of the harbingers of a more ugly type of madness: 'Aufflattern mit irren Gesichtern die Fledermäuse'. In the second version an onomatopoeic association compounds the image: 'flackern mit irren Gesichtern/ Die Fledermäuse' (I 320); in the same way as the sister's hair elsewhere (see below p. 68), the modification introduces the idea of the purple flame which corrupted the girl's hyacinthine hair. The noisy flight of these sexualised figures can be seen as a synaesthetic sound-shape much in the manner of the sister's tonic 'Bogen'; the 'disfigured' movement is analogous to 'dem *ungestalten* Schrei der Fledermäuse' (I 342, my emphasis).

The 'verfallener Bogen' of 'Wind, weiße Stimme ...' is the sick soul of the poet-brother as counterpart to the sister's unbroken arch. In 'Lange lauscht ...' the collapse of the arch is attributed to the substances of decomposition which are loaded upon it:

Mit Schnee und Aussatz füllt sich die kranke Seele
Da sie am Abend dem Wahnsinn der Nympe lauscht ...
Finster ihr Bild im Sternenweiher beschaut. (I 421)

As the sister was figured as anima, identical in her specular function with the 'Weiher', so here the brother's soul beholds an image in the pool which, by virtue of the ambiguous 'ihr', could be either that of the soul or the nymph. Their identity in the act of reflection is quite in keeping with the soul's assumption of the nymph's madness. The male figure as monk (a figure recurrently involved in acts of 'Wollust') is identified as Helian, who has taken the place of the sister in her locus of crucifixion:

Wo vordem ein Baum war, ein blaues Wild im Busch
Öffnen sich, zu lauschen, die weichen Augen
Helians. (I 421)

The affliction of his soul by 'Schnee und Aussatz' as it contemplates its image, runs counter to the optimistic reading that critics such as Goldmann have made of the analogous encounter in 'Helian'.⁶ Because the mirror in that case happens to be rosy-tinted they infer a transfiguration out of decay in the line 'Da Helians Seele sich im rosigen Spiegel beschaut/ Und Schnee und Aussatz von seiner Stirne sinken' (I 73). The lines could just as easily refer to a prevailing bleeding condition; the comparison with 'Lange lauscht ...' would certainly seem to support such a reading.

The lability of the rosy speculum is in evidence not only in 'Rosiger Spiegel' (see below) but also in the 'Gedichtkomplex' 'Finster blutet ...' which synthesises the apparently contrary specular encounters of 'Lange lauscht ...' and 'Helian'. Here the soul of the blind seer fills with decay notwithstanding the optimistic colouring of the mirror: 'Mit Schnee und Aussatz füllt sich die kranke Seele,/ Da sie am Abend ihr Bild im rosigen Weiher beschaut' (I 424). Similarly the poem which precedes 'Helian' in the *Gedichte* collection, 'Nachtlied' (I 68), casts the revelation of the subject's confrontation with the mirror as petrification:

... Ein Tiergesicht
Erstarrt vor Bläue, ihrer Heiligkeit.
Gewaltig ist das Schweigen im Stein.

In accordance with the effect which Novalis attributes to the sublime, 'Das Erhabene wirkt versteinern ... Könnte die Natur nicht über den Anblick Gottes zu Stein geworden sein?',⁷ the subject is struck dumb by the breath of 'des Unbewegten': 'Elai! dein Antlitz/ Beugt sich sprachlos über bläuliche Wasser'. The unalloyed truth of image which the transcendent mirror mediates, rather than transfiguring the brow of the lonely one, projects on to it a mark of his fallen condition:

O! ihr stillen Spiegel der Wahrheit.
An des Einsamen elfenbeinerer Schläfe
Erscheint der Abglanz gefallener Engel.

Helian is the blind seer, his soft eyes listening because they no longer see; having passed through the metamorphoses of tree as male and the sacrificial 'Wild' as female,⁸ he has come to substitute both sexes: 'Wo in finsternen Zimmern einst die Liebenden schliefen/ Spielt der Blinde mit silbernen Schlangen' (I 421). In the manner of Tiresias he has experienced both the sexually aggressive role of the male as 'Lustmörder' and that of the female as victim. The snakes indicate this mythical allusion (Tiresias's transgression in one version of the myth was to have parted two copulating snakes) as does the subsequent image of the blind seer tracing the texts of his extinguished stars: 'Leise folgt der magische Finger des Blinden/ Seinen erloschenen Sternen' (I 422). Another indication of the seer's bisexual identity is given by the appearance of 'Der Sohn des Pan' in 'Helian' (I 69). This figure has been shown to derive from Rimbaud's 'Antique', as does Helian's subsequent manifestation as novice.⁹ Rimbaud's poem is informed by the desire to animate through the invocatory power of poetic language, as the poet seeks to breathe life into the statue ('Promène-toi'). Pan's sleep is transposed in the sculpted figure of his

son into a suspended state of androgyny: 'Ton coeur bat dans ce ventre où dort le double sexe'.¹⁰ This hermaphroditic identity is essential to the melodic grace which the poet invokes in the movements of the 'fils de Pan'. In Trakl's poem, however, the statue (and by implication its 'double sexe') remains dormant, as the poet's attempt to awaken it, allegorised in the melodic movements of the human figures, fails: 'Leise klingen die Schritte im Gras; doch immer schläft/ Der Sohn des Pan im grauen Marmor' (I 69). When Helian does appear, in his novitiate, he can only don the laurel wreath and imitate the movements of the god who sleeps on; and this initiation is not an end in itself as in the Rimbaudian model, but merely the prelude to the descent of the seer.

This transsexual, mantic figure is another permutation of the angelic Elis who also consummates the lover's experience in the mirror of his eyes:

Ihre Bläue spiegelt den Schlummer der Liebenden.
An deinem Mund
Verstummen ihre rosigen Seufzer. (I 85)

He too is a reader of texts in the 'dunkle Deutung des Vogelflugs' (I 84). His experience is only apparently limited to the suffering of violence as the blue flower at the hands of such a monk as Helian. Here too both stages in the transsexual metamorphosis are evoked, 'Ein blaues Wild/ Blutet leise im Dornengestrüpp' and 'Ein brauner Baum steht abgeschieden da;/ Seine blauen Früchte fielen von ihm' (I 86). In either case the figures in which the lovers are united, embodiments, that is, of the 'Ein Geschlecht' of 'Abendländisches Lied' (I 119), have gained insight only in order to perceive that their dissolute signs ('Zeichen und Sterne/ Versinken leise im Abendweiher' I 86) signify an analogous dissolution for themselves as the figures in which the line is definitively incorporated. Unity here means 'Ein-samkeit': 'Klage eines großen Geschlechts,/ Das fromm nun hingeht im einsamen Enkel' (I 144). The lonely 'Enkel' Helian is reduced to playing auto-erotic games with his snakes, and the arch which was reflected as the multiple figure of the nymph's lament has deteriorated here into an image of the decrepit body's abject narcissism:

Grau verdorren im braunen Gewand die Glieder
Ein steinerner Bogen
Der sich im Spiegel faulender Wasser verzückt.
Knöcherner Maske, die einst Gesang war.
Wie schweigsam die Stätte. (I 421-22)

The blue waters of the 'Weiher' as poetic speculum have become the waters of decay, and the narcissistic paradigm of poetic reflexiveness is thus despoiled; here, as in 'Elis' the melodious tones are utterly subdued. The blind seer has also fallen mute; the 'Glockenspiel' which played in Elis's breast is doubly negated in 'Helian': 'Am Abend versinkt ein Glockenspiel, das nicht mehr tönt' (I 71).

The moment of ascent ('heben') which characterises the mystical union of 'Abendländisches Lied' is also present in 'Lange lauscht . . .', but it is not allowed to have the appearance of an ending. To adapt Rilke's formula, the moment of ascent

(indeed of ascension) is merely a 'Vorwand', coordinated with the inevitable descent. First Helian's eyes 'öffnen sich' only 'zu sterben' (I 423), and then the implicit ascent of the penultimate line 'Steigt der weiße Mensch auf goldenen Stiegen' is resolved as it were by poetic torque into dark descent: 'Helian ins seufzende Dunkel hinab' (I 423). In the same way as in 'Helian' the descent of the seer as last of the line takes as its goal a darker end. The image in 'Abendländisches Lied' of the lovers raising their eye-lids, which was echoed in the original version of the last line in 'Helian', 'Der heitere Gott die goldenen Lider aufschlägt' (II 132) is revised into a more commensurate closure in the final version. The eyes of 'Abendländisches Lied', opened in brilliant apotheosis, 'Aber strahlend heben die silbernen Lider die Liebenden' (I 119), are broken here; and the divine eyes into which Helian and his broken eyes are assumed, remain an undisclosed mystery:

O, ihr zerbrochenen Augen in schwarzen Mündern,
 Da der Enkel in sanfter Umnachtung
 Einsam dem dunkleren Ende nachsinnt,
 Der stille Gott die blauen Lider über ihn senkt. (I 73)

'An Angela'

The second version of the poem 'An Angela' would seem to define its object unproblematically in the dedication of the title. As the poetic subject is motivated by desire for this female figure, so the poem is impelled by the desire to make an authentic image of the beloved. However, the dedicatory movement which is embodied in a series of titles by 'An', opens up a gap between subject and object. This 'An' implies a movement towards the object, one which may fall prey to deflection. It is in the gap between preposition and object, 'An' and 'Angela', that this reading will trace the deflection of desire's trajectory.

The love poem opens on a disconcertingly solipsistic note: 'Ein einsam Schicksal in verlaßnen Zimmern' (I 286). This is compounded by the reference to narcissi, which obliquely present the threat of withering away chaste to the narcissistic desire of the text. The shift from the chaste redundancy of statues in the garden to the veiled smiles of 'Indiens Morgen' revives the erotic anticipation of the title, yet even as the intoxicating perfumes of dawn are said to see off the subject's cares, these are in fact summoned up. The 'Fremdling', a recurrent figure in Trakl's poetry, is by his very nature alienated from the assuaging beauty of the poetic landscape in which he moves. He has spent his sleepless night 'am Weiher um Angelen' (I 286); the pool as 'nymphischen Spiegel' is identified with the specular Angela. The line 'Ein blaues Wasser schläft im Zweiggedüster' (I 287), which appears later in this version, read as 'Angelens Ruh im Zweiggedüster' (I 285) in the first. Angela is clearly a pseudonym for the dedicatee of 'An die Schwester', the specular waters as 'Weibliches' given a personal identity. Both poems enact the pursuit of this idealised mirror, which may be regarded as the genetic core of the text, the source of its inspiration. However,

the poetic subject as 'Fremdling' is 'am' and 'um' this figure; he is at the pool 'um' his putative beloved in both senses: at once there for her sake, and excluded at her periphery. The poet can only inhabit the space around the co-terminous mirrors of the pool and the angelic loved one.

In accordance with the virtual nature of their spatial and causal relations alike, the peace rendered here to the insomniac by Angela is essentially deceptive. The image projected in her mirror-space is merely a mask for his pain: 'In leerer Maske ruht sein Schmerz verborgen' (I 286); the use of the verb 'ruht' which is properly the vehicle for Angela's authentic tranquillity, has an ironic effect when coupled with this act of concealment. Even as the subject seems to have found the desired locus of self-reflexive security, he is implicitly dislocated from it by the 'Gedanken, die sich schwarz ins Dunkel stehlen' (I 286). Behind his transfixed mask the Fremdling's fugitive thoughts imitate the furtive existence of the subject in 'Traum und Umnachtung' who 'log und stahl und verbarg sich' (I 147), and while his encounter with the specular sister-figure here may be less violent, it is similarly ill-fated. As his thoughts steal away from rather than 'an' Angela, there can be no hope of authentic self-recognition in her speculum. The 'Fremdling' remains estranged from the landscape (see the ironic accompaniment of the thrushes' laughter and dawn's smile), from Angela (its genetic core), and from the image which he projects in that core in order to secure a place within the landscape.

The second section moves away from the subject's predicament into a landscape less of tranquillity than of torpidity. The narcotic lethargy of the mowers alienates them too from their location. The drugged mowers are 'am Kreuzweg', which invariably carries the connotation of Christ's Passion in Trakl's poetry. The dulled passivity of the human figures in this landscape of suffering is as much of a delusion as the mask of the 'Fremdling'. Rather than engaging the *via dolorosa* the mowers imitate the noontide sleep of Pan. The 'spitzes Gras' which graphically surrounds the locus of pain is nurtured by 'Frucht und Greueln' (I 286). This striking coupling and the reversal that it effects — that the earth should grow from fruit rather than vice versa — can only be understood by reference to the ambivalent role of fruit in the poetry as a whole. Its double association — at once an image of plenitude, of literal fruition, and one of wounding, of bleeding diminishment — will be taken up later.

The next stanza is relocated into a reflective space 'in goldnem Glanz'. Here the voluptuous gesture of the indeterminate childlike figure is transposed out of the characteristic paradigm of 'Wollust' — the purple, guilt- and pain-ridden complex — into the apparent transcendence of 'hyazinthes Schweigen' (I 286). Though this exemplar for transfiguration is not explicitly identified, it would seem to be Angela once more; the change of paradigm accords with her probable historical model, St Angela, who, in common with other idealised female figures in the poetry (Sonja and Afra), foresook prostitution to turn to God. The prostitute's transformation into the hyacinth should alert us to the ambivalence of the model. The flower springs here from blood, the 'Frucht und Greueln' of the previous line, and is correlated

with the transubstantiation of bread and wine which are nurtured by the flesh of the earth, but reveal their spiritual essence to 'Sebastian im Traum'. The hyacinth seems to fulfil the credentials of its colour in Goldmann's scheme as 'ganz vergeistigtes Blut',¹¹ but, as we shall see, the blue flower is not only born of blood but bears it in its turn. The stigmata of the hyacinth are concealed here by the same token as the Passion is suspended in the *paradis artificiels* of 'Mohn' and 'Weihrauch'. It is no coincidence that the angel which is revealed to 'Sebastian im Traum' in his own poem: 'Und dem Knaben leise sein rosiger Engel erschien' (I 89), does not survive the dream: 'Da in Sebastians Schatten die Silberstimme des Engels erstarb' (I 90). A genuine revelation of the angelic figure can only be posited as the end of the subject's active engagement in the expiation of guilt, which abandons the consolation of hallucinations in an authentic pursuit of the 'Kreuzweg'.

The last line of the section couches Angela's spirit in the clouds in a gesture of concealment which confirms the restive undercurrents in the act of transfiguration. Once more the veil intervenes to defer desire. Bearing in mind the 'goldnem Glanz' and 'hyazinthnes Schweigen' attributed to her earlier, characteristic of sun and sky respectively, Angela emerges as a double figure, at once the specular pool and the remote purity of the sky which it reflects and renders apparently accessible to the subject's desire. The angelic figure is imaginatively reconstituted in the two-dimensional mirror-space of the pool, but its composite elements are actually disposed through the infinite dimensions of space above it. Thus in the next section her lips are fruits reflected in the pool, and in the final section her stars are perceived in the 'Quell'.

The opening stanza of the third section seems to represent a perfect reflexive integrity, cast in virtual temporal suspension:

Die Früchte, die sich rot in Zweigen runden,
Des Engels Lippen, die ihr Süßes zeigen,
Wie Nymphen, die sich über Quellen neigen
In ruhevolem Anblick lange Stunden. (I 287)

Yet any suggestion that the subject might be a party to this integrity is quite illusory. The plenitude of the mouth, expressed in the full, self-reflexive circularity of 'sich runden', is subverted by the association with fruits as emblems of carnage as well as of carnality. The apparent act of revelation here, Angela as it were removing her veils, is mitigated not only by the lack of a grammatical object as spectator, but by the very nature of the simile, which precludes the possibility of any transitive relations with an independent subject. The lips, which are ostensibly on show, in fact correspond to nymphs engaged in tranquil, narcissistic self-contemplation. The fact that this encounter is mediated by the 'nymphischen Spiegel' transforms the poet's show into an optimal scene of exclusive self-reflexiveness, denying the subject any access to the autistic world of his beloved.

The wounds which are inherent to both the hyacinth and fruit now break to the surface. The inauthentic claim to involvement in Angela's peace and the ability to

mediate it is revoked in a sudden turn to activity in 'Kampf und Spiele' (I 287). All pictorial composure is lost as the fruits which were suspended in virtual plenitude are now decomposed. The narcissistic pool undergoes the familiar transformation into its double as 'Spottgestalt'; the genetic core has become an agent of iconoclasm. The pool is now stagnant, the image of Angela's lips is deformed, so that the speculum now harbours foul fruits and the festering wounds which are their analogues. Angela's narcissistic kiss is disfigured in the same way as the kiss of the lovers in 'Klagelied'. The angelic spirit is now submitted to bodily decomposition, beset by swarms of battling flies, which are galvanised into a storm by her demonic counterpart. The flies intervene between Angela in her clouds and the reflective surface, so that her narcissistic integrity is destroyed, her hyacinth and gold denigrated into 'schwarzen Essen' (I 287). Having been denied in his desire for Angela, the poet unleashes his demon, the agent of the self-destructive repetition compulsion, to do violence to her.

In the fourth section Angela reverts to her pacific state, and as her animation is suspended in sleep, so is that of her landscape, as the birds hang immobile in the spatialised state of evening ('Im Abend' I 287). As Angela sleeps, the insomniac who has been denied access to her Lethean waters styles himself the hieratic mediator of all this beauty and peace of spirit: 'Es ist der Dichter dieser Schönheit Priester' (I 287). Having violated the landscape in the previous section, he seeks once more to emulate the revelatory model of the second. The rhetoric of self-anointment is necessarily undermined in the separate line which follows; the separation only serves to emphasise the discrepancy between the wishful, apodictic tone, and the painful reality of the quest which is required of the poet-priest: 'Schmerzvolles Sinnen in der dunklen Kühle' (I 287). The search for the landscape and its angelic centre can only be conducted in painful isolation; the subject must move ('sinnen' carries its connotation of 'der eine Fährte Suchende' here) in darkness, away from the marginal consolations 'um Angelen'.

However, the final stanza dispels the posture of isolation in 'Schmerzvolles Sinnen', as the subject is drawn once more to the anaesthetics of 'Mohn' and 'Weihrauch' which provide an hallucinatory imitation of Angela's sleep. Yet once more he is out of phase with her; she awakes to ludic joy, her stars playing in the speculum, a state quite incommensurable with the subject's 'Ermatten'. In the first version, the poet's encomium of Angela is figured as a dissolute simulacrum of her 'goldener Glanz'; this disclosure of gold is, in the manner of the sinking solar hero, a mere moment of discharge. It is bound about by darkness, the enclosure underpinned by the disposition of the lines:

Am Saum des Waldes und der Schwermut Schatten
Schwebt Goldenes von seinem Mund geflossen
Am Saum des Waldes und der Schwermut Schatten. (I 285)

The lines represent the poem as a golden discharge encompassed by the undifferentiated darkness before its beginning and after its end. In this version the subject

sinks alone, like the sun, into the night: 'Die Nacht umfängt sein trunkenes Ermatten' (I 285). In the second version, Angela transcends the 'Ermatten' of the setting sun and passes over into her nocturnal phase. The subject's doubling into the plural ('Der Liebenden') is purely notional; the poem has only one, unrequited lover, making a fictional romance out of his 'einsam Schicksal', and unable to gain any other than fantastic purchase on the anomalous dedicatee of that romance. So it is that the poem ends, not focused on the pool as locus of illumination, but in the marginal penumbra, in the 'Schattenbezirk' (I 161) as another poem has it. The centripetal desire of the subject and his text — to enter into the mirror-space as core — is overcome by the centrifugal moment of 'Ermatten' as *apnasis*.¹²

The denial of any effective co-presence for the subject and his object of desire, the text and its object of disclosure, may be reinforced by reference to two other poems of the same period. The condition of 'Ermatten', which is the nearest that the poetic subject came to recreating Angela's quiescent self-sufficiency, is represented more fully in the poem of that name (I 242). 'Ermatten' as the state of desire's *aporia* is exposed here as the response appropriate, not to the revelatory conceits of 'An Angela', but to their inevitable decomposition: the 'Verwesung traumgeschaffner Paradiese'. The angelic mirror is here disfigured as 'Zerrspiegel', concealing rather than revealing the images it mediates 'in verzerrtem Widerscheine'.

There is an analogous debunking of the rhetoric of 'An Angela' in 'Träumerei am Abend' (I 290); here the fantasy of co-presence is immediately revoked in the sober statement of the absence of Angela as genetic core: 'Wo einer abends geht, ist nicht des Engels Schatten/ Und Schönes!'. The desire of the 'Fremdling' is dissipated from the outset: 'Und seine Seele faßt ein staunendes Ermatten'. As in 'An Angela', where the poetic quest is dislocated from the specular centre to the surrogate comforts of 'milde Pfühle' in the poem's 'Saum', the subject's perception of Angela's integrity is marked by distantiation. Once more the vision is ephemeral, 'traumgeschaffen'; the incommensurability of the mystic constellation of Angela's stars and their vague mediation is marked by the disjunction of the rhyme-words:

Ein Wagen rauscht, ein Quell sehr fern durch grüne Pfühle,
Da zeigt sich eine Kindheit traumhaft und verflossen,
Angelens Sterne, fromm zum mystischen Bild geschlossen. (I 290)

The mystic image is closed and so inimical to dis-closure in the mirror of the poetic text. The reflective centre and repository of the image (the 'Quell' as original source being a perfect metaphor for the genetic core) is only perceived through the mediation of the 'Pfühle' which surround it. The 'Saum', or frame, intervenes to dislocate the poem from its object, rendering the image within the frame remote and indistinct. In its dreamlike apprehension the constellation as metatext is doubly 'entstellt'; it is at once dislocated ('sehr fern') and disfigured ('verflossen'). And the text itself, rather than taking subject and reader alike 'An Angela', leaves both in the framework 'um Angelen'.

Speculum or Frame?

The same process of decentering can be traced in another poem of 1912, 'Drei Blicke in einen Opal' (I 66–67). The opal here is another variation on the mirror as metaphor for the poetic imagination, transmitting the poetic landscape in its rosy iridescence. The first 'Blick' focuses on the village, only to deploy the stanza away from the locus of habitation into its shadowy environment. The view is as it were dislocated into the framing space, which progressively crowds out the village at its centre. Within this framework, the 'Zwillingspiegel', the mirrors within the poetic mirror, are themselves reframed: 'Umrahmt von Schatten und von schleimigem Gestein'. The opal is made to incorporate in its reflections the slime and shadows which must deny its transparency, effecting concealment rather than revelation; the frame not only encloses the mirror, but closes in on it.

The second stanza is constructed on a duplicity. The first two lines introduce the locus of pilgrimage and the stations of suffering, evoking a double enclosure in stigmata: the bloodstained mantle around the wounded bodily envelope. The second half then dispels the outer form; the subject is transfigured in an act of self-involution: 'Des Einsamen Gestalt kehrt also sich nach innen/ Und geht, ein bleicher Engel, durch den leeren Hain'. This radically self-reflexive figure is the corollary at once of Angela (as 'bleicher Engel') and of the opal as reflective transparency. He moves through an evacuated space on earth, freed of both his human frame and the frame of an organic environment. The third stanza, however, reverts from the autistic integrity of the angel's isolation to a veritable orgy of sexual union. The self-reflexive figure is dispersed by the winds of darkness, and the angel supplanted by his worldly counterparts. These monks — 'der Wollust bleiche Priester' — can only ape the other-worldly pallor of the angel as they carry out the profane sacrament of carnal union. The priests can no more mediate the grace of the angel than can the poet-priest of 'An Angela'. In either case sexuality diverts them from their sacred office.

The second view once more opens on the agency of the rosy mirror, this time as an opalescent droplet of dew. Yet the suspension of this second 'Zwillingspiegel' is immediately violated by its projections. It is made to turn outwards, to embody in microcosm the dissolution ('hinfließt'), and to be 'wirr erfüllt' with its confusion. The mirror must refract, under cover of homophony, the transcendent vision of 'Gottes goldenem Schrein' into the inchoate 'Fieberschrein' of the hospitals. The drop as ostensible genetic core becomes but a token of purity, invaded by the grotesque dance of death executed in the substance of its framework. The shadows and slimey stones are recalled in the 'Schleim und Schleiern' in which the old woman dances in a burlesque parody of the recurrent idea of the veiling of mysterious figures. The dancing 'Gestalt' is reframed by robes of excrescence, just as the foreheads of the boys are disfigured by leprosy. The parodic dance of revelation introduces what is apparently an authentic metamorphosis: the saint steps out of his

scars, which are suggestively projected outwards as a frame, an encompassing condition from which he might emerge. The next image, however, reverts to a parody of the saint's transformation; as he projects his wounds outwards in order to emerge from them, the 'Purpurschnecken' emerge from their 'frames' only to egest blood as a sign of their introjected wounds. These patently phallic figures move into the thorns which are supposedly emblematic of the saint's martyrdom, indicating that the transformation of carnal guilt has yet to be achieved.

In the third section, the mediating opal is not even summarily evoked; there is an immediate insistence that the third 'Blick' should fall on images of disfigurement, of blinding and unhealed wounds. Once more the body is encompassed by a projected inner derangement; the intravenous poison of sexuality is represented as another outer envelopment in the erotic embrace of the girls 'die wie Gift den Leib des Herrn umschlingen'. In the second stanza, the disfigurement is consummate; the genetic core has become infected with the degeneration of its distorted projections. The opal as poetic mirror transfers the disarray of its landscape to the structures of the poetic idiom. The 'Verzerrtes' finds a commensurate articulation in what has become a 'Zerrspiegel'. The gravitation of the poetic vision into the grotesque shapes of a fairground mirror is a necessary consequence of the loss of centre. As the mirror is invaded by the decomposition of its organic frame, so the language beomes paratactic ('Verzerrtes; Blumenfratzen, Lachen; Ungeheuer'), eschewing any spatial or temporal coordination of its figures, any sense of configuration. If the poetic vision so to speak loses frame-hold, it does so for a precise poetic effect. The 'Verzerrtes' line imitates the form of the last line of 'Trompeten' from the same collection; in either case the visual cacophony of the landscape is cast in the poetic anti-figure of parataxis. The loss of 'Sinn', of directed movement in the text, is redressed by the interpolation of 'eine Kritik des Wahnsinns, der sich selbst übertönt' (I 495).

To pursue the televisual metaphor, the turning up of the volume to the point of distortion is correlative with the loss of picture control. The ironic inflation of the language of madness is an over-compensating denial of the poem's pretensions to transcendence. As the poem's metaphysical visions all fall into the bleeding body of sexual desire, so the transfiguring discourse of the poet must be usurped by its double as 'Spottgestalt'. While tone and picture are restored in the final stanza, the mode of 'Übertönung' is superseded by that of 'Ermatten'. The wild burlesque of the 'Totentanz' is revised into the colourless fixture of a grim, naturalistic scene: 'Grau härtet sich der Himmel über gelben Feldern'. The heavens harden themselves to the wishful apotheosis of the subject, with the toned-down, distinctly earth-bound resignation of the stanza, signalling the revocation of poetic desire. The dialectic conflict between the transfiguring mirror and its dark, disfiguring frame, between sense and sensuality, for control of the 'Landschaft der Seele', leaves the resources of poetic enterprise exhausted.

Both 'An Angela' and 'Drei Blicke in einen Opal' submit the poetic quest for a

centre (the 'Quell' as core) to the violence of the centrifugal moment. The two poems illustrate the double play of poetic 'Entstellung'; Angela's body remains dispersed through space, and so unamenable to figurative capture; and the 'nach innen gekehrt' formula of 'Drei Blicke' is denied by the compulsive reversion of the poetic 'Blick' to the body and its excrescence. The dislocation and disfigurement of the transcendent body of Angela is transposed to the 'Gestalt' of the poem, as it collapses into the mode of 'Verzerrtes'. As the metaphysical figure of the sister is sexualized, subjected to the wounds of sexual abuse, so the mirror, which is her figure, is made to suffer the same violence as the archetypal female, Eve, who is both dislocated — wandering in a shadowy space — and disfigured by sexual traumas: 'Im Schatten schwarzer Thujen irrt/ Eva entstellt von Blut und Wunden' (I 289). The ideal enterprise of the poems is recurrently diverted into the repetition of this primordial disfigurement.

'Rosiger Spiegel'

The effect of the mirror's sexualisation on the double quest for a sense of self and for integrity of poetic form and idiom is nowhere more acutely in evidence than in the drastic ugliness of 'Rosiger Spiegel'. Critics have generally interpreted the epithet 'rosig' in Trakl's poetry according to its conventional connotations of optimism and the prospect of rebirth. Thus Detsch (p. 22) concurs with Goldmann's account of colour symbolism where it carries associations of the renewal of the self in the alchemical dawn: 'Rosig ist positiv, aktiv ... gehört so theologisch in den Bereich einer verheißenen Neuen Erde, der Auferstehung des Fleisches, der Findung des "Selbst", welche in der Aurora Consurgens angedeutet wird'.¹³ The mystical union of the sexes at the end of 'Abendländisches Lied' is thus cast in a rosy light, as is the angel which arises, a single identity, as the figure of dawn out of the lovers' nocturnal death: 'Tritt der rosige Engel/ Des Morgens aus dem Grab der Liebenden' (I 394). Goldmann cites as an example of this transcendent moment the apparent purgation of excrescence from Helian's brow. As we have seen, the encounter 'im rosigen Spiegel' (I 73) is decidedly more ambivalent than Goldmann's inductive reading would suggest; the poem stands up to a reading 'through rosy glasses' no better than 'Abendländisches Lied'. The alchemical model of transition out of darkness into a rosy dawn proves unsustainable in the poetic 'opus'. It doubtless provides a programme for the poetic transformation of suffering and darkness, but one which is recurrently dismantled. Rather than emerging out of darkness in the manner of the rosy angel, most of the rosy images in the poetry are cast *in* darkness, finding their meaning only by reference to an enclosing state of 'Umnachtung'. The individual images are characteristically framed in a dark spatial context such as the 'rosige Osterglocke im Grabgewölbe der Nacht' (I 90), or 'rosiger Frühling nistet in den schmerzenden Brauen' (I 456), while the more fully developed rosy scenes are defined by the darkness of their narrative context.

The rosy mirror might be expected to genetically transfigure the dark world or the dark figure that it reflects, effecting a poetic recuperation of the self (in Goldmann's Jungian terms 'Findung des Selbst'). However, the mirror's agency as space for the apparition of the double, and as projector of sexual antagonism and disparity, makes it only partially amenable to the colourist scheme of *Katabasis*. Rather than the colour defining the nature of the object to which it is attached, the inherent dualism of the object infects its predicate with a double identity, re-colouring it ironically.

The weight of the dark context in 'Rosiger Spiegel' (I 302) is overwhelming, the rosy mirror diminished by the demarcation of the colon to a syntactic moment. The genetic core is marginalised, the metaphor for poetic transformation set apart from the body of the poem, as from the body of the figure which it should embrace, and for which it should provide a space and a new colour. Far from the rosy apotheosis being born of darkness, a 'häßliches Bild' is born of the rosy mirror. The frame's encroachment is developed a fortiori as the hidden, dark side of the transcendent instrument comes to invade the specular surface. In the 'schwarzen Rücken', integrity, both grammatical and corporeal is denied; the patterns of fracture admit of no lyrical 'I', no discovery of a 'Selbst' for the figure who implicitly stands in quest of one, beholding the mirror. The black back seems to have multiple reference: it is the back of the mirror, a matt surface pressed into a reflective role; in the third stanza it appears to be the back of a spider: 'Spinne im schwarzen Rücken erscheint'; and it could be read as the black back of the figure before the mirror, the ugly image appearing as in scenes of murderous pursuit elsewhere: 'hadernder Männer im Rücken' (I 97). This implicit threat introduces the spectre of the double as murderer (Kain in 'Das Grauen'), who looms behind the subject and threatens him with the suppression of identity in the confrontation with the mirror. This double is also the 'Feind' of 'Dämmerung' in as far as his murderous threat is directed at the narcissistic ideal of the poetic mirror.

The metaphorical relation of dripping substances, snow, blood, sweat and tears, affords a general dissolution of bodily form. The eyes are broken and bleeding and so bound to perceive the reflective space before them, that is, their 'Zwillingsspiegel', as such. Accordingly the image of the face disintegrates into alien parts, the 'Bildnis' riven by 'Blut'. The self's alienation is figured, as in the Lacanian model, as a vision of the body's fragmentation. The unspoken act of violence which causes the wounds of self-alienation is once more a 'Lustmord'. While the subject is denied any tokens of identity, his reflected face is given an allegorical identity as that of 'Wollust'. In the variant the face of 'Wollust' is both 'rotgeädert' and 'spinnenädrig' (II 390), the veins of blood and the spider's arterial legs cooperative in the mirror's shattering. The disintegration of the mirrored image and thus of a sense of identity is derived from the subject's identification with 'Wollust', here surely, as in 'Traum und Umnachtung', 'die Wollust des Todes' (I 149). The quest for a narcissistic integrity of being in the rosy mirror undergoes a paradigm change into the ugly

dissociation of the black back, fit only to project images of sexual suicide, that is, of 'Lustselbstmord'.

The mirror's abject disintegration embodies the same fate for sexual desire, for the sense of self, and for poetic discourse. Rilke furnished a striking and apposite metaphor for the exclusion of the reader from the poetic sense of Trakl's texts as mirror-space: 'Ich denke mir, daß selbst der Nahestehende immer noch wie an Scheiben gepreßt diese Aussichten und Einblicke erfährt, als ein Ausgeschlossener: denn Trakls Erleben geht wie in Spiegelbildern und füllt seinen ganzen Raum, der unbetretbar ist wie der Raum im Spiegel'.¹⁴ It serves equally well as a metaphor for the quest enacted within the poetry to construct an inviolate space such as that inhabited by Narcissus, 'Narziß' being the identity given to the 'Gestalt, die lange in Stille blauer Wasser gewohnt' (II 392). Trakl's recurrent agonised insight is that to enter this space is to violate and fracture it. The 'Spiegel der Wahrheit' are bound to reflect the wounds of disintegration. The narcissistic paradigm can afford a domicile only in the conditional tense of 'Als wohnt' 'ich' in 'An Johanna', where ingress into the mirror-space of the 'Quell' is contingent upon achieving identity with the narcissistic sister. As the quest for such an identity remains in the wishful mode of 'An' so its enjoyment must be cast in that of 'Als'. The text too can be said to be in the position of an 'Ausgeschlossener', providing at best a frame or body for the narcissistic mirror which it desires for its core, and at worst subjecting it to the shattering abuse of 'Wollust'. The rosy mirror is made to confront its double as 'Spottgestalt', with the colon doing typographical service for the reflective screen, which mediates their identity: 'Rosiger Spiegel: ein häßliches Bild'.

The compulsion to repeat the vision of self-alienation cast in a glass darkly, will be pursued in the following chapter, which focuses on the enactment of the compulsion in the self-reflexive 'Lustmorde' of Trakl's dramatic fragments.

NOTES TO CHAPTER III

1. Wolfgang Held perceives the dual aspect of the mirror-scenes in their admixture of 'Eigenliebe und Selbsthaß', in 'Mönch und Narziß: Hora und Spiegel in der Bild- und Bewegungsstruktur der Dichtungen Georg Trakls' (Dissertation, University of Freiburg i.B., 1960), p. 123. Similarly Hans Esselborn in the chapter he devotes to the 'Doppelgänger' motif in his *Georg Trakl: Die Krise der Erlebenslyrik* (Cologne, 1981). However, both fail to make the crucial connection between ontological crisis and sexual problematics.
2. Rank, 'Der Doppelgänger', p. 354.
3. See Kleefeld for a discussion of the 'oral-sadistischer Charakter' of other scenes of violation (p. 139).
4. This is the 'Doppelgänger' as 'Schreibtischgespenst' (see above p. 9).
5. 'Und die Sterne des Himmels fielen auf die Erde, gleichwie ein Feigenbaum seine Feigen abwirft', Offenbarung 6. 13.
6. Goldmann, p. 48.
7. Novalis, *Schriften*, edited by Paul Kluckhohn and Richard Samuel, second edition, 4 vols (Stuttgart, 1960-75), I, p. 101.
8. Kleefeld argues convincingly that the tree is a figure of male libido (p.272).
9. See Reinhold Grimm, 'Georg Trakls Verhältnis zu Rimbaud', *Germanisch-romanische Monatschrift* N.S., 9 (1959), 224-46.

10. Rimbaud, p. 262.
11. Goldmann, p. 33.
12. The term coined by Ernest Jones to describe the death of desire.
13. Goldmann, pp. 48–49.
14. In a letter of 15 February 1915 to Ludwig von Ficker in: *Rainer Maria Rilke: Briefe aus den Jahren 1914–1921*, pp. 36–37.

IV THE LUSTMORD DRAMAS

This section focuses on Trakl's three extant dramatic torsos, all of which represent variations on the theme of the 'Lustmord', the traumatic scene of sexual violence which is the common denominator of Trakl's mythopoeic constructions, the common experience of his personal repertory of mythical figures. The perverse carnage of these grotesque 'blood-weddings' probably accounts for their critical neglect. However, Trakl scholarship remains partial as long as it circumvents the less palatable reaches of the oeuvre. These should be seen not simply as some aberrant aesthetic transgression, but as symptomatic of a tension, which obtains throughout the corpus, between lyrical form and the deforming forces of aggression and decay.

The section also addresses the vexed question of Trakl's relation to the prime contributor to the great sexual debate of the fin-de-siècle, Otto Weininger. It establishes a series of Weiningerian resonances in the three texts under review, not simply in order to identify a theoretical source for Trakl's poetic practice, but rather to show that the two writers both see sexuality as the key to the broader problematic of selfhood. For both, sexuality is bound up with the existential guilt that springs from the mitigation of identity. By submitting to the desire of the other — for Weininger specifically the woman's desire for 'Der Geschlecht gewordene Mann' (G&C 400) — the self is split, the sensual 'other' self alienated from the ideal. The sexually motivated split is embodied for Weininger in the 'Doppelgänger', this being the prime figure in his central principle of 'Projektion' as 'Externalisation des Psychischen' (G&C 609). While Trakl only explicitly invokes the double once, it is omnipresent in his psychological landscapes, as the subject encounters himself in a series of projected forms. In these encounters the subject is confronted with the fact of his self-alienation; the 'Lustmord' not only estranges him from his victimised object, but its violence is internalised. The 'Lustmord' scenario, played out between the self and its doubles, dramatises the disintegration of identity which is seen as the inevitable concomitant of sexual desire.

It is perhaps not surprising that these three dramas of self-mutilation survive only as it were in mutilated form. The sexual violence that is enacted in them as a metaphor for the violence done to the ideal self by sexuality, also militates against the conventions of dramatic theatre. The dramatis personae are thus reduced to marionettes in *Blaubart*, or appear as apparitions and indeterminate dream-figures in the *Dramenfragment*. Any orthodox notion of characterisation would be incommensurable with the catastrophic devolution of character which the 'Lustmord' dramas depict. Nor does the *Dramenfragment*, the most sophisticated of the three pieces,

espouse any sense of unity in time, place or action; the spatio-temporal continuity of conventional theatrical forms is superseded here by the radical dislocation which characterises the economy of dreams. The lack of distinction between the naturalistic landscape and the oneiric landscapes of the protagonists submits the fragment's location, time-scale, and narrative structure to the distorting processes of what Freud called 'Entstellung'. Conventional form is both dislocated and disfigured in accordance with the binary root of this term (mhd. *entstellen*: eigtl. = aus der rechten Stelle od. Gestalt bringen. (*Duden*)).

The threat to formal integrity that disturbed sexuality has been shown to present for Trakl's poetic texts, therefore has equally serious consequences for his experiments in the dramatic form. Once more the narcissistic paradigm will be seen to collapse into the other face of the double: the structure of the text becomes a travesty, a 'Spottgestalt'. In these incomplete prototypes for a Theatre of Cruelty, the traditional body of the theatre is as it were confronted with its double as anti-theatre.

Any attempt to reconstruct the aesthetic or philosophical influences on a poet as reticent in his recorded opinions and as hermetic in his poetic output as Trakl clearly has intrinsic difficulties. Trakl's relationship to Rimbaud is a case in point; critics have traced the more striking borrowings without establishing any satisfactory account of their status, either as pure plagiarism or as strategic relocation of 'found' images for a particular poetic effect. Neither have they properly assessed the sorts of poetic affinities which might have led Trakl to synthesise quotations from Rimbaud into his own work. The final chapter will indicate the way in which this failure might be redressed.

Trakl's relationship to Weininger has also attracted a certain amount of attention, *Geschlecht und Charakter* being one of the books known to have been in the poet's library, and Weininger's theories a topic for discussion amongst members of the 'Brenner-Kreis', stimulated by the series of critical essays devoted to Weininger by the journal's leading philosophical light, Carl Dallago. That Trakl was preoccupied with the problem of sexuality is borne out by aphoristic statements of his as recalled by Limbach from a conversation between the poet and Dallago. Thus Trakl insisted upon the pertinence of Christ's teaching: "Kann man die Frage der Gemeinschaft zwischen Mann und Weib restloser lösen, als durch das Gebot: Sie sollen ein Fleisch sein?"; and he went on to express his contempt if not for Weininger, then certainly for the sort of misogynist attitudes spawned by Weininger's excesses: "Totschlagen sollt' man die Hunde, die behaupten, das Weib suche nur Sinnenlust! Das Weib sucht ihre Gerechtigkeit, so gut, wie jeder von uns".¹ Both of these statements are confirmed in the poetry; the quest for male and female to become 'one flesh' is enacted in the recurrent images of bodily transitivity, and in the repertory of androgynous figures; and the various permutations of the sister figure suffer the same conflict between 'Sinnenlust' and spiritual yearning as do the brother figures. The polarised portrayal of woman as 'babylonische Hure' or 'Madonna' is confined

to the caricatures of Trakl's early poetry, and is superseded by a picture of complex, dialectic involvement between the sexes. In her recent study Denneler traces a decline in Trakl's receptivity to the ideas of *Geschlecht und Charakter*, arguing that this is symptomatic of a strategic intent on his part, initially to court the 'Brenner-Kreis' in an 'öffentliche Signalisierung des Einverständnisses mit dem Geisteshorizont des Brenner', and subsequently to champion its emancipation from the 'Geistesväter', notably Weininger, Nietzsche and Kraus.² She also notes that Trakl's often-quoted second aphorism, 'Gefühl in den Augenblicken totenähnlichen Seins: Alle Menschen sind der Liebe wert. Erwachend fühlst du die Bitternis der Welt; darin ist alle deine ungelöste Schuld; dein Gedicht eine unvollkommene Sühne' (I 463), was passed to Ludwig von Ficker 'mit dem ausdrücklichen Hinweis auf Weininger'.³ Denneler goes no further than to submit this as evidence of Trakl's preoccupation with Weininger. The reference to a death-like state would seem, however, to echo one of the poet's letters which describes 'Gesichte von Dunkelheiten, bis zur Gewißheit verstorben zu sein' (I 503); this quasi-mortal 'Umnachtung' surely alludes to Weininger's association of his male archetypes 'Genie' and 'Verbrecher'. In his 'Genielehre' Weininger describes the paradigm change out of the one into the other: 'Vom Ich-Ereignis an gerechnet wird der bedeutende Mensch im allgemeinen — Unterbrechungen vom fürchterlichsten der Gefühle, vom Gefühle des Gestorbenseins, ausgefüllt, mögen wohl häufig vorkommen — mit Seele leben' (G&C 217). Apparently Trakl founds his idea of the acts of creative genius as atonement, albeit insufficient, for the metaphysical guilt of the criminal on this model (in another letter he accuses himself of 'allerlei Verbrechertum' I 519). The involvement of the genial and the criminal, the saintly and the demonic, will be documented in the discussion of Trakl's fragmentary dramas below.

In his article on the relationship between 'philosopher' and poet, Doppler conjectures that the sexual pessimism which informs Trakl's poetry from the outset is evidence of Weininger's influence; he is, however, unable to furnish any secure factual base for his catalogue of affinities.⁴ Detsch concurs with Doppler and reinforces the argument by noting that a line from the fragmentary play for puppets *Blaubart*, 'Bis zweie nur mehr eines macht!/ Und eins ist der Tod!' (I 445), is almost certainly derived from a passage from an apocryphal gospel cited in *Geschlecht und Charakter*. When Christ was asked by Salome how long the exigency of birth and death would prevail, he is said to have answered that his reign would not succeed (and Weininger paraphrases here) 'als bis aus Zweien eins, aus Mann und Weib ein drittes Selbes, weder Mann noch Weib, werde geworden sein' (G&C 457). Detsch's conclusion is, however, wayward, when he suggests that both Trakl and Weininger saw such an androgynous state as 'das Ideal des Menschlichen', but that 'dieses Ideal bei Weininger und Trakl nur auf drastischem und von der Natur abgekehrtem Weg zu verwirklichen ist'.⁵ Weininger's ideal is not one of a mystical conjunction of the sexes, but of a purely masculine condition (his response to the notion of 'ein drittes Selbes' is 'Es gibt kein drittes Reich' G&C 441). For Trakl on the other hand, the

androgynous ideal certainly does obtain, but the sexual nihilism of the 'Puppenspiel', far from charting a drastic path to this ideal, effects its parodic denial. What Detsch fails to appreciate is the intertextual significance of the borrowed formula, that is, the consequences of its relocation in a new context, for both parent and adoptive texts. The quotation, which marks a culmination in Weininger's serious exhortation to celibacy as the pre-condition for passage into his ideal state of male monism, is transplanted into a context of grotesque laughter and dementia, as the narrator points out in the ironic 'Vorausnahme':

Beklagst du, Gerechter dies wirre Bild,
Das von Gelächter und Irrsinn zerwühlt
Glaub' mir, bis wir uns wiederseh'n
Wird mein Helde auf sittsameren Wegen geh'n!
Amen! (I 435)

Weininger's sentence is put into the mouth of a Grand Guignol 'Lustmörder', as a prelude to carnage among the marionettes; the consequences of the philosopher's positions are acted out in a black parody. Indeed other parts of the original quotation undergo a similar revision.⁶ Thus the 'casting away of the clothing of shame' which signals the resolution of sexual difference, is parodied in Elisabeth's voluptuous fantasy of self-exhibition: 'Möcht nackend in der Sonne geh'n,/ Vor aller Augen mich lassen seh'n' (I 443); and far from overcoming the dictates of 'generation and death', Bluebeard's 'Lustmord' denies the possibility of generation only by a ritual celebration of sexual murder ('Muß der Teufel feiern zur Lust den Tod' I 444). He despoils Elisabeth at once of her virginity and her 'shame': 'Und saugen aus deinem Eingeweid/ Deine Scham und deine Jungfräulichkeit' (I 444).

More important than the ironic treatment of Weininger is the fact that Trakl is submitting his own hope for the resolution of sexual antagonism, whether as 'Ein Fleisch' or 'Ein Geschlecht', to parodic violence. Trakl supplants the construction of a transcendent vision by what might be called its textual double, much as in the brutally self-ironic, unpublished revision of 'De Profundis'. Here the sacred marriage of the innocent maid with Christ which would mark the passage into his reign, 'Und ihr Schoß harrt des himmlischen Bräutigams' (I 46), is savagely profaned in an image of abject lust: 'Die stinkige Möse, harrt des kräftigen Schwanzes' (II 127). Indeed, Klettenhammer finds evidence to suggest that the *Blaubart* fragment is a travestied revision of an earlier 'Puppenspiel' on another of the poet's favourite figures, Kaspar Hauser. She cites a review by Buschbeck which compares the 'verzückte, frühlingswarme Primitivität' of the original drama with the 'schönen einfach-dekorativen' canvases of a Jugendstil painter.⁷ The choice of a new protagonist, shifting the perspective from the victim to the violator, is consistent with their general relationship. As will be shown in the discussion of the *Dramenfragment* the two personae are dialectically involved, the 'Lustmörder' typically cast as the double of the 'Kaspar' figure. The transformation of Kaspar into his double is therefore symptomatic of the general revision of the text into its

double. The poet is subjecting his work a fortiori to the sort of doubling he fears in the poetry of a plagiarist: 'So kann es mir doch . . . nicht gleichgiltig sein, vielleicht demnächst irgendwo das Zerrbild meines eigenen Antlitzes als Maske vor eines Fremden Gesicht auftauchen zu sehn — !' (I 478).

'*Blaubart*'

The 'Vorausnahme' sets the tone for the black mass of *Blaubart*; the 'Puppenspiel' enacts an occult burlesque of Christian ritual, with the 'Lustmord' doing service for an act of sacrifice, and Bluebeard performing the familiar role of the voluptuous priest or monk, a hybrid disciple of God and the devil (in a variant he says 'Hebe dich von mir Gott-Satan' II 486). The fragment is constructed around relations of complicity between the four characters. Thus the old servant craves God's mercy for both Bluebeard and his latest victim; Herbert initially wishes to make a public confession of Bluebeard's crimes, but, lacking the nomenclature for these ('das Namenlose' I 438) suffers a martyr's death instead. His attempt to forestall Elisabeth's death, 'Laß mich sterben für dich' (I 440), echoes his father's offer to Bluebeard: 'Gäb' gern dies bißchen Leben für Euch' (I 441). Martyric self-sacrifice, the pervasive presence of blood, and the recurrent gesture of genuflection, all serve to mark out the involvement of all the characters in a dark ritual. The scene opens with Herbert on his knees, his confession is to be made kneeling, and he sees blood on the threshold where the bride will kneel before entering the castle (blood which presages his own martyrdom, marking the place where he will fall); the old man falls to his knees before a wrathful God on his son's suicide, and kneels before the occult priest Bluebeard; and the 'Lustmörder' falls before the crucifix at the end of the fragment. The motif, with its dual associations of self-effacement before the divinity and of despair, serves to draw the participants together. The motif of bleeding reinforces the connection. Thus the artless Elisabeth and her 'Knabe' are both made to reflect Bluebeard's double nature; his sexual violence is pre-empted in the bad dreams which arise out of their bad blood as the emblem of sexual guilt.

Herbert falls from innocence into the sickness which comes with sexual awakening:

Herbert: Ein böser Traum hat mich krank gemacht
Nun weine ich die ganze Nacht
Ich vergaß — warum!

Der Alte: Deine Kindertage sind um — (I 439)

As Herbert enters manhood, so he is haunted by the ghosts of Bluebeard's previous wives; his mad dreams are at once anguished and ecstatic, partaking of both the guilt and desire of his 'leibeignen Herrn' (I 438). Even as he sacrifices himself in an effort to prevent the unutterable crime of the wedding night, his infected blood it is that replaces the fantasised blood of 'der Fackeln flackernde Glut' (I 439) where Elisabeth will kneel, and so prefigures the orgy of blood-letting to come.

Elisabeth too is not simply the innocent victim of Bluebeard's aggression; her pallor merely affects a lack of carnality, as a portent of the only true state of bloodlessness in death. She enters the scene, in accordance with the legend, seeking access to the mystery of Bluebeard's myth, and he duly initiates her by drawing out her carnal desire, stirring up the blood which is the prerequisite of sexual sacrifice. In a parody of the Eucharist he makes her drink wine, which does service for blood in her eyes: 'er leuchtet wie Blut' (I 442). Bluebeard's rejoinder, 'Sagtest du Blut! Des Mondes trübe Glut' (I 442), prefigures the carnal character which the moon will be seen to adopt. At the same time he seeks to transform her pallor by making her laugh, laughter being of course another familiar element in the purple, sexual complex: 'Wahrhaftig! Deine Wangen sind bleich!/ Ich sing dir ein Lied, das dich lachen macht' (I 442). The song in question, a macabre admission of guilt by a necrophiliac, furnishes an insight into the coordination of sexuality and death which is the ultimate mystery of Bluebeard's ritual. Like the girl of 'Die junge Magd', who in fact engages the forces of male sexuality ('Hascht sie nach den wilden Funken' I 13) even as she suffers the violence of the smith's laughter as if in a bad (i.e. sexual) dream ('Wie im Traum trifft sie ein Lachen' I 13), Elisabeth's role is revised. She too is transported into the ecstasy of a bad dream, one dreamt originally the day before, and so not initiated by Bluebeard. The dream is characterised by the twin elements of fire and blood (once more a familiar association from 'Die junge Magd' and elsewhere); as emblems of consuming sexuality they take up Herbert's vision of the torches' bleeding light. The fantasy has a sado-masochistic character: 'Und tausend Schmerzen auf mich flehn/ Und Schmerzen dir tun, zu rasender Wut!' (I 443). Elisabeth's carnal intoxication becomes a suicidal threat, prefiguring her murder in a 'Lustselbstmord' at the hands of her own blood as it were: 'Blut stickt und würgt mir die Kehle zu' (I 443). The dream-speech solicits Bluebeard to commit the sacrificial 'Lustmord', to let Elisabeth's bad blood, as she mistakes him for her 'Knabe', a confusion which confirms Herbert's own identification with his master as 'leibeigen' earlier.

Elisabeth's solicitation of Bluebeard's aggression is symptomatic of an involvement which can be traced in their relationship to the moon. Elisabeth imitates the moon as 'besoffene Dirne' (I 441), intoxicated, that is, into a soliciting role, and she takes on the bleeding 'Glut' of the moon in her exhortation:

Mein Knabe komm! Trink' meine Glut,
Bist du nicht durstig nach meinem Blut,
Nach meiner brennenden Haare Flut? (I 443)

Similarly Bluebeard is the moon as voyeur: 'Sieh nur, wie der Mond dich brünstig anschaut!' (I 441); he plays the role of the voluptuous priest (i.e. Zarathustra's 'Mönch im Monde') and thus shares Elisabeth's lunar pallor, focused on his hands: 'Erbarm dich dieser Hände so bleich' (I 441). These are the hands which will commit the sacrificial murder, evoking the familiar image of the moon's waxen fingers penetrating the sacrificial body as hyacinth (Elisabeth, that is, as a feminised Elis). It

is paradoxically only in her assumption of bad blood that Elisabeth is transfigured for Bluebeard as the blue flower which the priest's lunar fingers might grasp: 'Zur Todesblume greifend erblaut' (I 444). The complicity which is established between priest and victim under the ambivalent sign of the moon, recalls the identification of 'bleiche Priester' and 'blaues Wild' in the 'du' of 'Verwandlung des Bösen' (I 97); in this sense the two are indeed made one.

The violation of the blue flower once more takes up the black ironisation of Weininger's quotation; far from heralding Christ's reign, the diabolical 'Lustmord' rehearses his crucifixion in parody: 'Starb Gott einst für des Fleisches Not/ Muß der Teufel feiern zur Lust den Tod' (I 444). Trakl's ironic reading of the passage from *Geschlecht und Charakter* subverts the work's apodictic vision by dramatising the sort of crass sexual nihilism upon which it is predicated. Both this and Weininger's other published work *Über die letzten Dinge* could well have furnished the poet with the material for his parody. In both texts sexuality is correlated with murder: 'so ist auch der Koitus . . . dem Morde verwandt' (G&C 331); and murder is constitutionally a reflexive act: 'man mordet zuerst sich selbst, bevor man den anderen mordet' (ULD 131). The sexual act as 'Lustmord' is therefore always pre-empted by a 'Lustselbstmord'. Bluebeard's death, as befits a disciple of 'Gott-Satan' is that of Lucifer; as the 'Lustmord' is ushered in by the extinction of 'der letzte Stern' (I 443), so Bluebeard falls 'verlöschend' before God. In Weininger's terms the extinction of the star ('Die Fixsterne bedeuten den Engel im Menschen' ULD 71) is the mark of the angel's sexual fall: 'Der Fall des Sternes ist der Sündenfall' (ULD 140).

'Don Juan'

The *Don Juan* fragment is characterised by the same interplay of the divine and the diabolical. Once more the scene is the castle, as locus of 'die dunklen Sagen der Edelleute' (II 495). The aristocratic mythology is one of sexual violence, enacted in a realm which resists the conventional categories of heaven and hell: 'Gib Acht! Hier ist die Hölle — sagt' ich Hölle?/ Vielleicht des Himmels Eingang auch. Wer weiß!' (I 449). Just as Bluebeard's act is nameless, so Don Juan inhabits an ineffable domain, so that Fiorello is counselled to leave his language outside. The acts of the 'Lustmörder' are the stuff of the unspeakable legends which were written elsewhere in 'unsäglichen Vogelflug' (I 80):

Dem Unfaßbaren hascht das träge Wort
Vergeblich nach, das nur in dunklem Schweigen
An unsres Geistes letzte Grenzen rührt. (I 449)

Both Bluebeard and Don Juan are Dionysian heroes who succumb to suffering. When Bluebeard falls before the cross, he imitates what Trakl described as the fate of Tolstoy: 'Pan, unter dem Kreuz zusammenbrechend'.⁸ Similarly, in the prologue to *Don Juan*, reconstructed from a lost manuscript, the narrator no longer beholds 'ein dionysisch Antlitz', the dance of life having been turned into the descent into

terminal darkness: 'Aus der Ewigkeit des Leids entsteigt Juan und geht, statt es jauchzend zu überwinden, in Finsternis unter' (II 489). The Dionysian countenance has been replaced by a petrified mask 'dahinter Tod und heißer Wahnsinn lauern' (I 447). The extant fragment represents a station on this descent, with Don Juan's essential 'Zwiespalt' (I 447) dramatised as a confrontation with a bestial death-mask, one which rehearses the encounter in the prologue. This 'Tiergesicht' (I 451), rather than simply representing 'die ermordete Geliebte' as a Weiningerian demonic 'Weib' as Doppler suggests, is surely a projection of the hero's own dichotomy.⁹ If Weininger is Trakl's source here, then it is more likely the assertion in *Über die letzten Dinge*: 'Es gibt wenige Menschen die nicht ein oder mehrere Tiergesichter haben' (ULD 132). Don Juan confronts his own 'Tiergesicht' as double, as harbinger of his own death, much as Bluebeard, prior to his death, identified with 'ein Wolf oder sonstig reißend Getier' (I 443), which Weininger characterises as 'Symbol der Gier, vielleicht aber noch von etwas anderem' (ULD 136). The 'Tiergesicht' is clearly such a sexual predator; Don Juan's myth of sexual voracity is modified into that of the 'Lustmörder' in the manner of the wolfish Bluebeard. The mask as projection of Juan's murderousness threatens him with a reciprocal murder according to the same principle as in *Blaubart*. *Über die letzten Dinge* once more provides the model for this variation on the myth, by assimilating coitus and murder: 'Ein Surrogat für den Mord ist der Koitus, und nur durch eine Linie vom Mörder getrennt der Don Juan' (ULD 130). The Dionysian 'Lustmord' is seen as the attempt to usurp God; Don Juan, as the 'Jäger, der die Pfeile schickt nach Gott' (I 447), conforms to Weininger's model of the sexual 'Verbrecher': 'daß sie koitieren. So ersetzen sie Gott' (ULD 130).

The 'Dramenfragment'

The incomplete, so-called *Dramenfragment* of 1914 has received scant attention from critics in spite of its crucial relation both to the other dramatic fragments and to the verse and prose poetry contemporary with it. The notable exception, Heinrich Goldmann, exemplifies the need for especial critical caution with this text. In his eagerness to accommodate the highly complex and contradictory fragment into his synthetic scheme, he glosses over its obliquities and engages in some rather dubious speculation as to the shape the full drama might have taken.¹⁰

The *Dramenfragment* works a complex of ideas which is pervasive in the later poetry. The recurrent pattern of the perpetration of violence against an apparently innocent victim and the ensuing guilt and quest for an adequate penance, which in the prose poems is organised around the perception of a single main figure, finds rather different expression in the dramatic form. The prose poems are peopled with what are largely projections of elements within the central figure; they effect a complex dialectic relationship between the nominal identity of that figure and the characters, or indeed disembodied voices, summoned up around him. The subject in

these texts is at once afforded a sense of identity as aggregate of the disparate voices and actors, and yet is threatened with disaggregation by the sheer multiplicity that is encompassed, and the mortal antagonism of the characters. While the personae in the *Dramenfragment* appear to enjoy a greater degree of autonomy as characters in a domestic drama, the dialectic is no less crucial here, where it operates in a more general, inter-personal way. The prime concern of both the prose poems and the fragment is thus the question of identity. This is formulated not only in terms of the undermining of an unequivocal grammatical scheme of discrete subject and object, but also in terms of a moral perspective. In the aftermath of an unspeakable crime the drama seeks to determine the identity of the culpable aggressors and of the innocent victims. The question of moral identity is moreover bound up with that of sexual identity, the crime being one of sexual violation.

A close consideration of this question of sexual identity will show that the notion that Trakl's poetry is an attempt to expiate a unilateral sexual guilt — the alleged crime of incest — presents too simplistic a view. Rather than the problem of guilt being limited to a self divorced from the world by that guilt, it will become clear that the revaluation of roles in the scenario of violence (the ostensible victim as complicit in its own suffering) renders the whole idea of selfhood problematic in itself. Guilt is recognised as original and so general; the self is made to encompass internally both the perpetration of violence and its suffering, that is, to be fundamentally split as both subject and object, male and female.

That the guilt which is the motive core of the drama is of a general and so mythical nature is revealed from the start in the oppressive background presence of the castle. The drama takes its cue from the earlier treatments of the Don Juan and Bluebeard legends. The interpretation of these aristocratic sex-myths (in a variant the Pächter asks 'Warum deuten wir die dunklen Sagen der Edelleute' II 495) is equivalent to their inescapable re-enactment. The Pächter's opening lines, expressed in a terse and would-be categorical style quite out of phase with the nervous lyricism of the fragment's authentic language, seek to accommodate the setting of the sun in a mundane, workaday order, thereby to repress its mythological function as token of a general descent. Peter immediately introduces the restive voice of the tensions which underly the Pächter's rhetoric by reporting the death by drowning of the boy, who is identified in the variants as 'Unser Sohn, dein Bruder' (II 496). The body in the pool is the victim of animal violence, and yet, in its imitation of the death of Ophelia, bears thorns and nettles as emblems of penitence. In as far as the death of this son refers at once to the abused artlessness of Ophelia and to the assumption of guilt, he must be seen as a double figure. The boy bears the signs both of ravaging wolf and of ravaged innocent; he is at once the mad nymph and identified in the second version as the voluptuous monk (II 458). The monk in the water is a reworking of a familiar image, whereby the lunar figure of the monk penetrates the innocent body of the water as nymph. Here, the monk is seen to suffer his own violence. The fate of his son evokes in the father the repressed memory of a

similar deed in which he is clearly implicated himself, one which, in its mythical nature, belongs as much to the future ('morgen heben wir vielleicht das Bahrtuch von einem teureren Toten' I 455) as to the past. The Pächter's response to this extra-temporal 'memory' (and so to the interpretation of the 'Sagen der Edelleute') is that of the fugitive, 'Laß uns gehn' (I 455), but Peter insists on lending the mythical transgression a personal identity, with father and son implicating one another in the guilt inherent in blood-bound relationships:

Peter: Euere Tochter —

Der Pächter: Sprichst du von deiner Schwester! (I 455)

The mutual culpability of father and son is established in the next few lines. The Pächter's nocturnal vision of his daughter's countenance in the 'Sternenweiher', 'gehüllt in blutende Schleier' (I 455), identifies her with the dead boy (her brother) in the mill-pond. Like the brother she is implicitly identified with the moon's reflection, an association which is explicitly developed later. Yet at the same time she is implicitly identified with her father inasmuch as she appears in a specular surface; she is seen as the anima in its alienated condition: 'des Vaters Fremdlingin' (I 455). As a victim of violence she has become estranged from the father, and yet remains in an ambivalent relationship of identity with him. As mirror-image she embodies in other words the paradoxical nature of the double. In the variant moreover she is seen as the 'image' of her mother ('Wie gleicht sie ihrer Mutter' II 496), who in turn is identified with the reflective element of water (as 'blauer Quell' I 456), and suffers with her husband the retribution of nature for some unnamed act.

The female characters are thus incorporated in their proper element, and yet their male counterparts are repeatedly implicated in the female figure, whether by drowning (the monk as nymph) or by the confrontation with their likenesses. The essential involvement of male and female is developed in Peter's own oblique *De profundis*. Now the sister is relocated in the thorn-bush in a reprise of the scenario presented in 'An Johanna' and 'Offenbarung und Untergang'. While her crucifixion seems to set Johanna within a Christian frame of reference, the redemptive model is subverted by the real and personal, rather than assumed nature of her guilt. By the same token, when Peter drinks her blood (in the light of 'An Johanna' the question 'Wer trank ihr Blut?' (I 455) is surely rhetorical), he at once signals their common guilt and rehearses the act of violation. He is as much 'interpreting' the role of Bluebeard, the 'Lustmörder' who drinks his victims' blood, as that of the Christian penitent. The communion of suffering in imitation of the Eucharist remains as essentially ambivalent as the brother's incorporation of his sister-victim's wound elsewhere is imperfect (see below p. 00).

Johanna's bleeding implicates her in the collective guilt of the line, and blood as the token of that guilt marks out a set of more essential relationships which underly those of kinship. As Johanna's blood is transferred to Peter, so her bloody face in the pool is the projection of the Pächter's own 'blood-guilt'. The blood which she sheds

has a congenital source, as revealed in the Pächter's invocation: 'O du, Blut von meinem Blute' (I 456).¹¹ The pervasive nature of these blood-ties demands a reassessment of the narrow, autobiographical understanding of incest, of 'Blutschuld' as Trakl terms it. Relations of consanguinity seem to imply the mixing of blood in sexual relations in the manner of the line from 'Passion': 'Zwei Wölfe im finsternen Wald/ Mischten wir unser Blut' (I 393).

Johanna is identified in her father's invocation as both 'Weg und Träumende' (dreaming, it emerges later, is a correlative activity of bleeding); she is both engaged in thorny pilgrimage, a somnambulist on the dream-path as a variation on the *via dolorosa*, and is identified with that path. As such she furnishes an alternative space to the passive embrace of the water for the male figures to occupy. While Peter escapes the illusory security of domestic sequestration, and at least seems to emulate the identity between self and fate which Johanna as 'Weg und Träumende' is said to have achieved, his father cannot. Unwilling to partake of the 'blood of his blood' and so to acknowledge his guilt, he returns to the decayed house and the petrified ritual of communion in 'das versteinerte Brot' (I 456), with the scene ending in a symbolic hiding of identity as he covers his face with his hands.

Yet the divergence of the generations here is deceptive; the change of scene to the 'Dornige Wildnis' of Johanna's pilgrimage only serves to accentuate the sexual problematic. Even in the opening apostrophe, 'Stich schwarzer Dorn' (I 456), the ideal of self-mortification is caught up with the recurrent imagery of the dark phallus (the 'Stachel', 'Schwert', 'Messer' or 'Wurm'). Just as the nature of the guilt is invariably sexual, the murder a 'Lustmord', so the correspondence of images of death or wounding to coitus is transposed on to the self-inflicted wounds of the penitent. The *imitatio Christi* is thus no less an imitation of the sinful act that it supposedly absolves; the Passion is subverted, as so often elsewhere, by the undercurrents of passion. The recidivism of the sexual criminal has a twofold nature; while the 'Stich' here seems to read as a masochistic invocation, the corresponding passage in 'Offenbarung und Untergang' also refers to the desire for retribution of the female victim of sexual violence. So it is that both penitence and revenge are exacted in kind, and their sado-masochistic character is crucial as a key to the question of complicity.

Johanna serves to illustrate the danger of over-simplification with regard to the sister-figure in Trakl's poetry. She appears in the first scene in the role conventionally associated with her, as the immolated beast haunting her tormentor; however, her speech here is shot through with erotic imagery. There is an intimation of resurrection in the roseate spring which emerges from the bleeding of her temples. This 'rosiger Frühling' (I 456) would presumably succeed the attainment of a purely white, bloodless state of innocence ('Wie weiß ...'). Yet the bleeding continues; rather than making the transition into the deathly purity of the lunar condition (the moon being idealised as the locus of her 'weiße Tänze'), Johanna is still under the sway of eros. The lunar figure is beset by the bleeding which generally characterises

the setting sun. The open wounds represent the dreams of childhood which play in the broken mirrors of her eyes — evoking the familiar tripartite association of blood, dreams and blindness as 'Umnachtung' — and run scarlet from her mouth. The bleeding mouth corresponds here, as elsewhere, to the wound of the violated vulva; thus the metaphorical figuration of the act of dreaming ('Rinnt nicht Scharlach vom Munde mir' I 456) is analogous to the bloody content of these infantile dreams: the violation of the house and the female sex by the 'Tier' as the embodiment of untamed affect. It is the same scenario as occurs at the end of 'Im Osten'; the fact that in this poem the moon is cast as the 'Lustmörder', in league with the wolves, gives an indication of the role that Johanna as ostensible victim of the wolf will be seen to adopt. It is this violation which laid the house as womb to waste and expelled the children out of its security. The irruption of sexuality into the domestic innocence of childhood is tantamount to death ('Tod! Tod!' I 456), its particular form being the death of the mother. As was noted above, the Pächter is clearly implicated in the despoiling of the house (and of his 'house') which is now his decayed refuge.

The mother's ghost duly appears to Johanna in the bare tree. In keeping with her reflective nature elsewhere, and their likeness in the eyes of the Pächter, her role as a spectre of death is as a projection of Johanna's own fate; she beholds Johanna with her daughter's eyes: 'sieht mich mit meinen traurigen Augen an' (I 456). The confrontation, which may be seen as a classic instance of the mirror-image as double (the mother's eyes must be bleeding the same archetypal dreams of death as her daughter's), undermines Johanna's desire for life. The fantasy in which she sees herself as the ecstatic figure of the flowering lilac, her hair/branches ablaze with the flames of eros ('Liebes es ist mein brennendes Haar' I 456–57), is mitigated by the confrontation with her own image as the bare tree of death.

The ominous appearance of the double is borne out as Johanna encounters a further member of the family. She pleads in vain for the apparition not to become involved in her consuming desire: 'Rühre nicht dran, Schwester mit deinen kalten Fingern' (I 457). The apparition's agony ('Brennende Lust; Qual ohne Ende' I 457) is evidently inflamed by Johanna's erotic condition of flaming blossom: 'Leises Schweben erglühender Blüte' (I 457). Once more the apparition has a double, bisexual identity. It is addressed as sister by Johanna (apparently as the Maria of the Pächter's speech) and yet the variants had the figure as the brother, Kaspar. This double identity reflects Johanna's gravitation into the male role. Her attempt to avoid inflaming the apparition's desire clearly comes too late; the wound ('Weh, die Wunde die dir am Herzen klafft' I 457) is already inflicted, with Johanna as Kaspar-Maria's seducer, the father of the child which her brother/sister bears in pain: 'Fühl meines Schoßes schwärzliche Wehen' (I 457).

Johanna is thus implicitly cast in her turn in the role of 'Lustmörder'. As such she now appears as the double of her victim; it is surely her own face which she recognises in her sister's shadow as a customary medium for the double's

appearance. The apparition flees with a cry, 'Weh! Mein Mörder!', which recognises the identity of Johanna and the murderer in her shadow.¹² Thus all three figures bear the mark of lesions which are both sexual and penitential: Johanna in her bleeding mouth, the apparition in the wounded heart (summoning up at once the wound in the side of the 'Schmerzensmann' and the suffering of the 'Schmerzensmutter'), and the murderer in an even clearer imitation of the Madonna. He takes on the suffering of the mother's (i.e. Maria's) 'Wehen', with his 'zerbrochne Schwerter im Herzen' (I 457). That he experiences the mother's pains as a sexual wound is corroborated by the variants, where the swords were 'Würmer' (II 501).

There is thus a complex subversion of sexual roles at work here. While Johanna is recast in the role of the guilt-ridden brother, and Maria usurps her role of the sister as victim of incestuous passion, both bear the wounds of the violated (later Johanna will adopt the sister's voice as 'kleines Irrlicht' I 459). Johanna's complicity in her own 'Lustmord' is dramatised in her violation of this projection of herself. The element of suicide in the 'Lustmord' means that she is denied both life as a purely incandescent, erotic condition, and death as a lunar figure executing bloodless dances. Her fate is rather an unhappy wedding of both, a living death under the conjunction of fire and snow: 'Schneeiges Feuer im Mond' (I 457).

The final section spreads the web of complicity. As the apparition and Johanna sink away in tandem, so they are supplanted by the figures of the wanderer and the murderer, who re-enact the familiar myth. The original form of Johanna's last line was 'Wen suche/träume ich' (II 501); the wanderer is torn out of a state of unconsciousness, even as Johanna falls unconscious; she makes him play the role of a figment in her dreams ('Wer schrie in der Nacht, stört das süße Vergessen in schwarzer Wolke mir?' I 457). The wanderer's state of oneiric 'Umnachtung' is dispelled now by the confrontation with the 'furchtbare Schatten' of his guilt, and the different sort of darkness of memorative immediacy.

The murderer plays a complementary role to that of the wanderer; their experience within Johanna's dream is at once parallel and contrary. Just as the wanderer is propelled out of his passive, narcotic condition into the active engagement with guilt of the pilgrimage, the murderer undergoes a rude awakening from his own dreams. His adoption of the role is experienced as coercion from without: 'Wer riß aus dem Schlaf mich ...' (I 457); he, though, is dispossessed of the light of memory, 'Wer hat die Lampe aus meinen Händen genommen. Wildes Vergessen' (I 457), and thus of a sense of identity: 'Wer hat mein Antlitz genommen' (I 457). While the wanderer is made to tread the path of the penitent, the murderer is violently bereft of the lamp as penitential emblem. The taking up of the murder weapon, which once more has a phallic character, reads as a pre-emptive suffering of the act of violence: 'Wer drückt das Messer in meine rote Rechte' (I 457). The murderer suffers figuratively the same sexual murder as the three characters in the first section, so that the blood of his heart is also let ('das Herz in Kalk verwandelt' I 457).

The wanderer's new benighted state is then defined more clearly. He is oppressed by the same childhood nightmares as Johanna, with the same anticipatory configuration of the bleeding forehead and the broken eyes. Sought out to be her dream-self ('Wen suche/träume ich'), he has the same essential relationship as she with the murderer figure, who haunts his dreams as an inner, prophetic voice: 'Stimme im Innern kündet Unheil' (I 457). The wanderer and Johanna are thus associated by the archetypal nature of the nightmare; he suffers his own 'purpurner Alb der Kindheit' (I 457) as he is made to enact hers. The mythical status of this bloody dream scenario is revealed in the variant where it was styled the 'uralte Wunde' (II 502), the wound, that is, that all have been seen to share. This wound is the emblem of the compulsive return of the repressed. Even as the wanderer, as tormented child, calls upon the Madonna to tend to the ancient wound of his dreams, 'heilige Mutter trockne den Schweiß auf meiner Stirne, das Blut' (I 457), he invokes in her stead the murderer, the archetypal dream-figure who haunted Maria precisely in the form of the Madonna, and who has already suffered a stabbing himself as one more broken sword in the heart of the 'Schmerzensmutter'.

Just as Johanna perpetrates the wounding of her sister as a projection of her own injured innocence, the apparently unilateral act of violence here is in fact essentially reflexive. The appearance of the murderer in either section is contingent upon his own murder ('man mordet zuerst sich selbst, bevor man den anderen mordet'); when his image is captured within the dream, he experiences an amnesic loss of identity and of countenance.¹³ The dream-space where the myths of sexual violence are enacted is in itself a reflexive construction; for while dreams (as wounds) affect a sense of vulnerability — the self a prey to the aggression of its figments — they are also seen as doing violence (i.e. inflicting wounds) themselves (hence the striking substitution of 'träumen' for 'suchen' in the variant, so that it must be construed as a transitive act of pursuit).

The principle of dialectic involvement between the personae of the drama is no less crucial in the second version of the fragment. The figure of Kermor is introduced here as a variation on the 'Lustmörder', and the Kaspar figure is suppressed as an independent identity, only to be incorporated jointly by Kermor and Johanna as the 'female' victim within. The double identity accords with that of the protagonist in 'Traum und Umnachtung' who, as we have seen, both commits and suffers acts of violence according to the reflexive principle, and was originally named both Kaspar and Kermor.

Kermor enters with what appears to be an admission of guilt; having killed his horse he has suffered the same retributive onslaught from nature as the Pächter describes in the first version. Yet this is also a mercy-killing, as he releases the animal from the madness of its bad dreams, experienced once more as bleeding wounds.¹⁴ By the same token Kermor experiences his penetration into his victim's sleep as a profound disorientation ('Wo bin ich' I 458). He suffers the same threat to his identity as the murderer in the earlier version; the act of violation is tantamount to

one of self-alienation: 'Einbrech ich in süßen Schlummer, umflattert mich silbernes Hexenhaar! Fremde Nähe nachtete um mich' (I 458).¹⁵

In keeping with this ambivalence, Kermor shows the symptoms of suffering bad dreams, having apparently assumed the wounds of his murdered horse: 'Seine Schläfe blutet' (I 458). He thus dreams even as he is 'dreamt' by his victim; his traumatised condition marks him out as alien to the mundane order that the Pächter is so anxious to preserve. As Johanna on her wild dream-paths was 'des Vaters Fremdlingin', so Kermor is designated as 'Fremdling'. It is the guilty memories of the Pächter, estranged because repressed, that are figured in Kermor, just as they were stirred by Johanna. Kermor even recites parts of the Pächter's speech from the first version; he may intrude from without, but he is clearly an authentic son of the house. In his lifting of the pall Kermor enacts the scene that the Pächter had anticipated: the premonition of the first version is now actual: 'Leise hebt die silberne Hand das Bahrtuch von der finsternen Schläferin' (I 458). He offers her his heart wrapped in thorns as a token of identification with her suffering; the bleeding heart, which has already been encountered as the attribute of the grieving Madonna, may be seen as analogous to the condition of the sleeping victim. Her face is described as 'mondnes Antlitz' (moon and heart are frequently associated in Trakl's poetry), and in the variant it was 'blutend' (II 503).

Even before Johanna enters there is thus a suggestion of her presence as the bleeding lunar figure; Kermor identifies her as 'Sternenantlitz' (incorporating the bloody significance of the stars into the face), just as she was 'gehüllt in blutende Schleier' for the Pächter. In either case the image of the bleeding moon in the 'Sternenweiher' (a neologism which is practically equivalent to pool of blood) is the reflection of Peter's vision where Johanna's face is caught in the branches of the thorn (much like Kermor's heart). The correspondence is further complicated by Kermor's 'Mädchen dein glühender Schoß im Sternenweiher' (I 459). This makes sense only in terms of the sort of analogical chains which have been constructed here, that is, the bleeding face (brow and mouth as wound) as corollary of the vulva, and the pool as female matrix. In every case the reflective quality of the water, which redispersed the objects in the space above it — moon, stars, thorn, and human figures alike — into a single two-dimensional space, means that the male subject is always involved in the configurations reflected. There is an inevitable identification between the girl in the pool, in all her various manifestations, and the supposed murderer who stands over the speculum.

While Kermor is pursued by the bloody, avenging figure of the 'verfallener Mond', he is also following her example. Just as she gravitates from the 'Stich schwarzer Dorn' of ecstatic self-mortification to the desire to staunch her bleeding sexual wound ('Rinnt nicht Scharlach vom Munde mir' I 456), Kermor calls for an end to his suffering, also styled as phallic violation: 'Laß ab — schwarzer Wurm, der purpurn am Herz bohrt' (I 459). When Johanna ('Pfad und Träumende in mondener Nacht') appears, she is wandering along the dream-path ('traumwan-

delnd'), that is, totally involved in herself as the oneiric way. Yet as this dream-path leads as much to carnal violence as to its expiation, when Kermor awakes he feels misled. Johanna as model path has become his 'schuldiger Pfad' (I 459) — in the variant indeed his 'blutender Pfad' (II 504); she is corrupted by the very 'Blutschuld' that he seeks to abjure by her example. The path of absolution becomes a path of compulsive repetition of the original act of violence. Even as he breaks out of Johanna's sleep, she invokes by way of retribution the blood which he spilled when he first broke in. Once more the variant underpins the reflexive pattern of the violence, as Kermor is charged by Johanna with the very acts of calling and searching that stood earlier for her own transitive dreaming of male characters: 'Mein Blut über dich — da du mich suchtest/riefest' (II 505).

The double identity of Kermor as both wanderer and murderer may be suggestively related to the poem 'Der Wanderer'. The wanderer as somnambulant (the first version of the poem was called 'Wanderers Schlaf' I 391) traces a path which, like Johanna, is itself somnolent: 'Schlafend wölbt sich über den Gießbach der Steg'. As he pursues that path he is himself pursued by a deathly figure, the anthropomorphic 'Sichelmond' as 'dunkle Gestalt der Kühle' (I 391) or 'erstorbenes Antlitz' (I 122). In both the poem and the *Dramenfragment* the moon fulfils the function attributed to it by Weininger in *Über die letzten Dinge*: 'Der Mond ist der Traum; der Nachtwandler der unfrei gewordenen Träumer' (ULD 192). This is the moon as the 'finstere Schläferin' Johanna, who visits Kermor with bad dreams. The variants to 'Der Wanderer' once more identify the pursuit as reflexive; here the wanderer is identified as Narcissus, who is inherently double, attendant upon his own image. As the Pächter and Kermor see themselves in the lunar image of Johanna in the pool, so here Narcissus's image is that of the moon (Narcissus as the son of Selena). One variant has Narcissus in pursuit: 'Folgt Narziß . . . dem Mond in rosiger Schlucht' (II 211); another has him pursued, like Kermor, by the moon: 'Folgt Narziß . . . der Mond' (II 211). He follows and is followed, that is, he dreams and is dreamt. In 'Wanderers Schlaf' the aim of the sleeper's expiation is revealed; he has become alienated from the space in which he once lived: 'Stein und Stern/Darin der weiße Fremdling ehndem gewohnt' (I 391); the pursuit of the moon's earthly image is an attempt to re-enter the original space. Errancy is a metaphor for the transformative power of sleep (the wanderer seeking to become the moon in his dreams). In the discarded text of the variants the pun which cements the metaphor can be traced; the wanderer effects here the same double metamorphosis into stone and star as Novalis's *Ofterdingen*,¹⁶ the variants reading: 'Wandelt der Weiße in Stein und Stern' and 'Verwandelt der Weiße in Stein und Stern' (II 214). The ultimate fate of the wanderer revokes this wishful model, however; the moon's image (the corollary, that is, of Narcissus's own) cannot be rejoined, but rather sinks away 'in traurigen Wassern' (I 122). The poem adumbrates in a gentler form the disjuncture between self and dream-self, Narcissus and his image, which is enacted in the catastrophic nightmares of the *Dramenfragment*.

The apparent distinction between the dramatic and the verse forms is more or less notional. The inter-subjective relations of the *Dramenfragment*, and the loss of a central figure, are only a logical progression from the prose poems where that figure was under such intense centrifugal strain. The drama compulsively multiplies the scenario which is common to both the prose poems and 'Der Wanderer', that of the self pursued by its alienated alter ego, and in pursuit of it. The characters of the *Dramenfragment* are doubled in such a complex manner that they are all ultimately vehicles of a single, pervasive myth: the loss of identity which is intrinsic to the desire of the other. The fact that this desire becomes introjected according to the narcissistic model means that the self becomes as it were other (i.e. a 'Fremdling' or 'Fremdlingin') to itself. The double-bind of this self-alienating desire is perfectly expressed in the inherent dualism of the dream as it is presented in the fragment. The dream-space is, as we have seen, at once a prey to the violence of the other's desire, and preys on the other as the victim of subjective desire. In the displaced landscape of the dream, conventions of identity and location are suspended, hence the proliferation of agonised questions ('Wer bist du?', 'Wo bin ich', 'Wer spricht' and so on). As bleeding is the analogue of dreaming, so the principle of consanguinity ('Du Blut von meinem Blute') implies the incestuous exchange of self and other in the traumatised arena of dreams.

As the lunar personification of the dream ('Der Mond ist der Traum'), Johanna embodies the gravitation of the ideal figure of Narcissus's sister into the role of the male subject's double, his mirror-image and dream-self. As an authentic reflection she coordinates the infliction and the suffering of sexual aggression, and is engaged in a quest for absolution which is recurrently diverted by the compulsion of sexual passion. In the final section the sister's transformation will be pursued more generally and identified as the paradigm for the crisis of Trakl's poetic vision.

NOTES TO CHAPTER IV

1. Hans Limbach, 'Begegnung mit Georg Trakl', in *Erinnerung an Georg Trakl*, edited by Ignaz Zangerle, second edition (Salzburg, 1959), pp. 111–20 (p. 118 & p. 119).
2. Iris Denneler, *Konstruktion und Expression: Zur Strategie und Wirkung der Lyrik Georg Trakls* (Salzburg, 1984) p. 206.
3. Denneler, p. 206.
4. Alfred Doppler, 'Georg Trakl und Otto Weininger' in *Peripherie und Zentrum: Festschrift für Adalbert Schmidt*, edited by G. Weiss and K. Zelewitz (Salzburg, 1971), pp. 43–54.
5. Richard Detsch, 'Die Beziehungen zwischen Carl Dallago und Georg Trakl' in: *Untersuchungen zum Brenner*, edited by W. Methlagl et al (Salzburg, 1981), pp. 158–76 (p. 170).
6. Weininger quotes the original Greek (G&C 595).
7. Sieglinde Klettenhammer, 'Unbekanntes Puppenspiel *Kaspar Hauser* von Georg Trakl', *Mitteilungen aus dem Brenner-Archiv*, 1 (1982), pp. 50–56.
8. *Erinnerung an Georg Trakl*, p. 125.
9. Doppler, p. 49.
10. Goldmann, pp. 142–55.
11. To a reader of the *Brenner* this line might easily have recalled the words of Prinz Blaubart in the short story of that name by Karl Schobleitner (*Der Brenner* 3, 1911). Bluebeard's son is here

associated with his victim as mirror-image, much as the Pächter is with Johanna: 'Sein eigenes Wesen spiegelte sich ab in ihr' (p. 221). The victim is not only seen as a blood-relation ('Du Blut von meinem Blut' p. 214) but the same complicity is established between the murderer and his victim as 'Meuchelmörderin' (p. 221). The implication is that the 'Pächter' is interpreting the role of Bluebeard here.

12. A possible source for this recognition of the double is Emil Lucka's highly Weiningerian study 'Verdoppelungen des Ich', *Preußische Jahrbücher* 115 (1904), 54–83. He writes: 'Eine schreckliche Wirkung soll der Namens-Anruf auf Somnambule im Zustande des Schlafwandeln haben. Sie erwachen plötzlich, verlieren das Gleichgewicht und stürzen gegebenenfalls in einen Abgrund' (p. 75). The awakening of the somnambulant Johanna is experienced as a fall into unconsciousness: 'Sie stürzt besinnungslos'; and out of her fall the wanderer and the murderer, her doubles, are both violently awoken.
13. The fact that the murder is a 'Raubmord' may well refer to Weininger's postulation that the true aim of murder, to destroy the victim's identity, is only achieved by theft: 'das Rauben ist ein völliges Töten; der Gemordete hätte noch immer Realität, wenn er Geld besäße' (ULD 60).
14. The mad horse is consistent with Weininger's 'Tierpsychologie', where he writes 'daß das Pferd den Irrsinn repräsentiere' (ULD 134).
15. Once more there are echoes of *Über die letzten Dinge* here. Both Kermor and the murderer of the first version adopt their criminal persona in a manner that accords with Weininger's association of 'Verbrecher' and 'Epileptiker'. The murderer loses the light of his lamp ('Gefühl des Epileptikers: wie wenn das Licht erlischt' ULD 61); and as Kermor falls into darkness, he has a vision ('Purpurne Höllenflamme flamme!' I 459) such as Weininger characterises for the epileptic criminal: 'Der Epileptiker hat Visionen von roter Farbe: Hölle, Feuer' (ULD 61).
16. Novalis, I, p. 341.

V THE QUEST FOR UNION

This section will pursue the dismantling of the narcissistic ideal, by focusing on the motif of androgynous union and in particular on what Richard Detsch calls the 'numinous' figure of the sister. In his chapter on 'Androgynous Man' Detsch is able to cast the motif in a rather rosy light (without doubting the generally 'optimistic connotation' of the colour) by detaching his examples from their contexts, and taking them very much at face value. There is no regard here for the sort of subversion of the textual programme that the present study has sought to illustrate. While he is undoubtedly right in recognising the compound nature of the moment of transcendence in 'Abendländisches Lied' — the unity of creation in 'Ein Geschlecht' as contingent upon the union of male and female 'Geschlechter' — he fails to see that it is but a moment. The ascension of the lovers, arising out of a confrontation with the double under its mortal aspect, puts immense strain upon the credibility of the adversative hinge of 'Aber':

O, die bittere Stunde des Untergangs,
Da wir ein steinernes Antlitz in schwarzen Wassern beschaun.
Aber strahlend heben die silbernen Lider die Liebenden:
Ein Geschlecht. Weihrauch strömt von rosigen Kissen
Und der süße Gesang der Auferstandenen. (I 119)

The resolution of the dark encounter with the double into the rosy vision of narcissistic union must surely be viewed within the context of the reverse process which has been identified in so many of the poems.

Another example of how Detsch abstracts unitary moments from their ambivalent settings is in the key poem 'Ruh und Schweigen'. Rather than examining the overall construction of the narrative, he isolates its 'end' as evidence for the generalised contention that 'Trakl's "Schwester" appears therefore as a hermaphroditic being, and in his later poetry she assumes an increasingly numinous quality'.¹ In fact 'Ruh und Schweigen' will serve to illustrate the profound tension between the numinous quality that attaches to the text's surface, and the disturbance of its underlying space. The tension is perfectly evoked here in the figure of the speculum as textual metaphor; beneath the alluring narcissistic surface is a fraught infrastructure of repressed sexual violence. Detsch's 'Schwester' as 'hermaphroditic being', and her corollary, the blue flower as, in Jungian terms, 'die saphirische Blume des Hermaphroditen',² are both a prey to the sort of subjacent traumas identified earlier. This section will trace the alteration of paradigm that these two figures undergo: the transition out of the blueness of spiritual transcendence into the purple of

'Schwermut'. The hyacinth as colour and flower, contrasted with blue by Goldmann as 'ins Purpurne Hinüberspielendes',³ will provide the key to this paradigm change.

The hyacinth it is that embodies (literally becoming a body) Trakl's revision of the topos of Romantic transcendentalism. The blue flower, as adopted from Novalis, is the telos of the Romantic quest for the repossession of the self, for the union of body and soul, and for the reconciliation of the estranged sexes. For the errant male subject, the elusive beloved as 'blaue Blume' symbolises the spiritual homeland from which he has been uprooted, the epicene state which preceded sexual differentiation. The blue flower is emblematic of the ideal of 'Ein Geschlecht' which Trakl borrows from Novalis, and in Trakl's encomium of his brother-poet, it represents the transcendent quality of Novalis's song 'Eine blaue Blume/ Fortlebt sein Lied' (I 325).⁴ However, the soul as 'blaues Blümchen' is extra-temporal, and its authentic blueness essentially momentary: 'Ein blauer Augenblick ist nur mehr Seele' (I 79). The blue flower is thus as elusive for the body of the poem and its diachronic narratives as it is estranged from the worldly exigencies of the body: 'Es ist die Seele ein Fremdes auf Erden' (I 141).

In its quest for emulation of Novalis's song, Trakl's poetry is constantly diverted from its goal by this estrangement, as the blue figures of the soul, and thus by implication the quality of poetic melos, are subjected to the violence of bodily desire. This is the sexual 'Folter' exercised in the variants to 'Rote Gesichter . . .': 'Wollust — so leise leidet/ Ein blaues Blümchen die Seele' (II 431). The Romantic quest model becomes conflated with the model of the Passion. Yet even as the wanderer submits him- or herself to the stations of self-mortification, the proximity of suffering and desire (the thorn as phallus) means that the project of self-denial is always in danger of slipping into self-satisfaction. The shedding of blood which is the prerequisite of transfiguration into the blue flower is also at the root of the 'bösen Blumen des Bluts' (I 149). As Elisabeth is transfigured ('erblaut') only to suffer defloration on Bluebeard's satanic altar, so the blooming of blue flowers dissimulates an effective stillbirth: 'Tote Geburt; auf grünem Grund/ Blauer Blumen Geheimnis und Stille' (I 316). The secret of the blue flowers is none other than their inward wounds, the sign of the corporeal vulnerability which they share with the 'transcendent' stars. The 'Geheimnis blauer Blumen' which the old people of 'Am Abend' bear on their temples is thus revealed, secreted away in the variants, as blood: 'Blut erscheint auf bleichen Schläfen' (II 404). The recondite 'Sinn' of the blue flowers is therefore identical with the evident, purple identity of the 'bösen Blumen des Bluts', also located on the temples in 'Traum und Umnachtung'. Trakl assimilates Novalis's blue flower and the 'fleurs du mal' of Baudelaire, the transcendence of the Romantic soul and the spleen-ridden, post-Romantic body. In Trakl's personal vocabulary spleen is cast as 'Schwermut', the 'fleurs du mal' as 'der Schwermut kranke Blumen' (I 218), generated by the sexual act in the worldly womb of woman: 'Schwermut blüht im Schoß der Frauen' (I 417). He takes the

motif of Mathilde's self-sacrifice from Novalis's *Ofterdingen*, and recasts it as a combination of sexual murder and suicide. The flowers on the subject's temple mark him out at once as 'Lustmörder' (one variant has them as 'das Blut zerrissenen Getiers' II 274), and as 'Lustselbstmörder' (in another variant the blood is 'selbstvergossene' II 274).

The condition of 'Schwermut' and the sexual violence from which it derives can also be traced as the 'Geheimnis' of the blue flowers in 'Ruh und Schweigen', implying a similarly disturbed secret identity for the 'hermaphroditic being' which springs from the poem.

Hirten begruben die Sonne im kahlen Wald.
 Ein Fischer zog
 In härenem Netz den Mond aus frierendem Weiher.
 In blauem Kristall
 Wohnt der bleiche Mensch, die Wang' an seine Sterne gelehnt;
 Oder er neigt das Haupt in purpurnem Schlaf.
 Doch immer rührt der schwarze Flug der Vögel
 Den Schauenden, das Heilige blauer Blumen,
 Denkt die nahe Stille Vergessenes, erloschene Engel.
 Wieder nachtet die Stirne in mondenem Gestein;
 Ein strahlender Jüngling
 Erscheint die Schwester in Herbst und schwarzer Verwesung.
 (I 113)

'Ruh und Schweigen' appears to chart a *coniunctio oppositorum* according to the alchemical model, sexual antagonism being resolved by the cosmic marriage of 'sol' and 'luna' as male and female. Detsch is not the only critic to have seen the sister as androgyne emerging from the poetic opus.

The first stanza introduces the idea of the moon born out of the sun's interment. The moon's appearance here is a honed-down version of the variants where it was figured as a 'schmales Tier' which lived 'in uralter Bläue ... in dunklen Wassern' (II 186). This reading also points strongly to the identity of the moon and the 'bleiche Mensch'; in the pool the reflection of the moon's face is adjacent to reflected stars, as well as to the fish of the variant. The lunar man seems to represent the transition out of the carnal condition of the sun into an original purity and the peace and quiet of the title. Yet the peace of the specular domicile is illusory. The anthropomorphic figure incorporates the experience of sun and moon; his repose in the inviolate womb is yet a prey to the suffering of his solar progenitor. The ambivalence of the stars which attend his sleep is drawn out by their identity in the variant: 'Weiße Wangen an purpurne Schlangen gelehnt' (II 186); he is visited still by phallic dreams. The submerged association pre-empted the alternation marked by 'Oder' in the next line out of blue crystal and into a repose of a different colour. The pale one is leading a double existence; as 'man in the moon' he may inhabit a blue peace, but as solar hero he is enclosed in another sort of matrix. Once more the variants are significant; the head is characterised as 'gelb' (a variant to the first line

had 'Die gelbe Sonne ruht') and is located within the condition which invariably attaches to the setting sun ('purpurnem Schlaf' originally read as either 'Schoß' or 'Schwermut' II 186). The purple figures of phallus and womb indicate the sexual nature of the undercurrent dreams of the sleeper's 'Schwermut'.

The third stanza is once more introduced by a purely notional turning moment in 'Doch', one pre-empted by the double nature of the sleep. The restive undercurrents now surface to touch the sleeper, in the form of the three ambivalent motifs which were the subject of analysis earlier: the flight of birds, extinguished stars (as angels), and blue flowers. The birds touch the seer (flying, that is, across the face of the moon) with the portents of their black flight. The holiness of blue flowers seems to be in apposition to the birds, and yet in the variants the seer is not touched but touching, as his fingers (the tactile faculty of his blind eyes) dip in:

Und wächsern tauchen die Finger ins Heilige blauer Blumen
Die blinden Augen im Heiligtum
Sinkt der Träumer ins Heilige blauer Blumen (II 186)

There are multiple resonances here; the image represents the light of the moon on a blue flower, and equally its light or mirror-image in the blue waters which are recurrently associated with the blue flower (hence the fingers dip or dive in). The subject can thus be identified as the lunar figure of Narcissus as 'Träumer' encountered in 'Der Wanderer'. The image is modified in 'Afra', once more in association with the scriptural patterns of bird-flight. Here the casting of the waters in the singular form of their agitation allows a reflexive reading of the activity of touching: 'Die Stirne rührt des Wassers blaue Regung' (I 108). The 'Stirne' is also vulnerable, when touching becomes violation by the finger as phallus: 'Ein roter Finger taucht in deine Stirne' (I 305). The damage done in this line from 'Delirium' is recorded in 'Am Rand eines alten Brunnen' which was spawned by the same original poem; it is moreover reflected in the water which the brow therefore 'touches': 'Dunkle Deutung des Wassers: Zerbrochene Stirne im Munde der Nacht' (I 308).

The image of fingers dipping into blue waters also alludes to the body of Elis: 'Dein Leib ist eine Hyazinthe,/ In die ein Mönch die wächsernen Finger taucht' (I 373). Here the blue flower is the corollary of the 'blaues Wild' as victim of sacrifice; the monk dips his fingers into the body in an act of immolation such as that of 'Verwandlung des Bösen': 'Du, ein blaues Tier, das leise zittert; du, der bleiche Priester, der es hinschlachtet am schwarzen Altar' (I 97). The phallic associations of the penetrating fingers means that these figures can be identified as 'Mönche der Wollust bleiche Priester' (I 66), like Bluebeard, committing a sacrificial 'Lustmord'. Elis, whose identity has been the subject of much speculation, is here surely associated with the Hyacinthus of legend, the youth who was killed by his lover Apollo. The flowers which sprang from the youth's blood furnish the model for the 'blaue Blumen' here, their secret being violent death. The exclamation 'Elai!' (I 68, 457), which has also had various interpretations put upon it, is compounded out of

the youth's alias, Elis, and the markings of the flowers, which were said to form the letters of the lover's lament 'ai ai' ('alas, alas'). The Greek myth is modified in the same way as the Romantic topos: the accidental killing has become a sacrifice of sexual innocence, and the victim of the 'Lustmord', violently despoiled of hyacinthine attributes, may be either male or female, brother or sister.

The pale monk (the 'bleiche Mensch' here) is no solar hero in the mould of Apollo but a lunar figure in the manner of the voluptuous moon of Nietzsche's *Zarathustra*, the moon which ogles Bluebeard's victim. The gnomic 'das Heilige blauer Blumen' suppresses a secret sacrifice enacted only in the obscurity of the variants: 'Geheimnis der Priester, Blut das auf verfallene Stufen tropft' (II 186). The entry of the moon into the peaceful space of the sister ('Blaues Wild, das unter Bäumen tönt,/ Einsamer Weiher am Abend' I 57) is perforce one of violation, preparing for her ultimate appearance in decay. Yet this is the sister as projection of the self, which is both touched and touching, victim and violator. The pale priest and the sacrificial beast as alternative identities of the 'Du' figure in 'Verwandlung des Bösen' enact a self-reflexive, ritual 'Lustmord'. The impression of peace within the vicinity of the poetic landscape is made to touch or is touched by (and the reflexive readings which the stanza allows are of its essence) the distant, repressed and forgotten: 'Denkt die nahe Stille Vergessenes, erloschene Engel'.

The fourth stanza is once more introduced by a syntactic hinge with no apparent purchase; the 'Wieder' is but an apparent inflection of the state of disturbed sleep which is a continuum ('Doch immer'). The migration of the brow between the alternative ('Oder') conditions of sun and moon only serves to indicate that their union (i.e. in alchemical terms the union of male and female, brother sun and sister moon) is inevitably resolved into a continuous cycle of successive states, the one born out of the demise of the other. The syntactic markers of 'Oder' and 'Wieder' are also indicators of the insistence of temporal repetition. The marriage of 'sol' and 'luna' would be equivalent to Novalis's 'Vermählung der Jahreszeiten',⁵ but when the sister appears it is within a single season, that of decay: 'Ein strahlender Jüngling/ Erscheint die Schwester in Herbst und schwarzer Verwesung'. The variant had her emerging from this seasonal exigency ('aus ihrer Verwesung' II 187) but the final version insists on the dark context touching her brilliance. The composition of brother and sister, sun and moon, is set within a time-scale of decomposition, rather than arising out of and thus transcending temporality in the manner of the *unio mystica*.

The abortive union of brother and sister is a prevalent motif in the poetry of 1912 to 1914. Thus 'O das Wohnen ...' (I 314) recalls the dark act of sexual union as the transplantation of the sister's eyes — 'Da die Augen der Schwester sich rund und dunkel im Bruder aufgetan' — and the shared purple of broken mouths as the mark of sexual violation: 'Der Purpur ihrer zerbrochenen Münder/ In der Kühle des Abends hinschmolz'. The second stanza dramatises the siblings' expulsion from

the garden of innocence, relocating them in transit. The anguished cry 'Sag!' is uttered out of a condition of profound dislocation, as the poetic narrative can only circumlocute ('vorüber' and 'darüber') the place which the subject seeks to recall:

Sag! Wo waren wir, da wir auf schwarzem Kahn
Im Abend vorüberzogen,

Darüberzog der Kranich.

As the sister's eyes were incorporated by her brother's body, so the dislocated act is represented, not as a simple violation of object by subject, but as an introjection, a self-reflexive act of wounding: 'Die frierenden Arme/ Hielten Schwarzes umschlungen, und innen rann Blut'. The freezing arms and what they hold remain indeterminate, and by the same token the suffering figure of the 'Arm' Kindlein' is the singular body (equivalent to the 'einsamen Enkel' of 'Gesang des Abgeschiedenen') in which the twofold senses of 'Geschlecht', both genus and genders, are unified. The 'dunkles Geschlecht' looks out of the shared eyes of the first stanza; even as it unifies, it does so in the knowledge which caused the expulsion from the paradise garden, the knowledge, that is, of sexual difference.

There are several such examples of bodily exchange in the poems of the 1912–1914 collection. In 'So leise läuten ...' (I 321) the subject paradoxically undergoes a limited period of infinite suffering in the 'Stunde unendlicher Schwermut'. Even by multiplying 'der Schwermut/ Kristallene Minuten' (I 349) his suffering can only simulate that of a redemptive death: 'Als erlitt' ich den Tod um dich'. The poetic subject incorporates the purple mouth of the 'du' figure (whom we take to be the sister), at once a metaphor for the sexual wound and for her lamentation of lost innocence:

Dunkle Lieder
Singt dein purpurner Mund in mir,
Die schweigsame Hütte unserer Kindheit,
Vergessene Sagen;

But just as the martyr's death is in the virtual mode of 'Als', so is the anamnestic recuperation of childhood. The 'Oder' which replaces life in the mirror-space by a disturbed dream-space in 'Ruh und Schweigen' is implicit in the simulation of peace here:

Als wohnt' ich ein sanftes Wild
In der kristallinen Woge
Des kühlen Quells
Und es blühten die Veilchen rings

The attempt at communion in suffering is developed in 'An Johanna' (I 330). Johanna, the sister-figure of the *Dramenfragment*, is summoned up as an auditory image in the first stanza; her transcendent colour and the ring of her steps harmonising in the 'läu' sound:

Oft hör' ich deine Schritte
 Durch die Gasse läuten.
 Im braunen Gärtchen
 Die Bläue deines Schattens.

The subject, however, cannot join this melodic movement; he sits 'schweigend beim Wein' as a drop of blood falls from Johanna's brow into his glass. Here there is an implicit exchange of brows, in accordance with the 'Manche wechseln die Stirne' of 'Am Abend' (I 315), so that he assumes her wound. The narcissistic sister puts the same interpretation upon the subject's forehead as the speculum of 'Am Rand eines alten Brunnens' in the same collection: 'Dunkle Deutung des Wassers: Zerbrochene Stirne im Munde der Nacht' (I 308). While he sits silent in his 'Stunde unendlicher Schwermut', the blood which was the stuff of 'Dunkle Lieder' in 'So leise läuten' is taken in communion by his glass, which sings in the poet's place:

Ein Tropfen Blutes
 Sank von deiner Schläfe

In das singende Glas

The fourth stanza summons up the model for this Eucharist — 'Jeglichen Tod erleidet,/ Die Nacht der bleiche Mensch' — but as we have seen the subject's *imitatio Christi* is a conditional one. Thus the domicile which he claims to furnish for Johanna's trauma, 'dein purpurner Mund/ Wohnt eine Wunde in mir', is merely a temporary sanctuary, lasting for the hour of his 'unendlicher Schwermut'. His quest for a reciprocal sanctuary from the stark present by immersion in the sister's element is therefore bound to fail. Here the recuperation of the remote, prelapsarian world is not only cast in the conditional tense, but it can only be evoked indirectly as the time when his memory of it was still alive:

Als käm' ich von den grünen
 Tannenhügeln und Sagen
 Unserer Heimat,
 Die wir lange vergaßen —

Nor can the poem be allowed to end on this imaginative reconstruction of innocence. Having failed to enter the inviolate space of the spring, even under the false licence of 'als', the subject must instead listen to its lament, as the sister's element takes up her song. The question of location in 'O das Wohnen', which, left unanswered, defaults on the promise of the opening line, is echoed here in a question of identity: 'Wer sind wir?'. The vision of childhood serenity is invoked only to mediate the grave response that the last stanza gives to the spring's lament. The 'ich' and 'du' are united as 'wir' only to be identified with the 'dunkles Geschlecht' of 'O das Wohnen'. The pastoral childhood of the race is resolved into the death of its unborn, urban grandchildren, visited by the nightmares of their tainted blood:

Ein friedliches Dorf im Sommer
 Beschirmte die Kindheit einst
 Unseres Geschlechts,
 Hinsterbend nun am Abend-
 Hügel die weißen Enkel
 Träumen wir die Schrecken
 Unseres nächtigen Blutes
 Schatten in steinerne Stadt.

In 'Nimm blauer Abend ...' (I 336) the wish of the opening apostrophe is virtually realised in the familiar formulation:

... als wohnte der Knabe ein blaues Wild
 In der kristallinen Woge des kühlen Quells
 So leise schlägt sein Herz in hyazinthener Dämmerung

The hyacinthine serenity is disturbed though by the interference of the sister's purple shadow, a reminder that the sister (as both 'Wild' and 'Quell'), and with her the ceremony of innocence, has long since been sacrificed: 'Trauert der Schatten der Schwester, ihr purpurnes Haar;/ Dieses flackert im Nachtwind'. The purple hair is metaphorically aflame in the striking use of the verb 'flackert', which is substituted for the phonetically similar 'flattert' in order to introduce sexual fire into its movement. Thus the scene in the smithy is revived, where it was the maid who was hyacinthine before her violation. The simulated state of suspended animation in the 'hyazinthener Dämmerung' cannot completely silence the boy's heartbeat, which is associated in 'Psalm II' with the sexual aggression of the smith. Here the maid seeks in vain to conceal her innocence from the incendiary pulse of male sexuality: 'Das rote Gehämmer der Schmiede, ein pochendes Herz./ Stille; in langsamen Händen verbirgt die hyazinthene Stirne die Magd' (I 346). The transition out of hyacinth into purple is an indication of the essential lability of the colour; it certainly does not only transfigure blood as Goldmann contends, as 'von ihm Angestrahletes ... ganz vergeistigtes Blut',⁶ but may be disfigured by it. Both brother and sister suffer the disfigurement; the sister's shadow was 'des Knaben Schatten' (II 425) in the original version, and purple hair is emblematic of the brother's enclosure in suffering in other poems.

The slumber at the beginning of the poem which had sought to emulate the untroubled sleep of childhood is a prey to erotic dreams (the red mouth being the recurrent token of sexual desire) which render the slumberer a sleep-walker:

... versunkene Pfade
 Nachtwandelt jener und es träumt sein roter Mund
 Unter verwesenden Bäumen;

The somnambulant path ends not in the crystalline purity of the 'Quell' but in its surrogate, the composite mirror-surface of the 'Weiher' and the subject's eyes. The final moment is one of 'Entstellung' in both senses. The 'verfallene Mond' is the corollary of the subject's disfigured countenance, as in the variant to 'Rote

Gesichter', 'Purpurne Seuchen entstellend des Menschen / Mondenes Antlitz' (II 430), and it moves across a dark and broken mirror (the eyes were 'brechenden Augen' (II 426) in the variant). As womankind was 'entstellt von Blut und Wunden' (I 289) in the representative figure of Eve, so the female element of water has been 'ent-stellt', displaced by virtue of the disfigurement undergone by its personal figure, the sister. The 'mondenes Antlitz' of Narcissus is bound to share the fate of his mirror. Far from finding a transcendent home in the 'Quell', the subject meets his death by drowning (originally he was 'den Sterbenden' II 426) in a pool which can only reflect a landscape steeped in decay.

'Schwester stürmischer Schwermut'

The ambivalent figure of the hyacinth, the 'blaues Blümchen' which suffers 'Entstellung' into one of 'der Schwermut kranke Blumen', is symptomatic of a general development in the poetry. The elegiac lament for the lost homeland in the mode of 'Melancholie' is progressively superseded by the need to confront the causes and consequences of that loss. The subject turns to engagement in the activity of 'sinnen' in its characteristic mode of 'Schwermut'. There is an element of truth in the argument put forward by Mahrholdt in one of the earliest critical accounts of Trakl's poetry, that this transition should be seen in terms of gender: 'An Stelle der weichen, weiblich sich hinneigenden Melancholie tritt die unbeugsame Schwermut des Mannes, der sich nicht vergessen kann'.⁷ His reading is fascinating as a document of the time, with its sexualisation of aesthetic and moral questions and its recourse to Weininger. However, the alignment of the more passive, wistful mode with the female and the more active with the male, overlooks the consequences of the dismantling of sexual difference which is also at work in the poetry. Although every instance of the adjective 'männlich' predicates 'Schwermut' so that the two ideas are bound to be associated, this does not confine the realm of 'Schwermut' to masculine experience. It is ultimately the figure of the sister as 'Schwester stürmischer Schwermut' (I 166) who embodies this 'male' function in accordance with her transformation into a series of androgynous figures. She takes on this role in as far as the male subject invokes her out of his need for sustenance in his own fall into 'Schwermut'.

The transition out of 'Melancholie' into 'Schwermut' can be traced in the chronological structures of the poem 'Jahr' (I 138). It is characteristic of Trakl to construct a poem around a unit of time, be it an evening, a day, a season or a year. *Prima facie*, this paradigmatic use of time would seem to set up a simple temporal scale, against which the familiar developments through growth into decay, out of light into darkness may be plotted. In 'Jahr' four separate time-scales are correlated; running concurrently with the seasonal changes of the year is the span of a life-time: from childhood to the 'Neige in steinernem Zimmer'; then there is an eschatological perspective: the life as representative of the rise and fall of the 'Geschlecht'; and

equally there is a progression out of evening into night. This last foreshortened scale is suggestively out of phase with the other three, so that the poem is suffused from the start by a sense of twilight, even as it is apparently in the ascendent. So it is that the poem begins and ends in images of darkness, in either case attended by a golden pendant. Childhood here, and by implication the childhood of the race as 'Golden Age', is essentially pacific, though the golden peace is located within the context of 'Dunkle Stille'. The child's eye, metaphorically represented in a conjunction of the herbivorous 'Wild' and the 'blue look' of the pool, 'Unter grünenden Eschen/ Weidet die Sanftmut bläulichen Blickes', is identical with the female element elsewhere. Thus for instance the sister figure of 'An die Schwester' who, as 'Wild' and 'Weiher', is also constitutionally located within a twilight, autumnal landscape: 'Wo du gehst wird Herbst und Abend' (I 57).

The apparent seasonal cycle is transformed by this figure of 'Schwermut' into what is elsewhere called 'das herbstliche Jahr'. The modulation out of childlike 'Sanftmut' into 'Schwermut' is therefore implicitly contained in the autumnal darkness of the child's peaceful spring. The pastoral idyll of the 'Golden Age' is supplanted by the indoor activities of the 'Zimmer-mann' as *homo faber*, and the child undergoes a collateral spring-awakening out of sexual innocence, aroused by the emblems of fertility, the violets, the ears of corn, and the male seed: 'Ein Dunkles entzückt der Duft der Veilchen; schwankende Ähren/ Im Abend, Samen und die goldenen Schatten der Schwermut'. The passage into sexual maturity as temporal progression is accompanied by a further striking image in the continuum of black and gold in conjunction. As the child, who has become 'ein Dunkles' is awoken to corn which is 'im Abend' (as in 'An die Schwester' the temporal phase is spatialised), so his landscape is cast in the apparent oxymoron of golden shadows.

The manhood which was awoken by the irruption of the carpenter's noisy activity into the peaceful scene, is then engaged in a sexual encounter with the 'schweigende Wasser'. The metonymic representation of male sexuality in the purple mouth, 'im Hasellaub wölbt sich ein purpurner Mund,/ Männliches rot über schweigende Wasser geneigt', finds its counterpart in the female element of water. The colours of this male figure, together with its location in the bushes, suggests that it is being identified as elsewhere with both the setting sun and red fruits. The specular nature of the waters implies a narcissistic object, the lips coming down on their own image; and the medium in which they are projected was equally the embodiment of the male figure's own childhood, the implication being that the introduction of male noise and activity into the peaceful waters is tantamount to the figure's violation of his own childhood innocence. This suggestion is confirmed by a further manifestation in black and gold. The shadows of 'Schwermut' take on a personal identity as the stillborn progeny of the sexual encounter; the seed of line four, conceived amongst golden shadows, has become one of these. The shade of the grandchild (i.e. the abortive child of the child from the beginning of the poem) is in

apposition to a golden cloud, and in pursuit of the solitary male subject: 'goldene Wolke/ Folgt dem Einsamen, der schwarze Schatten des Enkels'.

The coordination of dark and golden images culminates in the final line; the colours are apparently polarised as conventional tokens of a light beginning and a dark end: 'Goldenes Auge des Anbeginns, dunkle Geduld des Endes'. However, the previous line alerts us to Trakl's revision of such conventions. The tears, which are presumably those wept in the winter season on the lonely path of atonement, are formed into a spring, so that out of their nocturnal images a symbol of renewal is created: 'Sind der Tränen nächtige Bilder zum Quell versammelt'. The last line, in its juxtaposition of beginning and end without a mediating life-span between, makes a typographical contiguity out of the dialectic of gold and dark which runs through the poem. The end may be subsequent to the beginning according to the reader's expectation that the line, along with the narrative as a whole, will conform to a linear scheme of time, but it also prefigures the beginning, as the nocturnal tears originate the source. There are no straight lines through temporal stations here; the pervasive principle of *chiaroscuro* in the poem's lighting, with the 'dunkle Geduld' and 'goldenes Auge' of the close, rejoining the 'dunkle Stille' and 'goldene Ruh' of the opening, implies a reflexive curvature in the poem's progress through time from the outset. It is the same reflexive moment as conditions the sexual encounter at the poem's centre, where the movement towards transitive involvement with the waters (i.e. involution into their transcendent space) is subverted by the narcissistic inflection of the desire. As the poem comes back on itself, so the desire of the protagonist draws him back to his own image. The circular shape traced by the year as paradigmatic unit of time (elsewhere the year is styled a 'Kranz' I 120) can be extrapolated out into a cyclic pattern, with an end in every beginning and a beginning in every end. The poem achieves a rare poise between the regenerative force of the rising moment and the gravitational compulsion of 'Schwermut', mastering the prospect of the end from the outset. It is an equilibrium that proves untenable in the darkening spiritual landscapes of the later poetry.

In the two versions of 'Am Abend' (I 337, 338) there is a similar development of rise and fall, organised like 'Jahr' around the central configuration of the male protagonist's descent towards blue waters, here specifically identified as his sexual counterpart. The first version of the poem introduces the 'du' figure as a would-be 'Sonnenjüngling'; his step seeks to emulate the animistic song of the Orphic poet, apparently deriving from the enterprise of the poetic subject in 'Aube' from Rimbaud's *Illuminations*.⁸

The *Illuminations* are acutely narcissistic in Hutcheon's sense; there is an intimate relation between the course of subjective desire and the aesthetic desire of the text. The narrative 'je' which represents the poet in his texts creates its poetic visions according to Freud's criteria for primary narcissism: 'Allmacht der Gedanken', 'Magie' and 'Animismus' (StA III 43). Yet the animistic fantasy of creation is also a prey to the other aspect of Narcissus, that of mortal alterity. Narcissus's self-

alienating utterance of recognition ('Iste ego sum') is echoed in Rimbaud's celebrated 'Je est un autre',⁹ the narcissistic poetic persona is perceived as 'Doppelgänger'.

In 'Aube' the poetic subject seeks to pre-empt the rejuvenating activity of dawn by awakening the landscape in which he moves (the animating activity being familiar from 'Antique'). The boy's poetic enterprise is collateral with a narrative of seduction, announced in the apodictic opening: 'J'ai embrassé l'aube d'été'. However, the bravado gives way to a frantic chase after the fugitive goddess; the embrace is realised only 'un peu' through her massed veils, and the narrative is suppressed in the very moment of its supposed consummation. As the boy-poet lies with Dawn there is a telling lacuna. The 'Je est un autre' formula is put into narrative practice as the subject can only 'embrace' dawn's movement by shifting from the omnipotent 'I' to the third person and joining her in her extinction: 'L'aube et l'enfant tombèrent au bas du bois'. Having as it were become another, the narrative 'je' is absent from the impersonal formula which closes the narrative: 'Au réveil il était midi'.

This coordination of the deferral of sexual desire and of the poet's creative desire is surely fundamental to Trakl's plundering of Rimbaud's poetic vocabulary; the many borrowed figures are symptomatic of a thorough-going affinity.¹⁰ In 'Traum und Umnachtung' the evidence of such borrowing is clearer. Here the 'ergrünendem Schritt' (I 337) of the boy in 'Am Abend' is revived in the wishful motions of the poetic subject, 'Frei ergrünt der Bach, wo silbern wandelt sein Fuß' (I 149), but here the fantasy has been revoked a priori. The goddess Dawn of 'Aube' is played now by the sister as 'flammender Dämon', who as it were consumes the narrative in an ellipsis which imitates that of Rimbaud's poem, and is curtailed by a clear borrowing: 'Beim Erwachen erloschen zu ihren Häuptionern die Sterne' (I 149). The sororial demon in her hempen garb is presumably identical with the apocalyptic 'härene Sonne' (I 169) of 'Offenbarung und Untergang'; the dawn has become the setting sun, which plunges the subject and the narrative alike into the darkness of 'Umnachtung'.¹¹ The narrative discontinuity is moreover redoubled by the lovers' awakening to dawn, experienced not as sunrise, but as a renewed extinction of light in the fading stars. In both 'Aube' and 'Traum und Umnachtung' the absence of the moment of conjunction between the two lovers implies the failure of the poetic subject to effectively animate and hence conjoin with his landscape. The protagonist in 'Traum und Umnachtung' ultimately follows the same yellowed paths as his counterpart in 'Am Abend', but his vernal step is evinced by an encompassing condition of wilderness; the paths 'im Korn' are implicitly rendered into the thorny paths of the penitent as he moves within the desolate 'landscape of his soul': 'In dorniger Wildnis folgte der Dunkle den vergilbten Pfaden im Korn' (I 150).

An analogous disruption of sexual and creative desire can be traced in the detail of 'Am Abend'. In the first stanza the boy is as it were out of step with the landscape, seeking to resolve the chromatic decay of the first line into new green; in the second

it becomes clear that the only accord which the landscape will grant is a hidden one:

Der Fluß kommt von den Bergen kalt und klar
Tönt im grünen Versteck; also tönt es,
Wenn du trunken die Beine bewegst ...

While the boy cannot make the patent landscape conform to his verdant movements, in the third stanza an assertion of essential identity between the two is made, in the form of a specular encounter with the spirit of the landscape in the boy's own image (a variant makes this clear; as the spirit 'ist deiner Gestalt' II 427). Far from being able to create the poetic landscape after his own image as innocent, he is made to take on the frenzied aspect ('O Rasendes') of the landscape as his double. The confrontation with this Nietzschean 'Geist der Abend-Schwermut'¹² prefigures an analogous sexual encounter to that of 'Jahr', as the boy seeks peaceful sanctuary from his new-found frenzy in the feminine space of the waters: 'Liebe neigt sich zu Weiblichem,/ Bläulichen Wassern. Ruh und Reinheit'. As he sought to make a mirror of the poetic landscape, so he now seeks to identify with the peace and purity of the pool by bending over his image in the mirror of its surface.¹³ In either case he is seeking to construct a narcissistic fantasy. The boy's brow, however, is now cast in darkness (i.e. incipient 'Umnachtung' for the boy who would be dawn) and he looks for absolution from the anointing moisture of the 'Abendgezweig'. In the second version the erotic and the self-cleansing motives for descent are unified as the metonymic moisture is replaced by the 'bläuliche Wasser' from which it is distilled. The demise of the 'Sonnenjüngling' is here coordinated with that of the sun; the brow which so often represents synecdochally the anthropomorphic figures of sun and moon, is shared with the boy:

Die schon sehr dunkel, tiefer neigt
Die Stirne sich über bläuliche Wasser, Weibliches;
Untergehend wieder in grünem Abendgezweig. (I 338)

The boy who sought to identify like Zarathustra or the boy in 'Aube' with the generative power of the sun is thus incorporated by it into the sinking moment of its recurrent fall.¹⁴ His movement is brought into step with the 'Schwermut' which is proper to the twilight landscape, and thereby attuned with its purple gravitation: 'Schritt und Schwermut tönt einträchtig in purpurner Sonne'. The singular verb form literalises the conjoined movement in 'ein-trächtig'. The collateral quests for narcissistic self-representation in the poetic landscape and for erotic union with the mirror-space make the boy as the poet's narcissistic persona recognise his subjection to temporal cycles, his essential difference that is, from the idealised female space. This abiding difference maintains the double narcissistic quest, erotic and poetic, in both 'Jahr' and 'Am Abend' in the mode of 'neigen'. The inclination towards the 'Ruh und Schweigen' of the female waters remains virtual.

A variation on the descent of these solitary, narcissistic figures can be traced in the synthesis through five different versions of the poem 'Untergang', where the poetic subject contrives to conjoin with the 'du' figure by asserting a fraternal unity of spirit, and framing their joint activity in the unison of what might be called the lyrical 'we'.

In the first version of 'Untergang' the two brothers appear to be erotically involved with one another: 'Umschlungen tauchen wir in blaue Wasser,/ Die dunkle Grotte männlicher Schwermut' (I 386); the term 'umschlungen' is invariably used to characterise the embrace of lovers (e.g. 'Liebende ruhn umschlungen am Teich' I 275). Like the sister, this fraternal figure at once has a personal identity (the fourth version was dedicated to 'seinem lieben Bruder Borromaeus Heinrich statt eines Briefes' II 190), and yet is equally an idealised projection of the self. The second version reveals the specular nature of the 'blaue Wasser', and a variant of the first shows that the dive into the waters of the female element is only apparent, derived from the reflection which floats on the waters' surface: 'Umschlungen laß uns neigen auf blaue Wasser/ Die dunklen Spiegel männlicher Schwermut' (II 191): We are thus once more in the virtual mode of 'neigen', with the female element explicitly a mirror for the male condition of 'Schwermut'. It is in such a mirror-space, the authentic sister of the poetic subject in his 'Schwermut', that he may recognise his alter ego: 'Schwermut kennt sich stumm im Spiegel' (II 304). By projecting a narcissistic duplicate of the solitary melancholic (a further variant reads 'Elai! Einsam ist der Abend des Schwermütigen' II 197) the speculum sustains an illusion of company. The first version also contrives to suspend the 'Untergang' of the title, or rather to suspend the active descent of the brothers as they lie within the sunset. The brothers affect the soulish state of the waters into which they ostensibly dived, and are therefore transported by the sun's descent rather than attuning their activity to it in the manner of the boy in 'Am Abend'. They shun the barren paths of decay: 'Auf dünnen Pfaden kreuzen die Wege Verwester sich,/ Wir aber ruhn Beseligte im Sonnenuntergang' (I 386).

The subsequent versions of the poem chart a progressive denial of this false harmony. In the second version the metaphorical entry into the transcendent domicile of the blue waters is substituted by the sensation of their coolness: 'Weht uns die Kühle blauer Wasser an' (I 387). The exclusion from the mirror-space is accompanied by an intimation of disjuncture between the two figures contained in the narcissistic construction of the lyrical 'we'. The spirit of Daedalus, who underwent his flaming descent 'vor Zeiten' is identified in a variant as 'sein Bruder' (II 193), so that the invocation which opens the last line of each stanza is an attempt to summon up a defunct spirit. The sighs of Daedalus are redolent of instances of death in childhood elsewhere, and specifically of the Kaspar figure, the younger brother, son or grandson of the 'Geschlecht', who meets an untimely death even as the older brother lives on to lament his passing. In further variants Daedalus becomes the shadows of 'toter Geburten' (II 194), 'unsere schwächtigen Enkel'

(II 194) and 'ein Nachgeborenes' (II 195); his stillbirth is symptomatic of the guilt of the line, the guilt which leads the surviving brother into his 'Untergang'. The final line, 'O mein Bruder, verwandelt sich dunkel die Landschaft der Seele' (I 387), indicates the metamorphosis that the landscape of the soul, and more especially its idealised figure, the blue waters, must undergo. In the variant the poet once more played with the etymological relation of 'verwandeln' and 'wandeln', the suggestion being that the darkening of the landscape is contingent upon the paths trodden by the brothers as they relinquish the false stasis of the first version. As in 'Ruh und Schweigen' the transcendent matrix of the pool is supplanted by a dark womb more commensurate with the condition of the 'Schwermütigen', a variant reading 'verwandelt sich herbstlich die Landschaft in dunklen Schoß' (II 194). As the genetic core of the 'Spiegel männlicher Schwermut' becomes infected with the condition that they reflect, so the landscape as dark womb furnishes a suitable space for its gestation such as in the 'Schwermut blüht im Schoß der Frauen' (I 417) of 'Nachtergebung'. The metamorphosis of the poetic landscape is manifest in the detail of the third version (I 388): the golden summer is now one of 'purpurnes Dunkel', the 'froher Heiliger' have become 'trauriger Mönche', the gentler verdure of the vine is now 'schmächtiger'. The poetic subjects have plotted a darker path into a more desolate landscape. The most significant transformation is in the speculum at the poem's centre. The blue waters are now a petrified countenance, fit neither to reflect nor to embrace the brothers; a variant also has the waters bleached as 'die Kühle milchiger Wasser' (II 194), which prepares for the 'weißen Weiher' of the final version. The reflective surface of the pool is blanked out as the concomitant of the brothers' blinding, eyes turning to stone being a recurrent metaphor for blinding in the poetry.

In the fourth version the synthetic process draws the three figures, subject, night and speculum, into a complex analogical relationship:

Kosen unsere Wangen vergilbte Sterne,
Beugt sich die Stirne vergangener Nächte herein.
Immer starrt uns das Antlitz unserer weißen Gräber an (I 389)

Night and stars have come in on the brothers and the petrified waters have undergone a further mutation into graves usurping the subjects' role in the act of looking so that the narcissistic scene becomes an encounter with death. The incongruity of the graves as eyes can be clarified by reference to 'An die Schwester' where the same analogy is predicated upon the common shape of the 'Bogen' as brow or vaulted arch in the cemetery. In 'Untergang' such an association is prefigured in the opening lines: 'Unter den dunklen Bogen unserer Schwermut/ Spielen am Abend die Schatten verstorbenen Engel' (I 389). The 'Bogen' as the figure of 'Schwermut' it is that coordinates the features of the poetic landscape in 'An die Schwester'; these angels are at once doing service for eyes beneath the arch of a brow, and are shades emerging from graves. Both associations can be found in other poems, but any notion of resurrection is denied

in this case; in spite of their ludic attitudes, the deathly shadows signify the blindness of the eyes.

The final form of the poem is honed down to a series of minimal statements, largely establishing the relative disposition of the poem's features, the illusion of blueness evinced by a stark monochrome. The first stanza introduces once more the two primary sets of poetic signs:

Über den weißen Weiher
Sind die wilden Vögel fortgezogen.
Am Abend weht von unseren Sternen ein eisiger Wind (I 116)

The birds are located above the speculum only to be evacuated, and the stars (a standard metaphor of course for eyes), which might be expected to inhabit the same remote upper regions as the birds, are now blowing the same cold wind as did the waters in earlier versions. The stars have been brought down to earth (made identical with their mirror-images) to substitute the angels with which they are recurrently identified in the poetry.

In the second stanza there is a similar illusion of ascent in the opening 'Über', but the night is in fact in descent: 'Über unsere Gräber/ Beugt sich die zerbrochene Stirne der Nacht'. The broken brow of the night is thus relocated in place of the 'dunklen Bogen' of the fourth version above the graves and the angels, so that it rejoins the stars which are rightfully its eyes, and which have gravitated into the space of the speculum. In accordance with the general descent the lunar barque in which the brothers swing is beneath the oak-trees, that is, in the naturalistic location of a vessel but also the reflected location of the moon as metaphorical vessel.

The final stanza once more focuses the poem on the graves (the association of graves and walls is automatic in Trakl); like their analogue the pool, they are white. Whiteness here is the attribute of blindness; the walls which, like the face of the graves in the earlier version, may have the faculty of sight ('Die Mauern starren' I 64), are susceptible to blinding in the same way as the specular pool ('Blindet sacht der Weiherspiegel' I 107). The thoroughgoing resolution of upper and lower regions accounts for the double movement of the celebrated final line: 'Unter Dornenbogen/ O mein Bruder klimmen wir blinde Zeiger gen Mitternacht' (I 116). The sentence opens tellingly by situating the brothers, as in the previous stanza, beneath trees, the thorn cast as a 'Bogen' (the figure of 'Schwermut') being particularly appropriate for the penitential path of their 'Untergang'. Yet the descent is apparently transformed into an ascent, midnight being located for these two clock-hands along with midday in the zenith. This spatial ordinance by analogy with the face of a clock accords both with the course of Zarathustra 'gen Mitternacht' and with the spatialising of the temporal moment elsewhere in such lines as 'Seufzend ragt das Haupt in die Mitternacht' (I 335).

The 'blinde Zeiger' are clearly a permutation of the figure of the blind seer encountered in other poems. Here the seers not only read the absent signs of the first stanza, but as 'Zeiger' they trace a path for others to follow. If the brothers are

located beneath the 'Bogen', that is, in the place of the graves, stars, and angels, it is because they have become like these a metaphorical figuration of blind eyes. The seers have taken over the function of their extinct signs ('unseren Sternen'). Rather than following the semiotic traces with the 'Zeigefinger' of the blind magus in 'Lange lauscht', the 'Zeiger' follow them in person. As in 'Der Wanderer', the activities of 'wandeln' and 'verwandeln' conjoin here. By following the path of the night ('Wo . . . Stein und Sterne sind' I 391), the wanderer not only takes the poem into a new landscape ('Verwandelt sich dunkel die Landschaft der Seele'), but he undergoes a metamorphosis into the body of the sign, recuperating what 'Wanderers Schlaf' establishes as his original home: 'Stein und Stern/ Darin der weiße Fremdling ehedem gewohnt' (I 391). As so often in Trakl's poetry there is evidence of Nietzsche's influence here. When Zarathustra charts his path 'gen Mitternacht' as the ultimate goal of his 'Untergang', it is as 'Nachtwandler'.¹⁵ Trakl develops the notion of 'nachtwandeln' as a means to metamorphosis, into the idea of self-transformation into the night. As Zarathustra is identified with the sun, so his descent is aimed at distilling a song out of his soul's purple 'Schwermut': 'Aber willst du nicht weinen, nicht ausweinen deine purpurne Schwermut, so wirst du singen müssen, oh meine Seele!'.¹⁶ This transformation of 'Schwermut' creates the possibility for the paradigm change out of descent into the resurrection of the midday sun: 'Eben ward meine Welt vollkommen, Mitternacht ist auch Mittag'.¹⁷

The quest for transformation (and a quest it is), in terms of 'Untergang' to become identical with the 'steinerne Antlitz' of the pool or with 'unseren Sternen' (these two being corollaries of course), is also further evidence of Novalis's substantial influence on Trakl. 'Steine und Gestirne' are the cosmic letters which the novices of *Die Lehrlinge zu Sais* seek to decipher, and 'Stein' and 'Stern' are two of the mutations that Heinrich von Ofterdingen undergoes.¹⁸ The path that they signal must necessarily have the same double nature as those traced by birds and stars for the seers to read. The difficult ascent to midnight can only be plotted on a downward trajectory (i.e. as 'Untergang') by one who has sacrificed the faculty of mundane sight and the fantasies of narcissistic desire which go with it. The 'blinde Zeiger' thus embody a diametrically opposite 'Sinn' (*sense* of direction) to that in which they apparently move. Yet even in this extinct landscape where all reflective surfaces have been 'blinded', there is no guarantee that the human signs might not yet be diverted from their goal. The ascent is only to be achieved piecemeal, midnight approached through the currency of minutes, which pass out of the time-bound paradigm of 'Schwermut' into the extra-temporal *space* of midnight:

Hinüberschimmern der Schwermut
 Kristallne Minuten
 Zur Nacht. (I 349)

These crystal minutes are visualised as stars in the first version of 'Die Heimkehr': 'Liebe, Nacht, der Schermut kristallne Minuten/ Hinüberschimmernd, Sterne, schon stilleres Anschau' (I 413). The 'blinde Zeiger', having themselves become as

it were astral bodies, mark out these minutes of 'Schwermut' as stations on the way to night. The ascent must remain in the virtual mode of 'gen' just as the earlier descent in quest of the narcissistic object of desire was confined to that of 'neigen'.

If these middle-period poems lead their protagonists into a sombre 'Untergang' under the sign of 'Schwermut' as the denial of their narcissistic desire, the later poetry is put under immense strain by the downward moment. The melodic line which the sister manages to distil out of her suffering of 'Schwermut' in 'An die Schwester', which serves as a tonic, in both senses of the word, to the poetic structure, is progressively disturbed here. In the poem 'In ein altes Stammbuch' (I 40) of autumn 1912, the poet can still authentically nominate the sister figure to personify melancholy as coordinating 'Sanftmut' and 'Demut' in poetic melos:

Immer wiederkehrst du Melancholie,
O Sanftmut der einsamen Seele.
Zu Ende glüht ein goldener Tag.

Demutsvoll beugt sich dem Schmerz der Geduldige
Tönend von Wohllaut und weichem Wahnsinn.

The variant to line two reads 'Schwester der einsamen Seele', at once a figure that the poetic subject might address in his isolation, and to whom, in the manner of 'An die Schwester', he might dedicate the song of his soul. By the summer of 1913 (with 'An die Schwester' intervening), the sister has undergone a change of paradigm out of 'Sanftmut' into 'Schwermut'. This transition is charted in the variants to the first version of 'Am Moor' (II 154). These are worth quoting in full as they illustrate not only that the sister is conceived here, to use Musil's terms, 'nicht im Sinne einer standesamtlichen Urkunde, sondern in dem eines Gedichts' (MoE 1504) — that is, that the title is in the gift of the poet — but also the way in which she may assume the male identity given to the moon:

12 i Geleitet den schwarzen Pfad. Das Lächeln einer Hure,
ii des Knaben,
iii Endymions Lächeln

13 i Die du Schwester und Schwermut nennst
Liebling genannt
ii Den du lange verstorben weißt
iii Und mondener Schlummer.

It is significant that the sister's assumption of the allegorical role of 'Schwermut', with its customary male predication, should be bound up with a transsexual mutation. Once more she is identified with the moon in the narcissistic figure of Endymion. The connection is reinforced in the poem which bears the title 'Die Schwermut', where the androgynous figure of 'Die stille Mönchin' is compounded out of the encounter between sister and moon in the variants: 'Der Schwester verschleiertes Antlitz/ Neigt sich über den Mond' (II 300).

It is this lunar sister-figure that is recurrently invoked in the final poems, either to attend, or to attend to the wounded condition of the male figures in their 'Schwermut'. Her melodic credentials mean that she is required to recuperate a sense of poetic beauty out of the wild aggression and strident tones of madness that are unleashed here. The mutilation of the male body in the recurrent images of fragmentation (broken eyes, mouths, brows) and the wounding of the warriors who inhabit the martial landscapes of the late poems involve a similarly grievous threat to the composition of the body of the poem. The unison of 'An die Schwester' is subjected to immense strain by the discordant polyphony of the lost voices of the 'Geschlecht':

Weiße Stimmen
 Irrend durch schaurige Vorhöfe,
 Zerrißne Terrassen,
 Der Väter gewaltiger Groll, die Klage
 Der Mütter,
 Des Knaben goldener Kriegsschrei
 Und Ungebornes
 Seufzend aus blinden Augen. ('Das Gewitter' I 157)

The gravitational pull of 'Schwermut' is applied to the figures who move in the poetry and by extension to the structure of its poetic figures, taking it to the verge of ineffability and the falling away of sustainable fixture:

Gelehnt an den Hügel der Bruder
 Und Fremdling,
 Der menschenverlassene, ihm sanken
 Die feuchten Lider
 In unsäglicher Schwermut. ('Abendland' 2. Fassung. I 406)

The model for the demise of the male figures is furnished as in the earlier poems by the sinking sun. The anthropomorphic solar and lunar figures are invariably invoked in synecdochal terms, and even then the fragmentary features are subjected to further fragmentation. In 'Klage' there is a double synecdoche:

Jüngling aus kristallnem Munde
 Sinkt dein goldner Blick ins Tal;
 Waldes Woge rot und fahl
 In der schwarzen Abendstunde.
 Abend schlägt so tiefe Wunde! (I 163)

The golden 'Sonnenjüngling' is here located within the metaphorical context of sexual violation. The mouth as wound, such as it appears in 'Die junge Magd' and elsewhere, is compounded with the image of the wounded eye as it appears in a variant to 'Anif': 'Blick aus purpurner Wunde' (II 188). Here the eye is incorporated into the analogical grouping discussed before (setting sun, mouth, fruit, wounded 'Wild'), with a further variant recording the wounded look as 'Blick aus kahlem Gezweig' (II 188). The same associations are at work in the transformations of 'Passion':

Jener aber ward ein schneeiger Baum
 Am Beinerhügel,
 Ein Wild äugend aus eiternder Wunde,
 Wieder ein schweigender Stein. (I 396)

In either case the 'Wild' sacrificed in the branches of the tree is correlated with the setting sun as a bleeding eye (a variant to 'Passion' read 'Ein Wild blutend' II 223) descending into those branches. The cycle into descent which was traced in 'Jahr' is thus shared by the look (implicitly out of a bleeding eye) of tree and beast: 'Schaut aus Baum und Wild das Jahr'. The metamorphoses of 'Passion' clearly derive from those of Heinrich von Ofterdingen: '(Edda die eigentliche blaue Blume) Die Morgenländerin opfert sich an seinem Steine, er wird ein klingender Baum'.¹⁹ In Trakl though, the male subject experiences both the roles in the sacrifice, much in the manner of the protagonist in 'Verwandlung des Bösen' who is both sacrificial priest and sacrificial beast. Novalis's 'klingender Baum' is here rendered 'schneeig', bleeding, that is, in anticipation of metamorphosis into the 'Wild' (in 'Offenbarung und Untergang' it is the 'Wild' that is snowy). The final metamorphosis in Trakl's revision of the scenario is into a mute 'Opferstein' rather than the melodic tree. The transformation into the 'Wild' in Trakl complicates that into the 'Tier' in Novalis,²⁰ for the 'blaues Wild' is the alternative identity of the 'blaue Blume' in Trakl's poetry; the mutation is thus also transsexual, an assumption of the female's wounds in the sexual sacrifice. It is the same bisexual experience as characterises the metamorphoses of Helian and Elis (see p. 45).

In 'An', the army of solar heroes and the body of the sun go down together into a bleeding death: 'Als sänke ein goldner Helm von blutender Stirne/ Stille endet der Tag' (I 413). In 'Die Schwermut' too, the two are assimilated by a shared forehead in its purple 'Schwermut':

Vom Hügel, wo sterbend die Sonne rollt
 Stürzt das lachende Blut —
 Unter Eichen
 Sprachlos! O grollende Schwermut
 Des Heers; ein strahlender Helm
 Sank klirrend von purpurner Stirne. (I 161)

The ineffable fall can find expression only in laughter, that is, the corollary of blood as the dissolution of corporeal form ('Blut' overwhelming 'Bildnis'). The poems published in the *Brenner* 1914/15 are rife with the images of the last line in 'Trompeten'. Thus for instance, 'Das Herz', which introduces once more the synaesthetic association of the bleeding flag (a variation surely on Rimbaud's 'pavillons en viande saignante')²¹ and the stridency of the trumpet:

Dunkler Trompetenruf
 Durchfuhr der Ulmen
 Nasses Goldlaub,
 Eine zerfetzte Fahne
 Vom Blute rauchend,
 Daß in wilder Schwermut
 Hinlauscht ein Mann. (I 154)

Here the man listens to the flag as trumpet-call, which is also a metaphor for the bleeding body of the setting sun (the archetypal figure of 'männlicher Schwermut'). The clue to the metaphorical identity of the flag is given by 'rauchend' which is attributed to blood on several occasions, and by analogy to the wound ('Abend schlägt so tiefe Wunde') of the evening sky. Thus smoke and sunset are set in apposition, once more within the context of 'Schwermut': 'Überfließt von purpurner Abendröte,/ Der Schwermut der rauchenden Stadt' (I 132). The sun smokes in its 'Schwermut' in accordance with Weininger's postulation in *Über die letzten Dinge*, which also furnishes a model for the 'lachende Blut' of the sun in 'Die Schwermut': 'Die Sünde der Sonne ist Lust-Schmerz, statt Wert-Unwert: sie lacht (aber sie sticht, glüht, brennt, blendet, raucht wie ein Feuer)' (ULD 187). Trakl adapts Weininger's idea by transferring the smoke to the blood of the 'Wild' in 'Verwandlung des Bösen' and indeed to Afra's blood smoking on the moon in a variant to 'Geistliche Dämmerung': 'Von Afras Blut raucht der rote Mond' (II 201).

The sisterly figure is recurrently called upon to pacify the 'wilder Schwermut' of the male, to staunch his wounds in the manner of her planetary alter ego: 'So leise schließt ein mondener Strahl/ Die purpurnen Male der Schwermut' (I 140). In 'Das Herz' she appears as 'Die goldene Gestalt/ Der Jünglingin' (I 154), a rejuvenated, androgynous successor to the dying 'Sonnenjüngling', and in 'Die Schwermut' she rises as the bisexual lunar figure, whose derivation has already been noted, over the broken male bodies. Her appearance does not, however, signal the resolution of the uncontrolled voice of madness 'der sich übertönt' into the tonic structure of 'An die Schwester'. The resplendent sororial figure is merely superimposed in silence:

Herbstesnacht so kühle kommt,
Erglänzt mit Sternen
Über zerbrochenem Männergebein
Die stille Mönchin. (I 161)

Even then, the mute brilliance of the androgynous figure proves impossible to sustain. When the golden, solar image of man ('Des Menschen goldnes Bildnis') disintegrates as a purple body ('Zerschellt der purpurne Leib'), the 'Bildnis' utterly disfigured by 'Blut', the sister is invoked, not as a figure of transcendent peace, but as the allegory of 'Schwermut' in its wild form. Here she is made to witness the falling away of the moon, that is, her own celestial body, from the impassive countenance of the night:

Schwester stürmischer Schwermut
Sieh ein ängstlicher Kahn versinkt
Unter Sternen,
Dem schweigenden Antlitz der Nacht. ('Klage' I 166)

The poetry gravitates between the consolation of the night as an embracing space:

... umfängt die Nacht
Sterbende Krieger, die wilde Klage
Ihrer zerbrochenen Münder ('Grodek' 2F. I 167)

and the modulation of the transcendent figure into a sexual one, complicit in the guilt of the men. The 'reine Mönchin' (I 107) becomes infected like her 'brother' the monk: 'Nacht dein lüstem Wolkendunkel/ Rote Frucht, verfluchte Lüge' (I 416). As the *pietà* of the solar hero is sexualized, the matrix of the night becomes an object of voluptuous desire, so the embracing body is also broken: 'Mit zerbrochenen Brauen, silbernen Armen/ Winkt sterbenden Soldaten die Nacht' (I 165). Far from staunching the heroes' wounds, the moon abjures its feminisation, taking on the role of sexual violator to scatter the women: 'Von blutenden Stufen jagt der Mond/ Die erschrockenen Frauen' (I 165). The 'Schwester stürmischer Schwermut', implicated as she is in her brother's condition, no longer moves in consummate harmony, but in more ambiguous sounds: 'Es schwankt der Schwester Schatten durch den schweigenden Hain' (I 167). The stream of alliterations identifies her unsteady movement as an oscillation ('schwanken') between 'stürmisch' and the hushing sounds of 'schweigend', the polar possibilities open to poetry which seeks to express the 'gewaltiger Schmerz' (a further alliterative association with the sister) in which 'Grodek' ends. The sister cannot be portrayed as a Valkyrie ready to bear off the shades of the dead heroes, for she too is a shadow, their sister through cognate experience. So it is that the lunar light, which was earlier seen to heal the wounds of 'Schwermut', is set in appositional identity with them in 'Grodek':

Doch stille sammelt im Weidengrund
Rotes Gewölk, darin ein zürmender Gott wohnt
Das vergoßne Blut sich, mondne Kühle. (I 167)

Sun and moon, brother and sister, thus share in the spilt blood. In accordance with her role as dedicatee of the poet's song, and her identity with the 'Landschaft der Seele' portrayed within it, the sister becomes the authentic embodiment of the 'stürmischer Schwermut' which informs these final poems.

Revelations

The descent into 'Schwermut' is taken to its logical conclusion in 'Offenbarung und Untergang'; the prophetic revelation of Trakl's last prose poem shares the eschatological vision of its biblical model. Its revelation is that the apparently optimistic programme of 'Ruh und Schweigen' or 'Abendländisches Lied' is ultimately untenable; it revives the transcendent model only to revoke it utterly.

This process can be traced in the final four sections of the poem. Once again the subject's descent into 'Umnachtung' is yoked to that of the sun. The process of descent gravitates between the two modes of 'Schwermut': storm and silence. The subject desires to move in silence, and thus to surrender the emblem of his prophetic office, the apocalyptic, hairy sun of Revelations: 'Am Saum des Waldes will ich ein Schweigendes gehn, dem aus sprachlosen Händen die härene Sonne sank' (I 169). The silencing of the prophetic voice (transferred metonymically to his hands) leads to a shift from the wishful formula ('will ich') to the narration of what appears to be

a *fait accompli* in the unconditional present tense. However, the wishful narrative cannot evince the return of the repressed; the reversion to the past tense terminates the vision of silence, as the sort of madness 'der sich selbst übertönt' irrupts: 'ergriff mich der Wahnsinn und ich schrie laut in der Nacht' (I 169). The familiar, narcissistic fantasy of being 'ein Wild' is denied by the 'Spiegel der Wahrheit', which can offer up no image of the overwrought subject commensurate with their silent essence: 'da ich . . . mich über die schweigenden Wasser bog, sah ich daß mich mein Antlitz verlassen' (I 169). The disembodied, lunar voice, which was identified as Johanna's in the *Dramenfragment*, demands his suicide, and in lieu of a narcissistic self-projection, the subject is beheld from within by the figure of his lost innocence. While this shadow rises it does not signal a parallel elevation for the subject, who gravitates once more under the sign of his 'Untergang'.

The fifth section locates the subject in a remote space by the repetition of 'ferne'. The sinking sun as archetypal figure of 'Schwermut' introduces the 'stürmisch' as the alternative response to that condition. The wishful metamorphosis into the quiescent 'Wild' is once more attempted, this time on the figurative plane, as the sun adopts a grazing posture ('weidet die sinkende Sonne'); but the 'wolf in lamb's clothing' terrifies the subject with the apocalyptic tone of 'ihr wilder Gesang' (I 169). The white voice of the sister is now addressed in a characteristically misleading, adversative turn: 'Aber leise kommst du in der Nacht'. The temporal discrepancy of the previous section is resumed; the sister's appearance, cast like the earlier fantasy in the unequivocating present tense, is quite out of phase with the subject, who is still lodged in the past: 'Aber leise kommst du in der Nacht, da ich wachend am Hügel lag, oder rasend im Frühlingsgewitter' (I 169).

The coordinating 'da' cannot achieve any more than a token of simultaneity for the two figures. The sister's transformation from an aggressive to a palliative role is bogus; she is implicated with subject and sun in the wildness of 'Schwermut'. This identity is pointed up by a syntactic ambiguity; while the twin gerunds seem to encourage a reading of 'wachend' and 'rasend' as alternative states of being for the subject, 'rasend' could equally be opposed to 'leise'. Once more the variants reinforce the ambiguity, the sister being addressed as both silent and yet 'verhüllt in Frühlingsgewittern' (II 318). In the finished version, 'Oder' is played against 'Aber' in the same way as the adversative prepositions of 'Ruh und Schweigen', signalling a dialectic subversion of continuity and identity. The subject and his 'Doppelgänger im anderen Geschlecht' (MoE 906) are set in apposition, sharing the oscillation between 'schweigend' and 'stürmisch'. In accordance with this doubling, the suffering of stormy 'Schwermut' is cast impersonally; the 'Haupt' which is clouded about and the 'Seele' which is a prey to 'schaurige Blitze' are both implicitly shared by sun, subject and sister. The fact that the separate figures of 'du' and 'ich' in the final vision of aggression are represented by two more bodily synecdoches, formulated in such a way that the impersonal model is echoed — 'die atemlose Brust mir' — would suggest that the violence is reciprocal, the victimised body

composite. The violent immolation of the body by 'stürmischer Schwermut' is surely a projection of an internal division, akin to the self-reflexive sacrifice of the 'du' figure in 'Verwandlung des Bösen'.

The next section once more effects a voluntary temporal shift: the agony of the 'nächtige Seele' is alleviated by a 'flash-back' into the peace of the twilight garden, which then leads into an alternative to the tempestuous night: 'umfing mich die hyazinthene Stille der Nacht' (I 170). The subject's enjoyment of the vision of peace is once more equivocal. He is touched by the waters of 'Ruh und Schweigen' ('und süßer Frieden rührte die versteinerte Stirne mir') and he can move across the surface of the 'ruhenden Weiher' borne by a barque in the form of the narcissistic moon; but as they would not bear his image, so he cannot enter their peaceful space. The subject is not a party to their silence except by being struck dumb, dispossessed of his poetic voice. His contemplation of the infinite space of the night seems to lift him ('anschauend'), but only as a prelude to his fall away into death ('hinstarb'). In beholding the transcendent height of the sky he seems to overcome the deepest of the worldly pains and fears within him. Once more the blue shadow of the 'Knabe' arises, but this time as an external figure, the allegory of poetic melos. While 'hinstarb' is doubled by 'starben', the twofold fall releases a collateral elevation: 'und es hob sich der blaue Schatten des Knaben strahlend im Dunkel, sanfter Gesang; hob sich auf mondonen Flügeln über die grünenden Wipfel, kristallene Klippen das weiße Antlitz der Schwester' (I 170). The male and female figures are both transfigured, but unlike the rosy apotheosis of 'Abendländisches Lied', there is no indication of a conjunction as 'Ein Geschlecht'. Ironically enough the repetition of the verb of elevation only serves to emphasise their separation, as they ascend not in union but in tandem. Poetic melos and the lunar sister, the twin objects of the poetic subject's narcissistic desire, which were a single identity in 'An die Schwester', are cast here as sexually differentiated figures. Furthermore, their ascension at the end of the penultimate section, rather than in the final line as in 'Abendländisches Lied', indicates that the poet is unable to incorporate his transcendent 'end' as the end of his text.

While the fugitive figures rise up into a rarified space beyond the poem's immanent bounds, the subject is resurrected out of his double death only to lead the narrative into a renewed downward trajectory. Once more the fantasy of regeneration is set before the descent which is its prerequisite. Rilke's formula of descent as 'Vorwand für die unaufhaltsamste Himmelfahrt' is inverted, as the 'Himmelfahrt' proves to be a mere pretext for the ultimate 'Untergang'. The text undergoes a radical 'Entstellung' from its transfigurative 'end'; it is dislocated both spatially, as it goes underground, and temporally, in a renewed regression from the moon's elevation to the sexual descent of the 'Sonnenjüngling'. The cosmic conjunction of the sexes which was projected in 'Ruh und Schweigen' is rehearsed in travesty. Having surrendered his claim to union with the narcissistic, lunar object, the subject mimics the death throes of the sun by burying his head in disfiguring clouds ('purpurne Linnen'), which also do metaphorical service for the earth's womb, the

matrix of 'Schwermut'. The mortal enactment of coitus, with the womb decked out as a subterranean tomb, gives birth to another lunar figure, as did the sun's interment in 'Ruh und Schweigen'. However, this birth only serves to debunk the premature flight of the previous section as an illusory 'Vorwand'. The twin attributes of shadowy 'Knabe' and lunar 'Schwester' are ironically redeployed, with the stillborn child emerging as a 'mondenes Gebilde' out of the subject's 'Schatten'. Trakl's use of the term 'Gebilde' invariably connotes an ephemeral figment, an imaginary construct doomed to go under ('vergängliche Gebilde gehen unter' I 36). The dual 'hob sich' is now doubly subverted as the hallucinatory abortion sinks away even beyond the descent of his progenitor. The narcissistic fantasy of self-regeneration as a transcendent, lunar figure is denied, as the child eludes the space of the subject's projected image.

Detsch sees the disbanding of this figure into 'flockiger Schnee' as betokening 'not the grim prospect of decay, but a kind of ethereal disintegration'.²² Apparently his disbelief has been suspended by the ethereal fantasy of the 'Vorwand'; in fact this snow falls from 'purpurnen Linnen' by analogy with blood, just as in 'Rosiger Spiegel'. Thus the variant casts the 'Linnen' explicitly as 'blutigen' (II 319), and the 'snow' falls over the subject in imitation of Johanna's blood in the earlier sequence. The variants, with their 'stinkenden Leichnam' leave no doubt as to the visceral rather than ethereal nature of disintegration here; once more the narcissistic figure is resolved into a repulsive 'Spottgestalt', devoid of the cosmetic perfumes of 'Weihrauch'. The 'Bildnis' is not only disfigured by 'Blut' but transmuted into a wound, which disintegrates even as it bleeds; as in 'Grodek', blood and moon are assimilated in accordance with St. John's 'Offenbarung': 'und der Mond ward wie Blut' (6. 12)

The coincidence of conception and disintegration also allegorises the revelation of the 'Untergang' for poetic creativity. As the narcissistic object can be given no life within the poem, the poetic quest is denied its telos. The stillborn generation of the 'ungeborene Enkel' ('Grodek') cannot generate new poetic narratives out of their 'gewaltiger Schmerz'. The compulsion to repeat ends here in their unnarratable life-story. The poet's eschatological vision recasts the androgynous consummation of 'Ein Geschlecht' as its double — a neuter stillbirth; the figure of the poem's narcissistic desire — the moon — as the anti-figure of the open wound; and the melos of 'sanfter Gesang' as stridency collapsing into mutism. This is the drastic self-fulfilling prophecy of the apocalyptic seer; the germ of blood which he identifies from the beginning within his transcendent images now sweeps them away in the 'purpurne Woge' of the cataclysmic wave.

NOTES TO CHAPTER V

1. Detsch, *Trakl's Poetry*, p. 42.
2. C.G. Jung, *Psychologie und Alchemie, Gesammelte Werke*, edited by Marianne Niehus-Jung, Lena Hurwitz-Eisner, Franz Rilkin etc., 19 vols (Zurich, 1958–83), XII, p. 102.

3. Goldmann, p.33.
4. Kathrin Pfisterer-Burger convincingly argues that Elis as 'lyrisches Dasein' is modelled on Novalis, in her *Zeichen und Sterne: Georg Trakls Evokationen lyrischen Daseins*, Trakl-Studien, XI (Salzburg, 1983).
5. Novalis, *Schriften I*, p. 355.
6. Goldmann, p. 33.
7. Erwin Mahrholdt, 'Der Mensch und Dichter Georg Trakl' (1924), in *Erinnerung an Georg Trakl*, pp. 23–90 (p.59).
8. Rimbaud, p. 284.
9. Rimbaud, p. 344.
10. The veiled figure of dawn at the beginning of 'An Angela' could well refer to 'Aube' as an ironic signal of the sort of deferral that the subject's desire for Angela will undergo.
11. In these final poems the poetic seer as prophet deploys a series of images from 'Revelations'. The 'hairy sun', shares the apocalyptic sky with the bleeding moon and stars falling as fruit. (Revelations 6. 12–13).
12. This is the spirit conjured up by the 'Zauberer', seducing him away from Zarathustra's example. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Also sprach Zarathustra* in: *Werke*, edited by Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari (Berlin, 1967-), VI, i (1968), p. 367.
13. Detsch reads a causal process into what is in fact a conflation. He writes: 'Trakl indicates that the spirit was in a state of frenzy ('O Rasendes'); but that after the fulfilment, the union with the feminine, a state of peace and purity exists ('Ruh und Reinheit')' (*Trakl's Poetry*, p. 40). In fact there is no indication that the subject ever enjoys the female state which he invokes.
14. He sinks into the trees with the sun, just as 'l'aube et l'enfant tombèrent au bas du bois' in Rimbaud's poem.
15. Nietzsche, VI, i, pp. 391–93.
16. Nietzsche, VI, i, p. 276.
17. Nietzsche, VI, i, p. 398.
18. Novalis, *Schriften I*, p. 101 and p. 341.
19. Novalis, *Schriften I*, p. 348.
20. Novalis, *Schriften I*, p. 341.
21. In 'Barbare' which also rings with 'des vielles fanfares d'héroïsme'. Rimbaud, p. 292.
22. Detsch, p. 66.

PART TWO

MUSIL



VI SENSE AND SENSUALITY IN TÖRLESS

In a rather defensive response to criticism of the 'perverse' preoccupations of his first novel *Die Verwirrungen des Zöglings Törleß*, Musil claimed that the choice of a bisexual thematic was more or less arbitrary: 'Statt Basini könnte ein Weib stehen u. statt der Bisexualität Sadism., Masochism., Fetischism..' (Ta II 1217). The author for some reason overlooks the fact that all three of these ostensible alternatives operate in conjunction with the bisexual motif in the novel. Several critics have taken their cue from this and other statements in a similar vein, in seeking to relativise the role of bisexuality in particular, and of psychosexual concerns in general in the work. So for instance Elisabeth Stopp, in her discussion of how formal strategies bind with the novel's narrative content, adapts Musil's pronouncement that the reality depicted by the novelist is 'nur ein Vorwand', to define the function of sexuality in *Törleß*.¹ Reniers-Servranckx, in her polemical redressing of an article by Harry Goldgar, takes this line of argument a step further; she has little trouble in refuting Goldgar's rather naively argued contention that this is the first European work of fiction to be influenced by psychoanalytic theory.² In her tendentious zeal to demolish Goldgar's circumstantial evidence, Reniers begs equally important questions. Recent work done by Corino and in particular Henninger with regard to the *Vereinigungen*, has shown that in order to trace Freudian influence in Musil's work, one should look less to the sort of general similarities listed by Goldgar (and dismissed by Freij in his study as simply "Teilaffinitäten zwischen im gleichen geistigen Klima lebenden Vivisektoren der Seele"), or indeed to the author's notes on psychoanalysis in the diaries and elsewhere, but rather to detail within the texts in question.³ It seems that neither Reniers nor Goldgar have examined either *Törleß* or contemporary publications of Freud's for evidence of specific resonances or textual graftings, such as have been persuasively documented in the novellas (Goldgar admits ruefully that he finds himself 'unable to cull out special passages as illustrations').⁴

By focusing my own reading firmly on the text, and, by extension, on the intertextual resonances between *Törleß* and early writings of Freud, and to some extent Weininger's *Geschlecht und Charakter*, I set out not merely to question Reniers's unequivocal denial of the possibility of Freudian influence in the novel, which has since held sway in the secondary literature, but more importantly to show that, whatever its derivation, the sexual problematic has an essential role to play within the general aesthetic and ontological framework of *Törleß*. I will seek in other words to reappraise the notion of 'Vorwand', as Stopp understands Musil to intend it, along the lines of the structural function accorded to the pretext in Freud's

contemporary studies of symbolic patterns in dreams and the role of hysterical symptoms. The 'Vorwand' emerges in these studies, not merely as a random device which conceals the actual desires of the psyche, but rather as an essential mode of representation for unconscious contents which would otherwise remain unexpressed.⁵ The qualifying 'nur' will be suspended here, the sexual 'Vorwand' deemed of primary significance as a paradigm for the ambivalent nature of every sort of desire, and thereby for the complex interdependence of self and other in the novel. The rehabilitation of the sexual content of *Törleß* will moreover furnish a model for its function in Musil's subsequent major prose works.

The existence of general affinities between the early works of Musil and Freud cannot be denied; their common desire to probe beyond the realms of the phenomenal world and the rational mind led both to focus on the seminal role of dreams, on infantile and pubescent sexuality, and on Oedipal patterns of desire. There are also striking similarities in the metaphorical language employed by the two writers in their pursuit of an understanding of the subliminal mind and its relation to rational consciousness. In particular, Musil's characteristic use of metaphors of space — rooms, walls, doors, thresholds etc. — in order to express transitions from one level of perception to another is strongly reminiscent of Freud's imagery in the metapsychological model sketched out in the *Traumdeutung*. Reniers glosses over the fact that Musil might easily have had access to this work, or at least have known something of its innovations, before the composition of *Törleß*. A particular example from the novel which Goldgar might have put forward to sustain his argument arises in the section where 'Mutter' and 'Dirne' are associated in Törleß's psyche. The identification, which traces a path through 'die Grenzen des Bewußtseins', is immediately superseded by a series of questions 'die es verdecken sollten'. The exposition of this concealment is couched in terminology strongly redolent of Freud: 'Aber alle diese Fragen waren nicht das Eigentliche. Berührten es kaum. Sie waren etwas *Sekundäres*; etwas, das Törleß erst *nachträglich* eingefallen war. Sie vervielfältigten sich nur, weil keine das Rechte bezeichnete. Sie waren nur Ausflüchte, *Umschreibungen* der Tatsache, daß *vorbewußt*, plötzlich, instinktiv ein seelischer Zusammenhang gegeben war' (T 33, my emphasis). The psychic function of dissimulation described here might well bear witness to an assimilation, albeit possibly a mediated one, of Freud's theory of the corrective role of the preconscious as set out in *Die Traumdeutung*.

As critics since Reniers have shown, Musil's relationship to Freud was certainly an ambivalent one. Henninger indeed goes as far as to suggest that Musil felt that he had been displaced from a career as a pioneering 'vivisector of souls' by 'der Einbruch der Psychoanalyse in das Hoheitsgebiet der Dichtung', and that Musil's tendency to dismiss the achievements of the new science in both published and unpublished writings, might be motivated by an unacknowledged sense of intellectual dispossession.⁶ This would also account in his view for the dissimulation, the element of what he calls 'Entstellung', that the graftings from the *Studien über*

Hysterie undergo as they are woven into the *Vereinigungen*. Any consideration of Freudian influence must be alert to this element, be it an unconscious strategy, as Henninger would have it, or ironically intended as Corino contends. To deny influence on the basis of the lack of reference to Freud in the diaries while Musil was writing *Törleß* would seem rather facile (nor is there any during the composition of the novellas). The possibility that Musil might resort — or perhaps fall prey — to such strategies of prevarication with regard to an unpalatable connection, as he portrays so strikingly in such passages as the one above, should certainly not be disregarded. The curiously disingenuous letter quoted above, where Musil refuses to acknowledge the role in his novel of the very sexual perversions that Freud was discussing in his essays on sexuality published in the same year, is a case in point.

If Reniers turns a blind eye to such possibilities it is because in the article in question, no less than in her later, more extensive study, she is eager to relegate the psychosexual element in Musil's fiction as a whole to an ancillary role, concentrating instead on the exploration of more exalted questions, aesthetic and philosophical.⁷ The divorcing of the two orders, with sexuality being hedged in as a mere pretext, runs quite counter to their interdependence in the narrative. The novel will be seen to focus on the correlation of sexual desire and the quest for the sense of an ontological centre: the quest which is motivated by what will be called here epistemological desire, tracing its course in the domain of language. The correlation of these two types of desire indicates that eros and logos are intrinsically bound up with one another in the novel. Such critics as Reniers might do well to consider the implications of Törleß's own self-deceptive attempt to separate philosophical and sensual exigencies, his quest for Kantian enlightenment and his involvement with Basini: "Basini und dies sind für mich zweierlei; und zweierlei pflege ich nicht im selben Topf zu kochen" (T 83). That the two problems do indeed belong 'in the same pot' is clearly indicated a little later: "Wenn mich die Mathematik quält und wenn mich -" doch er überlegte sich's noch schnell und sagte nichts von Basini' (T 83). The two orders are evidently associated by the same dialectic principle ('Ähnlichkeiten und Unähnlichkeiten zugleich' T 61) as governs Törleß's relations with the figure who comes to play the role of 'Doppelgänger' for him, Basini. Indeed, it could be said that Törleß's crisis turns on his inability to accept the involvement of the two, an involvement in which he, as subject of both kinds of desire, is the nexal element. As in the connection of the supposedly incommensurable mother and prostitute — 'durch ihn hindurch verkettete die beiden ein Zusammenhang' (T 33) — confirmed by the fact that Bozena can come to play the role of surrogate mother for him, the unholy marriage of philosophy and sexuality is forged inwardly by the meshing of Törleß's intellectual enterprise and his sensual needs.

The common character of the different orders of desire lies in the element of deferral which invariably separates the subject from his ostensible objects. The correlation of sexual and epistemological desire is constructed around the recurrent

references to the infinite perspective. This is adumbrated in the form of the endless railway tracks which open the novel, and sustained thereafter by such key motifs as the problem of imaginary numbers, the inability of the eye to encompass the infinity of space, and the perpetually retreating horizon as a metaphor for the bounds of perception. In each case the objects fixed upon by the desire to know are essentially preliminary, mere surrogates demarcating the cognitive horizon. Desire is bound to strain eternally after the true object, even as it remains inimical to desire's grasp; it is thus the fate of desire to be lodged in objects which are mere metonymic representations of the true object. The metonymic object, by dint of its partitive or virtual nature, is bound to disappoint, and thus to deploy desire perpetually beyond it. This is the paradigm established in Törleß's 'desire' for Basini: 'sein Begehren sättigte sich niemals an ihm, sondern wuchs zu einem neuen, ziellosen Hunger über Basini hinaus' (T 109). Not only do the two forms of desire share this common structure, but the pursuit of one may shift disconcertingly into the other. When Törleß is faced with a bewildering discrepancy between appearances and inner meaning, he experiences it in sensual terms: 'Nur was diese Sinnlichkeit dabei zu bedeuten hatte, wußte er nicht, aber er erinnerte sich, daß sie eigentlich schon jedesmal dabei gewesen war, wenn die Ereignisse angefangen hatten, nur ihm sonderbar zu erscheinen' (T 71). The perception of sense by Törleß's sixth sense ('So, als ob ich einen Sinn mehr hätte als die anderen' T 89) invariably provokes sensual excitement.

The abstract model of desire can be traced in every area of Törleß's experience. So for instance, the ephemeral cults which succeed one another in his early days in the academy. The parental cult is a case in point; co-determined by the trappings of religiosity and the illusion of the theatre — 'Er hatte nur unter irgendeinem äusseren Zwang Empfindungen, die über das Gleichgültige hinausgingen, wie ein Schauspieler dazu des Zwanges einer Rolle bedarf' (T 13) — the putative centre of his cult is absent: 'Denn der Gegenstand dieser Sehnsucht, das Bild seiner Eltern, war darin eigentlich gar nicht mehr erhalten' (T 9). The 'object', in itself a mere iconic representation of the absent parents, in fact does service for another cult altogether. The attempt to conjure up 'das Bild seiner "lieben, lieben Eltern"' (T 9) is seen as a pretext for the sort of masochistic pleasure that will later figure so importantly in his relationship to Basini, and in either case is essentially autistic: 'dieses egoistische Leiden in sich zu erzeugen, das ihn in seinen wollüstigen Stolz einschloß wie in der Abgeschlossenheit einer Kapelle' (T 9). This voluptuous desire, which is in essence intransitive, taking as its notional object an imaginary loss, is paradoxically experienced as a lost object itself when it is dissipated, an object which has blossomed unperceived 'unter dem Vorwand des Schmerzes' (T 10). The pattern set up here is of desire fixing on a pretextual object in lieu of an actual one which is defined as perpetually lacking. Concealed by its 'Vorwand' as long as it is active, it is only retrospectively perceptible in terms of the gap opened up when pretext and object alike have been removed. Out of a double negative — the loss of a sense

of loss — a positive object is construed by its lack: 'Und an diesem Nichts, an diesem Unausgefüllten in sich erkannte er, daß es nicht eine bloße Sehnsucht gewesen war, die ihm abhanden kam, sondern etwas Positives, eine seelische Kraft' (T 9).

There is an analogous disjuncture between self and other in Törleß's inability to fix on a discursive object: 'ohne grundlos zu verstummen oder zerstreut mehrmals den Gegenstand zu wechseln' (T 110). Language is seen to be constitutionally at odds with the desire to embrace the other, always eluded by a remainder which exceeds its conceptual grasp. As the mediating system between self and world, it places their relationship in what might be called the paradigm of the double. The dual movement of resemblance and dissemblance which informs Törleß's identification with his double Basini, and defines his desire for him according to the metonymic model, so that he is but 'ein stellvertretendes und vorläufiges Ziel' (T 109), is extended to the subject's mitigated accession to the mysteries of existence through language: 'Er war dann gezwungen Ereignisse, Menschen, Dinge, ja sich selbst häufig so zu empfinden, daß er dabei das Gefühl sowohl einer unauflöselichen Unverständlichkeit als einer unerklärlichen, nie völlig zu rechtfertigenden Verwandtschaft hatte. Sie schienen ihm zum Greifen verständlich zu sein und sich doch nie restlos in Worte und Gedanken auflösen zu lassen' (T 25). What is more, this disjunction is mirrored in an inward partition, as the infinite perspective of the continually retreating horizon is introjected as a metaphor of the self's failure to grasp its own essence: 'Zwischen den Ereignissen und seinem Ich, ja zwischen seinen eigenen Gefühlen und irgendeinem innersten Ich, das nach ihrem Verständnis beehrte, blieb immer eine Scheidelinie, die wie ein Horizont vor seinem Verlangen zurückwich, je näher er kam' (T 25). The desire to understand ('beehrte'/'Verlangen'), that is, to bridge the 'unüberbrückbare Unähnlichkeiten', shares an identical structure with sexual desire, propelled beyond its temporary objects by an elusive remainder: 'das übrige des Begehrens' (T 109).

The fact that the pervasive structure of desire should become internalised, so that the self becomes as it were its own double, self-identity being invaded by a sense of difference, is of particular significance. This study will trace this internalisation of difference, and will focus on how, just as sexual and intellectual desire are correlated when directed at external objects, the internal partition which marks Törleß's intellectual quest finds its analogue in an internalisation of sexual difference, that is, in the operation of bisexual desire.

The desire of the mother

The model of desire outlined above can be examined in more detail by reference to Törleß's relationship to his mother. Those critics who have sought to de-sexualize the text as a whole, have little trouble in glossing over this relationship, as its presence is a submerged one of oblique indication. The present reading will seek not

only to cast light on this shadowy presence, but to suggest that its obliquity is only in keeping with the type of deferred desire that has been discussed above.

Throughout the novel the mother is rendered remote; she appears in the opening scene only to depart, and even then she is concealed behind a veil. In her role as paragon of light and order she is located in the well-lit space of the distant family home, the antithesis, that is, of the 'engen, winkligen Gemäcker der Sinnlichkeit' (T 114) into which her son gravitates. Even when, at the end of the novel, the two are alone together and the mother unveiled, the element of obliquity is sustained in the fact that the look must be purloined ('verstohlen'), acquired, that is, by the covert methods of the dark world which Törleß seems to have abandoned. By seeking an object which is located as it were in the ideal space of a Kantian 'bestirnte Himmel', 'ein Gestirn jenseits alles Begehrens' (T 32), the desire of the mother is inherently self-denying, both in the sense that its satisfaction must be denied and its very existence repressed. A partial satisfaction can only be achieved, as we shall see, by the metonymic mediation of another female body; the sidereal body which inhabits a transcendent space beyond the reach of desire must be substituted by an entirely corporeal counterpart, the public body of the prostitute. The mother, who can only be glimpsed via the dissembling veil or by dint of subterfuge, is replaced by the body which is professionally on show to the desiring look.

The departure of the mother and her replacement by the prostitute is prefigured as Törleß is transposed to a traumatic memory from his childhood. The small boy is abandoned in a fairy-tale scenario by the maid as surrogate mother, and surrendered to what the child apprehends as another type of woman. His fear of isolation and abandonment is experienced moreover as the internalisation of this 'anti-mother':

Das war seine Art der Einsamkeit, seit man ihn damals im Stich gelassen hatte — im Walde, wo er so weinte. Sie hatte für ihn den Reiz eines Weibes und einer Unmenschlichkeit. Er fühlte sie als eine Frau, aber ihr Atem war nur ein Würgen in seiner Brust, ihr Gesicht ein wirbelndes Vergessen aller menschlichen Gesichter und die Bewegungen ihrer Hände Schauer, die ihm über den Leib jagten. (T 25)

This is sensuality represented by a sort of 'Erdgeist' within, sensual frenzy as the suppression of human identity, and as such it provides the key to Törleß's association of loneliness and inhumanity with sexual desire in the present time-scale of the narrative: the invoking of anonymous, orgiastic fantasies and the inability to harness the turmoil of his sensuality to a human identity. It is characteristic that the violent introjection of the mistress sensuality is evoked in tandem with an epistemological crisis; the boy is surrounded by irreducible strangeness, with the intuition that the forest speaks a language, but an utterly alien one. This double character is fundamental to the threat of nonentity for the self.

There are indications, however, that the loss of the mother involves more than this dual threat to the child's sense of identity. The mother's idealised fixity as a celestial body beyond desire is already challenged by implication in the opening scene. Here son and mother are drawn into subtle correlation by Törleß's

unconscious mimicry of his mother's attitudes of devotion. At both beginning and end of the scene of departure, the narrative focuses on the veil which hides the mother's tears; first, 'Frau Hofrat Törleß . . . verbarg hinter ihrem dichten Schleier traurige, vom Weinen ein wenig gerötete Augen' (T 8), and as the couple leave, a repeated concealment does service for the sort of embrace that the boy receives from his father: 'Hofrat Törleß umarmte seinen Sohn, Frau von Törleß drückte den Schleier fester ans Gesicht, um ihre Tränen zu verbergen' (T 15). When Törleß is left alone at the academy, he too dons a metaphorical veil: 'Er sah nur alles wie durch einen Schleier und hatte selbst unterm tags häufig Mühe, ein hartnäckiges Schluchzen hinabzuwürgen' (T 8). This mimetic gesture, which follows closely after the first example above, does not, however, merely signal a theatrical identification with the mother. The repeated focus on the veil as concealing the eyes and their look provides an indication of a repressed Oedipal relation between mother and son.

Since Freudian readings of *Törleß* have tended to founder on their inability to aver any specific instances of textual grafting in support of their discussion of such 'Teilaffinitäten' as the son's desire for his mother, it may be more useful in the first instance to consider the possibility of an intermediate text. When Otto Weininger discusses the relationship between mother and son in the 'Mutterschaft und Prostitution' chapter of his *Geschlecht und Charakter* (May 1903), the reference to the 'Ödipus-Traum' would certainly appear to bear witness to the influence of Freud's Oedipal theory, introduced with specific reference to such dreams, in his *Traumdeutung* three years earlier. More important, however, than this characteristic instance of Weininger's syncretism, is the striking development that Freud's theory undergoes in Weininger's text.

Weininger asserts the sexual nature of the mother/son relationship by way of an analogy between coitus and suckling, one which pre-emptly the sexual character imputed to lactation in psychoanalytic theory. This analogy is extended to include the role of the eye, with the look taking on a coital agency in his theory of 'Versehen', whereby 'der Urogenitaltrakt nicht der einzige, sondern nur der wirksamste Weg ist, auf dem die Frau koitiert werden kann, daß die Frau durch einen Blick, durch ein Wort sich bereits besessen fühlen kann' (G&C 308). The look as instrument of desire becomes the focus of desire's concealment in Weininger's variation on the Oedipal theory; the sexual relation between mother and son is veiled, hidden from view for either party: 'Sicherlich steht anderseits auch jeder Sohn zu seiner Mutter in einer, wenn auch vor den Blicken beider noch so *verschleierten*, sexuellen Beziehung.' (G&C 291, my emphasis) Not only are the eyes of mother and son both veiled in *Törleß*, but in the erotically charged scene with Beineberg in the cloakroom, Weininger's other coital agency — the spoken word — is also metaphorically veiled by sensuality: 'seine Stimme umschleierte sich leise beim Sprechen' (T 81).

If the veil intervenes in both Musil and Weininger to dissimulate Oedipal desire, then why should this be more than a coincidence? Musil after all uses the image of

the veil ('die dunklen Schleier der Sinnlichkeit' T 63) elsewhere in this and other works to evoke the concealment intrinsic to sexually charged moments. What is crucial here is the context. In Weininger's theory, mother and prostitute are the two types of woman, the one, however, always supplemented by the other to some degree. The same scheme of idealised opposition (the asexual star versus the 'Knäuel aller geschlechtlichen Begehrlichkeiten' T 33) and actual dialectic involvement can be traced in both works. Mother and prostitute gravitate out of a relation of utter opposition into one of complicity and ultimately of identification. In either case the 'natural' polarity, which, in Weininger's words, 'läßt sich ebensowenig deduzieren, wie daß Mann und Weib einander entgegengesetzt sind' (G&C 282), is dismantled in parallel with the notion of polarised gender. As Törleß is made to see a connection between the two women, so he comes to play the role of woman himself in his identification with the submissive 'Freudenmädchen' (T 124) Basini.

The metaphorical expression of Törleß's desire for Bozena, as the two women become confused in his imagination during the scene at the old bath-house, is telling. The boy visits the prostitute not simply to 'play the man' in the manner of Basini, but to enjoy vicariously his desire for his mother. The tripartite complex of coitus, the look, and lactation is introduced at either end of the episode. At the beginning, 'Törleß sog, noch in der Türe stehend, mit begierigen Augen ihr Bild in sich ein' (T 29); and at the end, 'Törleß sättigte sich mit den Augen an Bozena und konnte dabei seiner Mutter nicht vergessen' (T 33). The desire of the mother, which was veiled, is revealed here, but must take as its visual object a surrogate image.

Törleß's double vision

The gratification of Törleß's 'suckling look' can be situated within the broader function of the eye in the novel as an agency of desire. Its role here can at once be related to Freud's theory of the eye as erotogenic zone, first outlined in the 'Drei Abhandlungen zur Sexualtheorie' (1905), and be seen to anticipate Lacan's development of that theory in his notion of the dialectic of the eye and the gaze ('regard'). This is the theory, expounded in his 'Du regard comme objet petit a', which identifies a 'scopic drive' to describe the lodging of sexual desire in the gaze.⁸ This drive is informed by a characteristic Lacanian double-bind; in the 'scopic field' there is always a fundamental conflict between the desire to be the viewing subject and the desire to surrender as 'scopic object' to the desire of the other's gaze.

Freud's 'Drei Abhandlungen' are worthy of detailed consideration, as they abound in striking parallels with the treatment of psychosexual concerns in *Törleß*.⁹ Freud's main concern is to establish a number of essential tenets: that perversions can only be understood in the context of 'normal' desire; that childhood and puberty provide crucial keys to the nature of adult sexuality; and that desire is no unitary quantity, but rather a composite — one often characterised by ambivalence — with the dialectic of active and passive roles providing the paradigm for this. The

'Sexualobjekt' (i.e. the personal object of desire) and the 'Sexualziel' (the type of activity in which desire seeks its gratification) are radically reappraised. Desire is submitted to strategies of deferral, of painful self-denial; its classic model, with coitus as its 'Sexualziel' and a member of the opposite sex its 'Sexualobjekt', is modified to incorporate the perverse, the preliminary and the partial as viable objects. These are all seen to play an ancillary role in normative sexual practice, as well as a determinant role in its abnormal or deviant variations. This general revision of the orthodox structure of desire clearly finds its analogue in the psychosexual crisis depicted in *Törleß*; the congruence of psychoanalytic theory and fictional practice is reinforced when the particular 'perversions' which Freud instances are considered in detail.

Having come to the conclusion that the sexual perversions are amenable to analysis and must therefore be 'zusammengesetzter Natur', Freud extends the argument to make a radical postulation about the nature of the sexual drive per se: 'daß vielleicht der Sexualtrieb selbst nichts Einfaches, sondern aus Komponenten zusammengesetzt ist' (StA V 71). We are reminded here that the prototype of desire in *Törleß*'s parental cult is contrasted with mere homesickness as 'etwas viel Unbestimmteres und Zusammengesetzteres' (T 9). The complication of the drive in Freud's theory as the function of dual or multiple 'Partialtriebe' accords fully with its depiction in the novel. The partial drives on which Freud concentrates, those of sadism/masochism and voyeurism/exhibitionism, are located respectively in the erotogenic zones of the skin and the eyes: 'Doch entspricht bei der Schau- und Exhibitionslust das Auge einer erogenen Zone, bei der Schmerz- und Grausamkeitskomponente des Sexualtriebes ist es die Haut' (StA V 77-78). *Törleß*'s sexual awakening is not only organised around these two perverse drives, but their exposition, in either case drawing on the dialectic involvement of the two pairs of drives, centres on the two erotogenic zones.

The eye, as the zone which is in Freud's terms 'die dem Sexualobjekt vielleicht entlegenste' (StA V 114), takes on an active role, not merely by virtue of its penetrative faculty, but also because it can fix on an object in a purely preliminary way; its pleasure involves the deferral of the true 'Sexualziel' of intercourse. The subject is caught up in 'ein Verweilen bei diesem intermediärem Sexualziel des sexuell betonten Schauens' (StA V 66). Not only does *Törleß* experience the 'Fixierungen von vorläufigen Sexualzielen' (StA V 65), so that Basini is merely a 'vorläufiges Ziel' (T 109), but his objects are recurrently substituted by their images. The frozen 'Bild' intervenes between the subject *Törleß* and his successive objects, so that the course of desire is truncated. The image must do service for the object much in the manner of the fetish in Freud's account: 'in denen das normale Sexualobjekt ersetzt wird durch ein anderes, das zu ihm in Beziehung steht, dabei aber völlig ungeeignet ist, dem normalen Sexualziel zu dienen' (StA V 63). As fetish in this sense, the 'Bild' is submitted to the voyeuristic drive. So for instance in the first scene in the 'Versteck', Basini's image is framed as it were in self-exhibition:

'Starr festgehalten, wie das Lächeln eines Bildes, hob es sich aus dem Rahmen des Lichtes heraus' (T 69). However, in accordance with Freud's dialectic, 'wer im Unbewußten Exhibitionist ist, der ist gleichzeitig Voyeur' (StA V 75–76), there is an identification at work which substitutes voyeur for exhibitionist. Törleß moves in his turn into the frame of light, putting himself on show to the other's gaze. It is the same modulation from the active partial drive into its passive counterpart as occurs at the end of the visit to Bozena; having imbibed the *image* of the prostitute, Törleß is made to prefigure Basini's petrified, framed smile, as his own gaze is forced to submit to the prostitute's: 'Er starrte mit einem versteinten Lächeln in das wüste Gesicht über dem seinen, in diese unbestimmten Augen' (T 36).

This double-bind structure is invariably in evidence when the eyes adopt their sexually probing role. So for instance in the erotically charged passage when the cadets walk past the village-women, Törleß's eyes are unable to effectively penetrate the dark interior to which they are so powerfully lured. Access is denied by the intervention of a metaphorical net, which surely refers back to the role of the veil earlier: 'Er blickte mit so brennenden Augen durch die kleinen Fenster und winkligen, schmalen Torwege in das Innere der Häuser, daß es ihm beständig wie ein feines Netz vor den Augen tanzte' (T 17). His scopic drive thus suspended, Törleß is made to think of the sense of unclear anticipation which he had felt before old canvases, which seemed to conceal the potential of some 'ungeheuerliche Anblick'. Yet just as the apparently predatory fascination with the erotic scene masks a desire for self-abasement, so that his fantasy is one of 'einer Beschmutzung an dem Kot der Höfe' (T 18), so the desire to be the active subject of this unimaginable 'Anblick' is inverted. The penetrative, voracious look is merely preliminary, a diversion in expectation of a purely passive self-abandonment to the desire of the other. The static image will enter into and violate the self by way of the eye; the modification of the veil metaphor is explained: the net which remains drawn over his eyes throughout the scene, to the exclusion of any image — 'er fühlte jetzt nur mehr das feurige Netz vor den Augen' (T 18) — is only commensurate with the metaphorical transformation of the image into a wild beast: 'irgend etwas von fürchterlicher, tierischer Sinnlichkeit; das ihn wie mit Krallen packe und von den Augen aus zerreiße' (T 17–18).

The veiling of perception and the concomitant epistemological mutism before the threatening, subjacent desire ('die Worte sagten es nicht') actually has the same taming, self-protective function as the threshold of consciousness. The 'limen' reduces the images of the sublime and the subliminal worlds alike — and once more the visual metaphor is deployed, with the 'enges Tor' implicitly playing the role of the blinkered eye — to finite and so visibly accessible proportions: 'Und zwischen dem Leben, das man lebt, und dem Leben, das man fühlt, ahnt, von ferne sieht, liegt wie ein enges Tor die unsichtbare Grenze, in dem sich die Bilder der Ereignisse zusammendrücken müssen, um in die Menschen einzugehen' (T 106). The protective screening is applied to the mysteries of sensuality, the unconscious mind and the

phenomenal world alike; in every case the 'Bild', whether as a literal canvas or a metaphor for the mediating representations of consciousness, harnesses the other, which is feared as much as it is desired.

The mixture of fear and desire and the dialectic relationship between subject and object in the scopic field is nowhere more crucial than in the first scene of Basini's abuse in the 'Versteck'. The scene is co-determined by two pairs of 'partial drives' which are closely analogous to Freud's concepts of sado-masochism and of voyeurism/exhibitionism, with the focus, as we have already noted, on the area of light as figurative picture-frame. Törleß's sexual arousal is effected, however, precisely when the sado-masochistic scene which is its apparent motivation is inapparent, torn out of the frame by Reiting and Beineberg, and thus out of view for Törleß the voyeur. The field of view is emptied for Törleß so that he becomes a purely aural witness to the scene. Neither is he the only viewer left behind by the scene's removal. In an image that is *prima facie* as enigmatic for the reader as it is inappropriate and exalted for Beineberg, Törleß likens the light from the lamp at the end of the beating to an eye: "Ist das nicht wie ein Auge?" sagte er und wies auf den über den Boden fließenden Lichtschein' (T 71). Törleß's eyes pursue the vacant patch of light: 'Mit den Augen folgte er dem Lichte' (T 70); what the apparently vacant gaze sees, however, is the viewer himself, as the light comes to frame a specular screen for his self-projection: 'Dabei beobachtete er sich selbst. Aber so, als ob er eigentlich ins Leere sähe und sich selbst nur wie in einem undeutlichen Schimmer von der Seite her erfaßte' (T 70). Törleß is literally beside himself, split by self-scrutiny into the double personae of voyeur and exhibitionist. As his own *image* is substituted for that of Basini, he assumes the postures of the victim's role. An 'enigmatic' smile — and the significance of this motif has already been noted — mimics Basini's own: 'Irgend etwas ließ Törleß darüber lächeln' (T 70); he is then drawn down to the floor in imitation of the prostrate victim, and is metaphorically stripped of his clothing: 'er fühlte durch den nackten Leib hindurch sein Herz gegen das Holz schlagen' (T 70). Törleß enacts in parallel the scene of Basini's torment as both actor and spectator, submitting to a desire which is his own, but which, in accordance with his split, comes with the look 'von der Seite her' (T 70).

As the actors proper return to the scene there is a renewed 'eye-contact', this time between the light and its owner: 'Beineberg blickte auf die Lampe'. The apparently innocuous act triggers a rehearsal of the gravitational pull, and so by implication a reprise of Törleß's sexual arousal. The voyeuristic master now adopts an independent identity; Beineberg's desire to dominate is transmitted in the form of scopic drive by his lamp-eye, and duly forces Törleß's submission by way of his own eyes: 'In diesem Augenblicke zog es Törleß wieder hinunter. Es ging von den Augen aus, — das fühlte er nun, — von den Augen aus wie eine hypnotische Starre zum Gehirn' (T 70–71). The compelling gaze of the hypnotist ('In diesem *Augenblicke* zog es') subjugates that of his thrall to his every desire. Törleß is made to play out a 'pre-view' of the later scene of Basini's hypnosis, in keeping with the veiled threats

of Beineberg and Reiting, and corroborating Basini's assertion that in his place 'du würdest ebenso handeln wie ich' (T 104). The threat to his free will as subject is bound up with a threat to the security of his sexual identity; the vicarious male spectator is made to act out the part of 'Freudenmädchen', just as earlier the visit to the brothel had ended in Törleß the client submitting to the hypnotic gaze of Bozena's 'unbestimmten Augen' (T 36). In both scenes, moreover, the scopic drive is associated with references to lactation; Törleß's desire to enter into the liquid matrix of the eye, 'in dieser Lache zu wälzen' (T 71), with its echoes of the scatological fantasy in the village in which 'fast nackte Kinder wälzten sich in dem Kot der Höfe' (T 17), develops into a suckling fantasy: 'Ich möchte es in mich hineintrinken' (T 71). This framing of the dialectic structure of the scopic drive in terms of infantile appetite — to consume or to be consumed — accords with the double-bind of what Lacan calls 'l'appétit de l'œil'.¹⁰

The association with the village children as the way of access to the desire of their mothers provides an indication as to the original desire from which these fantasies spring. As Bozena and Basini are both characterised as images rather than as objects adequate to Törleß's desire — and the fact that Basini is as it were out of the picture when Törleß's desire is aroused only goes to emphasise his extraneous nature — so his desire is directed here at the enthralling 'eye'. The eye can only fulfil the maternal function as fount to sate Törleß's 'begierigen Augen' (T 29) by forcing his hungry gaze to submit to enslavement. This is precisely the dialectic of active and passive roles that Lacan identifies in his 'desire of the other', and which finds its exemplary expression in the infant's desire of the mother. Lacan draws on the reflexive potential of the 'of' in these formulations in order to show that this desire is derived from the wish to become the sole object of the (m)other's desire. In terms of the scopic drive this means that the son will not only seek to feast his gaze on the mother, but to be a satisfactory object for her desiring gaze. It is the denial of this primary desire — marked by the intervention of the veils — that sets Törleß off on the metonymic chase after a commensurate object, propelled by the inevitable 'übrige des Begehrens'.

Once more there is a suggestive analogy to be made with the 'Drei Abhandlungen', this time in the section which treats of 'Ludeln'. Here Freud draws similar conclusions about the sexual nature of lactation to those reached by Weininger two years earlier; he writes: 'Wer ein Kind gesättigt von der Brust zurücksinken sieht, mit geröteten Wangen und seligem Lächeln in Schlaf verfallen, der wird sagen müssen, daß dieses Bild auch für den Ausdruck der sexuellen Befriedigung im späteren Leben maßgebend bleibt' (StA V 89). In Freud's view, the infant's pregenital sucking fixation derives from the desire to consume the mother, and he traces in this the model for the function of identification in sexual desire: 'das Sexualziel besteht in der *Einverleibung* des Objektes, dem Vorbild dessen, was späterhin als *Identifizierung* eine so bedeutsame psychische Rolle spielen wird' (StA V 103).

In *Törleß* too, sexuality and lactation are brought into conjunction under the sign of identification. In the opening scene *Törleß* is reduced to playing out an empty mimetic identification with his mother; the 'prop' he uses, the veil, is ironically enough a device for the dissimulation of identity. The veil hides the shared tears from view. The subsequent attempts at identification are doubly mediated, and so as it were doubly veiled. We have seen how *Törleß* seeks to deny the threat to his identity, and in the first instance to his sexual identity, which is embodied by his effeminate double Basini. The 'Freudenmädchen', whom *Törleß* tellingly tries to 'make a man of' — "Du willst also ein Mann sein? Nicht nur mit dem Mund und mit . . ., sondern mit der ganzen Seele?" (T 103) — dissembles another, more essential identity: 'War nicht, als er sich vorhin Basini vorgestellt hatte, hinter dessen Gesicht ein zweites, verschwimmendes gestanden? Von einer greifbaren Ähnlichkeit, die sich doch an nichts anknüpfen ließ?' (T 60). *Törleß* sees himself in this transsexual actor who visits the prostitute 'um den Mann zu spielen' (T 50–51). Indeed, in the course of their relationship *Törleß* is ousted from the predatory, male role of his fantasy: 'In der Nacht hätte *Törleß* beinahe Basini überfallen. Solch eine mörderische Sinnlichkeit war in ihm' (T 96). The impulse of the 'Lustmörder' is of the same metonymic kind described earlier — 'er mußte sich gestehen, daß die Grausamkeit und Sinnlichkeit in ihm gar kein rechtes Ziel hatte' (T 97); remaining thus intransitive, the desire is open to inversion. When *Törleß* moves over to Basini's bed it is he who 'erschrak'; indeed, when the scene of violation is replayed later, it is Basini who adopts the male role with aplomb in what is once more referred to as an 'Überfall' (T 107).¹¹

As we have seen, the prostitute is able, by virtue of the correlation set up in *Törleß*'s imagination, to stand for the absent mother. *Törleß* goes to Bozena, not to affect manly bravura in the manner of his peers, but to seek maternal protection; he is excited by the idea that, should he have to pitch his 'zierliche Degen' against the fists of a genuine client, Bozena might shield his impotence: 'Oder sich von Bozena schützen zu lassen. Der Gedanke durchrieselte ihn' (T 30). While Basini's attempt to play the man leads him to deny the very existence of the mother — "Mutter? . . . Mutter?" sagte er drauf, "was ist das? Das existiert jetzt nicht" (T 35) — *Törleß* imbibes the image of the 'wet-nurse' Bozena in an act of 'Einverleibung' in order to achieve a mediated identification with the idealised figure of the mother. The dialectic of master and slave is revised here into that of mistress and maid. As *Törleß*'s mother is 'mistress of the house', so her connection with Bozena is forged by way of Beineberg's mother ('Beineberg's Mutter wurde zu seiner eigenen' T 32) whose confidante Bozena was while in service with an aunt of his. In the same way, by submitting to the 'Herrin' (T 24), the overpowering female identity which his sensuality assumes, *Törleß* is in danger of enslaving himself in the manner of his double: 'einem Menschen, der gestohlen hat, der sich dann zur Magd, zum Sklaven angeboten hat' (T 47). The threat is compounded when the 'maid' Basini ("oh, es wäre mir ein Genuß, dir zu dienen" T 107), who doubles as mistress for his

ostensible masters, Beineberg and Reiting (“Du bist also ihre . . . Mai . . . tresse?” T 100), begins to call the tune: ‘fand sich Basini bald besser zurecht als er und wurde zum Führer’ (T 108).

There is even an indication that Törleß might turn to Basini for the kind of protection he sought from Bozena. The guardian angel, who nonetheless takes sadistic pleasure in viewing the torment of his ward (‘Dein Schutzengel Törleß wird selbst zusehen und sein Vergnügen daran haben’ T 125), is threatened by Reiting with the reversal of these roles: ‘Dann mag er dich beschützen. Verstanden?’ (T 127).¹² So it is that Törleß comes to play out a double fantasy, identifying at once with the mother as mistress and with the dependent son as slave. He demands Basini’s ‘Demütigung’ in the name of the mother: “. . . ich könnte dich Bewegungen machen lassen — du weißt schon —, und du müßtest dazu seufzen: Oh meine liebe Mut. . .” (T 104). Yet once more the veil as it were falls, splicing and thus disembling (in both senses) the mother’s name; the fantasy of identification with the mother is denied in the very act of its pronouncement.

There is a complex play on words at work here. When Weininger distinguishes the character of mother and prostitute, he ascribes to them ‘Mut’ and ‘Feigheit’ respectively (G&C 293). When Bozena assumes the maternal role it is as a protective figure to the cowardly impotence of Törleß’s ‘De-müt-igung’. On the other hand, when Törleß plays in his turn the role of the mother as mistress (to Basini, the ‘feiger Kerl’ T 124), the lapsus in his discourse at once denies the ‘act’ of identification, and reveals the nature of the role to which he aspires: ‘Mutter’ is metonymically reduced to its quintessence: ‘Mut’. Törleß’s motherhood is confined to the purely virtual mode of the metaphor: ‘Ihm war zumute wie einer Mutter, die zum ersten Male die herrischen Bewegungen ihrer Leibesfrucht fühlt’ (T 79). Even then, the intuition of the mother’s submission to the child’s desire in the form of his ‘masterful’ movements, is an illusion. The metaphor is a vehicle for Törleß’s abortive attempt to master the mysteries of Kant, and is therefore debunked as a ‘phantom pregnancy’.

The double desire expressed in this metaphor, to become the mother only in order to fulfil the desires of the child, corresponds perfectly to the Lacanian notion of the desire of the mother. This is the primary moment in the Imaginary order, the order of desire which is lodged in the eye and seeks to identify with the imagos which are available to the gaze. The desire to identify with these imaginary objects, all of which refer back to the model of the mother, leads perforce to an element of subjection to their desires. This subjection to the ‘desire of the Other’, which necessarily militates against the primacy of subjective desire, is instrumental in the formation of the ego in Lacan’s scheme. The ego is never identical with the subject, always marked off by difference. Derived as it is from the desires of imaginary objects, it too is an essentially imaginary construct. As Törleß’s desire is diverted from the start to metonymic objects, objects which are insistently represented as *images*, so the subject’s ego is constituted as an image of the self, what Törleß, in his

rhetorical torture of Basini, calls 'das Bild, das du von dir gemacht hast' (T 104). This ego is an armature which intervenes between self and other, a hybrid of the two, and hence informed by the 'Ähnlichkeiten und Unähnlichkeiten zugleich' principle of the double. While the ego doubles for the subject, providing immunity from the threat of violence, so that Basini is protected from Törleß's murderous torment ("Wenn ich all das wie Messer in dich hineinstoße" T 104), it has serious implications for the subject's desire to embrace the other. By virtue of the universal principle of doubling, the other is always situated beyond the reach of subjective desire, offering only the consolation of imaginary representations. Thus it is that Törleß can find no satisfaction in the imaginary aspect of things, or in the nomenclature attached to their surfaces: 'Es kam wie eine Tollheit über Törleß, Dinge, Vorgänge und Menschen als etwas Doppelsinniges zu empfinden. Als etwas, das durch die Kraft irgendwelcher Erfinder an ein harmloses, erklärendes Wort gefesselt war, und als etwas ganz Fremdes, das jeden Augenblick sich davon loszureißen drohte' (T 64).

It is characteristic that this 'Doppelsinn' should be perceived in terms of an inner identity which is hidden behind the appearances of the imaginary order; Törleß is afflicted by double vision: 'Gewiß: es gibt für alles eine einfache, natürliche Erklärung, und auch Törleß wußte sie, aber zu seinem furchtsamen Erstaunen schien sie nur eine ganz äußere Hülle fortzureißen, ohne das Innere bloßzulegen, das Törleß wie mit unnatürlich gewordenen Augen stets noch als zweites dahinter schimmern sah' (T 64). It is the same structure of identity deferred by difference as informs Törleß's perception of his own image as 'ein zweites, verschwimmendes' behind that of Basini. Basini, in his sexual debasement, is not merely perceived as an image, but as a mirror-image (hence the reflective quality of the 'eye' in the 'Versteck'). The double as incarnate 'Spiegelbild' (T 46) represents the self mimetically, but any affirmation of identity that might seem to be offered is denied by the purely virtual nature of the image. The double embodies the play of resemblance and dissemblance which determines the inner relations of the ego and the 'irgendeinem innersten Ich' of the subject.

By adopting an imaginary identity in the form of the ego, the self submits itself to its own bifocal perspective. In the first scene in the 'Versteck', this has the effect of doubling Törleß' gaze in the eye of the lamp. The subject forfeits his self-determination and loses any visual purchase on the world, so that under Bozena's gaze Törleß's view of the other is occluded: 'dann begann die Außenwelt klein zu werden . . ., sich immer weiter zurückzuziehen' (T 36). There is a last vision of Bozena's previous client, who had treated her with the requisite sexual disdain, then Törleß is isolated by the mistress's gaze: 'Für einen Augenblick tauchte das Bild jenes Bauerburschen auf, der den Stein gehoben hatte, und schien ihn zu höhnen . . ., dann war er ganz allein - - - ' (T 36). The mocking of Törleß's failure to sustain his sexual identity as 'man' indicates how the 'dialectic of the eye and the gaze' is bound up here with the dialectic subversion of secure gender differentiation. The scenario

of the female hysteric being hypnotised by the male analyst which was so central a convention in the psychiatric practice of the day is reversed, as Törleß (who is thought by the mathematics teacher to have 'Anlage zum Hysteriker' T 138) is sent into a hypnotic trance.

As long as Törleß is able to sustain the role of the master and to deny the identity with, or indeed submission to the 'Freudenmädchen', he is secure in the belief that he is a man: 'Nicht nur mit dem Mund, und mit . . . , sondern mit der ganzen Seele' (T 103). In the role of the 'Lustmörder' his eyes fulfil their violent, phallic function, so that Törleß fixes Basini 'mit den Augen ihn festhaltend, sich in ihn hineinbohrend' (T 95). Yet just as the 'Überfall' is essentially reflexive, so Törleß is always potentially a prey to the domination of the other's gaze, as when it overpowers him with hypnotic force in the 'Versteck'. In Lacan's account, the gaze is situated without (in both senses), 'dans le champ scopique le regard est au-dehors, je suis regardé, c'est-à-dire je suis tableau', so that it is universally lodged in the things of the world: 'c'est-à-dire ces choses me regardent'.¹³ Similarly, Törleß is subjected to an aggressive, interrogative gaze which is extrapolated from the lamp-eye into the universe of inanimate objects: 'Er ahnte nur dunkel, daß sie mit jener rätselhaften Eigenschaft seiner Seele zusammenhänge, auch von den leblosen Dingen, den bloßen Gegenständen, mitunter wie von hundert schweigenden, fragenden Augen überfallen zu werden' (T 91). In the same way as Törleß's 'Überfall' is disarmed by dint of the intransitive nature of the desire from which it springs, and is subsequently turned back on him in an effective, transitive form by Basini, he is here rendered a prey to the 'Überfall' of these inanimate eyes because he is essentially 'without' the desiring gaze. His scopical drive fails to fix these objects as its objects and hence to deny them access to the human prerogative of the questioning look. The failure in question is a double one; in terms of Törleß's epistemological crisis it is a failure to take cognitive possession of the objects and experiences of the world; in terms of his sexual crisis, it is an inability to find an object commensurate with his constitutionally excessive desire. The 'village-scene' is a case in point; the failure to grasp the meaning of a picture is aligned with the trapping of desire's gaze in a net; the other's gaze is thus unleashed in the metaphor of the wild beast, the canvas becomes a ravaging predator and Törleß laid open to it, taking the role of the picture ('je suis tableau').

The Theatre and its Double

Törleß's bifocal perspective on things in both realms of desire always sets him at a double remove from his objects, which are dismantled into a double image. When he tries to summon up Basini's image he never achieves 'eine wirkliche Vision: immer nur die Illusion einer solchen, gewissermaßen nur die Vision seiner Visionen' (T 91). The location of the novel's action in a metaphorical theatre-space — the 'Versteck' as a store for old 'Kulissen' — is compounded by the more extreme

suspension of disbelief effected by the cinema, where the image perceived is merely doing service for a host of others which elude the gaze: 'wenn man neben der Illusion des ganzen doch eine vage Wahrnehmung nicht loswerden kann, daß hinter dem Bilde, das man empfängt, Hunderte von — für sich betrachtet ganz anderen — Bildern vorbeihuschen' (T 91). The image alighted upon by the eye masks a sense of irretrievable loss, just as the illusion of satiety in surrogate images masks the loss of the mother as primal object. In either case the surrogate image corresponds to the notion of the 'Vorstellungsrepräsentanz' coined by Freud and developed by Lacan; it merely serves to represent a representation of the lost object.¹⁴ Bearing in mind the centrality in the novel of the metaphors of theatre and film, of marionettes and magic lantern, the 'Vorstellungsrepräsentanz' could usefully be understood here as a double play of masks, as the 'act' which stands mimetically for the original 'Vorstellung'. The doubling of the movement of representation only effects a paradigm change from the life and death pretensions of the final act (Basini's hypnosis) into the accustomed mode of the burlesque: 'So hatte er es oft in dem Versteck belauscht, wenn Beineberg und Reiting ihre fantastische Welt entrollten, und er hatte sich darüber gefreut, wie über die Musik zu einem grotesken Schauspiel' (T 66).

The tortuous route to the 'Versteck' along dark, narrow passages with peripetia, obstacles and thresholds to be negotiated gives an impression of a quest; as the syntax is subjected to analogous twists and turns, the narrative time-scale is virtually aligned with real time. We are led to believe that, by virtue of its distance, and implicit difference from the real, daylight world, the 'Versteck' must be a viable locus for the discovery of mysteries. In fact the quest is aimed at reconstructing an original scene. It seeks to act out a fantasised search for the mistress sensuality: 'als sollte er nun von Zimmer zu Zimmer suchen ... tastend über die Schwellen schreiten ... bis — in einem Zimmer sich die Türen plötzlich vor und hinter ihm schlössen und er der Herrin selbst der schwarzen Scharen gegenüberstünde' (T 24). This fantasy is itself derivative, an active rehearsal of the childhood scenario of abandonment to the other woman, and satisfying 'ein grausamer Kultus der Selbstaufopferung' (T 30). However, just as Törleß's 'two worlds' prove to be shifting and inter-penetrating (witness the assimilation of 'Mutter' and 'Dirne'), so the fantasy-world of the 'Versteck', with its grotesque role-play, is but a travesty of the real world, its theatrical double. The apparently authentic models for Törleß's behaviour in the daylight world, his parents, are unmasked as 'geheime Mitspieler' (T 35), and the world they epitomise is resolved into a more radical kind of 'Versteck': 'Nun aber schien der helle Tag selbst zu einem unergründlichen Versteck geworden zu sein' (T 66).

The deception of appearances is compounded by the invasion of the distorting strategies of sensuality into language. The dissimulating 'prop' of the veil is transposed to discourse, as the voice shrouds itself in secrecy: 'und seine Stimme umschleierte sich leise beim Sprechen' (T 81). The veiling of sense can be seen as a

general sensual phenomenon. Language is subsumed by the principle of the 'Versteck', joining the gaze within the 'Schleier der Sinnlichkeit' (T 63), or hidden behind the 'höchste, versteckteste Mauer' (T 87) of Törleß's sensuality. The 'Versteck' (Middle High German *vorstecke* = *Heimlichkeit*, *Hintergedanke*) is, as we have seen, a highly ambivalent space, one enclosed by false walls ('Kulissen') that are constructs of fantasy, and sustained by deceit, its sense of 'Heimlichkeit' merely 'eine äußerste Illusion' (T 39). The 'Versteck' as scene for a fantastic theatre is clearly created by analogy with the subliminal world of the unconscious mind. The false walls are as it were 'Vor-wände', the 'set' constructed by the psyche in order to divert attention from the desires which actually motivate the scenarios played out there. These desires must remain in the latent state of 'Hintergedanken'; they may not be directly expressed in the veiled language of the script. Such, for instance, is the unspoken, unspeakable desire which motivates the look that Törleß contrives to steal from his mother in the final scene. The language of speech and thought alike becomes travestied as theatrical language, according with the true desires of the subject only in the same mitigated way that the double corresponds to the self. Words and thoughts are thus identified with one of the standard manifestations of the double: 'als seien sie nur Schattenbilder des einst Gedachten' (T 119); once more these silhouettes are doubly removed, shadows of images and so representations of original 'Vorstellungen'. The 'Versteck' as a mimetic representation of the outer world with its dramatic conventions, that is, as 'Vorstellungsrepräsentanz', can be said to have the effect of the 'en abyme' device. Törleß's perspective on the evident world and its discourse is so to speak projected into the abyss of the 'unergründlichen Versteck' as a result of the analogical relationship that he is made to perceive between the theatre and its double.

The perpetuation of the fantasy-world is contingent upon the suspension of the sort of disbelief that invades Törleß's perception of the workaday world, its characters and discourse. When the illusion of difference between the two worlds collapses, as in the final 'Auftritt' when Basini collapses in accordance with the very real dictates of gravity, the curtain must fall on the fantastic theatre. The scenes, which had from the first been guided by an unwritten, inner script — 'er fühlte, daß alles so kam, wie es für ihn — innerlich — kommen mußte' (T 58) — are curtailed when, for their originator all interest has gone. Significantly enough the final curtain is signalled by the secession of Törleß and his double in tandem: 'denn er [Basini] beginnt sich aufzulehnen' (T 126), and: "'Mein lieber Törleß, wenn du dich gegen uns auflehnt und nicht kommst, so wird es dir gerade so gehen wie Basini'" (T 127).

The phallic object

The key element in the travesty of the 'Versteck' is its emancipation of transsexual fantasies. Not only does the quest for the 'Versteck' play out a reversion to Törleß's

masochistic abandonment to the 'Herrin', but it derives directly from his childhood desire to take on the identity of a little girl. The transsexual fantasy of imitation is motivated by the desire for a more essential identification which might give him access to the secret, inner chamber in the girl's body, so that he might share the feeling 'daß sie jeden Augenblick in irgendein furchtbar tiefes Versteck in dem kleinen Körper zurückziehen könne' (T 86). This autistic fantasy is the progenitor of the adult's quest for sanctuary in the other's body, as Ulrich in *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften* perceives: 'wie sehr das leidenschaftliche Eindringen in einen fremden Körper eine Fortsetzung der kindlichen Neigung für heimliche und verbrecherische Verstecke ist' (MoE 622).

The 'Versteck', entered by a 'schmaler, schlauchartiger Durchgang' (T 38) and decked out with 'einen blutroten Fahnenstoff' (T 39), furnishes the ideal 'set' for the enactment of the transsexual fantasy. If Törleß's gaze was denied access to the dark interior of the village-women's huts, here he seems to have penetrated into the desired inner space. The 'Versteck', however, shifts disconcertingly from vagina, with Törleß playing the role of phallic master in his domination of the 'Freudenmädchen', to womb, where the child seeks the security of total dependence on the mother and subjection to her desires. The threat of identification with Basini, who plays the submissive son to Törleß's performance as 'mother', is clearly one of emasculation. The transsexual mask which Basini is made to affect by Reiting so that he might deny his own 'inversion' — 'Er sagt, wenn er mich nicht schlagen würde, so müßte er glauben, ich sei ein Mann, und dann dürfte er mir gegenüber auch nicht so weich und zärtlich sein' (T 101) — is also the reverse side to the mask of phallic master which Törleß adopts. As Beineberg remarks, Reiting would 'gegebenenfalls gegen ihn [Törleß] genau so handeln ... wie gegen Basini' (T 100).

In the context of the 'Versteck' the security of sexual identity is undermined; the suspension of difference between the genders which had informed Törleß's childhood fantasy ('Denn er wußte damals nichts von der Bedeutung körperlicher Unterschiede' T 86) is revived in the theatrical reconstruction of the fantasy: 'Basini war schön gebaut; an seinem Leibe fehlte fast jede Spur männlicher Formen, er war von einer keuschen, schlanken Magerkeit, wie der eines jungen Mädchens' (T 98). The double play of difference and identity which characterises the subject's relationship to his 'Doppelgänger' is therefore not least at work in the transsexual appearance which the double adopts ('als ob ein Mädchen nicht anders sein könnte' T 99), prefiguring the 'Doppelgänger im anderen Geschlecht' of *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*. Basini's apparent shift of gender in the moment of revelation (as though he were a girl masquerading as a boy) meets the requirements of the childhood fantasy, but equally his 'playing the man' is repugnant to Törleß who now knows the exigency not only of bodily difference, but of what it means to be a man 'mit der ganzen Seele'. By virtue of this transsexual appearance Basini is able to perform the role of the 'Herrin' as Törleß is transposed once more to the vulnerability of the little boy lost (once more the key term is 'überfallend') and

subjected to a violation akin to that of the early memory: 'Aber die heiße Nähe der weichen, fremden Haut verfolgte ihn und umschloß ihn und erstickte ihn' (T 107).

Basini's false revelation is only consistent with the beguiling of Törleß's perception by illusory images throughout the novel. This process corresponds to the effect of 'trompe-l'œil' in Lacan's theory of the gaze. This is the element of luring by false appearances which he sees as essential to the picture's effect on the eye. The series of pictures which present themselves in lieu of objects of desire to Törleß's gaze are all struck by the arbitrary nature of their alluring surface. In terms of Musil's cinematic metaphor, the eye is diverted by 'Repräsentanten an der Oberfläche' (T 90) from the underlying 'Wucht der dunklen, ungehobenen Masse, die zu vertreten sie vorgaben' (T 90). Lacan too mobilises the device of the veil to illustrate his theory; in Pliny's anecdote of the painters' competition in verisimilitude, Parrhasios paints a veil and thereby deceives Zeuxis's eye into desiring to see what the veil conceals.¹⁵ Zeuxis is like Törleß before the village-scene as a metaphorical canvas, except that here the painted veil is replaced by the net before Törleß's eyes; both desire a glimpse of what lies behind the surface representation. The veil furnishes a perfect image for Lacan in as far as it stands at once for the lure of 'trompe-l'œil' and for the counter-movement which he identifies in the relation between eye and picture: the 'dompte-regard'. The lure is but a prelude to the submission of the gaze to the necessity of its denial beyond the token image of the 'trompe-l'œil'. The transmutation of the veil into a net in the novel evokes the taming effect of the 'dompte-regard' perfectly.

By virtue of her veil the mother is raised to the power of a cult object in a mystery. Her revelation is not only the subject's supreme desire but also his supreme fear, as is witnessed by the transformation of the protective 'wet-nurse' Bozena into the petrifying Medusa. The mother surrogate becomes the voracious phallic woman and thereby illustrates the threat of emasculation which attends the boy's 'desire of the mother' (i.e. *her* desire to have him impotent and dependent on her protection).

Once more the Lacanian model of the scopic field of desire is instructive here. Lacan correlates the dialectic of the lure of attainment and the threat of denial, the 'trompe-l'œil' and the 'dompte-regard', with that of possession and loss with regard to what he calls the supreme signifier of desire, the phallus. Thus he dubs the gaze 'objet a' by analogy with the phallus, this being the object which is perpetually beyond subjective desire, and which in the ancient Mysteries had to remain veiled. Both scopic and phallic desire are seen by Lacan to be self-denying, impelled by a fundamental lack in the subject, a lack which he will always seek to conceal by false appearances. This is where the importance of sexual role-play comes in; whatever his desires to be subservient to the female, the male subject feels compelled to play the master, to affect the supreme power that is signified by the phallus as cult object. The boy's transsexual desire must therefore be denied. By virtue of its status as privileged agent of desire, Lacan believes that the gaze may assume the role of the phallus as signifier both of ultimate possession and of inevitable loss: 'le regard, en

tant qu'objet a, peut venir à symboliser le manque central exprimé dans le phénomène de la castration'.¹⁶

This 'objet a' is that which always eludes the eye; in the moments of its virtual revelation Törleß is hypnotically overpowered (that is, under Bozena's 'evil eye' and in his submission to the lamp-eye). Bozena's transformation into Medusa and a comment passed by the headmaster may be read as indicators of the subliminal presence of the 'objet a' as both phallic and scopic object. In his attempt to make sense of the Basini affair, the headmaster ventures the suggestion to Törleß that 'der Anblick des Lasters Sie gewissermaßen bannte, so wie man es von dem Blick der Schlangen ihren Opfern gegenüber behauptet' (T 134). This is the very pair of metaphors that Weininger deploys in his discussion of the role of the phallus as cult object for woman, where once more the emphasis is on the hypnotic effect: 'Sie empfindet ihn vielmehr wie der Mensch das Medusenhaupt, der Vogel die Schlange; er übt auf sie eine hypnotisierende, bannende, faszinierende Wirkung' (G&C 339). In both the brothel and the 'Versteck', Törleß is made to adopt this female role, and in either case the sexual 'Überfall' is shifted metonymically from the phallic object to a scopic instance: the hypnotic power of the other's gaze. It would seem that the threat to Törleß's sexual identity is framed in terms of ideas grafted from Weininger's text.

Once more the context of the Weininger quotation is instructive. The twin metaphors provide an indication of the sort of contradictions that beset Weininger's essentialist scheme of sexual character. Throughout the argument of *Geschlecht und Charakter* the author's pet notion of projection can be seen at work, as the man's fearful desire for the phallus as 'seine Sexualität im engsten Sinne' (G&C 338) is projected on to woman. The assertion that female desire is motivated exclusively by the phallus is made in the manner of a revelation: 'es ist vor allem — darüber kann ein Buch über das wirkliche Weib nicht schweigen . . . es ist der Phallus' (G&C 338). Yet the revelation which must out in spite of conventional propriety is in fact a bluff, veiling a more significant revelation, one which does indeed remain tacit. As weapon in the coital 'murder', the phallus must remain hidden for woman; indeed, it derives its mystery from its occultation. The cult-object remains nameless, 'das Etwas wofür sie keinen Namen hat' (G&C 339), and its revelation would mean her destruction. If Weininger ceremoniously avers his own freedom from the cult ('das, was die Frau absolut und endgültig unfrei macht' G&C 339) by giving a name to the nameless, there are indications that the very act of naming effects a concealment. In the comparison with the Medusa Weininger substitutes man for woman in the scenario of the phallic Mystery, and so unwittingly reveals that he too is 'unfrei'. Both Weininger and Törleß when seeking to play the role of 'master', are unable to adopt the phallic prerogative. While Weininger's revelation is purely 'nominal', Törleß plays the role of the Weiningerian woman to the letter; he fails to name the phallus in his attempt to tell Basini what it is to be a real man: 'Nicht nur mit dem Mund und mit . . .' (T 103). As in the curtailing of 'Mutter' to 'Mut. . .' the ellipsis

may be seen as an indicator of the intertextual link. The philosopher and the schoolboy are conjoined in their inability to assert an unequivocal model of sexual difference, their ambivalent relationship to the phallus being the stumbling-block in either case.

This substitution, common to both texts, has its foundation in the book which was a documented source for both writers, Bachofen's immensely influential account of the matriarchal tradition *Das Mutterrecht*. Bachofen relates that man's initiation to the Dionysian rites was contingent upon his dissembling his gender: 'In weiblicher Kleidung nimmt der Mann an dem Kulte der Frauen teil'. Woman, enthralled in the scenario presented by Weininger, actually assumed the role of mistress in the transsexual order of the cult: 'Die Rollen der Geschlechter scheinen gewechselt'.¹⁷ Musil notes this ambivalence in one of his essayistic fragments: 'Möglich, daß dieses männlich-weibliche Prinzip schon den Mysterien zugrunde liegt' (VIII 1393).

Weininger also notes that woman is the natural medium for hypnosis by virtue of her lack of character: 'Nur wer keinen Charakter in höherem Sinne hat, bleibt . . . so leicht beeinflussbar wie das Weib es ist' (G&C 268); similarly, we read of Törleß that 'es schien damals, daß er überhaupt keinen Charakter habe' (T 13). And as Weininger supports his theory that women submit more easily to hypnosis by the claim 'Wie leicht wird nicht . . . W durch Lachen oder Weinen angesteckt' (G&C 268), Törleß, as we have seen, mimics both the tears of his mother and the transfixed smile of Basini. The veiling of the mother's desiring gaze, the 'objet a' from which these other eyes derive their power, is vital if the threat of the son's emasculation is to be forestalled. As woman is made to tremble in anticipation of the enthralling phallic revelation in Weininger's account, so Törleß's desire to be the object of the phallic mother's gaze is coupled with the fear of sexual nonentity.

The interdiction of this desire is ascribed by Lacan to the 'nom/non du père', which demands that the son's incestuous wish should submit to the father's prior right. By accepting this prohibitive instance the son is granted access to the Symbolic order, which allows him to operate in the name of the father, but only in as far as he submits his desire to the exigencies of the paternal law. It is significant that Törleß conceives a possible end to the Basini affair under the patronate licence of his parents ('unter dem Patronate seiner Eltern' T 129). In *Törleß* a major part of the son's submission lies in his renunciation of bisexual desire and the childhood fantasy of being a little girl; in taking up the father's name (we never know him by another) he is required to play the man 'mit der ganzen Seele'. By the end of the novel Törleß has apparently taken the place of his father at the mother's side. The child's desire to be a 'Kutscher' (T 8), which Freud associates with the desire for sexual arousal — 'Die Erschütterungen der Wagenfahrt und später der Eisenbahnfahrt üben eine so faszinierende Wirkung auf ältere Kinder aus, daß wenigstens alle Knaben irgend einmal im Leben Kondukteure und Kutscher werden wollen' (StA V 107) — is revised as Törleß travels to the station with his mother in order to

replace his father in what Freud sees as the sexual scenario of the train journey. Yet the boy's accession to the father's place is made under the sign of a denial. Although the gaze is emancipated from the prohibitive veil, it must now operate by stealth: 'Und er betrachtete verstohlen von der Seite seine Mutter' (T 139). Like the gaze which forces Törleß's sexual submission in the scene in the 'Versteck', this fugitive look comes from the side. Törleß must dissimulate the fact that his parents' relationship and primarily the sexual role of his mother is no longer 'unvorstellbar'; the boy's gaze is as it were stolen from the father, whose right it transgresses. The desire which contravenes the law, when asked to name itself, must perforce be denied. The gaze, itself doing service for the coital desire to suckle, is translated into the olfactory consumption of the perfume which rises from the desired breast:

"Was willst du, mein Kind?"

"Nichts, Mama, ich dachte nur eben etwas."

Und er prüfte den leise parfümierten Geruch, der aus der Taille seiner Mutter aufstieg.
(T 140)

The 'Bandwurm'

As was noted above, Freud establishes the constitutional interplay of active and passive roles in the partial drives which engage in the 'scopic field': 'Bei der Perversion, deren Streben das Schauen und Beschautwerden ist, tritt ein sehr merkwürdiger Charakter hervor . . . Das Sexualziel ist hiebei nämlich in zweifacher Ausbildung vorhanden, in *aktiver* und in *passiver* Form' (StA V 67). The correspondence with the motif of the eye in *Törleß* is all the more striking in view of Freud's postulation that the root of this dualistic structure might be traced in human bisexuality: 'Dagegen wäre man versucht, solche gleichzeitig vorhandene Gegensätze mit dem in der Bisexualität vereinten Gegensatz von männlich und weiblich in Beziehung zu setzen' (StA V 69).¹⁸ The notion of bisexuality is invoked moreover, not only in order to revise the received idea of simple gender polarity, but also to challenge the idea that sexual inversion merely reverses such a binary scheme. Thus Freud notes of the homosexual cult in Ancient Greece 'das Sexualobjekt ist also in diesem Falle, wie in vielen anderen, nicht das gleiche Geschlecht, sondern die Vereinigung beider Geschlechtscharaktere, das Kompromiß etwa zwischen einer Regung, die nach dem Manne, und einer, die nach dem Weibe verlangt' (StA V 56). The parallel between this and the bisexual 'compromise' which characterises Törleß's desire is clear.

In the 'Drei Abhandlungen', the compromise between active and passive roles in the realm of the scopic drive is more fully developed in the partial drives which Freud locates in the skin as a generalised erotogenic zone: sadism and masochism. Once more there is a striking degree of correspondence between the Freudian theory and Musil's fictional practice. The key passage here is the description of Törleß's hypnagogic thought processes and the grotesque dream on the night after

his visit to the mathematics teacher. The scene is ushered in by an apparently quite innocuous sight, which nevertheless presents an unaccountable threat for Törleß: in a square of light projected by the window, a curtain-cord casts a shadow 'wie ein Wurm' (T 84). For Törleß, 'dies alles war von einer beängstigenden, grotesken Häßlichkeit' (T 84). The threatening cypher in fact refers back to the scene in the 'Versteck'; once more the patch of light is the focus for the gaze, and the worm does metonymic service for the image of Basini. In the 'Versteck' scene, a 'worm' is invested with the significance of the sadistic torture that Basini has undergone while 'out of the picture', the sole vestige of evidence from the invisible scene: 'Und mit einem Male war Basinis Antlitz wieder darinnen; genau so wie zum ersten Male; mit demselben starr festgehaltenen, süßlichen Lächeln: als ob in der Zwischenzeit nichts geschehen wäre, nur über Oberlippe, Mund und Kinn zeichneten langsame Blutstropfen einen roten, wie ein Wurm sich windenden Weg' (T 72).

The worm can be said to have the function here of a fetish in the sense that Freud details in the 'Drei Abhandlungen', where the normal object is replaced by a metonymic substitute which is inadequate to the satisfaction of the normal 'Sexualziel'. That Törleß should not perceive the fetish as such is only consistent with Freud's theory: 'In anderen Fällen ist es eine dem Betroffenen meist nicht bewußte symbolische Gedankenverbindung, welche zum Ersatz des Objektes durch den Fetisch geführt hat' (StA V 65). In his essay 'Ansätze zu neuer Ästhetik' (1925), Musil discusses the metonymic function of the fetish, relating it specifically to the unconscious processes of 'Entstellung' that Freud first identified in his *Traumdeutung*:

Wahrscheinlich hängt es mit den, untereinander eng verwandten, Vorgängen zusammen, welche die Psychologie Verdichtung und Verschiebung nennt, wobei entweder heterogene, aber unter gleichem Affekt stehende Bilder zu Konglomeraten zusammengeballt werden, an denen gewissermaßen die Affektsumme haftet (z.B. Tiermenschen und multiple Tiere der primitiven Kulturen, Traum- und Halluzinationsbilder, wo gleichfalls zwei oder mehr Personen in einer erscheinen), oder umgekehrt ein einzelnes Bild (Teil) als Repräsentant eines Komplexes auftritt und mit dem unerklärlich hohen Affektwert des Ganzen geladen erscheint (Magische Rolle von Haaren, Fingernägeln, Schatten, Spiegelbild u. dgl.) (VIII 1139).

This formulation is anticipated in *Törleß*. Basini's purely preliminary status as object of desire is explained by the fact that Törleß's perception of him is always limited to such fetishistic forms as those outlined in the essay. Basini is both 'Traumbild' and 'Spiegelbild': 'Und diese tiefe Erniedrigung, diese Selbstaufgabe, dieses von den schweren, blassen, giftigen Blättern der Schande Bedecktwerden, das wie ein unkörperliches, fernes Spiegelbild durch seine Träume gezogen war, war nun plötzlich mit Basini geschehen' (T 46). The image which Törleß typically has of his double is, as we have seen, in itself doubled — in Freudian terms a 'compromise' between Basini and Törleß's own image. The image of the worm can thus be seen as a fetish at a double remove, like the 'Vorstellungsrepräsentanz' an image of an image.

This image serves perfectly to figure the double nature of Törleß's desire; as a

standard phallic symbol (related to the snake discussed above), it represents the sadistic desire for sexual aggression, yet it is also the bloody mark of the suffering of such aggression, the mark, that is, of Törleß's identification with the girlish victim Basini. The 'Versteck' is seen as concealing such phallic figures, a hide at once for 'Schnecken und Würmern' (T 66) and for 'zauberkundiger Schlangen' (T 62); these figures embody the danger which is intrinsic to the 'Versteck' in its transposed sense: 'eine Gefahr lag nun da . . . irgendwo im Versteck' (T 100). As a mere metonym the worm obliquely sustains the presence of the sexual object during Törleß's fantasy in the later scene, allowing the motivation of his arousal, but not requiring him to recognise the identity of the motivating object. It is a mysterious tessera; as he falls asleep, he feels 'eine sinnliche Regung, — die ihm aber als solche gar nicht mehr zu Bewußtsein kam, sondern in irgendeiner durchaus unerkennbaren, aber sehr nachdrücklichen Weise mit Basini verknüpft war' (T 87). The fetishistic dissimulation keeps the phallic threat at bay; once more the image fixed upon by the subject's gaze is metaphorically transformed into a voracious beast, and once more his vulnerability is shielded; the veil or net is now a cage: 'Ihm war, als liege dort eine Gefahr gekettet, die er aus seinem Bette heraus, wie durch Gitterstäbe geschützt, mit der Ruhe der Sicherheit betrachten könne' (T 86).

The worm as phallic fetish is not merely the trigger of the dream and the index of Basini's continuous, subliminal presence during the scene, but it also effects a connection between Törleß's sexual desire (figured by Basini) and his epistemological desire (figured by Kant). The two paradigms, which Törleß had been so anxious to keep separate in the previous scene ('Basini und dies sind für mich zweierlei' T 83), coalesce in the dream. The philosophical work which Törleß had perceived as the icon of the paternal cult ('Zu Hause standen diese Bücher in dem Schranke mit den grünen Scheiben in Papas Arbeitszimmer . . . Es war wie das Heiligtum einer Gottheit, der man nicht gerne naht' T 78), is drawn into his sexual fantasy. As Törleß's mother, the heavenly body located in Kant's 'bestirnte Himmel', gravitates into the 'engen, winkligen Gemächer der Sinnlichkeit' (T 114), so the philosopher who represents the ultimate realm of the logos ('als letztes Wort der Philosophie' T 78) is annexed in an erotic scenario.

In the course of the dream the mathematics teacher's 'Konkubinat mit der Mathematik' (T 75) takes on a homosexual dimension. The teacher and Kant are seen leafing through a huge volume of Kant's work; the teacher has 'Kant in der Hand' as had Törleß earlier (T 78), and Kant in his turn repeatedly strokes the teacher's cheek. The role of the hand as focus of sexual activity has emerged elsewhere in Törleß's relationship to Beineberg; the movement of Beineberg's hands evoke the sensation of their touch on Törleß's skin: 'In den Händen schien es [etwas Unzüchtiges] nur gewissermaßen anzusammeln und schien von ihnen wie das Vorgefühl einer Berührung auszustrahlen, das Törleß einen ekligen Schauer über die Haut jagte' (T 21). Similarly, in the sexually charged scene with Beineberg which immediately precedes this one, his sexual aggression is concentrated in his

eyes and hands: 'während die Hände mit einer eigentümlich häßlichen Behendigkeit im Halbdunkel hin und her zuckten' (T 82). In the same way Kant and the teacher, bent over the book, 'griffen mit den Händen hinein' (T 85); then Törleß hears the teacher's voice 'genau so, wie wenn sie im Mathematikunterricht einen Bandwurm von Beweis abfingerte. Solange, bis der andere wieder den Professor streichelte' (T 85). The resonances here are multiple and complex. The 'Bandwurm' may be seen as a type of 'Kompromißbildung' in the Freudian sense, derived as a compound from the two fetishistic representations of the epistemological and sexual cults respectively. The 'Band' not only refers back to the 'Strumpfband' which Basini brought back to the academy as the token of a fictitious affair (this being the sole example of fetishism cited by Freij in his book), but more importantly to the volume, which as we have seen was perceived by Törleß as the feared and hallowed object of the Kantian cult. By virtue of this ambivalence the object undergoes the same shift from divine fetish to sexual substitute as Freud notes in the derivation of the notion of sexual fetishism: 'Dieser Ersatz wird nicht mit Unrecht mit dem Fetisch verglichen, in dem der Wilde seinen Gott verkörpert sieht' (StA V 63).¹⁹

The cult object which 'man nicht gerne naht' is opened up to the probing touch of those who had revered it, and amalgamated with the worm as cypher of sexual abuse. In the figure of speech 'einen Bandwurm von Beweis abfingern', the displacement of intellectual pursuit into the sexual paradigm is encoded with all the subtlety of an example from Freud's *Traumdeutung*.²⁰ As Törleß's intuition of Beineberg's sexual aggression had focused on 'einer fingernden Beweglichkeit' (T 21) in his hands, so here the 'divine' fetish suffers violence not only in the leafing of hands through it, but also in the metaphorical fingering ('abfingern') of the 'Bandwurm'. The teacher's proofs are made by touching 'Kant' even as they lead Kant to stroke him; the mutual handling of these two 'Männchen' clearly enacts a sexual encounter in the displaced realm of double-meanings.

The figure of speech is an exemplary case of Freudian 'Entstellung' in the economy of the dream; by the double movements of 'Verdichtung' and 'Verschiebung' the banal word becomes a highly charged portmanteau; in terms of Musil's discussion in the 'Ansätze' essay, the 'Bandwurm' is both as it were one of his 'multiple Tiere', a conglomerate, that is, of 'unter gleichem Affekt stehende Bilder', and it is a synecdochal image imbued with 'dem unerklärlich hohen Affektwert des Ganzen'. In this double fetish, the link between the intellectual quest and Basini, which Törleß had sought to deny, is definitively forged. It is hardly surprising that he is made to think of the scene where he had denied the link to Beineberg, and so to associate his friend's fingering sexuality with Kant: 'Und nun fiel ihm auch Beineberg wieder ein, Beineberg und Kant — das gestrige Gespräch' (T 85). The two are reunited as it were 'im selben Topf' in the displaced narrative of the dream, as the phallic figures of worm and fingers gain access to the 'Band' which thereby becomes, like the 'Strumpfband', a token of sexual conquest.²¹

While the figures in the dream make so free with the imaginary fetish, its trace

on the floor retains for Törleß a threat which keeps him at a distance, to be viewed like the 'Kant', 'behutsam, ganz langsam und behutsam' (T 86). At the same time the effect of Beineberg's hands is revived as the gestures of touch are transposed into the recurrent references to the sensations of the skin, the erotogenic zone in which Freud's sado-masochistic drives are located. Thus the dream retreats as a physical sensation 'langsam wie eine seidene Decke, die über die Haut eines nackten Körpers hinuntergleitet' (T 85). The dream is a figurative analogue of the blanket which furnishes Törleß with a pleasurable 'hide' which protects his skin from the fetish whilst allowing him to view it. Törleß is able to rehearse the scene of sexual abuse in the 'Versteck' where Basini and his worm of blood are on show, while the 'Gitterstäbe' and the blanket contrive to keep the worm 'dis-placed' or 'ent-stellt' at a safe distance from Törleß's own skin. He is thus protected from having to make the physical identification with his double that was implied in the reflective function of the framed image in the earlier scene, and thus to physically suffer the violence of the worm. The casting of the dream as the corollary of blanket and cage is only consistent with its double function in emancipating repressed desires, but only in a form which is, like the fetish dissimulated (condensed and displaced) and thus devoid of immediate, physical danger for the dreamer.

It is also in the skin, 'in seiner Haut, rings um den ganzen Körper herum' (T 86), that the memory of his infantile fantasy is then evoked, a fantasy which 'kitzelte im ganzen Körper und jagte rings unter der Haut umher' (T 86). The connection between the memory and the dream, mediated by the sensual apparatus of the skin, lies in the bisexual nature of the desire embodied in either fantasy. The desire to enjoy the secret, sexual recess of the little girl's 'Versteck' on the one hand, and the identification with Basini the 'Freudenmädchen', which chooses the theatrical reconstruction of that 'Versteck' as its scene, on the other, both leave Törleß in a state of sensual pleasure. Yet the oscillation between active and passive, sadistic and masochistic roles in the transsexual fantasy world of the 'Versteck' means that the excitement must be bound up with fear; the skin's pleasure is only guaranteed as long as it is blanketed in another sort of 'Versteck'. The pain inherent to sado-masochistic pleasure is wishfully 'versteckt', only to be released when Törleß perceives the illusory nature of the 'Versteck', that it offers only an 'äußerste Illusion von Trotz und Heimlichkeit' (T 39). The model of the quest for the inner chamber which was discussed earlier is subjected here to the principle of deferral; the simulated space for sensuality's emancipation is debunked as only one more in the succession of antechambers. Törleß must once more confront the pain of exclusion: 'Der ganze Schmerz darüber, daß er noch immer vor einem verschlossenen Tore stehen müsse' (T 87). The locus of the lethal mistress sensuality must be bound in by protective walls and doors; indeed in the next paragraph the chamber undergoes a paradigm change into just such an exclusive, protective structure, as Törleß's sensuality is metaphorically cast as a 'höchste, versteckteste Mauer' (T 87). Not only

has sensuality become a metaphor of partition, but this structure is in itself 'versteckt', not simply available to the self's recourse. The inner chamber is only to be experienced by the metonymic mediation of its 'Vorwände', the pretextual fantasies of the psyche, which as 'Vor-wände' also protectively partition off its essential desires.

Freud writes in the 'Drei Abhandlungen', 'daß auch die Genitalien des anderen Geschlechts an und für sich Gegenstand des Ekels sein können und daß dieses Verhalten zur Charakteristik aller Hysterischen (zumal der weiblichen) gehört' (StA V 62). If credence is given to the amateur prognosis of Törleß's propensity to hysteria, it is hardly surprising that when Törleß seeks refuge from the phallic worm in the womb-like security of the 'Versteck', retreating, that is, as a little girl from the male 'sex', his reaction to the space of the female 'sex' is no less ambivalent.

Having been subjected earlier to attempts at hypnosis, Törleß is now treated with two of the other standard techniques of contemporary psychiatry in the displaced form of the narrative's figurative language. Firstly his fantasy of the 'Männchen' Kant as a figure of phallic arousal is transmitted as a dose of electrotherapy: 'Dazwischen aber schien immer wieder das kleine Männchen riesig zu wachsen, mit einem unerbittlich strengen Gesicht, und jedesmal zuckte es wie ein elektrischer Schlag schmerzhaft von Törleß' Gehirn durch den Körper' (T 92).²² Having undergone this pain Törleß is then given more the gentle treatment of hydrotherapy. The sensation of pleasure is once more dispersed over the surface of the skin: 'dann, ganz zuletzt, war nur die angenehme laue Wärme, — wie ein Bad und eine sinnliche Regung, — die ihm aber als solche gar nicht mehr zu Bewußtsein kam, sondern in irgendeiner durchaus unerkennbaren, aber sehr nachdrücklichen Weise mit Basini verknüpft war' (T 87). Once again the image corresponds to a passage from Freud's essay on infantile sexuality: 'Wir werden also nicht erstaunt sein zu erfahren, daß gewissen Arten allgemeiner Hautreizung sehr deutliche erogene Wirkungen zuzuschreiben sind. Unter diesen heben wir vor allem die Temperaturreize hervor; vielleicht wird so auch unser Verständnis für die therapeutische Wirkung warmer Bäder vorbereitet' (StA V 106).

In Freud's terms this derivation of sensual pleasure from pain, 'die sexuell erregende Wirkung mancher an sich unlustiger Affekte, des Ängstigen, Schauerns, Grausens', is made possible 'wenn nur gewisse Nebenumstände (die Angehörigkeit zu einer Scheinwelt, Lektüre, Theater) den Ernst der Unlustempfindung dämpfen' (StA V 108–09). Törleß's sado-masochistic experiences are invariably played out in such a 'Scheinwelt', a world of illusion and projected images in lieu of real objects. In the dream-scene, as in others, the reality of sexual aggression is mitigated, its presence limited to the projected 'Schein' (in both senses) of the fetishistic image on the floor. This sexual experience is twice removed from reality in the manner of the cinema; such an image of an imaginary figure (Basini) as the worm, is for Törleß the viewer but 'die Vision seiner Visionen' (T 90).

In terms of one of Lacan's much-vaunted formulations regarding the nature of desire, the fetish is but a preliminary station on desire's endless trajectory:

The enigmas that desire seems to pose for a 'natural philosophy' — its frenzy miming the abyss of the infinite, the secret collusion with which it envelops the pleasure of knowing and of joyful domination, these amount to nothing more than the derangement of the instinct that comes from being caught on the rails — eternally stretching towards the desire for something else — of metonymy. Hence its perverse fixation at the very suspension-point of the signifying chain where the screen-memory is immobilised and the fascinating image of the fetish is petrified. There is no other way of conceiving the indestructibility of unconscious desire.²³

Lacan cites here, in metaphorical language that strikingly coincides with Musil's own, the sorts of enigmas which the indestructibility of desire poses for Törleß's attempts to construct a natural philosophical system. Desire is indestructible not least because the subject always recoils from its potential satiation, and fixes instead on the sort of imaginary substitute ('the fascinating image of the fetish') which will guarantee the perpetuation of lack and thus of desire. At the end of the novel Törleß is fittingly propelled on along the infinite perspective of the rails which had set the scene at the beginning ('Endlos gerade liefen vier parallele Eisenstränge nach beiden Seiten' T 7). This return to the 'endless' perspective of the beginning implicitly defines this, Musil's first 'story', as the prototype for all his unfinished narratives: 'meine Geschichten waren alle endlos' (VII 839).

By fixing on a mere 'Vorstellungsrepräsentanz' of the phallus, Törleß not only overcomes the desire to suffer its violence — this being the effect of the electric aversion therapy — but he thereby shores up his sexual identity as man. This semblance of security in a sexual identity is essential to the assumption of an identity in language as an 'I' which can make statements about the nature of self and world. The closure of the 'Versteck' as the scene of Törleß's 'innere Zwiespältigkeit' (T 42) at once suppresses his bisexual desire and resolves his bifocal view of self and world. The painful surrender of the desire to be a little girl is achieved by replacing the ideal of the 'Versteck' by the 'Vorwand' as the mark of desire's fore-closure.

At the end of the novel Törleß once more figuratively becomes the mother. The discursive conception of Kantian philosophy (his first pregnancy) is superseded here by the aporia of sense-making through language: 'diese Wortlosigkeit fühlte sich köstlich an, wie die Gewißheit des befruchteten Leibes' (T 140). The consequences of this ostensible fruition are shown in the final lines:

"Was willst du, mein Kind?"
 "Nichts, Mama, ich dachte nur eben etwas." (T 140)

The unspeakable desire of the mother is dissembled behind some 'Vorwand' of a thought which cannot be put into words. The enigmatic 'etwas', as marker of desire's repression, indicates the sort of compromised existence which Törleß, the expectant mother, will bear into the outside world. Equally it intimates the more elaborate strategic 'Vorwände' behind which the protagonists of Musil's more mature prose works will be seen to take cover.

NOTES TO CHAPTER VI

1. Stopp, pp. 94–118.
2. Reniers-Servranckx, 'Törleß', pp. 26–39.
3. Corino, pp. 123–235; Peter Henninger, *Der Buchstabe und der Geist* (Frankfurt a. M., 1980); Lars Freij, *Türlosigkeit: Robert Musil's Törleß in Mikroanalyse* (Stockholm, 1972), p. 27.
4. Harry Goldgar, 'The square root of minus one: Freud and Robert Musil's Törleß', *Comparative Literature*, 17 (1965), 117–32 (p. 131). Similarly, as was seen above (p. 3), Reniers takes her version of the text as read.
5. See the full discussion of the 'Vorwand' in the section on the *Vereinigungen* below.
6. Henninger p. 173.
7. Annie Reniers-Servranckx, *Robert Musil: Konstanz und Entwicklung von Themen, Motiven und Strukturen in den Dichtungen* (Bonn, 1972). Her discussion of the function of male and female principles and of their resolution in the figure of the hermaphrodite skirts round the crucial connection with sexuality.
8. In: Jacques Lacan, *Les quatre concepts fondamentaux de la psychanalyse* (Paris, 1964).
9. Reniers finds evidence to suggest that this work could not have come to Musil's attention before the completion of the novel, the main plank of her argument being the text of a letter of March 1905, in which Musil writes that the novel has been finished 'Schon seit Wochen' (Reniers, 'Törleß', p. 29), while Freud's essays were published only in the summer of that year. If I persist in drawing a series of connections between the works it is because there is evidence that the draft to which Musil refers in the letter was hardly the finished article. After rejections from three publishers in the course of 1905, Musil turned for help in revision of the script to the critic Alfred Kerr, who later recorded their collaboration: 'Musil und ich, wir haben jede Zeile dieses Buchs, im Mscpt, nicht nur zusammen durchgegangen — sondern zusammen durchgearbeitet' (quoted from Freij, p. 5). The extent and nature of these revisions must remain a matter of speculation, there being no extant versions of the novel in the 'Nachlaß', but Musil might well have had access to the *Drei Abhandlungen* in the period when alterations to the text of *Törleß* were being undertaken.
10. Lacan (Paris, 1964), p. 105.
11. The identification with the prostitute victim anticipates the experience of Moosbrugger in *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*.
12. The figure of the 'Schutzengel' is a preoccupation of Musil's in his early writing career. It provided the title for one of the sketches for a novel that he produced before embarking on *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*. Its function appears to be analogous to that of the 'Doppelgänger im anderen Geschlecht': 'drei Nächte, in denen man Beziehungen zu einem Schutzengel erwachen fühlt (er ist bei Männern eine Frau, bei Frauen ein Mann) ... man gehört mit nichts so persönlich zusammen wie mit ihm' (Ta II 980). The fact that the angel is a member of the opposite sex accounts for the transsexual role-play which Basini and Törleß engage in. This protective double is, however, also a potential sexual aggressor. As the female protagonist is seated on the toilet she becomes aware of the angel's voyeuristic presence: 'merkt sie plötzlich, daß ihr der Schutzengel zusehet und ist von der Eindringlichkeit dieser Beziehung überwältigt' (Ta II 981). In either case the effect of the 'Schutzengel' as incubus (Törleß we recall suffers Basini's 'Überfall' as he lies asleep) is transposed into the sexually aggressive act of 'zusehen' (a corollary of Weininger's 'Versehen'). The threat of violation in the scopie field invariably underlies Törleß's quest for protection.
13. Lacan (Paris, 1964), p. 98; p. 100.
14. It is 'ce quelque chose qui tient lieu de la representation'. Lacan (Paris, 1964), p. 101.
15. Lacan (Paris, 1964), p. 95.
16. Lacan (Paris, 1964), p. 73.
17. J. J. Bachofen, *Gesammelte Werke* (Basel, 1948), II, p. 592; p. 591. The ritual of these Mysteries informs the function of the phallus as supreme scopie object in Weininger, Musil and Lacan alike; the power of the veiled *fascinus* compels all three in the phallogocentric strain that is common to their very different *œuvres*.
18. Freud's writings recurrently bear witness to the desire to establish a general correlation between bisexuality and the cooperation of active and passive roles in the unconscious. Ultimately, however, he felt unable to make of bisexuality the linch-pin for his edifice.
19. The fetishistic investment of the text anticipates Barthes's definition of the text as 'un objet fétiche' doing service for the reader's desire of the author: 'dans le texte, d'une certaine façon, je désire l'auteur'. Roland Barthes, *Le plaisir du texte* (Paris, 1973), pp. 45–46.
20. A specific parallel lies in the symbolic exploitation of the 'Bücherwurm' in Freud's 'Traum von der botanischen Monographie' (StA II 186). In either case the worm's voracity is focused on the book as object of desire; the young Freud and Törleß share the same epistemophilic fantasy. In *Törleß* worm, finger and manikin are correlated in the phallic plundering of the book: 'Dieses wutzlige kleine Männchen, von dem er geträumt hatte, wie gierig es die Seiten unter den Fingern jagte!' (T 87).

21. The same configuration of 'Band' ('Strumpfband') and 'Wurm' as a metaphor for sexual engagement recurs in the context of Moosbrugger's fantasies in the 'Moosbrugger tanzt' chapter of *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*: "Zum Beispiel, Frauen halten ihre Strümpfe mit Gummibändern. Da hat man's!" — dachte Moosbrugger. "Sie tragen wie ein Amulett Gummibänder ums Bein. Unter den Kitteln. Wie die Ringe, mit denen man die Obstbäume beschmiert, damit die Würmer nicht hinaufsteigen." (MoE 395).
22. Even Freij, who subscribes to the denial of Freudian influence in the novel, feels constrained to read this passage as a symbolic erection 'fast wie aus einem psychoanalytischen Bericht geholt', but he does not recognise that this phallic metamorphosis of the philosopher is but the culmination of a general pattern of interference between sexuality and epistemology; this in spite of the fact that the passage in question evokes just that interference, in the transmission of the orgasmic shock 'von Törleß' Gehirn durch den Körper' (my emphasis). He also asserts that 'auch solche Stellen an und für sich nichts über eine eventuelle Bekanntschaft des Urhebers mit Schriften Freuds aussagen' (Freij, p. 27).
23. Quoted from 'L'instance de la lettre dans l'inconscient' in: Lemaire, p. 195.

VII VEREINIGUNG OR VORWAND?

We have seen that the cooperative crises of sense and sensuality in *Törleß* turn on a fantasised scenario where the subject enters into the female space of the 'Versteck', there to gaze upon the phallic object, the scenario being recurrently forestalled by the intervention of a series of 'Vorwände'. In the two novellas published together as the *Vereinigungen* this scenario is developed from the point of view of a female protagonist. Once more the psychosexual quest for identity is transposed into the metaphorical space of a house, encountering walls and doorways. Here windows too are incorporated into the topological model. In the *Vereinigungen* the double sense of 'Vorwand' as pretext and as a partition before some object ('Vor-wand') is exploited more systematically. The notion of the pretext is seen to determine the external structures of dialogue and the internal structures of the psyche alike; it intervenes both in the quest for communication between self and other in language, and in the quest for identity within the self, where it will be shown to have the same function as in the contemporary theories of Freud.

This transitional section of the argument can hardly pretend to do full justice to these complex, multivalent texts. By focusing on the metaphor of the 'Vorwand' it seeks to furnish an economical picture of the interdependence of the three themes of sexuality, the self and discourse in the *Vereinigungen*. The argument is constructed on the foundations of three more comprehensive studies. Karl Corino provides a meticulous study of the texts' genesis and narrative structure; Jürgen Schröder discusses the intense semantic ambiguity of the novellas; and, most importantly for present purposes, Peter Henninger, in his compelling psychoanalytic reading, identifies the phallus as the symbolic core of the texts' motivation.¹ Henninger traces the pervasive, encoded presence of the phallus in a series of cryptic references to tumescent figures, and to mysterious objects concealed behind veils or curtains. He believes that for Musil, as for Lacan, the phallus in its copular function serves to symbolise the ultimate union of male and female. As the moment of union is constantly deferred, so the phallus is never truly actualised. It must remain hidden both literally and figuratively, its representation limited to imaginary simulations. This phenomenon was minutely traced in *Törleß*; here, however, the detail of Henninger's exposition will not be rehearsed, but rather complemented by a number of significant ideas which he overlooks.

The paradigm for the quest enacted in the two novellas is furnished in the passage which stands as a prologue to *Die Versuchung der heiligen Veronika*; the telos of the quest, the site of its 'Vollendung', is defined by the *unio mystica* of the male and

female voices, the locus where the 'Stücke' will spring 'aus ihrer Krankheit und Schwäche hinweg ins Klare, Tagfeste, Aufgerichtete' (VI 194). For Henninger this is the site of the phallus, and so, in accordance with his Lacanian frame of reference, infinitely deferred as end-point of the quest.² The voices are disposed in their dialogue in a way that is exemplary for the works as a whole; dialogue is exploited as a metaphor for sexual intercourse, as well as for the intercourse of the male and female souls. The female voice seeks containment in the male, but there is a disruption of roles as her voice encloses itself and so to speak forecloses on the encompassing function of his. By the same token the space that the male voice would provide, far from furnishing the security of an intact enclosure, remains partial. Their disposition is as much one of contiguity as of union; they lie as if adjacent on a written page, 'nebeneinander und ineinander, die dunkle, tiefe, plötzlich mit einem Sprung um sich selbst gestellte Stimme der Frau, wie die Seiten es fügen, von der weichen, weiten, gedehnten Stimme des Mannes umschlossen, von dieser verästelte, unfertig liegende Stimme, zwischen der das, was sie noch nicht zu bedecken Zeit fand, hervorschaut' (VI 194).

The site of the voices' coition, the 'Punkt' which lies at the very centre of the passage, and is thus equivalent in its location to the 'Mittelpunkt' (VI 195) which Johannes in *Die Versuchung* seeks in God, this transcendent centre is hedged in by the conditional tenor of the passage. The resolution of sexual difference and the resolution of the difference with which language is constitutionally struck (this being marked out here by the punctuating 'vielleicht', in which the discourse can be seen to equivocate on the desire which motivates the quest) are conjoined. Their common symbolic object is the phallus as 'Klare, Tagfeste, Aufgerichtete'. The copular figure as, following Leclaire, 'the signifier of the impossible identity',³ can only be inferred from the condition of sexual difference, the union of the sexes from their estrangement as disparate 'Stücke'. Far from the parts being resolved into a unitary figure, the male and female — their bodies, souls and voices — will be subjected to the 'Vorwand' and its principle of partition. It will be seen to interrupt the quest for physical union in sexual intercourse, to intervene in the mystical intercourse of souls, and to disrupt the ideal of verbal intercourse as furnishing a space for the union of self and other within an unbroken concatenation of meanings.

Die Vollendung der Liebe opens with an enactment of this abstract model of intercourse. The anonymous dialogue which opens the novella sets up a discord between the two voices, the one refusing to travel with the other because he (as it turns out) has his own ends: 'ich muß trachten, jetzt rasch zu Ende zu kommen' (VI 156). This parting, indeed partition, in discourse is extrapolated into the metaphorical line which 'runs between' man and wife as a 'Blick'. The highly complex nature of the gaze in *Törleß* should alert us to the potential disruption of this almost tangible span of their intercourse: 'als spannte er sich zwischen ihnen wie eine Strebe aus härtestem Metall und hielt sie auf ihren Plätzen fest und verbände sie doch

trotzdem sie so weit auseinander waren, zu einer Einheit' (VI 156). Yet the 'er' here refers not simply to the unifying 'Blick', but rather to the 'Winkel' which this forms with the line of the wife's arm: 'Der Arm von der Frau aber ragte von der Kanne weg und der Blick, mit dem sie ihrem Manne sah, bildete mit ihm einen starren, steifen Winkel' (VI 156). The 'Winkel', the conjunction of two separate lines in the woman's body, is thus made to stand metonymically for one part of itself — the look as evidence of an inner sense of 'Vereinigung' — while the other, that which diverges from the line of the gaze, is as it were disregarded. In *Törleß* the 'Winkel' was repeatedly associated with the 'Versteck' as locus of occultation, the vagina as the scene of sexual experience. Here, however, the angle is transformed into a single line, so that the darkness and equivocation (the dissonant admixture of the two voices in the opening dialogue) is apparently expunged. The metonymic shift realises, by sleight of syntax, the point where the voices 'wie zwei Strahlen schiessen und sich ineinander schlingen' (VI 194). The angle between self and other, which is the authentic figure of the partial 'Vereinigung', is the corollary of the incommensurable desires which are at work in the 'dialectic of the gaze'. The relation between male and female in the scopic field of desire is characterised by the semantic ambiguity of the lovers' plural gazes, which as 'unverwandten Blicken' (VI 156) can be read either as undeviating in their communion, or as unrelated. The fact that the gaze may be pluralised implies an element of divergence, a 'Winkel' rather than a 'Blick'. The coercion of the figure of separation into the figure of union seeks to alter the paradigm of the 'Winkel' into the 'Klare, Tagfeste, Aufgerichtete', that is, the phallic paradigm. The univalent figure at the centre of the prologue is recreated here in what is only a semblance of univocality and of scopic identity between the sexes.

The divergent moment which is attached to the line of the lovers' 'Vereinigung' maintains a similarly veiled presence when their intercourse is taken up once more; feeling the need 'nichts von sich zu sprechen' they revive an apparently alternative topic: 'sie sprachen wieder von dem Kranken, von einem Kranken eines Buches' (VI 157). The interrupted dialogue in question is characterised by dissimulation 'als ob es sein Gesicht verbürge und, während es von dem Buche handelte, eigentlich anderswohin sähe' (VI 157); this is a dissimulation, moreover, of the direction of the gaze, reminding us that the apparent line of the gaze is not always authentic to its determinant desire. If their look had seemed to assert an integrity of intercourse in its bridging of the space or interval between the two of them, the conversation appears to look to the book for its object, but is actually trained on the conversing partners. The book is merely a mediating object, a pretext: 'nach einer Weile waren ihre Gedanken dann auch ganz unmerklich über diesen unbewußten Vorwand wieder zu ihnen selbst zurückgekehrt' (VI 157).

Corino and Henninger have documented a series of instances where Musil would seem to be interpolating fragments from Freud's early works on hysteria, often in a slightly dissembled form, into the *Vereinigungen* texts. Here there would seem to be

a significant example which both overlook. The reference to G. as an 'unbewußten Vorwand' can be regarded as a veiled borrowing from the 'Bruchstück einer Hysterie-Analyse' (1905). In this work Freud twice refers to the symptomatic 'Vorwände' deployed by his hysterical patient Dora. She accuses her father of exploiting his illnesses as pretexts, in what Freud debunks as a pretext in itself, a way of diverting his attention from her own similar strategies: 'Der andere Vorwurf, daß er seine Krankheiten als Vorwände schaffe und als Mittel benütze, deckt wiederum ein ganzes Stück ihrer eigenen geheimen Geschichte' (StA VI 114). Dora talks then of a sick man in order to express in dissembled form her own illness which, as Freud shows, is symptomatic of her separation from her alleged lover K. The correlation between this and *Die Vollendung* is striking, with a 'Kranke' being introduced in either case as a foil to the revelation of the problem of separation in love; and Claudine's experience of this separation is recurrently cast in metaphors of a sickness which must be concealed: 'Es war ein Dämmerndes um sie und ein Ungewisses wie das ängstliche Verbergen von Leidenschaften Kranker' (VI 162).

Freud's second use of the term 'Vorwand' is no less interesting; it arises in the context of 'Symptomhandlungen', 'jene Verrichtungen, die der Mensch, wie man sagt, automatisch, unbewußt, ohne darauf zu achten, wie spielend, vollzieht, denen er jede Bedeutung absprechen möchte, und die er für gleichgültig und zufällig erklärt, wenn er nach ihnen gefragt wird' (StA VI 146). The symptomatic action (for Musil the acts of the fictional G., 'diesen zufälligen Menschen' VI 157) is represented as 'zufällig' and yet its true motivation is concealed by 'ein solcher Vorwand vor dem Bewußten' (StA VI 147). The word pair 'zufällig' and 'gleichgültig' recurrently appear in *Die Vollendung*, characteristically serving to distance Claudine's experience from her sense of self. Furthermore Musil described the novella form in contradistinction to the novel in an unpublished diary note thus: 'Novellen sind Symptomhandlungen eines Menschen',⁴ so that the action of the novella, the actions taken by Claudine, are in a psychoanalytic sense symptomatic. The pathological symptom determines the structure of the fictional text. Musil's 'unbewußten Vorwand' is surely a derivative of Freud's 'Vorwand vor dem Bewußten', and the transformation is all the more interesting in that it sets on its head Henninger's contention that Musil disguises his graftings from Freud by omitting the key terms 'unbewußt' and 'unterbewußt'.⁵

The book as pretext is both pre-text and 'Vor-wand'; it intervenes between the subjects of the dialogue and its objects in order to deny their identity. Behind the text, behind its protagonist, the sex-criminal G., is concealed the true object of the dialogue's gaze; behind the partition ('Vor-wand') they find themselves. The partition is the prerequisite for the sort of intercourse which Musil explores in the novellas; as he notes in a diary entry their informing idea is 'Die Fiktion, zwei Menschen sprechen, wie durch eine Wand voneinander getrennt' (Ta I 221). Under the guise of the 'Vorwand' this metaphorical wall reinforces the splitting of the

lovers' unity, as much an obstacle to verbal intercourse as to the desire for free intercourse of the 'Blick'.

The particular nature of the mediating agent is crucial to his function. He is 'zufällig' only in a limited sense, acting as 'Vorwand' between the lovers by virtue of an essential analogy between his experience of desire and their own. Willemsen, in his recent study of Musil, argues plausibly that the mysterious G. is Gilles de Rais, the historical model for the archetypal sex-murderer Bluebeard.⁶ The acts of this 'Lustmörder' are not merely ones of corporeal violation, but the violence is seen in much the same way as Clarisse's construal of 'Lust-mord' in *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*, as the murderous separation of eros and sexual desire: 'Die Lust hat sich getrennt vom Menschlichen' (MoE 1572). The 'Lust-mörder' destroys desire by making this separation; G. thus denies his victims the possibility of finding any commensurate object for their desire: 'er tut seinen Opfern schlecht, weh, er muß wissen, daß er sie demoralisiert, ihre Sinnlichkeit verstört und in eine Bewegung bringt, die nie mehr an einem Ziel ruhen können' (VI 158). The 'Lustmord' complex therefore comes to stand for what Lacan defines as the metonymic essence of desire, its eternal straining after what lies beyond its scope. The operation of desire is always played out within a tripartite structure of subject, pretextual object, and actual object (the perpetually deferred 'Vollendung' as 'end'), and for Veronika as for Claudine it must therefore pursue an indirect course: 'Sie [Veronika] hatte niemals ein geradehinzielendes Begehren gespürt, aber nie so sehr wie damals erschienen ihr die Männer nur als ein Vorwand, bei dem selbst man sich nicht aufhalten soll, für etwas anderes, das sich in ihnen nur ungenau verkörpern konnte' (VI, 208).

The 'pre-text' (G. and his book), read and interpreted as a sort of parable, leads to the assertion of fundamental human isolation by its readers, that is, of the inability of desire to unite self and other: 'Ist nicht jedes Gehirn etwas Einsames und Alleiniges?...' (VI 158). The exegesis of the text is a mere pretext for the questioning of the lovers' union; it introduces a third party who bears witness to the denial of intercourse, even as his condition of utter isolation is ironically pressed into the service of its antithesis, their supposed unity: 'Auf dieser Einsamkeit fühlten sie das Geheimnis ihres Zuzweieenseins ruhen' (VI 159). The fictional 'Vorwand' becomes inseparable from what lies behind it; as G. is transformed metaphorically into a house, denied access to his victims by the immutable enclosure of his walls (one might say his 'Vorwände'), so the lovers unwittingly imitate his dilemma, enclosed in their room and looking out on to the world through the windows. The act of 'Lust-mord' has moreover been previously played out by the lovers, as Claudine's desire died in an access of aphanasis during the act of intercourse 'als ich dann plötzlich unter dir zu weinen begann' (VI 159).

The scenario of union is placed under the scrutiny of the other, the paradigm of the unitary 'Blick' superseded by another gaze which comes from without and subjects the view of the world to a bifocal perspective such as emerged in *Törleß*: 'es

stehen manchmal alle Dinge plötzlich zweimal da, voll und deutlich, wie man sie weiß, und dann noch einmal, blaß, dämmernd und erschreckt, als ob sie heimlich und schon fremd der andere anblickte?' (VI 159). Their love is submitted to the same dialectic of enclosure (the protective walls of selfhood) and sheer expansion into the cosmic dimensions of the other as informs G.'s isolation. He is at once entrapped within himself as within walls, and yet, heaven-sent: 'Wie ein Regentag über dem Land, der Himmel schickt ihn' (VI 158), he finds his apotheosis in the vast emptiness of space as he rises: 'von dem Geheimnis seines Alleinseins mit bebenden Flügeln getragen, wie ein fremdes Tier in die Wunder volle Leere des Raums' (VI 158). The lovers' 'Zuzweiensein' is subjected to a double spatial deformation, a moment of extreme diastole into the infinite dimensions of space, experienced as one of extreme systole: 'Sie fühlten nichts als einander und doch war es — schon ganz klein und im Dunkel verschwindend — noch ein Gefühl wie nach allen vier Weiten des Himmels' (VI 160).

This dual spatial transformation, exploiting the ambiguity inherent in the word 'Raum', is not only established by Claudine in her reading of the textual 'Vorwand' in the opening passage (which is itself a sort of pre-text), but it also determines the description of her affair in the text proper as it were. Claudine's experience of self in the text is invariably framed in metaphors of enclosure (as concealment) and of release (or dis-closure), where enclosure can either mean the inviolate space of the 'Versteck' or the dark and inescapable scene of sexual abasement and violence. What Claudine does in the course of the text is to interpret the pre-text, that is, to re-enact the role of Bluebeard — 'dessen "gute" Morde sie nun exemplarisch nachvollzieht'.⁷ Yet at the same time she must suffer the role of victim in her own 'Lustmord'. There are distinct parallels here with the portrait of Bluebeard by Musil's friend Franz Blei: 'Gott war wahrhaftig in ihm und führte das Messer: Gilles wollte Gott von der Welt erlösen'.⁸ As Musil's G. is transformed into the figure of an avenging angel, Claudine's adultery does apparent violence to the love of man and wife, but can nonetheless be represented as a more essential recuperation of that love.⁹ Only by undergoing the painful cut of separation through isolation is the possibility of a true conjunction, a true resolution of difference, averred; this is the fundamental paradox of the construal which Claudine puts upon the pre-text, and duly 'interprets' herself.

Claudine leaves the room which encloses her love and so as it were enters the space behind the protective device of the textual 'Vorwand'; this emancipation is framed in a spatial metaphor: 'ein Weitwerden, wie wenn Wände sich auftun' (VI 163). Yet when the 'Vorwand' is suspended it reveals an essential vulnerability; a door is opened, and according to the correlation of body and room/house which operates throughout the two novellas, it is experienced as a wound: 'es stiegen langsam wie aus einer kaum sichtbaren, aber bis an irgendeine Tiefe reichenden Wunde, in kleinen unaufhörlichen Tropfen, daraus Gedanken und Gefühle empor und weiteten die Stelle' (VI, 163). From the start, the interpretation of G.'s role ('ein

Weitwerden') is bound up with the suffering of violence. As G. 'covered' his victims 'wie ein Regentag über dem Land' (VI 158), so there is an intimation of a break in the lovers' relationship in an analogous image: 'irgendwo aber lockte etwas und lag still und bleich wie Märzsonnenschatten auf frühlingswunder Erde' (VI 164) — 'bleich' is attributed earlier to G.'s smile as he (the sky) violates his victims (the 'wounded' earth). As she becomes ever further removed from her husband, so the coition of heaven and earth is metaphorically effected: 'der Himmel wurde immer niedriger' as it begins 'in dunklen, grauen Vorhängen von langsam dahintreibenden Flocken auf der Erde zu schleifen' (VI 167). The 'Vorwand' is metonymically transformed into these 'Vorhängen', so that the image is later consolidated: 'weich und schwer wie Mauer stand es in der Luft' (VI 171).

The Ministerialrat's ominous words 'Wir werden eingeschneit werden' (VI 169) are realised as Claudine awakes in her hotel room. Standing 'wie eine Mauer' and then revised as 'das dicke Gegitter der Flocken' (VI 171) in accordance with Claudine's own mutation into 'ein Tier', the snow literalises the metaphor of the 'Vorwand'. What in Freud was called a 'Vorwand vor dem Bewußten' is constructed here before the window, which, as in the earlier passage describing G. as a house, has the double function of enclosure and of giving the subject visual access to the world, as a transparent element in the wall. The 'Vorwand' is raised before the enclosed space of Claudine's consciousness: 'Sie tat dies alles, wie man im Schlaf auffährt, mit dem engen Raum eines Bewußtseins, das wie eine kleine unbewohnte Insel herauftaucht' (VI 171). She is indeed marooned, cut off from intercourse with her husband; when she seeks to write a letter to him, the snow (that is, the Ministerialrat) has intervened to cut the 'Verbindung' (VI 176).¹⁰ It is characteristic that the interruption of the lovers' intercourse should be effected by an agent which primarily interferes in the scopic field. A passage from *Die Versuchung* illustrates how the 'Vorwand vor dem Bewußten' is related to the motif of the veil, just as it became a 'Gegitter' above: 'Schleier sanken, sanft wie Schneetreiben vor beleuchteten Fensterscheiben um ihr Bewußtsein' (VI 215). The dialectic of scopic access to the other and of dissimulation, enclosure within a net or cage, which we identified in *Törleß*, is compounded here in the figure of the opaque wall before a transparent window. The veil is raised between the room of the subject's consciousness and the infinite space of the other. It has the same function as the 'Gitter' in *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften* as a device of separation, which nevertheless allows limited visual access to the world: 'das sie von der Welt abtrennte, aber durch Sicht mit ihr verband' (MoE 1316). 'Schleier', 'Gitter' and 'Scheibe' are all correlative in this function, sustaining the principle of 'die Ungetrennten und Nichtvereinten' (MoE 1104) and thereby denying the idea of intercourse without remainder.

It is in the veiled scopic field of the window that Claudine perceives the threat of the Ministerialrat: 'Es war wie wenn einer angepocht hat und ein dunkles, großes Gesicht hinter blassen Scheiben schwimmt' (VI 168). The reading of G.'s isolation in the pre-text: '...vielleicht ist er immer wieder mit tastenden Händen durch sich

gegangen, um ein Tor zu finden, und steht endlich still und legt nur mehr sein Gesicht an die verdichteten Scheiben' (VI 158) is recast here. Claudine imitates the plight of her 'Vorwand'; she is doubly enclosed in her room by the wall of snow, unable to enter the space outside. At the same time G.'s alter ego seeks access from without, access that is, at once to her body and to the narrow space of her consciousness. The conscious mind, denying access to its unconscious desires, must suffer the constraint of 'Vorwände' as the bars of a cage or the wounds of self-inflicted pain: 'Eng lag das Zimmer hinter ihr und es war auch etwas Sonderbares in dieser Enge, wie ein Käfig oder wie Geschlagenwerden' (VI 171). Even as the seducer is represented as seeking entry, as 'Vorwand' his function is an enclosing one; in the form of snow he immures Claudine, and while he knocks at the door, he also becomes identical with it and falls closed on her, closing the contingency, the point of access and exit in the 'Vor-wand': 'Wie wenn eine Tür zugefallen wäre, fand plötzlich jeder Blick seine dunkle Figur vor sich' (VI 169). The gaze which seemed to seal the lovers' 'Vereinigung' in the opening passage can now find only the closed 'Vorwand'.

The opening and closing of the door gives it a pivotal function in the work as a whole. It embodies the ambivalence of Claudine's desire for release and her fear of total enclosure with the seducer and the final partition from her husband. The opening of the door is implicitly the opening of a wound in the body as 'Raum', and even when this contingency in the 'Vor-wand' is apparently closed, the idea of the wound is incorporated into the concealing screen. As Freud's 'Vorwand' is symptomatic of the illness it seeks to conceal, so the door as 'zufällig' is symptomatic of the gaping aperture which it seems to seal. It is in other words a figure for the inherently wounded condition of 'Zufälligkeit', expressed metaphorically in the 'schrecklich auseinanderklaffenden Zufälligkeit alles dessen, was man tut' (VI 185). As a metonymic representative of the 'Vorwand' the door significantly elicits the very response that Freud describes in his exposition of the hysterical 'Symptomhandlung': 'sie fühlte nur den Einfluß des *Gleichgültigen* dabei, des *Zufälligen* dieser Tür, an deren beiden Seiten sich Spannungen, einander unfindbar, stauten' (VI 188, my emphasis). The door is 'zufällig' in more ways than one, for if the Ministerialrat is only the chance door for Claudine's desire, in the manner of the 'Symptomhandlung' he conceals from her perception a fundamental lack in her love, a love which itself is a construct of chance: 'es ist Zufall' (VI 188). If she opens her door to his approach it is because she prefers to be enclosed by this chance door ('Wie wenn eine Tür *zugefallen* wäre', my emphasis) to the dis-closure of the separation with which her love for her husband is struck. The prospect of her seducer closing on her in the act of sexual violence thus elicits a double response: 'Es war, als ob sie etwas packte und zu einer Tür zerrte, und sie wußte diese Tür wird *zufallen*, und wehrte sich und lauschte doch schon mit vorgestreckten Sinnen voraus' (VI 180, my emphasis).

Rather than the violent annexation of space by the 'Lustmörder', the space furnished by the love of man and wife is a fragile dream- or mirror-space, one

which is contingent upon the desire of the other: 'das traumdunkelenge Nur durch den andern sein, das Inseleinsame des Nichterwachendürfens, dieses wie zwischen zwei Spiegeln Gleitende der Liebe, hinter denen man das Nichts weiß' (VI 188). The illusion of love creates an imaginary inviolate space between mirrored walls, but the relationship of specular reciprocity between the lovers is constructed under the same sign as the 'Vorwand', concealing the oblivion beyond its walls. In *Das verzauberte Haus*, an earlier version of *Die Versuchung*, the idea of the shared gaze as 'nur durch den andern sein' is revealed as a pretext for narcissism. The soul of the other keeps the subject's desire for a 'geheimnisvolle, geistige Vereinigung' (VI 150) perpetually in abeyance:

Und sie sah durch seine Augen, wie jemand, dem es gelingt, sich für einen Blick an ein hohes Turmfenster zu zwingen; sie wußte, daß dieser Blick nie wieder in sie zurückkehren werde. Er traf sie von außen; er traf sie wie etwas Fremdes, sie glänzte von Gold wie ein Spiegel, von Gold und doch nur ein Spiegel, in dem seine Seele aus dem Turm herunter sich ansah (VI 148).

She gains access to the gaze of the other only to perceive that it desires only to see itself in her as mirror, just as she sees herself through the window of the other's eye. Each furnishes a specular screen for the other, a 'Vor-wand' for the wound of their autistic condition which lies behind it: 'und doch lieben sie den anderen nur, weil ihre Einsamkeit leise hinter ihm blutet' (VI 148). The lovers' idyll, styled variously as the desert island, the closed room, or the hermetic sphere, is progressively dismantled. The reliance on the other, on the space behind the mirror, which is intimated in the need of the lovers to sustain their togetherness by looking out (the look which seemed to fix their union being redirected out of the window), becomes a desire for its violent intrusion. Claudine's fantasies, triggered by the Bluebeard pre-text, enact the violence of penetration into the autistic space: 'Wie in eine warme, strahlende Kugel konnte sie in jenes Gefühl zu ihrem Mann schlüpfen, sie war dort geschützt, die Dinge stießen nicht wie scharfe Schiffsschnäbel durch die Nacht, sie wurden weich aufgefangen, gehemmt. Und sie wollte nicht' (VI 187).

As Claudine is recurrently drawn to the window on the world, so the window, like the door, is a point of 'intercourse' for the penetrating other. The face of the 'Lustmörder', pressed against the glass, gains metaphorical access. As she sits in her room after the dream, Claudine's thoughts turn once more to the pretext of her actions ('Und dann war es wohl jener G., der ihr einfiel') and the sex-murderer makes his entry dissembled in the form of the metaphors which accompanied him in the pre-text.¹¹

Und dann, irgendeinmal, kam von einem Spalt des Fensters die feuchte, milde Luft der verschneiten Nacht und strich schweigsam und zärtlich an ihren nackten Schultern herab. Und da begann sie, ganz weh und ferne, wie ein Wind über regenschwarze Felder kommt, begann sie zu denken, daß es eine regenleise, wie ein Himmel eine Landschaft überspannende Lust sein müßte, untreu zu sein, eine geheimnisvolle, das Leben schließende Lust (VI 174–75).

G., who had appeared 'wie ein Regentag über dem Land' (VI 158), is conflated with his surrogate the Ministerialrat, the 'Wind über regenschwarze Felder' with the

'milde Luft der verschneiten Nacht' (snow being the representation of the Ministerialrat's enclosing presence). The conjunction of the breeze and access to the self as room by way of the 'Spalt' has sexual connotations. In *Die Versuchung* the wind is associated with the phallus by way of a common assimilation with the tongue; the breeze as 'die Berührung einer spitzen, schnellen, weichhaarigen Zunge' (VI 204) clearly refers to the memory from Veronika's childhood where the tongue of her dog emerges ambiguously from his hair as 'etwas Spitzes, Rotes, lustweh Gekrümmtes' (VI 205). Then in the final scene Veronika's desire for the anonymous man on the other side of the door slips out 'durch den dünnen Schlüsselspalt' (VI 223); the narrow aperture, whether in the door or window as 'Vorwände' between self and other, also carries the resonance of the vulgar term for the female sex. The scene at the window thus simulates an act of intercourse.

The elemental metaphors (the murderer as rain, his victim the 'frühlingswunde Erde') express Claudine's fearful desire to escape the protective space of her love and to lay herself open to what the seducer calls the 'großen Sturm'. The clichéd expression of his desire, as though he, like G., were heaven-sent, is in itself an agency of the Ministerialrat's violence. The 'Lustmord' scenario is transposed to the realm of language. Thus when the Ministerialrat first encloses her in his masterful discourse, marked by 'selbstverständlichen männlichen Herrschaftsanspruchs', her own discourse evokes an image of the mutilated body: 'ein kraftloses, abgebrochenes, wie ein Armstumpf fuchtelndes Gefühl' (VI 169). Claudine perceives her own identity in language as one of mutilation; her broken language surrenders to the discourse of the master as if in parody of the two voices in the prologue to *Die Versuchung*. Coitus is prefigured in verbal intercourse and the banality of the man's advances; as he misinterprets her silent response, so the effects of the storm are confined to the surface, mutilating the body but having no access to, or understanding of her soul:

Sie fühlte, wie er ihr Schweigen mißdeuten mußte, aber es tat ihr eigenartig wohl. Daß es etwas in ihr gab, das sich nicht in Handlungen ausdrücken ließ und von Handlungen nichts erliden konnte, weil es unter dem Bereich der Worte lag . . . empfand sie stärker bei diesem Schweigen; so war es eine innere Vereinigung, während sie die Oberfläche ihres Wesens diesem Fremden überließ, der sie verunstaltete (VI 181).

The Ministerialrat's words once more annex space; the notion of the lovers' specular relationship is deformed, as the seducer's 'word-space' becomes a distorting mirror-space. In the manner of a storm he deforms the landscape: 'es war ein unmerkliches Verschieben der Welt' (VI 181), and Claudine, who had earlier identified herself in her fantasy with the land, all but becomes identical with it in its distorted state: 'Es verwirrte sie, daß sie auch ihr Bild in dieser spiegelhaft gleitenden Welt gewährte; ihr war, wenn sie jetzt noch etwas nachgäbe, müßte sie plötzlich ganz dieses Bild sein' (VI 181). Like Törleß, Claudine is in danger of utter subjection to the other as pure image. The image is 'verschoben' as if perceived 'in den Scheiben von Fenstern' (VI 181); the 'Scheibe' which was 'verdichtet' for G.

therefore distorts its images by the same dual process as characterises dream-work for Freud. The dissembled introduction of the processes of condensation and displacement would be quite consistent with the sorts of examples of Freudian graftings isolated by Corino and Henninger, and elsewhere in the present work. In 'Ansätze zu neuer Ästhetik' Musil sees these two processes as informing the role of the fetish, citing the example of the 'Spiegelbild' (see above p. 126). The Ministerialrat's desire to make a mirror-image of Claudine is of the same distorting nature as the examples of fetishistic desire which were outlined in *Törleß*.

As Claudine allows herself to be 'verunstaltet', conforming to the image which the Ministerialrat projects of her in the mirror-space of his words, so she progressively assumes her part in the intercourse, so that the drama of seduction might find the sort of 'good end' which the Ministerialrat requires of a play, an 'Aktschluß' effected in the closing, sexual act. Thus Claudine mimics the man's double-entendre, 'Wissen Sie, daß wir wirklich eingeschneit sind?' (VI 180), she appears to respond to his gambit, 'als hätte sie aufgenommen, was der Ministerialrat sagte', and ultimately advances strategic double-meanings of her own: 'Sie hatte etwas im Gespräch gesagt . . . sie wußte in welcher Weise er es mißverstehen mußte' (VI 192). Yet when they eventually enter into intercourse, coitus being accompanied by the first contiguity of their voices on the printed page in a dialogue, thus raising expectations of the sort of union posited in the prologue to *Die Versuchung*, it is he who calls for her silence, that is, for the renunciation of any quest for true intercourse.

The unconscious 'Vorwand', which introduced a distinction between text and pretext, between discourse and its underlying motives, may be seen as the mark of a partition in language, one which as we have seen, is recurrently concretised in the wall imagery of the novella. The 'Vorwand' it is which dissembles and erases the words of the lovers' intercourse: 'das Gespräch vor der Reise mit seinen verhüllten Worten; und niemals gesprochene Worte' (VI, 174). The act of partition, in Freud's terms the strategy of displaced expression through the symptom, is that which detaches language from its meanings. In other words it is the bar in Lacan's revised version of Saussure's formula of signification (S/s), the bar which allows the slippage of the signified below the signifier. Musil's development of the 'Symptomhandlung eines Menschen' into the narrative structure of the novella, turning on the discursive device of the 'Vorwand', anticipates Lacan's postulation that the 'symptom is itself structured like a language'. What he means by this, is that it expresses the disorder of the psyche only in a form which is 'entstellt': 'a symptom being a metaphor in which flesh or function is taken as a signifying element'.¹²

For Musil as for Lacan the slippage inherent to discourse implies a correlative slippage in the workings of desire; in either case the object defies fixture, and intercourse between signifier and signified or between subject and object of desire is interrupted. It is, moreover, telling that the partitive bar invariably takes the form in Musil's writing of 'Vor-wand' or 'Vorhang': the screen which is more or less intact

(where there are windows the face of the other may be made out in distorted form) and contains doors and windows as points of ingress or egress. The 'Vorhang' is generally a 'Schleier' or 'Hülle' which is more or less opaque and may be moved even to the point of tearing by the occulted objects of quest which lie beyond it: 'als ob Formen lang gesuchter Gegenstände sich wie in einem Schleier abdrückten und wieder verschwänden' (VI 211). Henninger has shown that these objects refer to the shrouded phallus as the symbolic end of the quest for identity,¹³ and indeed the two novellas abound in image-patterns which would have been familiar to Musil from his reading on the subject of the Mysteries in Bachofen. The connection is most palpable in the veil imagery of the various versions of the *Versuchung* novella, where the lifting of the veil (as hymen) is a fantasised reworking of the rite of initiation in the Dionysian cult:

Sie hatte einmal von einem Mädchenzimmer gehört, das ganz weiß war, und es verknüpfte sich ihr damit die unklare Ahnung eines Lebens von besonders zart und vorsichtig gegliederter Schönheit. Nun dachte sie, wenn sich eines Tages der Schleier von ihrem Leben heben werde, wird es sein, wie wenn junge Mädchen in weißen Kleidern über eine Landschaft gehen (VI 231).

The idyll of revelation here, with the phallus maintaining a carefully veiled presence in the 'vorsichtig gegliederter Schönheit' (my emphasis), is none the less one of sequestration from the world of men. Veronika becomes as it were a pristine 'Mädchenzimmer' by assuming the phallic attribute. She is thus absolved from the metonymic nature of her desire for men, and the dispatching of Johannes the 'Vorwand' ('nie so sehr wie damals erschienen ihr die Männer nur als ein Vorwand') has the effect of apparent release and revelation for the phallic woman as she carries out the symbolic 'Lustmord': 'Wie aus einer zerbrochen am Boden liegenden Hülle war ihr aus diesem Abschied ein Gefühl von sich emporgestiegen; es war plötzlich so fest, daß sie sich wie ein Messer in dem Leben dieses andern Menschen fühlte. Es war alles klar gegliedert' (VI 212). The removal of the veil and the concomitant sense of self-disclosure is derived from a phallic penetration of, and separation from the 'Vorwand'; and with the veil dropped all is 'klar gegliedert' as in the earlier instance. The revelation is tantamount to 'ein Schnitt durch die Zeit, vor dem alles frühere erstarrt war, es sprang . . . wie ein Schwert aus allem andern heraus' (VI 212). It is the same synchronic section that is described in *Die Vollendung*: 'Und es war sonderbar, wie wenn in dem leise rinnenden Faden des Geschehens plötzlich ein Glied zersprungen und aus der Reihe heraus in die Breite gefahren wäre' (VI 184). The fiction of continuity in experience, styled variously as thread, line or chain, is disrupted by a cut through linear time, and the epiphany that this cut provokes is the springing out and dilation of 'ein Glied'. It is no coincidence that both examples invoke the same springing movement as characterised the coition of the voices into the copular figure in the prologue.

The cut described here in Claudine's affair and that of Veronika's 'Ab-schied' from Johannes, are merely preliminary; by virtue of the act of symbolic castration

(Claudine's husband cuckolded, Johannes's desire denied by Veronika), the phallus as the mark of a more essential 'Vereinigung' is seemingly revealed: 'als sähe sie körperlich in der Luft, wie die Beziehung ihrer Seele zu dieser anderen Seele zu etwas Letztem, Unabänderlichem geworden war, das wie ein Aststumpf in die Ewigkeit ragte' (VI 212). The temporal cross-section opens up the perpetual perspective of the phallus, albeit hedged in by the condition of castration. The appearance of this definitive object is undermined by the resonance of the 'Armstumpf' which earlier symbolised Claudine's discursive mutilation. The dialectic of having and lacking which is intrinsic to the 'supreme signifier of desire' in the Lacanian model is fixed in these moments of virtual accession to the phallus. The insight, which in the 'Turmfenster' section of *Die Versuchung* is literally to see from within the other, is hindsight gained only by dint of falling apart, that is, through the mediation of the partitive 'Vorwand'. The figure of the 'Vereinigung', the phallus which as copula conjoins man and woman into a third quantity greater than the sum of its constituent parts, is inherently self-dismantling. Its evidence is marked out by the intervention of the 'Vorwand' in the intercourse of the separate parts:

Sie sah — wie nach rückwärts gewandt sah sie ihr Leben und dieses andere Leben so nebeneinander als ob aus ihnen beiden etwas Drittes bestanden hätte, ein Mehr, etwas, das es nicht gab und doch so gab wie ein Ruf in zwei Tönen oder wie zwei hölzerne Balken zum Schweigen eines Kreuzes werden. Aber sie sah es nur mehr am Auseinandergefallensein. (VI 232)

For both Claudine and Veronika the male 'Vorwand' is a symptom of an inner partition: 'einen zwischen Lust und Erleiden zerspaltenen Genuß' (VI 170). In the shorthand of the *Versuchung* fragment the masochistic split in the self is styled thus: 'sie fühlt Feindseligkeit u. die Bedrängnis eines Weibchens — und halb schon wieder unter dem Schleier, wie ein Zurücksinken kommt die Schneckensehnsucht, die mystische Vereinigung' (VI 232). As the revelation is partially revoked by the veil, so the desire for intercourse remains in its partial form, struck by ambivalence. The 'Bedrängnis eines Weibchens' refers to the ambivalent reaction of the female animal to the male in sexual pursuit, as Veronika is tempted to stick out her tongue and to bite back at her attacker: 'und mit einemmal hätte es ihr beinahe die Zunge gegen ihn herausgestreckt und war ein sonderbar zwischen Flucht und Lockung geteiltes Empfinden, fast wie das Bedrängnis eines Weibchens, das nach seinem Verfolger beißt' (VI 211). The sticking out of the tongue (with its phallic associations) is an imitation by the 'Weibchen' of the aggressive male role; in the displaced arena of the simile Veronika replays the scene from her childhood, adopting both her own role and that of the dog. The bite as threat to the phallic tongue will be taken up once more in the section on the *Vorstadtgasthof* story. The two gestures indicate Veronika's reflexive relation to the phallus, at once simulating it with her tongue and threatening its castration with her bite. The 'Schneckensehnsucht' refers to the desire for coition in the wounded and broken condition of the dying snail (VI 210).

In either case the coming together in intercourse is marked by the intervention of violent separation.

The enclosing space of the other's speech, 'das Männliche, Andersgeschlechtliche' fantasised by Claudine as she listens to the words of the teachers, 'während die Reden dieser Menschen sie einhüllten' (VI 177), is dismantled. As she listens to the two voices together in intercourse, once more evoking the idea of the *Versuchung* prologue, so she is made to think of the breakage of the voice in coitus, and thus its failure as enclosure: 'und sie suchte den Klang sich vorzustellen, mit dem sie in der geschlechtlichen Erregung zerbrochen in die Tiefe gleiten mußte' (VI 178). The shroud of the male voice is a function of dissimulation, a mere 'Vorwand', its currency the 'verhüllten Worten; und niemals gesprochene Worte' of the sexual dialogue; it is a fiction aimed at shielding the abyssal separation of self and other, female and male, from view. The fiction deploys experience through the protective space of words as rooms, rather than projecting it into the yawning interstices: 'und überall innen war dieses Gehaltenwerden vom eigenen Widerhall in einem engen Raum, der jedes Wort auffängt und bis zum nächsten verlängert, damit man nicht hört, was man nicht ertragen könnte, — den Zwischenraum, den Abgrund zwischen den Stößen zweier Handlungen, in den man von dem Gefühl von sich fortsinkt' (VI 187). This fiction of attenuation it is that perpetually defers the synchronic splicing and with it the revelation of the 'Glied' as transcendent object. It defines language as informed by a principle of *closure*, constructing within its 'Vorwände' the illusory space of an echo-chamber, similar to the mirrored room which hides the wound encountered earlier.

The principle of *closure* is perforce one of 'fore-closure', of the shutting out of transcendent perspectives which Musil identified as the failure inherent both to aesthetic form: 'Form schließt aus, indem sie sich schließt' (Ta I 974), and to literary language: 'Solange man in Sätzen mit Endpunkt denkt — lassen sich gewisse Dinge nicht sagen — höchstens vage fühlen. Andererseits wäre es möglich, daß man sich so auszudrücken lernt, daß gewisse unendliche Perspektiven, die heute noch an der Schwelle des Unbewußten liegen, dann deutlich und verständlich werden' (Ta I 53).

The principle of syntactic closure is thus identified with the idea of the 'Vorwand vor dem Bewußten' as shutting out the visual perspective on the mysteries of the unconscious. By clinging to the illusion of a chain of significance through time, language forecloses the breadth of experience, the flight of rooms 'en abyme' which furnish such a suitable image for Claudine's 'Seitensprung': 'Und sie mußte an seltsam von den übrigen abgeschnittene Tage denken, die wie eine Flucht abseits liegender Zimmer einer in den andern mündend vor ihr lagen' (VI 171). The intercourse into this 'cut-off' space is for Claudine the opening up of a wound, a 'Schnitt durch die Zeit'. The cut effects what might be called by analogy with *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften* at once a 'Lustmord' and a 'Lustselbstmord' (see the section on 'Gerda's Auftritt' below); it takes a knife to the bond which unites the two lovers in the opening scene, inflicting a wound on either party. The 'Lustmörder' figure is

merely an agent of the lovers' self-inflicted separation: 'ich tue dir weh, aber sie hatte das seltsame Gefühl, alles was ich tue, tust du' (VI 191). The violence done to the body, the opening of the wound, is seen as bearing optimal witness to the fidelity of the lovers' souls. In Leclair's terms the phallus as 'agent de l'ouverture', rather than concealing the aperture, the opening up of difference between the partners in intercourse, serves to fix it.¹⁴ Claudine employs the phallic services of the Ministerialrat (as 'agent de l'ouverture' as it were) in order to deny the desire which draws her body to his and to fix in the figure of the gaping wound her quest for an ultimate 'Vereinigung'. She uses the 'Vorwand' of her 'seducer' to breach the deceit of the 'Vorwände' constructed around her love. The wound of the 'Lustmord' serves to emancipate the soul from the body, which encloses it as the corollary of the 'Vorwand', as 'ein dunkles Versteck um die Heimlichkeit seiner Seele' (VI 170). The protective envelope of the corporeal 'Versteck' tempts her:

... ihn von sich zu stoßen, in der Wehrlosigkeit der sinnlichen Verlorenheit von einem Fremden ihn niedergestreckt und wie mit Messern aufgebrochen zu fühlen ... um ihn in einer seltsam bis zur letzten Wahrhaftigkeit geöffneten Treue um dieses Nichts, dieses Schwankende, dieses gestaltlose Überall, diese Krankengewißheit von Seele dennoch wie den Rand einer traumhaften Wunde zu fühlen, der in den Schmerzen des endlos erneuten Zusammenwachsenwollens vergeblich den anderen sucht. (VI,186)

The image of the open wound may serve as the figure of the various forms of interrupted intercourse which have been detailed here. If the phallus as the authentic copula, the figure which might close the wound, is never fully disclosed, it is because the self holds on to the protective 'Vorwände' of its discourse and the soul on to the protective 'Versteck' of the body in spite of themselves. These partitive structures perpetually defer the quest for 'Vereinigung' in body, voice and soul (i.e. sexuality, discourse and the self) between the sexual 'part-ners'. This tripartite desire is infinitely renewed ('des endlos erneuten Zusammenwachsenwollens'), precisely because its object, the other, is irretrievable for the self 'der ... vergeblich den anderen sucht'.

This multiple quest for the other may be seen as collateral with the quest of the author for another aesthetic idiom in the novellas. In the lyrical elasticity of these texts, so different from either *Törleß* or *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*, Musil seeks to redefine the purposive structures of 'Sätzen mit Endpunkt', and thereby to open up a perspective on the unconscious mind and its desires. The author is engaged with the problematic strictures of syntactic partition, which, like the symptomatic 'Vorwand', raise an obstacle before the space of the unconscious. It can be no coincidence that these radically experimental works both have female protagonists. The *Vereinigungen* are the closest that Musil comes to realising the desire to represent eros in a genuinely female perspective, that is, to release the repressed, feminine identity and its discourse from the unconscious. This is the project that he notes in his diaries: 'Raben — Wie eine Autobiographie zu erzählen — Mit weiblichem Körper und Geist. Gewiß wäre das zügel- und regellos, ... Aber einmal, und zum

Ausgleich des zu Nachdenklichen und Rationalen sollte man diese Dämonen loslassen' (Ta I 1011). While the novellas still have an independent narrative voice to keep these demons at bay, they pursue their own ideal of narrative 'Vereinigung', seeking to conjoin the male and female voices on the written page as in the prologue. The failure, albeit a narrow one, of union in both novellas, leads to the abandonment of the female perspective. *Raben* remains a project in Musil's diary, and he turns instead for the culmination of his life's work, to a male protagonist, a diarist who records only his own voice, and who is observed in his attempts to achieve union with the female other, by what is clearly a male narrator.

NOTES TO CHAPTER VII

1. Karl Corino, *Robert Musils 'Vereinigungen': Studien zu einer historisch-kritischen Ausgabe*, Musil-Studien, V (Munich, 1974); Jürgen Schröder, 'Am Grenzwert der Sprache: Zu Robert Musil's *Vereinigungen*', *Euphorion*, 60 (1966), 311–334; Peter Henninger, *Buchstabe*.
2. Henninger, *Buchstabe*, p. 114.
3. Quoted by Lemaire, p. 145.
4. Quoted by Ernst Kaiser and Eithne Wilkins in *Robert Musil: Eine Einführung in das Werk* (Stuttgart, 1962), p. 322.
5. 'Sie meidet Musil in allen Fällen', Henninger, *Buchstabe*, p. 170.
6. See Roger Willemsen, *Robert Musil: Vom intellektuellen Eros* (Munich, 1985), p. 131.
7. Willemsen, p. 132.
8. Franz Blei, *Ungewöhnliche Menschen und Schicksale* (Berlin, 1929), p. 15. First published in *Die Insel* (1901).
9. Demonstrating that 'eine Untreue kann in einer tieferen Innenzone eine Vereinigung sein' (Ta I 232).
10. This cutting of a connection in language is the corollary of the tongue's mutilation in the 'Lustmord' of the *Vorstadtgasthof* (see below p. 166).
11. The 'Einfall' is thus literalised in the same way as the 'Zufall' of the door, their effect projected into the space of the room as psyche. In *Törleß* Musil has Beineberg concretise the same figural term; for him, thoughts and feelings: "'fallen uns ein", fallen in uns hinein wie Steine' (T 120).
12. Lacan (London, 1977), p. 59; p. 166.
13. Henninger writes: 'Eine Ahnung davon vermittelt schon die Stelle im *Verzauberten Haus*, wo es heißt: "Formen unbekannter Glieder drückten sich wie in einem Schleier ab und verschwanden wieder" (Pst 143f) worauf dann jenes schon erörterte Bild der eternisierten Erektion erscheint (etwas Letztes, Unverrückbares, Unabänderliches) "das wie ein Aststumpf in die Ewigkeit ragte" (Pst 146). Unzweideutiger noch ist der den "Vorspruch" beschließende Ausdruck das "Aufgerichtete" (Pst 194). D.h. das Verschleierte — nicht anders als in den Mysterien der Antike — ist das phallische Bild' (*Buchstabe*, p. 113).
14. Serge Leclair, *Psychanalyser* (Paris, 1968), p. 73.

VIII SEXUAL DOUBLES IN *DER MANN OHNE EIGENSCHAFTEN*

My concern here is to show how the motifs of the double, the veil, the 'Vorwand' and so on, which play such a focal role in the sexual problematics of Musil's early prose works, are equally significant in the very different economy of *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*. My reading of this text is bound to be a selective one, and I have chosen to concentrate on a small number of key passages, all concerned with scenes of sexual engagement of one kind or another, where the motifs in question are all at work. The function I argue for these perverse preoccupations here is in accordance with Musil's insistence (in 'Das Unanständige und Kranke in der Kunst') that the deviant, pathological or salacious can provide a unique perspective on experience in general, in so far as the writer of fiction is able to draw relations between the two. The perception of such relations is, I would argue, essential, not only for an understanding of the sexual thematic in itself, but also for a fuller understanding of the work's other preoccupations.

Musil's statement that the poem 'Isis und Osiris' contains the novel 'in nucleo' (Ta I 847) has become a commonplace of Musil criticism. The poem seems to offer a mythopoeic programme for the rehabilitation of love through the suspension of sexual difference, a programme which would conform with the Utopian projection for 'der Mann = Seele u. der Weib = Seele' which Musil noted as 'nicht unfruchtbar' (Ta I 138) in Huch's account: 'Es ist anzunehmen, daß die Liebe ihren Charakter wieder ändern wird, wenn einst ein dem Urtypus analoger Mensch entsteht, in dem sich männliches und weibliches vereinigt, ohne ineinander unterzugehen'.¹

There are striking parallels between 'Isis und Osiris' (VI 465) and Trakl's 'Ruh und Schweigen'. In either case the cosmic cycle of lunar and solar phases furnishes a cosmic parallel to the quest for incestuous union between brother and sister. Although the genders of sun and moon are initially at odds in the two poems, in both cases the narrative turns on the exchange of sexual identity: as Trakl's 'Schwester' becomes a 'Jüngling', so Musil's becomes 'er'. Musil's 'Knabe Mond' lies 'auf den Blättern der Sterne', enjoying the same superficial peace ('silberner Ruh') as his counterpart in 'Ruh und Schweigen', who also leans against stars. If Musil seems to cast his stars in an original metaphor, it is one that Trakl pre-empts in the complex of associations between stars and leaves discussed above (p. 33). In both poems planetary conjunction as *unio mystica* is realised only in the moment of

exchange 'wenn Mond und Sonne wechseln'; and as Trakl's programme was subverted by subtle undercurrents of sexual violence, so Musil's is sustained only within a context of mutilation, pursuit and castration. The periodical union of brother and sister is achieved only by dint of a 'sexual exchange' of the phallus for the heart as wound. The motif of castration can be traced to Musil's source for the poem: Otto Rank's *Das Inzestmotiv in Dichtung und Sage*, where it is incurred as punishment for the siblings' incest.²

The fear of the consequences of a sexual exchange will be seen to militate constantly against the fulfilment of the hermaphroditic programme in *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*, and to introduce the counter-motif, that of 'Lustmord' in its various permutations.³ Between these two poles the contrary desires for identity with the other and for self-identity unalloyed by involvement with the other are played out. Whether in the guise of the androgynous Pierrot or identifying with Moosbrugger the 'krankhafte Komödiant' (MoE 652), Ulrich is playing a part and so setting himself apart from his true self. The gravitation between the two roles in what will be called the dialectical condition of bisexuality is the prime expression of the problematic nature of identity per se.

The preoccupation with sexual difference and its dismantling can be traced throughout Musil's essays and diaries. On one level Musil is sufficiently a child of his age to deploy popular conventions of gender identity in his critical essays, to talk of Hauptmann's 'männliche Stille' (IX 1442) or of El Lissitzky's 'männlich scharfer Bestimmtheit von Farbe und Form' (IX 1643). Yet he also charts the revision of such conventions; in a projected novel he plans to depict 'ein modernes Liebespaar. Sie ammaskuliniert, er homosexuell tingiert' (Ta I 822). Then again, he ascribes sexual difference to repressive role-play: 'der Mann verhehlt angeblich weibliche, die Frau angeblich männliche Eigenschaften' (Ta I 837); and in an aphorism 'zur Männer- und Frauenfrage' he comes to the conclusion that 'In Wahrheit dürfte kaum ein anderer wirklich gründlicher Unterschied bestehen als der zwischen einer derberen und einer zarteren Gesamtverfassung' (VII 815).

Even this last limited difference, however, is under threat from the ferment in the parameters of sexual identity. Thus Musil identifies himself with the 'Weib der Zukunft' as 'muskulös, trainiert, aggressiv, aber dabei nervös, labil, zu hysterischen Mechanismen (neigend). Eigentlich, horrible dictu, mein eigener Typ' (Ta I 684), and thereby concurs with Clarisse's prognosis: 'die Frau vermännlicht sich heute, und der Mann verweiblicht' (MoE 1736). Out of the bankruptcy of the phallocratic order, Musil sees the rise of a new matriarchy (Ta I 811). His response to the phenomenon of the 'neue Frau' is essentially ambivalent, and frequently satirically inflected. The male sense of dispossession is focused less on the accustomed role of sexual and societal domination than on that of submission to the figure of woman as mother. In 'Der bedrohte Oedipus' it is the mother's womb which is denied the boy-child, in the 'Tagebuchblatt' the boy's masochistic love of the motherly servant as she takes a knife to a fish. This masochistic disposition is recurrently sought by the

male figures in both the novel and the essays as they offer themselves up for immolation to the omnipotent goddess (see 'Penthesiliade'); it satisfies the constitutional, male 'masochwilliger Zug' (MoE 1823) which lurks beneath the 'männliche Machtvorstellung' (MoE 684) and the mask of the hunter. In 'Eine Geschichte aus drei Jahrhunderten' it is framed in three separate scenarios; the Marquis d'Épatant, overwhelmed by a tigress 'war in den Zustand und Rolle eines Weibchens gebracht' (VII 588), the men of 270 BC mythologise the dominant female figure as devouring sphinx,⁴ and in 1927 the Amazon is sustained in the cult of 'das dämonische Weib'.

It is an idea to which Ulrich finds himself recurrently drawn, albeit adopting a similarly ironic detachment to that of the narrative voice in the essays, the similarity being most patent in Musil's sardonic portrayal of the 'Ball der Veränderten' in 'Erinnerung an eine Mode' and Ulrich's own reactions to the transvestite antics in the 'Gartenfest' episode. The submission to the matriarchal principle is seen as tantamount to adopting a transsexual identity, releasing the demon of the female within, and it is one which lures both Ulrich and his creator as we saw in the diary note on the *Raben* project for a female autobiography. The understanding of the female as irrational eros, which informs that project, may conform to the prevailing ideas of such as Weininger, but the fact that Musil thinks of assuming this transsexual identity from within signals a more complex view of gender difference.

While Freud toyed throughout his early career with the possibility of equating the dialectic of active and passive moments which he found omnipresent in psychic order and disorder alike with male and female respectively, Musil certainly does make this connection. The nature of male and female sexual desire, which he evidently derives rather simplistically from the mechanics of the sexual act, is invariably in play whenever the broader question of activity and passivity is under scrutiny. After a section on the problem of 'Aktivität und Passivität' in his diary, Musil writes: 'Es ist keine schlechte Analogie, es mit männlichen u. weiblichen Begehren zu vergleichen' (Ta II 897).⁵ Where Musil transcends these sorts of popular *idées reçues* is in insisting on the disruption of any simple sexual polarity in his narrative. In other words he realises the idea of bisexuality in his fictional practice, even as his protagonist is unwilling to pursue the practical consequences of his own theoretical positions on the notion of human bisexuality. Ulrich is caught up in the same dilemma as Weininger, and forced into similarly grievous contradictions, as his creator takes up ironic distance from him. Ulrich's attempts to hold on to the role of the male in spite of his 'innere Widersprüche' (MoE 285) are repeatedly subverted by Musil's thoroughgoing dismantling of the idea of a monistic sexual identity, as he subjects it to the principle of the double.⁶ The double is a crucial structuring principle in *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften* no less than in *Törleß*; the doubling of character and of scene (the patent world with the latent world of the 'Versteck') both find their analogue in the later work, along with a series of more explicit references to the 'Doppelgänger'. The present discussion of the double will work within the two complementary frames of reference, Freudian

and post-Freudian, set out in the introduction. Lacan's more sophisticated reworking of the idea of the double proves more readily applicable to the motif in Musil for two main reasons. Firstly, because the notion of the 'Doppelgänger' as an isolated symptom of psychic disorder is developed by Lacan into the notion of a continuous encounter: the idea of the double is conceived as universally at work in the genesis of the self. This reading of *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften* will trace an analogous generalising of the phenomenon into an informing principle, not least in terms of the role played by the 'Gleichnis'. This figure, omnipresent in Musil's writing and a pivotal idea in the novel's discursive fabric, will be seen to derive from the dialectic of 'Ähnlichkeiten und Unähnlichkeiten zugleich' in the subject's relation to its doubles. Secondly, Lacan sets the double firmly within the context of narcissism, which occupied a relatively marginal position in Rank. When, as in *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*, the specular alter ego is not merely an agent of desire's frustration, but as the 'Doppelgänger im anderen Geschlecht' (MoE 905) also the *object* of desire, its function is compounded. By analogy with Rank's idea that the double's murder is 'eigentlich ein Selbstmord', the murder of the double as object of desire in a 'Lustmord' must actually be considered in Musil's coinage as a 'Lustselbstmord' (MoE 622).

The present, brief account cannot pretend to furnish a comprehensive overview of the function of sexuality within the general structure of the novel. It is, however, the case that this function is most acutely in evidence in those chapters of the novel which depict scenes of sexual engagement. The question may thus be treated economically by a close reading of these scenes, tracing the effect that sexual desire has upon both the perception of selfhood and the discursive interaction of the characters. Necessity may yet conjoin with virtue here; the licence for such a paradigmatic way of reading is granted by Musil in a note: 'es kommt auf die Struktur einer Dichtung heute mehr an als auf ihren Gang. Man muß die Seite wieder verstehen lernen, dann wird man Bücher haben' (MoE 1937). In accordance with this tenet, the instances of desire which will be scrutinised will be seen to furnish a model for the syntagmatic operation of textual desire, that is, the narrative's quest for an end. In either case desire's end or object will be exposed as lacking, its only available course one of deferral from satisfaction.

The scenes in question are invariably played out in a metaphorical theatre-space, where identity is governed by the conventions of masquerade, and discourse by the script of seduction. In order to present a full picture within these precise parameters, material from the 'Nachlaß' will also come under scrutiny. These, the novel's 'sexual acts' will all be seen to turn on the ambivalence in sexual identity, the problem of the double, and the idea of the reflexive 'Lustmord'. As these motifs conspire to disrupt the operation of sexual desire, so they underpin the failure of ontological desire: the quest for an integral sense of identity, both within the self, and between self and other.

Gerda's 'Auftritt'

One such 'sexual act' is played in the chapter entitled 'Kontermine und Verführung'. At one level the title sums up the double concern of the chapter: Gerda's announcement that Arnheim is involved in the 'Parallelaktion' in order to further his stock-market speculations, and thinly disguised by this pretext, her wish to lose her virginity to the seducer Ulrich. 'Kontermine' plays on this double movement; it is not only a stock-market strategy, but in a less common sense 'eine durchkreuzende, hintertreibende Maßnahme' (*Duden*). The news of Arnheim's 'Kontermine' is in itself a 'Kontermine', an elaborate if rather maladroitly performed 'Vorwand'. As a pre-text the news provides Gerda with something to say when she is unable to summon a proper text for the occasion of her seduction. This second sense of 'Kontermine' situates the 'Auftritt' firmly within theatrical conventions of pretence. Gerda's dramatic denunciation of Arnheim's dissimulation in the role of lover — 'er spielt den Verliebten, aber er hat ganz andere Absichten' (MoE 619) — may serve as an ironic motto for the disjuncture between mask and motive that afflicts both parties throughout the seduction scene.

In preparation for her entrance Gerda sits before the mirror making up and dons the veil which is the essential part of Bonadea's costume, and as a symbol of sexual mystery is as grotesque a 'prop' for the nymphomaniac as it is for her virtually asexual 'under-study', Gerda. The mirror is seen here in the function which Graf Leinsdorf ascribes to it: 'denn der Spiegel, ursprünglich zur Freude geschaffen . . . sei zu einem Instrument der Angst geworden' (MoE 177). This is the Lacanian mirror which turns the original moment of ludic joy into one of self-alienation; estranged from her image as *femme fatale*, Gerda is stricken by 'Angst vor dem Spiegel' (MoE 617). The 'Auftritt' is characterised from the start by stark dramatic irony as the terrified, dissembling virgin attempts to strike the pose of the woman of the world. Both parties are aware of the scene to be performed, 'The deflowering of the virgin', yet neither the seducer, well-versed as he is in such parts, nor the girl on her opening night can carry off their roles. The eventual failure of the scene is prefigured in the script which accompanies and disturbs the action. Gerda's announcement elicits a response which she hardly expected; Ulrich confirms the status of her father as 'Gottvater' (MoE 481), paying homage to the paterfamilias whose right he is ostensibly about to transgress. Gerda is ironically made to experience her emancipation from the familial 'womb' as a return to it: 'einer etwas ungewöhnlichen Rückkehr in den Schoß der Familie, die sie durch ihren Fehltritt feierte' (MoE 620).

Gerda's larger than life entry and 'übertriebenes Gebaren' mark the first stage in the devolution of the body from conscious control; when Ulrich embraces her the devolution is total: 'Ihr Atem, ihre Finger, die nach ihm griffen, waren wie von Bewußtlosen' (MoE 618). At this moment Ulrich is overcome by 'die Grausamkeit des Verführers', yet he is not the sole agent in the abduction of the helpless virgin; he is rather an accessory of Gerda's own body which is figured as doing violence to her

soul in an internalisation of the violator-victim relationship: 'des Verführers ... der sich unwiderstehlich von der Unentschlossenheit einer Seele angezogen fühlt, die von ihrem eigenen Körper mitgeschleift wird wie ein Gefangener in den Armen seiner Häscher' (MoE 618). The body which Ulrich must embrace is rendered, devoid as it is of soul, as a corpse, as the self utterly reified and thus deprived of the faculty of language. Once more the interruption of sexual intercourse is bound up with the suppression of verbal intercourse. The actress is struck dumb as the farce becomes 'unheimlich', clenching her lips 'um nicht unheimlich wortleere Bewegungen auszuführen' (MoE 621). When at first she resists: 'Wir wollen uns zuerst menschlich zusammenfinden' (MoE 620), she is asking for a conciliation which neither partner even enjoys within the self.

Once more the eyes play a crucial role in the sexual semiotics of the scene, as Gerda lies 'mit den Augen unter den Augen des Verführers' (MoE 620), and the veil is constantly in play in its familiar double role of mysterious lure and 'dompteregard'. While Gerda's 'Kontermine' sets her discourse at utter odds with her desire, her eyes militate against their own desire to grant access to Ulrich's passionate gaze. Having abandoned the veil, Gerda fantasises that, echoing Weininger's theory of coital 'Versehen', she might lose her virginity to the seducer's gaze. She closes her eyes 'für die Dauer eines Blickes' (MoE 618) and wishfully feels that this momentary re-veiling of her gaze might coincide with her defloration by Ulrich's momentary gaze ('Augenblick'): 'als ob sie schon dieser Augenblick zur Frau gemacht hätte' (MoE 619). Gerda's fantasy of the breaking of the hymen and the flow of blood as passage into womanhood is pre-empted in parody; having lost the veil she sees her image in the mirror. Once more the specular encounter is one of fear and mortal self-alienation; the blood of this alter ego has apparently been let before even reaching the bed: 'sie meinte, ihr Blut habe sie verlassen' (MoE 621). And when, in Ulrich's bed, the expectation of coitus becomes more realistic, once more the veil is drawn over Gerda's eyes and her gaze deranged in a way which denies the mysterious revelation: 'Ulrich starrte voll Grauen in die kleinen Pupillen der verschleierte Augen, aus denen der Blick merkwürdig steif hervorkam' (MoE 623). Behind the veil Ulrich discovers not the receptive gaze of a woman (see the corridor below p. 159) but a reflection of his own penetrative gaze, a phallic simulacrum.⁷

So it is that with the costume of womanhood removed Gerda is exposed as a transvestite impostor: 'Gerda schlüpfte wie ein Knabe ins Bett' (MoE 621). The unmasking of his leading lady dispels any lingering commitment which Ulrich might have had to the act of seduction. At this moment the idea of the sexual act as an affirmation of the adult self is displaced by the childish need for the reversion to the security enjoyed in the womb, as Ulrich realises, in the passage already quoted with regard to *Törleß*, 'wie sehr das leidenschaftliche Eindringen in einen fremden Körper eine Fortsetzung der kindischen Neigung für heimliche und verbrecherische Verstecke ist' (MoE 622). Finding himself in bed with what appears to be the body of a boy, Ulrich is denied the illusion of the 'Versteck', feeling only the impulse to

take flight, 'er würde am liebsten die Flucht aus dem Bett ergriffen haben' (MoE 622), that is, to act as the victim of a violation.

Ulrich holds his ground only by convincing himself of the necessity of the split in the self between the mechanics of the body and the exigencies of the soul; thus both partners experience the same essential schism: the polarisation of body and soul that Clarisse defines as constituting a 'Lustmord': "'M. hat ein Lustmord begangen, nicht wahr? Was ist das? Die Lust hat sich in ihm getrennt vom Menschlichen'" (MoE 1572); hence Ulrich's distaste for 'das Unmenschliche, nur Körperliche des Erlebnisses' (MoE 623). He compensates for his lack of desire by a compulsion to destroy, to beat before he is beaten. The offensive has the character both of a 'Lustmord' in that he ensures the split in Gerda, and of a suicide as he confirms a correlative split within himself: 'zwar nicht die Ergriffenheit der Liebe, wohl aber eine halb verrückte, ein Gemetzel, einen Lustmord, oder wenn es das geben kann, einen Lustselbstmord erinnernde Ergriffenheit von den Dämonen der Leere, die hinter allen Bildern des Lebens zuhause sind' (MoE 622). However, the self-reflexive act of murder is forestalled by Gerda's hysterical fit. The victim pre-empts what she senses is a sort of execution — 'es war ihr zumute, als sollte sie hingerichtet werden' (MoE 622) — by undergoing a symbolic suicide which mimics the attitudes of sexual passion, that is, her own form of the 'Lustselbstmord': 'Ihre Lippen krümmten sich beweglich und waren naß wie in tödlicher Wollust' (MoE 622). Her body throws off all voluntary control; like a child that fears a beating (and this idea will recur later), her body attacks its aggressor: 'diese Empörung ihres Körpers gegen sie selbst war schrecklich' (MoE 623). The idea of a single role to be played is revoked as the theatre itself is internalised and Gerda is split, like Törleß in the scene in the 'Versteck', into actor and spectator: 'Sie hatte ganz und gar das Gefühl von Theater dabei, aber saß auch allein und verlassen in dem dunklen Zuschauerraum und konnte nicht aufhalten, daß heftig und unter Schreien ihr Schicksal gespielt wurde, ja daß sie unwillkürlich mitspielte' (MoE 623). What had been intended as a rite of passage ends in a shared regression. The projected act of intercourse, indeed any communication between the two, is denied as they withdraw into mutually exclusive mutism. Gerda must be dressed like a child and makes her exit 'ihren Schleier jetzt in der Hand' (MoE 624), while Ulrich, his nakedness reduced from the 'schlank aufgerichteten mächtigen Körper des Mannes' (MoE 621) to boyish impotence, can only stand helplessly by 'wie ein Junge' (MoE 624), unable to act on until he has once more donned his costume.

The Masquerade

The same crisis of sexual identity is in evidence in the 'Skizze zum Gartenfest'. When Ulrich arrives at the party he is immediately struck by the fact that, apparently by whimsical design, all the women present are dressed as men; the phenomenon is put down to modishness — the ladies of the belle monde mounting

the bandwagon of emancipation and failing to masquerade successfully as the muscular 'neue Frau'. The narrator's gently mocking tone (one would-be Amazon appears 'allerdings in einem Beardsley Kostüm' MoE 1615) guarantees that disbelief will not be suspended; the transvestite burlesque merely serves to enhance the effect of the heightened theatrical light ('Rampenlicht' MoE 1616) in which the scene is presented. However, Ulrich's disdain for the anachronistic illusion is not shared by the Napoleonic officer whom he notices nearby, apparently transfixed by the drama. In spite of her professed contempt for the travesty ('man glaubt in eine Theaterredoute geraten zu sein' MoE 1616) Diotima finds the scene 'träumerisch'; her disbelief is very much suspended. This ironic disparity of perspective, on the one hand the transparently ridiculous postures of a badly acted burlesque, and on the other the charmed world of childhood, the stuff of dreams, will determine the whole episode, with Ulrich adopting once more the well-rehearsed role of the cynical seducer, while Diotima indulges in oneiric fantasy.

The element of the burlesque is largely sustained by the ironic gap between Diotima's persona, the mask which she sports with some discomfort, and her true nature, as Ulrich at least perceives it. He recognises her because she is the only one still wearing a mask, inferring her embarrassment from his own experience of her, which has been as a virtual female archetype. Unlike her pseudo-Olympian colleague Bonadea, the nymphomaniac 'Göttin der Keuschheit, deren Tempel durch Verkettung des Schicksals zum Schauplatz von Ausschweifungen geworden war' (MoE 522), Diotima's temple has hitherto been seen by Ulrich as the potential scene of his own ritual immolation. He can only half-heartedly partake of the narrative ironisation of his 'große Kusine', who, in her cult status, adopts super-human proportions as 'Seelenriesin' (MoE 95). Despite the ambiguous depiction of the soul, which is to be inscribed in the novel as 'ein Fehlendes' (MoE 1832), the cult of Diotima has remained compelling for Ulrich. From their first meeting his desire has been to desecrate the temple of this antagonistic deity ('Ulrich fühlte sich von etwas Feindseligem bedrängt, einer Lust, diese lächelnde Frau zu empören' MoE 93), and yet he is rendered impotent before her 'aber er konnte sich der Schönheit Diotimas nicht ganz entziehen' (MoE 93). So it is that the supposed exemplar of predatory manhood, who after intercourse with Bonadea feels 'gesättigt wie ein Raubtier / besser: Wie er sich selbst sagt: wie ein Hund, der ein Huhn zerrissen hat' (MoE 1483), finds the roles reversed. A note reveals that the cynical behaviour of the seducer is 'die Kraft, die ein Mann aus seiner Ohnmacht zieht', that is, out of effeminate passivity: 'Wenn ein gewagtes Gleichnis erlaubt ist, ist der Genuß dieses passiven Erlebens etwas Weibliches' (MoE 1819). When the mask of the predator is removed, Ulrich as worm (like the dog a phallic figure) 'den ein großes Huhn aufmerksam betrachtet' (MoE 95) is under threat of emasculation. As Ulrich is displaced from the masculine territory of intellectual virility in discourse ('So weit ist es also gekommen, daß dieses Riesenhuhn genau so redet wie ich?' MoE 566) he seems to share the fate of both the hapless von Stumm, 'dann fühle ich mich

kurzerhand von ihrer Gescheitheit entmannt' (MoE 1135), and of Tuzzi, for Ulrich the archetype of 'reiner Männlichkeit' (MoE 416), who sees being the 'Gatte einer bedeutenden Frau' as 'ähnlich der Entmannung durch einen Unglücksfall' (MoE 334). The giant hen as threat to the impotent worm represents an allegory of the cult of the female soul consuming the object of the phallic cult. This accords not only with the role played by the worm in *Törleß*, but also with the pattern of phallic aggression born of fear which characterises both Ulrich and his double, Moosbrugger. Not only does Moosbrugger frame male sexuality in the figure of the worm (see above p. 133), but when he is holed up with Rachel, the scenario is rehearsed in figurative form: 'daß so solch ein mageres Huhn tagaus, tagein um ihn herumscharren dürfe, wurmte ihn' (MoE 1594).

Diotima threatens to transpose Ulrich into the pre-rational realm of childhood with the emancipation of repressed archetypal fears and fantasies: 'Uralter Kinderschreck vor der großen Frau griff nach ihm' (MoE 566). She is the deified representation of an inner identity, threatening to consume him only in as far as he is prepared to see her as a double: 'er fand es angenehm von der dummen Übereinstimmung mit einem ihm verwandten Menschen gleichsam seelisch aufgezehrt zu werden' (MoE 566). In his notes for the episode Musil situates it between 'Reflexion Geschlechtsproblem = Kampf um menschliche Form — u. Doppelgänger' (MoE 2096). The two concerns are bound together in the scene; the quest for human form being pursued in the stripping off of Diotima's super-human and sexual masks, and the motif of the double invoked, as Ulrich sees his own loss of human form reflected in Diotima's disintegration during the 'Stoßen u Vergehn' (MoE 2096) of the sexual act. It is the principle of sexual difference (marked by the figure of the phallus) which is under threat here, and with it the blueprint for sexual power relations:

Und weil er seinen Einfluß auf Frauen zu oft mit der Lust eines Jägers am Fangen und Beobachten ausgenutzt hatte, war ihm fast immer auch das dazugehörige Bild begegnet, worin die Frau das Wild ist, das unter dem Liebesspeer des Mannes zusammenbricht, und es saß ihm die Wollust der Demütigung im Gedächtnis, der sich die liebende Frau unterwirft, während der Mann von einer ähnlichen Hingabe weit entfernt ist. (MoE 683–84)

It is against just such a fantasy of submission that the male in Ulrich is struggling in the projected form of the soul as goddess. This is the wisdom of Diotima's discourse as related by Bonadea (an unlikely substitute for Socrates),⁸ whereby the threat of woman's 'seelische Überlegenheit' is explicitly directed at the 'Liebesspeer': 'denn im Gegensatz zur beständigen Lustbereitschaft der Frau ist der Mann, also kurz gesagt, des Mannes männlichster Teil, sehr leicht einzuschüchtern'.⁹ And the fear of phallic vulnerability is concealed in (as indeed from) Diotima's view by the veil of sexual aggression, as lesser men 'verschleiern sie hinter brutaler körperlicher Anmaßung und mißbrauchen das Seelenleben der Frau' (MoE 885). In spite of his apparent ironic distance from this discourse, Ulrich is unsettled enough to steer its postulations on to Tuzzi 'um es von sich zu entfernen' (MoE 886). The 'Gartenfest'

episode marks the upturning of the masochistic disposition of the helpless child supine before the Great Mother deity.¹⁰ Significantly the toppling of the goddess is brought about when she adopts the appearance of the phallic cult. Nor is the choice of costume here arbitrary; Diotima has chosen the role-model of the Stendhalian Romantic hero; and just as the exploits in the bedroom or on the battlefield of those effeminate heroes are typically deflated in a theatrical manner, so Diotima is ill-equipped to carry off the incongruous role.¹¹

Ulrich scrutinises the patent incongruity with a merciless and vengeful eye; throwing down the gauntlet for sexual combat ('u. betrachtete herausfordernd den Körper D's' MoE 1616). The hunt model of sexual conquest is complicated in the case of this bisexual prey: there is a suggestion that the 'lesboid gekleideten Frauen' (MoE 2088) might have no use for male sexuality. Ulrich interprets Diotima's appearance as symptomatic of a sort of Adlerian 'männliche Protest'; she has mobilised 'eine Art Übermann' within to avenge the infidelities of the male sex; and yet it is clear from the start that the 'super-man' will fail to galvanise Diotima's character into an authentic performance, and a committed acquisition of the phallic prerogative.¹² The outsize dimensions and elevation which she has enjoyed as an allegory of the female soul are undercut as she humbles herself before her 'subordinate': "'Ach, lieber Freund, sagen Sie nicht Oberst zu mir'" (MoE 1617). Thus she protests not her maleness but her femininity, "'Ich bin nicht unweiblich'" (MoE 1618), and then oscillates between the postures of her assumed role and telling effeminate mannerisms: 'ihre linke Hand stützte sich bald männlich auf den Säbelknauf, bald griff sie sich damit weiblich in die Haare' (MoE 1619). By drawing attention to the phallic symbol at her side she merely emphasises the purely notional effect of this prop doing service for a physiological lack: 'und der runde Bauch in den weißen Reithosen hatte, was merkwürdigerweise komisch wirkte, nicht die kleinste Unregelmäßigkeit, wie sie den Mann verrät' (MoE 1619). That this effect should be 'merkwürdig' only goes to show that Ulrich is playing along with the transsexual fantasy.

Diotima has been ravaged of the resource upon which her role as allegorical giantess was founded ('Sie habe ihre ganze Seele diesem Mann gegeben' MoE 1619) and is reduced to a life-size woman, fair game for the huntsman. Yet Ulrich does not immediately perform the requisite conquest; at the crucial moment 'U. war verzweifelt' (MoE 1619). This term should be understood here in its full etymological sense, for Ulrich, no less than Diotima is 'ver-zwei-felt', split into two selves; reminded as he is here of 'einen Auftritt mit Ge.' (MoE 1619), he begins once more to fudge his role.

Once more intercourse is 'pre-viewed' in the scopic field. The forcing of sexual submission by the penetrative gaze finds Ulrich confronted with the same prospect as Törleß. Diotima's gaze, appearing behind the figurative veil of her desire, is cast in the familiar sexual metaphor of the dark interior: 'ihre Augen unter dem Schleier des Verlangens wie zwei in einen dunklen Gang geöffnete Tore' (MoE 1620). From

Diotima's point of view at least, Ulrich's gaze seems to gain forced access to the interior, disregarding the element of deterrence which is bound up with the lure of the veil. The 'Augen-blick' (and it can be no coincidence that Musil introduces this word wherever the lodging of desire in the gaze is at work) penetrates Diotima's 'Gesicht' (once more there is a suggestive ambiguity in the sense of 'Gesicht' as sight) 'und bohrte seine Augen, von D. aus gesehen, fürchterlich in ihr Gesicht. In diesem Augenblick empfand sie nichts als Angst u. Anerkennung für ihn' (MoE 1620).¹³ Musil's notes for the scene are instructive here. The act of coitus is to be transposed to the scopic field: 'Coit. D. gar nicht sexuell machen, ganz nur Reiz, einen Menschen sichtbar zu machen' (MoE 2096); the desire at work here is thus to gain a revelation of Diotima's 'Gesicht' behind mask and veil.

The revelation is, however, an unexpected one; it is Agathe that Ulrich's fantasy summons up, that is, his own female counterpart — the 'Doppelgänger im anderen Geschlecht' (MoE 905). It is this passage that Musil intended to be the key section of the chapter; the notes above the draft read: 'Mimetus d. Coit. soll den Eifersuchtsvorstellungen Material liefern' (MoE 1616). The note refers to a favourite idea, the mimicry of death-throes in coitus as 'Lustmord': 'Coitus: Das Brechen des Auges, das zuckende Sichlassen des Körpers, die aufgebrochenen Lippen, zwischen denen sich der Atem fortschleicht, dieser ganze Mimus ist verwandt mit dem der Katastrophe. Das ist einer der beunruhigenden Reize des Vorgangs' (Ta I 408). The mimetic effect here is compounded, as the 'Kampf um menschliche Form' is correlated with the 'Doppelgänger'. The fact that Ulrich sees his alter ego before him in the role of submissive victim illustrates the essentially reflexive nature of his 'Eifersucht'. Agathe's self-abandonment, and with it the weakness of the female sex, is merely the corollary of his own: 'er sah Ag. vor sich u. er hätte schreien mögen vor Eifersucht, im Anblick dieses weiblichen Unvermögens, länger Widerstand zu leisten, obgleich er seinen eigenen Widerstand von Sekunde zu Sekunde schwinden fühlte' (MoE 1620). The rendering 'sichtbar' of the female form in its disintegration fulfils the classic mimetic function of the double as disrupter of desire and harbinger of death. The attitudes of Ulrich's double in coitus are thus framed in a metaphorical mirror as they are prefigured ('vorgespiegelt') in his imagination. When he adopts a mask himself, rendering his own human form invisible, it is in a desperate attempt to forestall his own masochistic identification with his double's fragmentation:

Schon *spiegelte* ihm seine Erwartung das Brechen dieser Augen vor, ihr Glangloswerden, wie es nur der Tod u. die Liebe hervorrufen, . . . und er konnte es kaum noch erwarten, diesen Menschen, den er vor sich hatte, ganz zusammenbrechen zu fühlen u. ihm zuzusehen, während er sich in Moder wand, wie ein Kapuziner, der in die Schädelgruft hinabsteigt. Wahrscheinlich gingen da seine Gedanken schon in eine Richtung, in der er Rettung erhoffte, denn er wehrte sich mit allen Kräften gegen seinen eigenen Zusammenbruch. (MoE 1620, my emphasis).

The scopic desire of the voyeuristic 'Lustmörder' ('ihm zuzusehen') is redirected by the specular double on to the violator, to behold his own 'Lustselbstmord'. What

becomes 'sichtbar' to Ulrich in this metaphorical mirror is exactly the sort of corporeal disintegration that Lacan identifies behind the apparent accession to integrity in the 'mirror-stage'.

At this moment of crisis Ulrich assumes a new persona; in a last-ditch attempt to resolve his 'Verzweiflung' (i.e. his doubling), and the concomitant inability to act the required part, he gives vent to a pent-up sadistic impulse and adopts the role of the punitive father-figure, reducing Diotima in her turn to the helplessness of the little child. As the persona of the monk was one of dissimulation by self-enclosure ('während er sich in Moder wand'), so this new mask is but a self-protective 'Vor-wand', as a note for the chapter makes clear: 'der Sadismus nur ein Vorwand' (Ta II 1110). In order to play the father Ulrich must borrow the mother's prop, the weapon which symbolises her specious manhood: 'U. hatte ihren Pallasch ergriffen u halb aus der Scheide gezogen.' (MoE 1620).¹⁴ He disarms her and so metes out the sort of symbolic castration which had figured in the ritual of her cult. Diotima relives the experience which she had described to protest her femininity, when she had surrendered the rigorous role of mother-surrogate ('die Mutter spielen' MoE 1618) and sought a father-figure 'dem ich mich unterwerfen dürfte', and felt in his bed like 'ein kleines Mädchen, das der Tod zu Gott dem Vater entführt' (MoE 1618). She now reverts by this other metaphorical death of the sexual act to childhood, 'als entflöhe die ganze Frau, die sie nach ihrem zwölften Lebensjahr gewesen sei, aus ihrer Brust' (MoE 1620). She experiences this reversion as an emancipation from the onerous demands of her character (in both senses) and thus of her cult of the soul, and yet the night of rarified bliss, 'wie erfüllt von einem dunklen, kindischen u. seligen Traumzustand, der D. von ihrem Charakter befreite' (MoE 1621), is mitigated by the more sinister corollaries of this liberation, by madness and the 'Schrei u. Röcheln' (MoE 1621) of the 'Lustmord'.

When the dream ends the erstwhile goddess is caught in an attitude of ritual genuflection; but just as Tuzzi had been but a poor substitute for God the Father, this other false god, who had engaged her complicity in her own profanation, now mocks her veneration by his absence in the cold light of day. The series of disguises to avoid becoming 'sichtbar' culminates in a vanishing trick: 'Von U. war aber nichts zu sehen' (MoE 1621).

Both Gerda and Diotima engage in strategies of travesty in their scenes with Ulrich, and provoke similar strategies in the seducer. In Lacanian terms they are forced to assume the veil in order to excite Ulrich's desire: 'Such is the woman concealed behind her veil: it is the absence of the penis that turns her into the phallus, the object of desire'.¹⁵ In order to dissemble this absence, Diotima joins in the transsexual masquerade and adopts the prop of a phallic weapon. Lacan's account of the 'signification of the phallus' furnishes an exact reading of the strategies of dissimulation here. Neither partner being in possession of the phallus

they are constrained to seem to have it, and so to adopt roles in what Musil calls the 'schlechte Theatralik der Liebe' (MoE 2096). The exigency of 'to seem':

... has the effect of projecting in their entirety the ideal or typical manifestations of the behaviour of each sex, including the act of copulation itself, into the comedy.

I am saying that it is in order to be the phallus, that is to say, the signifier of the desire of the Other, that a woman will reject an essential part of femininity, namely, all her attributes in the masquerade. It is for that which she is not that she wishes to be desired as well as loved. But she finds the signifier of her own desire in the body of him to whom she addresses her demand for love. Perhaps it should not be forgotten that the organ that assumes this signifying function takes on the value of a fetish.¹⁶

The ritual castration in the 'Gartenfest' scene indicates the absence behind the phallic semblance. The seducer can only play his part in the 'comedy' by despoiling Diotima of her fetishistic simulacrum, which he is then tempted to use himself in lieu of the organ which can equally only do symbolic service (as a signifier) for phallic desire. Both parties in the sexual act are beset by the same essential lack and thus the same desire. This, the desire to render 'sichtbar' the phallic object — the object which throughout the 'sexual acts' of Musil's writing is veiled from view — must be frustrated. When the simulacrum is removed what Ulrich perceives behind the veil is not the phallus but a vision of its absence in the dark passage of the gaze as vagina. The castration of the double and the disintegration of her phallic role, her role that is as signifying desire, implies the death of desire in a 'Lust-mord' which empties the scene of seduction, rendering absent both the coital act and the phallic god at its conclusion.

The next section will examine three analogous 'Auftritte', where the predatory, phallic role is fulfilled in an equally equivocal way by a repertory of surrogates, all of whom embody the disturbed character of Ulrich's desire.

The uncanny double

We have seen that the knife as phallus betokens the correlation of the sexual act with murder. Yet in Törleß's torture of Basini, for example, the knife is turned back on the would-be 'Lustmörder' by dint of his masochistic identification with the victim. The phallic knife must be seen as double-bladed to adequately serve as the instrument of such dialectic acts of violence. The infantile fantasy of being a girl (MoE 609) which Ulrich shares with Törleß, is implied in another memory from childhood, arising in a dialogue with Diotima which prefigures the ambivalent aggression of the 'Gartenfest' seduction. Ulrich recalls the love-objects of his childhood: 'Ich war, was Sie nicht glauben werden, ein gutes Kind; so weich wie Luft in einer warmen Mondnacht. Ich konnte grenzenlos verliebt in einen Hund oder in ein Messer sein' (MoE 575). The softness of the child determines the hardness of his objects: the dog as embodying his adult role as predator of chickens, and the knife as phallus and weapon of death. These are, moreover, the very objects which

will be seen to characterise the sexual aggression of Moosbrugger, who is thus able to succeed them as an object of love for the adult male; according to a note in the 'Nachlaß', 'Er liebte eigentlich Moosbrugger, weil er ein Frauenmörder war' (MoE 1953). Ulrich is still drawn to play the role of masochistic victim to the sadistic sex-murderer, even as he feels constrained to play the 'Frauenmörder' himself in his sexual engagements. The ambivalence is reinforced, when, later in the novel, Ulrich reformulates the image he has of himself as a child. The initial image was no more than a 'Vorstellungsrepräsentanz', one image doing analogical service for another. The revelation of the original image deconstructs the 'Mondscheinromantik' in which Ulrich had wishfully cast himself; he recalls 'daß ihm eigentlich ein anderes Bild vorgeschwebt hatte: die Spitze eines brennenden Magnesiumlichts; denn so wie diese sprühend zu Licht zerrissen wird, glaubte er sein Herz zu kennen' (MoE 644). The original light both had the 'Spitze' of the knife and was 'zerrissen' in the same way as the victims of the dog (MoE 1483). The slippage in the metaphorical self-image is symptomatic of Ulrich's desire to repress his double identity. Once more Lacan's model of desire's dialectic essence is prefigured; Ulrich's desire is at once to be the phallic object in the shape of the 'Lustmörder', and to be the object of the phallic murderer.

The dialectic construction of Ulrich's desire is extrapolated into the experience of the three sex-criminals who ostensibly embody the phallic principle: the exhibitionist, the dream-figure who appears in an early project for the novel, and most significantly, of course, Moosbrugger. These three have the same function as G. in *Die Vollendung*, that is, as the deviant 'Vorwand', his actions a pretext for the vicarious gratification of analogous desires in his 'normal' counterparts, according to the principle 'daß solche Unglücksgeschöpfe die Verkörperung unterdrückter Triebe seien, an denen alle teilhaben' (MoE 653). These figures forge the participation between the sexually pathological and the ostensibly normal that Musil outlines as a major aesthetic preoccupation in his essay on 'Das Unanständige und Kranke in der Kunst': 'Jede Perversität läßt sich darstellen durch ihren Aufbau aus Normalem' (VIII 982).

The example with which Musil introduces the essay is a telling one, in its amalgamation of the 'sick' and the 'indecent'. The analogy is made between the reification of the naked, female body for a doctor carrying out an operation, and the writer's portrayal of such an 'unfitting' subject. In fact the wound in the woman's side and the incision of the surgeon's knife indicate that the clinical act stands for coitus as 'Lustmord'. The wound, which is 'blumenhaft' and 'dargeboten', surely refers to the passage from Adolphe Retté's 'Paradox über die Liebe', transcribed in Musil's diary. Here the sexual act is depicted as sexual murder, and the woman prostrates herself 'um so ihre heimliche Blume noch besser anzubieten' (Ta II 106). There are also indications of the self-reflexive threat of the violence. The narrator is drawn by an 'automatische Assoziation' to press 'die wehrlose Haut der Lippen' on to the wound which is also perceived as a vulnerable mouth. He is both a party to

the incision and automatically associates himself with the 'nah Verwandte' and her wound. The scene provides a blueprint for the compulsively repeated acts of 'Lustmord' in Musil's depiction of the 'Unanständige und Kranke' in his art.

The scenes where the perverse criminals are invoked will be seen to confront the 'normal' characters, and in the first instance Ulrich, with a travesty of their disturbed desires, and specifically to represent the constitutional insatiability of desire. However marginalised the depiction of the 'Vorwand' may be, it still exercises a central function as 'Symptomhandlung'; the sick acts of these peripheral figures are symptomatic of a malaise at the very heart of both the fictional world and its protagonist.

'Ein Schausteller und seine Zuschauer'

This symptomatic function is at work in the scene involving the exhibitionist, his 'show' being played according to the scopophilia desires of his spectating gallery; the scene is played on the principle of audience participation (a note reads: 'Exhibit. = Partizipation!' MoE 2087). The exhibitionist's self-revelation is seen as a foreshortened transposition of desire's vagaries: 'Der ganze Weg der Sexualität wird abgekürzt ersetzt durch das Nebeneinanderstellen der exhibierten Handlung und des Vorübergehenden' (Ta II 896). The connection between 'Schausteller' and 'Zuschauer' is made by a subtle process of narrative alignment as first Ulrich and then Clarisse are made to construct the experience of the exhibitionist literally from their own point of view.

The exhibitionist is introduced in terms which elsewhere attach to Ulrich's predatory sexual role, as 'Raubtier' and 'Mörder'. He becomes the sexual beast when he climbs over the 'Gitter', which here, as in *Törleß* and *Die Vollendung*, is both a cage for the wild beast and, in the manner of the veil, a protective screen for the subject's gaze. The exhibitionist's pleasure relies on the screen, as the desire for voluntary self-exhibition is bound up with the fear of becoming the passive victim of discovery. As in *Törleß*, the roles of active, male subject and passive, female object are confounded. He fantasises an 'Überfall' for his image (i.e. the object of the desired, desiring gaze): 'er bereitete sich vor, sie ... mit seinem Anblick zu überfallen, der in die Überraschte eindringen und für ewig in ihr stecken bleiben sollte' (MoE 788). The image is to penetrate the victim in the manner of the phallus or its surrogate, the knife. In accordance with this discrepancy the predator is made to experience bodily the role of victim (at least from Ulrich's perspective!): 'die stumpfen Bewegungen ihrer Augen und ihrer Beine zuckten wahrscheinlich schon in seinem Fleisch' (MoE 788); and her breathing dictates his: 'und sein Atem keuchte folgsam im Rhythmus der fremden Person' (MoE 788). Ulrich sees a threat for his co-predator; the violence of the scene may be inverted and the man follow the same impulse to flee from the fate of a 'Lustselbstmord' as befell Ulrich in his scene with Gerda: 'dann müßte der verrückte Feigling die Flucht ergreifen, und die gestörte

Wollust stieße ihm ihre Messer mit dem stumpfen Griff voran ins Fleisch! (MoE 788). The 'blunt' movements of the woman's legs and eyes take on the role of the phallic weapon in the 'Lustmord', and the man accordingly conceals himself once more in the bushes as 'Blätterunterrock' (MoE 786), a space more suitable for the protection of a woman from the male eye. The petticoats are subsequently transmuted into a metaphor no less indicative of the sexual ambivalence at work in the 'disturbed desire' of the scene. The man is now enclosed by the 'fast schon geöffneten Schleier der Büsche' (MoE 788). This is both the veil that is removed in the exhibitionist's fantasy of phallic revelation, and the prop of feminine mystique, the mark of deferral for the desiring gaze. Once more its function here is as much 'dompte-regard' as lure, as the exhibitionist must be protected from becoming the victim of a voyeuristic gaze.

The climax of the scene is marked by a change of narrative perspective. If Ulrich constructed an allegory of his own 'gestörte Wollust' out of the scene on view, Clarisse must imaginatively reconstruct its denouement. The female viewer who fantasises a male role for herself thus reverses the reading of the scene, ironically enough inferring its successful conclusion from the man's absence from view. Clarisse consummates the phallic apotheosis of the man's image: 'In dieser Sekunde fühlte er sich ... tief in den widerstrebenden Blick der Wehrlosen hineingleiten' (MoE 792).

'Der Vorstadtgasthof'

The special significance of the knife lies in the association of Ulrich with the sex-murderer Moosbrugger as a classic manifestation of the double: 'Es war ihm besonders rührend, in gewissen Zügen M's sein Spiegelbild ... zu sehn' (MoE 1987). The key to their association can be found in the short story *Der Vorstadtgasthof*, which was originally incorporated in an earlier version of *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*, *Der Erlöser*, where it was dreamt by Ulrich's avatar, Anders. The dream persona is clearly derived from Moosbrugger, 'denn Moosbrugger war zweifellos am Zustandekommen beteiligt' (MoE 1983), and yet Anders cannot distinguish him from himself; the dream is to be related 'so wie sich einer mit Anstrengung erinnern will, ob er es war und warum er das getan hat'.^{*17}

The *Vorstadtgasthof* is reminiscent in many ways of the model of sexual encounter that emerged in the earlier works; there is the same association of its location (a dark passage-way and room) with the idea of penetrating a dark and potentially antagonistic, alien world in the body of the partner. The opening of the woman's dress arouses fear and nausea in the man: 'Das Öffnen war, die unvorstellbare Höhle eines Lebensinneren, die Tür eines Gefängnisses aufschliessen. In der Mitte stand ein Tisch; daran saßen alle Dinge ihres Lebens: in Hausschuhen, mit Gesichtern. Sie wollte ihn fangen' (VII 631). The roles are thus once more reversed: the victim lays traps and it is she who pursues him, even as she appears to be in the position of the

pursued: 'Sie verfolgt mich. Sie rollt so aus sich heraus. Immerzu knapp vor mir her' (VII 633); and the same image that is used to explain Moosbrugger's crime (MoE 71) is deployed here: 'Ich muß mich wie ein Hund auf den runden rollenden Ball ihres Lebens stürzen' (VII 633).

The woman combines several dimensions; she is at once body, room and world. A note attached to the sketch for *Der Erlöser* suggests that the victim is a figment of the man's pathological imagination: 'Ist das überhaupt eine Frau? Oder ist das ... Verdichtung aller Gehässigkeiten der Welt in dem infantil ausgenommenen Menschen mit Röckchen und Löckchen' (MoE 1982). The woman is an embodiment of the threatening other (the female) within, and as such, she elicits the self's fear of dispossession by the double, as an earlier version of the piece shows: 'Menschen, die mir auch nur in der Kleidung oder in den Manieren ähneln liebe ich nicht. Das ist mir schon zu nahe'.* The 'infantil ausgenommener Mensch' is in the first instance the mother, and so it is that the idea of penetration is bound up with what is elsewhere dubbed the 'psychoanalytische Legende' (MoE 1462) of intra-uterine regression. Thus he is made to think of her son ('der wohnte darinnen'*) and daughters: 'Sind die Mädchen ausgegangen, die in deinem Leib wohnten?' (VII 633). The woman as *materfamilias* becomes a sort of 'earth-mother'; the rolling ball ('Sinnlos rollend' VII 632) of her life becomes a globe, and active and passive roles are exchanged as it catches the 'dog': 'die runde Kugel der Welt rollte auf ihn' (VII 634). It is the same transition from one enclosure to another as a note in *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften* identifies in birth: 'Ich bin geboren worden, entlassen in diese Welt; aus einem schützenden Dunkel ins andere ... Die Welt meine Mutter?' (MoE 1828). To be enclosed in the woman as mother (to become part of her world) involves a threat to the man's sexual identity. It is the same threat as Ulrich comes to fear in the rites of passage into the 'aZ'; here, penetration in quest of a goal (the ideal of male activity) is disarmed as the telos is foreclosed: "'Ein Mann drängt mit Kraft in die Welt ein," schwebte ihm vor "aber plötzlich schließt sie sich um ihn, und alles sieht anders aus ... Kein Weg, den er gekommen ist und weitergehen muß"' (MoE 772). So it is that the dream-figure abjures penetration in favour of cutting the connection in the form of his partner's tongue. A sketch in the 'Nachlaß' shows that the separation from the world is seen as cutting the umbilical cord as connection with the mother: 'Jetzt wollte er die Verbindung für immer durchtrennen nabeln' (MoE 2127).

The separating cut has a double nature. It is a symbolic castration, with the 'Lustmörder' forgoing the knife and adopting instead the revenge of the female victim: he cuts their intercourse in the manner of the 'vagina dentata'.¹⁸ But the fear of intercourse or return to the womb is inherently bound up with the fear of verbal intercourse with the other which is also figured by the tongue. The man cuts the woman's stream of romantic platitudes and his own enigmatic non-sequiturs, by transferring to 'body-language' and the tongue as universal 'Menschensverständigungsmittel'. The deployment of this ostensible mediator of understanding is

ironically effected in a grotesque misunderstanding as she takes 'Kungfutse' to be a 'Fachausdruck' for the phonetically similar 'Zungenspitze': 'Seine Zungenspitze — Klangverknüpfung' (MoE 2127). The 'unbewußten Klangverknüpfung' (VII 633), which makes a false signifying connection, is physically transposed to the 'Verbindung' of the tongue. In accordance with the deformation of meaning which obtained throughout the lovers' intercourse (he being dubbed the 'Unverständliche' VII 632), it is the articulating tongue which suffers the mutilating cut. Connection through sound ('Klangverknüpfung') is denied by its metaphorical dismemberment, as the victim reels 'um den taumelnden Rumpf eines Lauts' (VII 634). The sex-crime enacts the violent tearing asunder of the allegory of intercourse between the sexes in the prologue to *Die Versuchung*. The quest for a sense of identity through dialogue is revoked by the symbolic suppression of the tongue as supposed mediator of sense. The male desires only to revert to sense-less mutism: 'Hoch aufgerichtet wie ein Baum und sinnlos schwankend mit der Krone'.*

Moosbrugger

The detail of the *Vorstadtgasthof* story can be correlated with the experience of Ulrich's 'Spiegelbild', Moosbrugger, the monstrous figment of society's collective dreams: 'wenn die Menschheit als Ganzes träumen könnte, müßte Moosbrugger entstehn' (MoE 76). In the 'Heimweg' chapter, which sees repeated instances of Ulrich's impotence in the predatory role, he invokes the figure of Moosbrugger as one apparently quite committed to his role as the archetype of male affect: 'Moosbrugger — der krankhafte Komödiant, der Prostituiertenjäger und -vertilger, der durch jene Unglücksnacht genau so gegangen war wie er heute . . . Er hatte offenbar so lange an einem Leben ohne innere Einheit festgehalten, daß er nun sogar einen Geisteskranken um seine Zwangsvorstellungen und den Glauben an seine Rolle benedete' (MoE 652).

Yet there is more to the bogey-man and his role-play than meets the eye. The 'Prostituiertenjäger' is in fact himself figured as the quarry; in Moosbrugger's imagination his victim's sexual aggression is at first seen as presenting a comedy of his impotence to some hidden pimp: 'immer steckt ja hinter den Weibern der andere Mann, der einen verhöhnt' (MoE 73). She then becomes, in accordance with her role of hunter, a man in the guise of a woman: 'Überhaupt, kam sie ihm nicht wie ein verkleideter Mann vor?' (MoE 73). The prostitute has usurped his role and is therefore seen as a projection of the self. Thus, like the dream-figure, he is in pursuit of himself, both rolling ball and dog, in front and behind: 'Da erkannte er, daß er niemals von ihr loskommen werde, weil er es selbst war, der sie hinter sich herzog . . . Er ging, und das, halb hinter ihm, war wiederum er' (MoE 74). He is reminded of when he had had to inflict a wound on himself with the phallic knife to expel another foreign body, a splinter, from the self: 'ganz ähnlich fühlte er jetzt wieder sein Messer, lang und hart lag es in seiner Tasche' (MoE 74). Even as he is supposedly

fulfilling his role, like Diotima he adopts a prop in lieu of his real 'weapon'; and the ownership of the simulacrum is disputed by the alter-ego victim: 'das weiche, verfluchte zweite Ich legte sich neben ihn . . . Da fühlte er etwas Hartes in ihrer oder seiner Tasche' (MoE 74). She maintains that it is scissors, her more feminine version of the phallo-dagger, so that Moosbrugger doubts his weapon even as he stabs: 'Er wußte nicht recht, war es eine Schere oder ein Messer; er stach damit zu. Sie hatte behauptet es sei nur eine Schere, aber es war sein Messer' (MoE 74). He plunges the dagger in 'bis er sie ganz von sich losgetrennt hatte' (MoE 74), that is, until he has murdered this female phantasm, 'diese Karikatur eines Weibes' (MoE 75), within.¹⁹

The female as caricature (as in the *Vorstadtgasthof*) and the phallic huntsman are inextricably involved with one another as personae in Moosbrugger's inner theatre. The murder of the woman is essentially the murder of a composite, bisexual double of the self: 'Frauen sind Frauen und Männer; weil die ihnen nachrennen' (MoE 396) as he enigmatically says. According to this logic, the sex-murderer pursued by a woman is, *mutatis mutandis*, both man and woman. The 'Lustmörder' is as unsure of his role as Ulrich and is made to commit the same sort of 'Lustselbstmord'.

The feminine doubling of the 'Lustmörder' represents a paradigm for the ambivalent nature of desire in general. If Moosbrugger is paradoxically driven to murder by his fear of women ('gleichsam aus Zartheit wird er zum Lustmörder' MoE 1954), so at the centre of every act, sexual or otherwise, is a core of passivity; the supreme male act of rape belies its bisexual essence: 'dem Vergewaltigen wollen ist ein Scheuen, ist Zartheit beigemengt, fast möchte man sagen, dem Maskulinen etwas Feminines. Und so ist es mit allen Gefühlen; sie sind eigenartig entkernt u vergrößert' (MoE 1525). When the effeminate Walter violates the 'hermaphroditic' Clarisse, it is he who is made to bleed from the sexual wound of his 'Scham': 'die Scham war wie eine Wunde, aus der wirkliches, warmes Blut quoll' (MoE 1564). The act of phallic penetration is thus turned back on itself, when it is not deferred altogether. Far from fulfilling his phallic role, the 'Lustmörder' serves as a role-model for the general diversion of desire from its objects, and its gratification only in the simulated form of the sexual 'act': 'Daß die ersten Opfer von Moosbruggers Lustmorden ihre Virginität nicht eingebüßt hatten, war ungeheuer bezeichnend für den indirekten Charakter seines Begehrens' (MoE 1987).

The 'krankhafte Komödiant' furnishes Ulrich with a precise role-model. In the sexually charged scene where Arnheim tries to 'seduce' him, Ulrich finds himself fantasising a re-enactment of the 'Lustmord'. He is directed by his 'Selbstbewußtsein' as 'Regisseur', and 'prompted' by a dramatic text, as Arnheim's self-dramatising presence summons 'auch diese alten Texte auf die Szene: "Nimm einen Dolch und erfülle sein Schicksal!"', leading Ulrich to stand 'mit dem halben Körper hinter Arnheim' (MoE 645). Like Moosbrugger, Ulrich feels in his pocket for his knife; in either scene the murderous desire is evoked by the fear of similarity ('übereinstimmen') with the other, and it is no coincidence that Ulrich positions himself, like the prostitute, 'halb hinter' his 'victim'. If Ulrich fails to complete the

'act', it is an indication of the 'indirekten Charakter' of his own desire, its derivation from a theatrical script.

'Das Unheimliche'

The term 'unheimlich' recurs several times with regard to the *Vorstadtgasthof* story: a note reads that, though a dream, it is 'erzählt wie eine unheimliche, wirkliche Geschichte' (MoE 1944); it is to furnish 'einen unheimlichen geheimen Anfang' (MoE 1944); and Anders, we read elsewhere, 'konnte Moosbrugger unheimlich gut verstehen' (MoE 1949). The recurrence might seem to fit into the general claims which S. S. Prawer makes for Musil's use of the term;²⁰ however, the striking apposition of 'unheimlich' and 'geheim' suggests that in this case Musil is working within a Freudian frame of reference.

In 'Das Unheimliche', first published in *Imago* in 1919,²¹ Freud departs from a discussion of the etymology of 'heimlich' and 'unheimlich', tracing an equivalence between the two by way of 'geheim'. Freud relates the uncanny effect to the irruption of repressed infantile ideas into the life of the adult, focussing on the fear of displaced castration by blinding which he finds in E. T. A. Hoffmann's *Der Sandmann*. He describes the fear thus: 'daß ein besonders starkes und dunkles Gefühl sich gerade gegen die Drohung, das Geschlechtsglied einzubüßen erhebt, und daß dieses Gefühl erst der Vorstellung vom Verlust anderer Organe den Nachhall verleiht' (StA IV 255). Freud goes on to refer to Rank's 'Doppelgänger' and the analogous idea of *déjà-vu* as the uncanny doubling of experience. Both are redolent in their 'Wiederholung des Gleichen' of 'die Hilfslosigkeit mancher Traumzustände'. This doubling is once more related to repression: 'Der Charakter des Unheimlichen kann doch nur daherrühren, daß der Doppelgänger eine den überwundenen seelischen Urzeiten angehörige Bildung ist' (StA IV 259). The phenomenon of *déjà-vu* is explained specifically as representing a fantasised return to the womb, a return which has a highly ambivalent character. There is a more sinister side to the recuperation of security in the matrix: the fear of incarceration, or of burial alive:

Es kommt oft vor, daß neurotische Männer erklären, das weibliche Genitale sei ihnen etwas Unheimliches. Dieses Unheimliche ist aber der Eingang zur alten Heimat des Menschenkinds, zur Örtlichkeit, in der jeder einmal und zuerst geweilt hat . . . Das Unheimliche ist also auch in diesem Falle das ehemals Heimische, Altvertraute. Die Vorsilbe 'un' an diesem Worte ist aber die Marke der Verdrängung. (StA IV 267)

In fiction the effect is determined by a sudden transition from the real to the fantastic. It is most powerful when the reader is unaware of being required to suspend disbelief in a dream-world; having been led to feel at home in the fictional world, the irruption of the uncanny will illuminate for an instant the illusion of 'homeliness'.

In the *Vorstadtgasthof* we are presented with a dream 'denn in wachem Zustand

denkt so etwas kein anständiger Mensch' (MoE 1983) as the narrator drily remarks, yet it is expressly to be related 'wie eine unheimliche wirkliche Geschichte'. This false realism allows for the full effect of 'das Unheimliche' in Freud's terms. It is striking how many elements in the narrative then fulfil Freud's categories: the threat of displaced castration, the complex doubling of self and other, and the suggestion that the man is returning to a familiar scene. The 'Versteck' within the woman is, moreover, both hiding-place and prison, 'heimlich' (literally furnishing a home for her progeny) and 'unheimlich'; it is at once the 'weibliche Genitale' and the 'Mutterleib' of Freud's model. The prefix 'un', a sign for Freud of repressive negation, is applied here to the idea of understanding as the 'Unverständliche' denies the communicative mediation of the 'Menschenverständigungsmittel'. In suppressing understanding the murderer is denying the relationship of identity which Ulrich sees as its premise: 'Weil man nichts versteht, was man tun sieht oder tut, sondern nur was man ist' (MoE 1651). It is such an identity which characterises Ulrich's uncannily intimate understanding of his double ('Ulrich konnte Moosbrugger unheimlich gut verstehen'). This understanding is 'unheimlich' only in as far as, contrary to Ulrich's assertion ('Sein Zwiespalt war ein anderer ... daß er nichts unterdrückte' MoE 653), there is repression at work. While he can acknowledge his resemblance to the Ripper figure as male archetype, he fails to recognise that, in both Moosbrugger and the dream-figure, the archetype is radically subverted, invaded by the 'unheimlich' in the form of a threatening female identity. The doubles are therefore in themselves redoubled, struck by an essential 'Zwiespalt' by virtue of repression; they present a total reflection of Ulrich, the man who is constantly struggling to repress an identification with the female.

Ulrich's love for his 'Spiegelbild' fails paradoxically not 'weil er ein Frauenmörder war', but because he has another, feminine side: 'Man konnte ihn von tausend Seiten lieben, wenn man ihn nicht voll nahm' (MoE 1953). It is in other words a love which can find no 'Vollendung' in narcissistic self-fulfilment. The novel in its desire for a consummate reflection also seeks to encompass the perverse in its 'love'; Musil writes 'daß die Kunst das Unmoralische und Verwerflichste nicht nur darstellen, sondern auch lieben dürfe' (VIII 979). There are indications that the novel's self-fulfilment is also beleaguered by repression; Moosbrugger, a focal figure in the early drafts is progressively marginalised, the 'grauenvolles Kapitel' of the 'Lustmörder'-dream excluded altogether. The repression of the 'Vorwand' necessarily involves the recession of the sexual ambivalence of which it is a symptom. Accordingly, the perspective of the novel remains rooted in the male protagonist. The dialogue between male and female cannot be effectively transferred to the pages of a diary as in the prologue to *Die Versuchung*; instead the diary is a secret, male monologue, which Agathe can only read covertly. Female experience thus remains other, the project to transpose the 'geistige Führung' to Agathe (Ta I 811) a pipe-dream. This failure to transcend sexual alterity in the text, to conjoin the voices on the written page, is allegorised in the failure of Ulrich's narcissistic desire for his

'Eigenliebe', Agathe (MoE 898). This coordinated failure of sexual and of textual desire will be the concern of the final section.

The Narcissistic Mirror

Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften is one of the texts which Hutcheon chooses to exemplify her notion of the narcissistic narrative, citing Ulrich's often-quoted remark: 'die meisten Menschen sind im Grundverhältnis zu sich selbst Erzähler' (MoE 650).²² Ulrich makes this assertion only to point out that the anarchy of modern existence is quite inimical to the 'primitiv Epische' of the narrative line. Significantly the narcissistic model of fictional self-construction is revised into the pervasive principle of self-dramatisation. Thus Walter is styled 'Darsteller u. Dichter seiner selbst' (MoE 1521); Clarisse, for whom life is a 'schauspielerische Aufgabe' (MoE 656), perceives herself as an amalgam of 'Textlagen' (MoE 657), as if ironically aware of her own fictionality; and Ulrich too performs according to a textual model, following 'alten Texte' in the scene with Arnheim discussed earlier. The narcissistic text draws a continuous account of its own narrative enterprise in its depiction of this metafictional dimension. The author attempts to make a character's narrative out of the character's attempts to narrate or, indeed, enact himself. Hence Ulrich's desire to live as 'eine Gestalt in einem Buch' (MoE 592), which complements ironically the author's desire to make the figure in the book live.

The relationship of the author to his protagonist, as mediated by the third party of the narrative voice, is not simply one of narcissistic equation, however. Ulrich is more properly his creator's double, at once similar and dissimilar; when Musil considers whether to have his philosophy championed or ironised by his protagonist, he concludes 'Wahrscheinlich beides' (MoE 1775). Their identity is tempered by an ironic inflection; the author's conviction must be dialectically redressed by 'die Ergänzung durch Ironie' (Ta I 973). This 'Ergänzung' is conceived in the manner of a Derridean supplement, as symptomatic of a constitutional shortcoming in the author's investment in the relation between self and work. The fictional world requires the same chary commitment as its model: 'denn die Welt selbst ist nicht zum Ernst reif' (Ta I 973).

It is only in the 'Reise ins Paradies' section, where the protagonist's narcissistic quest is virtually fulfilled, that the ironic gap is closed; Musil notes: 'die Vereinigungsversuche realistisch, d.h. mit vollem Ernst beschreiben' (MoE 1833). Here the double does indeed become narcissistic; the author's ability to realistically consummate his hero's quest would imply the consummation of his own narcissistic programme. When Ulrich can pursue his quest not with the double of his commitment ('der Schatten meines Ernstes' MoE 1356), but with its authentic, original desire, Musil is able to identify 'mit vollem Ernst' with his fiction.

As with Trakl, the protagonist's quest allegorises that of his creator; their deferral is co-determined. Here too the object of the quest is to find the self in the other as

'Ichwiederholung im anderen' (MoE 905). Once more the object is figured as the sister in her double identity as a real, personal figure and as the fictional or poetic figure of the protagonist's entelechy. The narcissistic quest seeks to identify the fantastic sister as 'erdichteter Doppelgänger' (MoE 1338) conceived 'im Sinne ... eines Gedichts' (MoE 1504) with the real sister 'im Sinne einer standesamtlichen Urkunde'. The sister's double identity as imaginary and real, poetic idea and sexual body, will be seen to revive the problematic intervention of the 'Bild' in the operation of desire, which was charted in the earlier works. She will epitomise the seminal idea of the 'Gleichnis' ('Schwester? Ein Gleichnis' MoE 1829), as a conflation of the figurative and the literal, which nevertheless resists their ultimate union: 'Auch zu sehr eins werden wollen ist ein Verstoß geg. das Gleichnis' (MoE 1834). The constitutional element of difference in the 'Gleichnis' both subverts the sister's analogical identity as her brother's 'Eigenliebe' or 'Autismus' (Ta I 598), and confirms, by analogy, the essential disjuncture between the figurative and the literal which must undermine the 'Eigenliebe' of the narcissistic text.

From their first encounter in a metaphorical mirror-space, both dressed in the androgynous motley of Pierrot, Agathe's and Ulrich's relationship is informed by the ideal of the mirror-image. The figure of the 'Doppelgänger im anderen Geschlecht' (MoE 905) in its 'spiegelfechterische Anmut' (MoE 1313) is seen as the consummate supplement to the self, each acting upon the other reflexively and deriving an ever more intense image of their identity in what is 'eine besondere Art der gegenseitigen Ergänzung, wie zwei Spiegel einander dasselbe Bild zuwerfen, das immer inständiger wird' (MoE 1353). The image seems to defy the Lacanian model of desire as engaged in a perpetual metonymic chase after imaginary objects; and yet the casting of the ideal relationship in a 'Gleichnis' necessarily admits of an element of difference in the specular equation: 'Ein Gleichnis enthält eine Wahrheit und eine Unwahrheit, für das Gefühl unlöslich miteinander verbunden' (MoE 581). The equation by analogy is always an admixture of 'gleich und nicht gleich' (MoE 906), so that like the double it is never a total 'likeness' of the self, but a 'Wiederholung und Veränderung' (MoE 694, my emphasis). The mystical union of self and double is only to be achieved 'wie in einem schwärmerischen Gleichnis' (MoE 1083), and the space of identity through the looking glass is accessible only to the imagination; indeed it can only be framed in an image: 'Mir ist selbst zumute, als sähe ich alles, was wir wollen, in einem klaren Spiegel vor mir; aber ich kann nicht hinein, und es kann nicht heraus' (MoE 1335).

The double is supplementary (an 'Ergänzung') in the Derridean sense, that is, an indicator of a fundamental lack within the original self, its difference from the ideal of self-sufficiency. The mirror as 'Gleichnis' par excellence of the *unio mystica* can only be apprehended by way of such a supplement; the broken metaphorical mirror of mystic union lies behind another metaphorical mirror, the image of integrity that it presents to the world: 'jenes ekstatische Leben, dessen Spiegel zerbrochen unter

dem gewöhnlichen hervorblickt' (MoE 1351). The principle of metonymic self-representation in the form of a 'Bild' or 'Gleichnis' ('ebenso gut ließe sich von jedem Bild sagen, daß es ein Gleichnis wäre' MoE 1348), which had such a vital part to play in the operation of desire in *Törleß*, is thus extended here to cover the needs of the mystical mirror, as a double intervening to veil its mutilation. The subjacent broken mirror interferes in the idea of 'gegenseitige Ergänzung', as the image reflected by Ulrich, far from supplementing Agathe, detracts from her totality, so that she perceives a lack in herself, 'als sähe ich mich in den Scherben eines Spiegels: man erblickt sich bei dir nie in ganzer Figur!' (MoE 744). The mirror thus undergoes the shift which Lacan exemplifies in the dialectical moment of the mirror-stage; the illusion of corporeal integrity is superseded by the broken image of the 'corps morcelé'.²³

Both Ulrich and Agathe experience individually a self-alienating moment of reflection. Thus Ulrich seeks a mirror as he stands over his father's corpse, and can only perceive his image in 'dieses blinde Gesicht' (MoE 693). Agathe's encounter accords to a striking degree with the Lacanian model. She sees herself as if 'zum erstenmal' (MoE 854); her initial response is one of jubilant play with her image, but her 'Übermut' (MoE 853) is short-lived, as the image dispossesses her of her corporeal identity. The passage describes perfectly the Lacanian notion of the subject's 'capture' by its ego, as she feels 'daß sie selbst ohne Körper dazustehen und ihr Körper zu der Frau Hagauer im Spiegel zu gehören schien' (MoE 854). This is the ego as derived from the desire of the other; Agathe shares the other's scopical desire for her body: 'So konnten sie leicht die Männer gesehen haben, mit denen sie sich eingelassen hatte' (MoE 854). The security of her childlike play is dispelled, as she passes 'aus dem Zustand ihrer glücklichen Sicherheit in einen des Bangens, Staunens und Verstummens' (MoE 855). The perception of her bodily 'Wohlbildung' is resolved into a *memento mori* so that her thoughts turn to the 'Zerfall der Elemente im Tode' (MoE 855). The jubilant 'infant' is now made to recall an experience from her actual infancy which casts the intimation of death in a metaphor of the 'corps morcelé'; she remembers how, during a severe illness 'von Tag zu Tag mehr Teile ihres Körpers von ihr abgelöst und vernichtet worden' (MoE 856). The narcissistic scene ends in thoughts of suicide.

The play of resemblance and dissemblance in the figure of the double allows Ulrich to see himself doubled in such disparate figures as Agathe and Moosbrugger, who both have the character of 'likenesses': 'Schwester? Ein Gleichnis . . . M. ein Gleichnis' (MoE 1829). Indeed, his own likeness assumes the double's role as sexual rival, by seeming to *reflect* an image which differs from his sexually ambivalent character: 'indem er den Frauen eine gangbare Männlichkeit *vorspiegelte*, für die Ulrich zu viel Geist und innere Widersprüche besaß. Er war mitunter geradezu auf seine Erscheinung wie auf einen . . . Rivalen eifersüchtig' (MoE 285, my emphasis). This 'Zerrspiegel' effect is extended to his 'Spiegelbild'; as 'ein entsprungenes

Gleichnis der Ordnung' (MoE 653), Moosbrugger is likened in his combination of 'gleich und nicht gleich' to Ulrich's own photographic portraits: 'daß ihn aus dem Bild eines Mörders nichts Fremderes anblickte als aus allen anderen Bildern der Welt, die alle so waren wie seine eigenen alten Bilder: halb gewordener Sinn, halb wieder hervorquellender Unsinn!' (MoE 653). In the same way as the sister as 'erdichteter Doppelgänger' Moosbrugger represents Ulrich figuratively, in the manner of a dream or a poem: 'Moosbrugger ging ihn durch etwas Unbekanntes näher an als sein eigenes Leben . . . er ergriff ihn wie ein dunkles Gedicht, worin alles ein wenig verzerrt und verschoben ist und einen zerstückt in der Tiefe des Gemüts treibenden Sinn offenbart' (MoE 121). As Ulrich perceives elsewhere, the imaginary worlds of dream and poem represent meaning by analogy; as 'Gleichnis' they must involve 'einen Mangel an Wirklichkeit' (MoE 906).

The play of like and unlike with regard to Agathe can be seen at work in the prelude to the 'Reise ins Paradies', as brother and sister deploy a complex of 'Gleichnisse' gravitating around the notion of the 'Bild' and the associated ideas of 'Bildnis', 'Abbildung', 'Gleichnis' and 'Sinnbild'. The double movement is not least evident in Ulrich's perception of his own sexual identity. The closing chapters of the first book see Ulrich's progressive withdrawal from the rival of his 'donjuanischen Selbstbildnis' (MoE 728). The failure to live up to the male self-portrait of predatory potency (his dodging of the prostitute, and virtual rape by Clarisse) lays the ground for the exploration of the 'unlike' in the form of female experience.²⁴ Identity with the 'Doppelgänger im anderen Geschlecht' is only to be achieved *within* the other sex. In terms of the symbolism of Agathe's dream the aperture which marks out their sexual difference must be bridged: 'Sie bewegte ihren Bruder zu sich bis auf letzten schmalen Abgrund. Er darf wohl auch nicht über den Abgrund (Vagina?) gehen' (MoE 1912). The conventional bridge of copulation is rejected ('nicht in der normalen Vereinigungsart' MoE 1912), in as far as it merely overcomes difference temporarily and using the phallus, a mark of difference itself, as bridge. The bridge must rather be constructed out of genuine likeness, which means the disavowal of the accustomed 'likeness' of Don Juan. It is the fear of forfeiture of the sexual 'Selbstbildnis' which will lead to the conventional bridge after all: 'u. das Eindringen beginnt' (MoE 1855). The vision of hermaphroditic union in the mystic mirror is displaced by the collusion of 'trompe-l'œil' and conformity to the role-play of copulation. The journey into paradise will end, as a note has it, 'in optische Täuschung und Sexus' (MoE 1899).

Much of the second book is taken up with discursive or dialogic explorations of the possibility of union, a union which turns on the restoration of the original 'Doppelgeschlechtlichkeit der Seele' (MoE 906). The primordial androgyny of the soul is inferred from certain vestigial manifestations, present for instance 'in dem Reiz, der mit jeder Veränderung und Verkleidung verbunden ist, wie in der Bedeutung der Übereinstimmung und Ichwiederholung im anderen' (MoE 905), for Agathe in the dream scenarios where she encounters herself as a man, and in the

principle of analogy or 'Gleichnis': 'Selbst in jeder Analogie steckt ja ein Rest des Zaubers, gleich und nicht gleich zu sein' (MoE 906). The desired union involves the self being relocated in the space of the other as its own double, as 'Ichwiederholung im anderen' or 'im anderen Geschlecht'. In terms of Ulrich's infantile fantasy, his desire is to be in the place of the other: 'ganz an ihre Stelle' (MoE 690). Ulrich is required to dismantle the system of barriers erected between himself and the other. These are the elaborate 'Vorwände' which characterise his discourse and seem to offer the only alternative to mutism ('Aber der Scherz war ausgeschöpft, der Vorwand verbraucht, sie verstummten eine Weile' MoE 905), and the series of obstacles (clothing, the veil, rivals, incest taboos etc.) which defer desire from its object, even as they excite pursuit: 'Das überfeinerte Übertragen des Begehrens vom Leib auf die Kleidung, von der Umarmung auf die Widerstände oder mit einem Wort vom Ziel auf den Weg kam seiner Natur entgegen' (MoE 284). The removal of obstacles merely disconcerts desire; where the subject might pass unhindered into the realm of the other, he thus sets up obstacles of his own, which sustain the pleasure of 'wollüstige Verzögerung' (MoE 1013). The desire of the sister epitomises the principle of desire's voluptuous deferral. This desire, properly the motive force of the quest, becomes instead its subject, usurping Ulrich in his heroic enterprise. As 'der Held des Versagtseins, des abbrechenden Wegs und aller sich daranschließenden zweideutigen Abenteuer und Umwege' (MoE 1331), it diverts the quest into a dilatory locus: an anti-hero on an anti-quest.

Still Life

Once more the dialectic nature of desire is paradigmatically at work in the predatory play of eye and gaze. So for instance, the abandonment of the other's body to the subject's gaze, when Agathe's face is 'nicht vom Blick ihrer Augen verteidigt' (MoE 901) disarms the acquisitive desire of the scotophiliac; 'dieses nicht für den Mann berechneten Anblicks' (MoE 901) displaces Ulrich from his customary sexual identity. The combative model of the 'Augen-blick' by which Clarisse distinguishes the 'Zwiespältigkeit der Liebe', 'Aneinanderdrängen der Blicke und gequältem Wegdrehen des Auges im letzten *Augenblick*' (MoE 144, my emphasis) is only momentarily suspended.²⁵ Ulrich seeks to reassert an element of 'Rückstoß' by forcing open Agathe's eyes and allowing his gaze to indulge in the mock antagonism of protracted 'fore-play' in lieu of possession: 'ihre Blicke stemmten sich übertrieben gegeneinander wie zwei Knaben' (MoE 902). He thus manages to relocate the field of play out of the uncanny 'Frauenbad' (MoE 901) into a familiar masculine context of struggle for domination.²⁶

As Stumm expounds in one of his philosophical excursions, desire is spurred by the intervention of a 'Hindernis', the element of mystery 'wenn eine Dame einen dichten Schleier trägt' (MoE 1295). Clothing as the extension of this obstacle has the very double nature for Ulrich that Lacan establishes in the scopic field; it activates

the dialectic play of 'trompe-l'œil' and 'dompte-regard', of lure and resistance: 'etwas ziehend Verlockendes und etwas den Blick Abweisendes' (MoE 938). The removal of the resistance to the gaze also removes the lure. While Ulrich is tempted, in spite of being 'einen männlich empfindenden Mann', 'einmal das so oft Begehrte von der anderen Seite zu sehn' (MoE 938), the passage to the other side involves a serious threat to his sexual identity: 'aber manchmal wurde das beinahe unheimlich, und er lehnte sich lachend dagegen auf' (MoE 938). As Ulrich engages in dressing his sister 'to kill', so he renounces the activity of pursuit and becomes instead a party to the alluring image which Agathe as carnivorous flower will present to her suitors; he waits, a victim of the fly-trap, 'wider meine Natur schon ein Stück von dir geworden, auf die Männchen, die wir anlocken werden!' (MoE 939). Made to suffer the desiring looks which Agathe receives as they walk together, Ulrich feels the shame: 'die ein recht beschaffener Mann empfindet, wenn sich ihm unter Vorwänden einer genähert hat, der es nicht ist' (MoE 939). In fact the 'recht beschaffener Mann' is using a 'Vorwand' himself in order to participate in Agathe's desire, and the desire that she provokes in other men. Ulrich, like Törleß before him finds himself reverting to the transsexual identity of his infantile fantasy: 'Er war ein sehr männlicher Mann . . . ein Fraueneroberer und Frauenjäger. Aber als er ein kleiner Knabe war, in den Jahren wo sie noch Mädchenkleider tragen, wünschte er sich selbst heimlich, dieses Mädchen zu sein . . . Er begehrte nicht als Mann nach der Frau, sondern als Frau' (Ta I 612–13). This passage from a sketch for *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften* is developed in the published work into the familiar, dialectic structure of desire. The boy's desire, like that of Törleß, is at once to consume the object and to replace it, to become, that is, the narcissistic object of his own desire: 'Vielleicht glich es auch einer harmlosen Art vampyrischer Leidenschaft, die das ersehnte Wesen in sich einsog, doch wollte dieser kleine Mann jene kleine Frau nicht an sich ziehen, sondern sich ganz an ihre Stelle' (MoE 690).

The transsexual threat of being made the object of the other's gaze, the hunter become quarry, is developed in the motif of 'Bildwerdung', which provides the metaphorical framework for the intimations of the 'aZ'. The motif is introduced in Ulrich's 'Überfall' of his sister in Chapter 45. Their momentary union evokes a comparison ('man hätte es mit der wundersamen Inbrunst eines Bildes vergleichen können' MoE 1082), and yet it is telling that this transformation is itself only mooted in the form of an image. Union is effected '*wie* in einem schwärmerischen Gleichnis' (MoE 1083, my emphasis); the double principle of 'gleich und nicht gleich' is redoubled by the qualification of '*wie*'.²⁷ The bridging of sexual difference is expressed, that is, in differential terms. The momentary, imaginary incursion into the space of the picture is subsequently extrapolated into the twin motifs of the still life and the mirror. The central example chosen for the still life is interestingly enough the very one that Lacan chooses to illustrate his theory of 'l'appétit de l'œil'; Ulrich cites the image of 'spiegelblanke Trauben' in order to point out the absurdity

of 'gemalter Appetit' (MoE 1229). The same grapes which Zeuxis uses to attract birds to his canvas are the object here of what Ulrich later styles the 'Appetithaften', the beast of prey in man which he pitches against Agathe's advocacy of the ripe fruit as image of passive plenitude. The two orders, animal and vegetable, are conjoined in the human being, which is at once drawn by its appetite to the desired image of the fruit, and yet may play the role of passive image to the hungry gaze of the other: 'Denn in jedem Mensch ist ein Hunger und verhält sich wie ein reißendes Tier; und ist kein Hunger, sondern etwas, das frei von Gier und Satttheit, zärtlich wie eine Traube in der Herbstsonne reift' (MoE 1236). In his 'Überfall' of Agathe, perceived with the 'Inbrunst eines Bildes' (MoE 1082), Ulrich mimics the attack and bite of the 'reißendes Tier', but is nonetheless drawn into the picture and the passive disposition of the still life.²⁸

In their dialogue Ulrich and Agathe understand the still life in terms of a complex interaction of subject and object in the scopic field. The objects depicted are seen by the viewers of the still life as themselves seeing, their eyes full of the enormity of the 'unendlichen Anblick' presented by the ocean, they are mute and transfixed: 'Je länger man sie ansieht, desto deutlicher wird es, daß die von ihnen dargestellten Dinge am bunten Ufer des Lebens zu stehen scheinen, das Auge voll Ungeheuerem, und die Zunge gelähmt' (MoE 1230). And in this image of a stillborn image, the siblings perceive a 'seltsame Ähnlichkeit' with themselves. The still life as an image of frozen, inactive desire, effects a parallel disarming of the viewer's desire. So it is that the dialogue moves by analogy to necrophilia, exhibitionism and rape, all of which share the common denominator of fixing on an object which is inadequate to 'normal' desire, and are symptomatic of 'eine Unmöglichkeit, ein Unvermögen' (MoE 1231) in the subject. In accordance with the programme of 'Das Unanständige und Kranke in der Kunst', the still life represents a paradigm not only for these pathological forms of desire, but equally for the 'Spiegelfechterei' which characterises the privileged moments in its 'normal' forms. It is the inability of the object to reciprocate desire, and thereby to make an object of the subject in its turn, that excites this 'necrophiliac' passion, as Ulrich notes, 'daß das Schweigen, die Ohnmacht und jedwede Unvollständigkeit des Gegenspielers mit der Wirkung verbunden ist, das Gemüt in Überspanntheit zu versetzen' (MoE 1231).

This model of desire also lurks behind the 'spiegelfechterische Anmut' (MoE 1313) of the 'Doppelgänger im anderen Geschlecht'; in as far as the double inhabits the inaccessible space of the mirror, as metaphorical 'Spiegelbild', it can only be desired in the manner of a fetishistic substitute.²⁹ In 'Atemzüge eines Sommertags', Agathe is once more framed in the frozen attitude of a picture, 'so daß er sie unbefangen betrachten und das Geheimnis dieser betäubenden, tief vertrauten Bildwerdung ausspähen konnte' (MoE 1330). Ulrich muses: "so könnte man ja auch eine Tote anstarren ... deren Antlitz keinen Wunsch erwidert und keinen verscheucht. Oder einen Fetisch lieben'" (MoE 1331). Once more Ulrich is drawn to make the analogy between the privileged moment of viewing, where the object

sets up no obstacle to the desiring gaze, nor counters it with its own, and the pathological: 'Es gab also eine unangenehme, mehr oder minder verkrüppelte Vetternschaft, und Ulrich wäre kein Mann gewesen, wenn ihn nicht das Schiefgezogene, Schlüpfrige und Schlupfwinklige dieser Verhältnisse nicht mit Unbehagen erfüllt hätte' (MoE 1331). The alliterative triad here carries strong associations of the womb as 'Versteck',³⁰ and elicits a characteristically ambivalent response in Ulrich, whose discomfort in the female space is taken as an indication of his male sexual identity. Once again the gaze partakes of the still-life before it ('wenn er seinen Blick auf seine Schwester und ihn von ihrem Anblick trinken ließ'), and the subject is drawn into its condition by 'ein stilles Abrücken in die Gegend des Schlafs, des Todes, des Bildes, des Unbeweglichen und Ohnmächtigen' (MoE 1331). Ulrich experiences here the same hypnotic suspension of selfhood as did Törleß in the scene at the bath-house; in either case the desiring gaze is that of the lactating child, the object a mistress (for Ulrich the queen-bee 'suckling' her swarm) to whom the subject submits his will. Dispossessed of the 'männliche Machtvorstellung' (MoE 683), Ulrich comes to feel 'eine unheimliche Willensschwäche' or 'Entmächtigung', uncanny because he sees the loss of will (what is elsewhere called 'ein willensfremdes, fast weibliches Gefühl' MoE 2001) as an emasculation. In the same way as Törleß, as he is drawn into the picture, so the world is rendered remote, 'fern und taub' (MoE 1331) to his senses.

Out of this condition of hypnotic impotence Ulrich sees the possibility of union as lying in the exchange of wills: 'Sie hatten also bloß den Willen zu wechseln und einander ein Zeichen der Einwilligung zu geben' (MoE 1332). The transaction is cast in the metaphor of textual interpretation as applied to their discourse. The characters who narrate themselves are also seen as readers of one another: 'Das bedeutete für ihr Leben nicht mehr als die Wahl eines Vorzeichens, einer Überschrift und einer anderen Lesart, und kein Buchstabe des Sinns und Hintersinns wäre dadurch gekränkt oder von seinem Platz gerückt' (MoE 1332). Yet this new way of reading which will unify letter and spirit, resolving the difference intrinsic to the 'Gleichnis', without dislocating either 'Sinn' or 'Hintersinn', text or sub-text, is surrendered. The familiar strategy of discursive 'Ent-stellung' is introduced to disfigure and dislocate the text. The 'Vorzeichen' which will close the gap between the two parts of the sign, signifier and signified, is supplanted by the 'Vorwand' which operates precisely by partitioning letter and spirit.³¹ It is only under this discursive cover, albeit one 'der so durchsichtig wie möglich wäre' (MoE 1332), that Ulrich can approach Agathe. The text of Ulrich's discourse can only be read with a view to the pretextual sleight of surface, which necessarily conceals its 'Hintersinn' even as it seeks to impart it to the partner. The deployment of the pretext disrupts the lovers' verbal intercourse, and thereby the project for sexual intercourse which is the hidden meaning of Ulrich's 'Vorwand'.

As in *Die Vollendung*, the pretext operates in tandem with the imagery of visual partition; the perverse pleasure of 'wollüstige Verzögerung' is at work in both the

discursive and the scopic fields. Ulrich eschews intercourse as a visible reality and remains within the fantasy and the excitement of virtual apprehension: 'es war ähnlich, wie sich Bewegungen hinter einer dünnen Wand verstümmelt, aber aufregender anhören, als ob man sie sähe' (MoE 1332). The situation of movements behind such a 'Vor-wand' aligns this moment with the scenarios of vicarious audition of the sexual act which recur in Musil's work.³² The wall which separates the scene of intercourse from the third party also partitions the partners in sexual and verbal intercourse. As in the deferral of union in the *Vereinigungen* the fictional model is one of intercourse 'wie durch eine Wand voneinander getrennt' (Ta I 221). At the same time the metaphorical mutilation inflicted on the overheard intercourse once more introduces into it the spectre of the 'Lustmörder'.

The fear that introduces the 'Vor-wand' and defers the resolution of sexual difference is that of Freud's primary 'Verstümmelung', castration. Once more Musil takes up the psychoanalytical idea of the analogy between eye and phallus.³³ The scene is curtailed by Agathe's secession as still life for Ulrich's scopophilia fantasy, and a double movement of mutilation. For a while the 'image' has been watching its spectator's eyes, and now the still life comes alive to splice the other's gaze: 'als wollte sie den sonderbaren Blick mit dem er sie ansah, von oben nach unten entzweischneiden' (MoE 1333). And the move is reinforced by a second gesture which is recurrently used to signal the claims of the other's desire: 'Und sie preßte mit aller Kraft ihre Fingernägel in den Arm ihres Bruders, der ihn abwehrend spannte' (MoE 1333).³⁴ The claim here carries an extra significance, as reference to a related episode will show. In the chapter 'Die drei Schwestern', Ulrich holds forth on the eunuchs kept by noblewomen for their pleasure. The discourse is prompted by Agathe's challenge that he should sever an arm or a finger to prove his love, in what is surely an allusion to the Freudian idea of mutilation as displaced castration. Ulrich describes the slave, 'in ein mädchenhaftes Dasein erniedrigt' (MoE 1431), in terms which evoke such theories: 'so als ob etwas von den mythologischen ihre Anbeter verzehrenden Göttinnen oder den siamesischen Zwillingen bis zum Masochismus oder zum Kastrationskomplex mit dem Fingernagel über das zweifelhafte Tastenwerk der zeitgenössischen Seelenlehre gefahren wäre' (MoE 1431). Taking up the cue of this metaphorical fingernail, Agathe then once more lays her hand on Ulrich's arm:

"Aber warum hast du mir das erzählt?" fragte sie.

"Ich weiss nicht" sagte Ulrich.

"Ich glaube, du hast an mich gedacht" behauptete sie.

"Unsinn!" wehrte Ulrich ab. (MoE 1431-32)

Ulrich's reaction to the threat of castration embodied in the fingernail is one of 'Abwehr' in either case. The fantasy of union cannot be sustained; by dint of the threat to sexual identity, the cut and thrust of antagonistic intercourse is reintroduced. The cut having been made, they feel the need 'das grobe Sinnbild des Gartengitters aufzusuchen' (MoE 1337), a further permutation of the partitive 'Vor-

wand', a symbol of the need for a mediating, and thus to some extent separating, instance ('es trennte und verband' MoE 1350) between the two of them.

Ulrich himself is led to place the desired object behind bars; when he has an image of 'Agathe hinter Gittern' (MoE 1086), he in fact colludes in her removal: 'dann wieder war er selbst nicht nur der ohnmächtig Verabschiedete, sondern ähnlich auch der Trennende' (MoE 1086). The other's gaze becomes fair game for ambush or ensnarement: 'Von Zeit zu Zeit kam er heimlich mit seinen Augen daher und trachtete ihren Blick zu überraschen und zu fangen' (MoE 1364). And elsewhere Agathe is lured into the unconscious trap (falling prey, that is, to 'die ... unbewußt und fallenartig festhaltende Wirkung des Gitters' MoE 1350) of trying to make the images of divorce do service for an expression of virtual marriage between subject and object. Thus the veil takes on a reflective function; and yet the kiss which is reflected from it reminds us of its role as the prime instance of illusory lure or 'trompe-l'œil': "'Manchmal fühlt man von einem Schleier seinen eigenen Atem heiß wie ein Paar fremder Lippen zurückkommen: So *täuschend* oder wirklich kommt es mir manchmal vor, daß ich du bin!'" (MoE 1104, my emphasis). The veil is hardly suited to its specular function, being a device of concealment from view, and of the self's separation from the other; it can only perform that function in the same illusory way as the mirrored 'Vor-wand' of *Vereinigungen*, behind which the wound of isolation bleeds on. There is always a partial image of the self to mitigate visual access to the desired other: 'wie durch ein Glas, das teils den Blick durchläßt, teils den Hineinblickenden widerspiegelt' (MoE 1342). It is no coincidence that the veil is almost always in evidence, whether in literal or metaphorical form, in Ulrich's sexual encounters, as a mark of essential separation even in the act of intercourse. Agathe's metaphor of the kiss within the veil may be compared with Bonadea's parting kiss through the veil as 'Gitter': 'und dann küßte sie ihn noch einmal durch den Schleier, dessen Fäden davon heiß wie glühende Gitterstäbe wurden' (MoE 582). The lure through 'trompe-l'œil' of the veil and the separation through 'dompte-regard' of the bars are transposed together here from the scopic field to subvert union in the kiss.

The mirror-space as locus of consummate union must be reappraised, as the 'Doppelgänger im anderen Geschlecht' is perceived as a murderous threat to the subject's sexual identity. As the mirror of ecstatic union could only be glimpsed as a broken image, so Ulrich follows the example of many a protagonist in Rank's study, by a displaced shattering of the double's mirror-image. Having destroyed her piano, he says: 'Ich hätte ebensogern in einen Spiegel geschossen, wenn du dich gerade darin angesehen hättest' (MoE 1529). It is only consistent with the universal mediation of the 'Bild' in relationships of desire, that the murder of the double, in Rank's terms the act of suicide, should be displaced on to its mirror-image. The act effects the same disfiguration of the mystical mirror as was traced in Trakl; the idealised image of the mirror as the space of 'Gleichnis' is supplanted by an authentic vision of the 'zerbrochenes Spiegel' which was hitherto concealed behind it. Ulrich's

symbolic act of murder and suicide, like those inflicted by his alter egos (Moosbrugger and the dream-self) on their doubles, is a type of 'Lustmord'. When the double threatens the subject with emasculation, his response is to murder the object of narcissistic desire, and thereby to destroy that desire in a 'Lustselbstmord'.

NOTES TO CHAPTER VIII

1. Ricarda Huch, 'Apollo und Dionysos' in *Die Romantik, Gesammelte Werke VI* (Cologne, 1969), p. 94.
2. Rank moreover relates the Osiris myth to a contemporary newspaper report of an epileptic murderer, a carpenter's apprentice, who mutilates and castrates his victims. The connection is thus made between the myth of hermaphroditic union and the idea of the 'Lustmörder' and the threat of castration which will play such a key role in Ulrich's experience. It is quite conceivable that Musil drew on Rank's example for Moosbrugger, who is both a carpenter and diagnosed an epileptic (MoE 1368).
3. The ensuing readings will refute Leon Titcher's contention that the 'violent aspect' of 'Isis und Osiris' is 'greatly softened in the novel'. 'Into the Millennium: The Theme of the Hermaphrodite in Robert Musil's *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*, *Oxford German Studies*, 7 (1972/73), 143–160 (p. 149).
4. In Rank's *Das Inzest-Motiv in Dichtung und Sage* (Leipzig, 1912), which provided Musil with source material for 'Isis und Osiris', the sphinx, though female, is in possession of 'das männliche Glied' (p. 267).
5. Thus Ulrich's characterisation of his own nature as an 'aktiver Passivist' (MoE 356) adumbrates the passage into a bisexual mode of experience.
6. Ultimately then, Freud and Musil undergo a parallel modification of their theoretical position. Musil draws the same conclusions about the dialectic interplay of active and passive elements in desire, regardless of gender, as Freud in the addenda to the 'Drei Abhandlungen' for example.
7. The double nature of the veil makes the same connection between the gaze and the phallus as hidden objects as that made by Lacan when he styles both the 'objet a'.
8. The pattern of desire as motivated by an essential lack which I trace in Musil lies at the heart of Diotima's discourse in Plato: 'was uns noch fehlt bestimmt unsere Begierde und die Liebe', *Platons Gastmahl*, verdeutscht von Rudolf Kaßner (Jena, 1918), p. 46.
9. Bonadea's discourse on sexology is ironically enough constructed on such misogynist tenets of Weininger's as the 'beständigen Lustbereitschaft der Frau' and elsewhere her 'physiologischen Schwachsinn' (MoE 884).
10. Both Diotima and Bonadea are characterised as motherly; Diotima is the voice of maternity: 'Aber der Fall hat doch sozusagen auch eine mütterliche Seite — fuhr Diotima fort — eine weibliche, unlogische' (MoE 1609); Bonadea is a 'mütterliche Schönheit' (MoE 28), with a 'zarter mütterlicher Bauch' (MoE 1269). Musil is clearly playing with the Freudian counter of the Oedipus complex by choosing for Ulrich's consorts two goddesses who are both identified by Bachofen as matriarchal cult figures (Bona Dea is 'das mütterliche Naturprinzip' — *Das Mutterrecht*, p. 382).
11. Musil much admired the work of Stendhal and in particular his depiction of the deferral of desire (see above p. 5).
12. There is further evidence here of Musil's complicated relationship to Freud. In spite of his tendency to privilege Adler's 'Individualpsychologie' over psychoanalysis, Musil is putting Freud's polemic against Adler into fictional practice here. In 'Zur Einführung des Narzißmus', which Musil discusses in his diary (Ta I 721), Freud writes: 'Vom Standpunkte der psychoanalytischen Forschung ist Existenz und Bedeutung des "männlichen Protestes" von allem Anfang an anerkannt, seine narzißtische Herkunft aus dem Kastrationskomplex aber gegen Adler vertreten worden' (StA III 59). Musil's Adlerian reference is set within a narrative which focuses precisely on narcissistic desire and the threat of castration.
13. If the idea of the gaze penetrating Diotima's 'sight' seems fanciful it is worth recalling that the exhibitionist seeks to penetrate the gaze of his victim (see p. 165).
14. Once more the interpolation of a vulgar term for the female sex would seem to be no coincidence.
15. Lacan (London, 1977), p. 322.
16. Lacan (London, 1977), p. 289.
17. This note (and other subsequent quotations marked by an asterisk) is taken from unpublished papers in the 'Nachlaß', transcribed by Kaiser and Wilkins, and made available to me by their archive at the University of Reading.

18. This scenario can be compared with the tongue as phallus and the bitch's bite in *Die Versuchung* (see above p. 146).
19. Karl Corino shows in an article in *Die Presse* (5/6 April 1986) that Musil based the Moosbrugger story closely on an actual case, transferring several details word for word from newspaper reports. The model for Moosbrugger finds his knife in the prostitute's pocket, and sees murderous intent in her pursuit: 'Zu was war die Verfolgung? Das Messer war offenbar für mich bestimmt!'.
20. In 'Robert Musil and the "Uncanny"', *Oxford German Studies*, 3 (1968), 163–182.
21. The various versions of the *Vorstadtgasthof* are dated between 1919 and 1924, when the short story was published.
22. Hutcheon, p. 88.
23. Lacan, *Écrits I* (Paris, 1966), p. 94.
24. Clarisse, who fantasises a transsexual role for herself, symbolically dispossesses Ulrich of the phallus: 'sie beschrieb mit der Hand einen wagrecht liegenden spitzen Winkel, der U. unwillkürlich an einen Phallus erinnerte' (MoE 1576).
25. Clarisse's own sexuality is figured in terms of the very dialectic of the gaze which I have traced elsewhere. Its seat is in the magical birthmark which, as evil eye, both lures and daunts the gaze of men by its own enthralling gaze: 'Das Auge des Teufels hatte einen Blick, der durch die Kleider drang; dieser Blick "faßte" die Männer "ins Auge", zog sie gebannt an, aber erlaubte ihnen nicht sich zu rühren' (MoE 437).
26. The disturbing quality of the 'nicht für den Mann berechneten Anblicks' may be related to Musil's reminiscence of an analogous revelation in a 'Frauenbad' where the naked body of his mother glimpsed by chance is perceived as 'Hindernis der Stimmung und Stimmungsentkleidung jedes Begehrens' (Ta I 773) for the young Musil.
27. Trakl's 'als' and Musil's 'wie' are both conjunctions, which nevertheless serve to mitigate the idea of conjunction between self and other. Their function is twofold, to overcome at once the syntactic disjuncture (between two different clauses), and the inter-subjective. The fact that both conjunctions introduce the conjunctive tense serves to indicate that their unifying effect is only virtual. In both writers the mitigation of desire is reflected by this recurrent slippage in the discursive structure.
28. In Lacan's terms he follows the dictate of 'je suis tableau'.
29. See Musil's discussion of the 'Spiegelbild' as fetish in 'Ansätze zu neuer Ästhetik' (VIII 1139).
30. See Henninger, *Buchstabe*, pp. 69–84. The mysterious allure of Bonadea's sexuality is framed in a similar alliteration as the 'Schlüpfrig-Schleirigen' (MoE 582).
31. See above p. 144, where the 'Vorwand' is aligned with the partitive bar of the formula of signification.
32. See Henninger's discussion of the recurrent scene where sexually charged dialogue is heard by a third party through a parting wall (*Buchstabe*, pp. 61–8). An example that Henninger does not consider is the scene where Ulrich overhears a conversation between Agathe and a carpenter in a neighbouring room: 'Als ob es sich um eine sexuelle Improvisation handelte' (MoE 1487).
33. The 'Ersatzbeziehung ... die sich im Traum, Phantasie und Mythos zwischen Auge und männlichen Glied kundgibt' (StA IV 255).
34. The hand on the arm is invariably used to express a sexual 'Überfall' in the novel. It recurs in Arnheim's 'seduction' of Ulrich, and in Clarisse's assumption of the male sexual role, when her hand 'mounts' Meingast's arm 'wie sich ein vielbeiniges Tier auf sein Weibchen schiebt' (MoE 919).

IX THE PROBLEM OF CONCLUSION

The passages treated here all attest to the subversion of the hermaphroditic ideal, its recurrent collapse into the 'unnatürlichen Polaritätsspannung' (MoE 1833) of sexual difference, and the repertory of variations on the 'Lustmord' scenario. Within the more discursive framework of *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*, the meshing of sexuality and problems of meaning, traced in Törleß's crisis, and in the figure of the 'Vorwand' as disrupting intercourse in *Die Vollendung*, is taken a step further. The problem of sexual difference provides a paradigm at once for the invasion of difference into the sense of self (dramatised in encounters with the double) and for the denial of a simple signifying integrity in language. In as far as the self constructs its identity vis-à-vis the world through the mediation of language, the inherent difference between the signs deployed by language and the objects they purport to represent must interfere with the quest for identity.

Ulrich's teasing out of the problem of understanding is constructed around a series of dualisms: 'Verstand' and 'Gefühl', 'Ratio' and 'Seele', 'Begriff' and 'Gleichnis', 'nehmende' and 'gebende Sehen', and the 'eindeutig' and the 'unbestimmt'. These dualisms are traced back to the primordial 'Doppelgeschlechtlichkeit der Seele' (MoE 906) which predated the bipolar model of gender difference. Ulrich's accustomed mode of active, rational engagement with, and conceptual grasping of ideas in the 'Kampferlebnisse des Geistes' (MoE 804) is characterised as a masculine struggle; he enjoys a 'Mann-Mannes Verhältnis' (MoE 900) to ideas. His renunciation of the acquisitive ethic in love, which is the premise of passage into the 'aZ', is bound up with a collateral reappraisal of his relationship to ideas. He is in quest of the analogical, the 'gleitende Logik' (MoE 593) which is proper to the soul's original androgyny. The alternative to the struggle for conceptual definition is seen as the feminine mode: 'das Verhalten des unbestimmten Gefühls zur Welt hat etwas Magisches an sich und — Gott helfe mir! — im Vergleich mit dem bestimmten etwas Weibliches' (MoE 1198).

It can hardly be coincidental that when Musil has Ulrich point out the inadequacy of his conceptual currency, he alights on the example of sexual identity: "'alle anderen Begriffe, auf die wir unser Leben stützen, sind nichts als erstarren gelassene Gleichnisse. Zwischen wieviel Vorstellungen schwankt und schwebt nicht schon ein so einfacher Begriff wie der von der Männlichkeit'" (MoE 574). The status of the 'Begriff' thus collapses with the idea of a monistic male identity, and so too the possibility of unequivocal differentiation of any kind.¹ Just as the paradigm of sexual opposition must be revised into one of dialectic interplay, the 'Begriff' cannot be

allowed to masquerade as autonomous. While Ulrich's mask of male sexual brutality conceals his identification with the female, the masculine 'Begriff' is merely an atrophied form of the 'Gleichnis', the 'bisexual' figure which it pretends to supersede.² Beneath the mask of simple identity is an amalgam of 'gleich und nicht gleich'. 'Männlichkeit' has a bisexual double in the same way as its exemplar, the 'sehr männlicher Mann' (MoE 690), Ulrich. The fact that his sexual identity is cast in an apparent pleonasm opens up an implicit difference between nominal and adjectival gender identity; it is a grammatical mark of the 'Schwanken' and 'Schweben' of 'Männlichkeit', the slippage in its signification.

The play of resemblance and dissemblance which informs Ulrich's relations with the other in his sexual acts thus presents an allegory of the general relations between self and other. The phallogocentric ideal of male activity is dismantled in tandem with the logocentric ideal of male thinking. Words too are made to confront their 'verdächtigen Doppelgänger' (VII 965) in the form of extraneous connotations: 'Allein alle Worte haben soviel Nebensinn, Doppelsinn, Nebenempfindung, Doppelempfindung, daß man gut tut sich von ihnen fernzuhalten' (Ta I 2). Ulrich's quest leads him from the illusory security of conceptual understanding into a realm of 'traumhaften Doppeldeutigkeit' (MoE 2003). The unwillingness to see his identity, and in the first instance his sexual identity, as invested with double meanings, forecloses the quest for Ulrich. The failure to become identical with the personal 'Gleichnis' of the 'Doppelgänger im anderen Geschlecht' implies the failure to enter into the 'other condition' as universal 'Gleichnis', as 'schattenhaften Doppelgänger unserer Welt' (VIII 1144).

The failure to consummate fictionally the programme of sexual union may be seen as a narrative necessity. As Brooks points out, this would involve a narrative fore-closure, what he calls the 'short-circuit' of textual desire (see above p. 14). Just as Ulrich ensures that his desire is sustained by a continuous element of deferral in his self-narration, so the text sustains readerly desire by continuously deferring the 'end' of its quest. Indeed, when Ulrich's 'Vorwände' are virtually suspended, he too has a foretaste of the only true end of desire in death (i.e. the experience of still life). The suicidal compulsion of the shot in the mirror is set, in a note from the 'Nachlaß', against the creative compulsion of writing: 'Also käme hier die Frage des Werks, die Frage *Selbstmord oder Schreiben*' (MoE 1381). This is the 'Gretchenfrage' both for Ulrich's life's work and for the fictional work which depicts his life. The personal suicide of the narcissistic hero would be tantamount to the surrender of writing; when he ceases to narrate himself, the end of his narrative is inevitable. The narcissistic text is so to speak confronted with its suicidal end. For a text which relates the experience of an age through that of its protagonist, this suicide would also involve universal self-destruction. Musil contemplates, like Trakl, projecting his protagonist and thus his work into the catastrophic 'Endzeit' of war: 'er entscheidet sich später für Selbstmord — Krieg' (MoE 1386).

The work as the 'Parallelaktion', if not the narcissistic fulfilment of life, also

suggests a 'life and works' parallel between the two writers: the fate of their narcissistic works being borne out in their respective fates. Trakl as it were follows the signs of his shattered speculum, putting an end to the 'unvollkommene Sühne' (I 453) of his work by his death. Musil on the other hand reworks his pre-apocalyptic vision of 1913 through three decades; Ulrich's decision for 'Selbstmord — Krieg' is continuously deferred, to be effected 'später'. Unable to inscribe a formal end to his life's work, Musil's endless narrative ('meine Geschichten waren alle endlos' VII 839) is curtailed by a natural death. He can neither realise an end in a 'Vollendung der Liebe' (Trakl's 'Ein Geschlecht') nor take on the apocalyptic mantle which Trakl ultimately does; he writes of *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*: 'Ich mache mich darin über alle Abendlandsuntergänge und ihre Propheten lustig' (Ta II 258).

What Musil's incomplete narrative does is to sustain the principle of the 'Gleichnis' as 'gleich und nicht gleich', and with it the same dialectic, turning on 'Oder' which Trakl could not ultimately sustain. The 'Nachlaß' incorporates alternative ends. On the one hand Musil is compelled to plunge the narrative into the abyss. He matches Trakl's dark prognosis, 'Alle Straßen münden in schwarze Verwesung' (I 167), with his 'Alle Linien münden in den Krieg' (MoE 1851). The mimetic analogy between coitus and death, the sexual act of the 'Gartenfest' which prefigured both personal and universal catastrophe (as 'Vordeutung des Kriegs' MoE 2076), is revived. While that act summoned up the sister as double, in spite of being 'nicht mit Agathe erlebt' (MoE 2076), it is now replayed with her. The reflexive 'Lustmord' of brother and sister rivals Trakl's most intense nihilistic visions. When spoken intercourse fails ('wovon kann man sprechen' MoE 1672), there remains the compulsion to rehearse the 'Lustmord' scene. The Lacanian 'enigma of desire', 'its frenzy miming the abyss of the infinite', is realised in what Musil calls the catastrophic 'Mimus' of intercourse (Ta I 408):

Fürchterliche Gewalt der Wiederholung, fürchterliche Gottheit! Anziehung der Leere, die wie der Trichter eines Wirbels immer tiefer hineinzieht, dessen Wände ausweichen. Küsse mich, und ich beiße leicht und immer härter und immer wilder, immer trunkener, blutgieriger, auf den Schrei um Schonung lauschender in deine Lippen, die Schlucht des Schmerzes hinabkletternd, bis wir zum Schluß in der senkrechten Wand hängen und uns vor uns selbst fürchten. Da kommen die tiefen Stöße des Atems zu Hilfe, der den Körper zu verlassen droht, der Glanz im Auge bricht, der Blick rollt nach den Seiten, der Gesichtsausdruck des Sterbens beginnt ... Es endet in Kot und Erbrechen wie das erste Mal! (MoE 1672)

This is the incestuous act as a grim variation on Brooks's narrative short-circuit; what might be called the Romantic 'Liebestod' of the text has become its 'Lustmord'. The agonistic act imitates that quoted by Musil from Adolphe Retté's 'Paradox über die Liebe' in his diary; here, in spite of coming 'fast bis zum Mord', the lovers still feel 'das dunkle Verlangen, diese Dinge zu wiederholen, die für sie schrecklich wurden' (Ta I 106). This formulation of the repetition compulsion, which conjoins the erotic and death instincts in an effective 'Lustmord', informs all

the works discussed here. Thus Törleß is compelled to return to the sado-masochistic theatre of the 'Versteck', and to revive it in the dream-scene; after the extract from Retté, Musil notes: 'Es ist in der Liebe, was Törleß auf anderem Gebiete wiederfuhr' (Ta I 106). Similarly Claudine is compelled to re-enact the sexual violence of Bluebeard, to rehearse once more his repeated 'Lustmord'.

Yet in the 'Reise ins Paradies' section Musil makes a narrative out of the vision of transcendent union. The vision, which is never more than momentary ('Ein blauer Augenblick' I 79) for Trakl, is here sustained through time. Ulrich's question as to the possibility of prolonging the 'Ausnahmestand' of the poem (i.e. Trakl's moments of ascension), 'Aber wo kommt denn . . . der Augenblick der Erhebung im nächsten Augenblick hin?' (MoE 911), is answered contrary to its rhetorical assumption. The moment is protracted and so made narratable, as the sexual partners are suspended like the other siblings of 'Offenbarung und Untergang' over the abyssal void of separation; here though no fall follows: 'Stürzten. Und die Leere trug sie. Der Augenblick hielt an' (MoE 1656).

The transcendent vision is tempered in another passage from the 'Nachlaß', which also attempts to construct an alternative to the repetition compulsion of the 'Lustmord'. The sexual consummation of the siblings' love is to be realised 'bewußt in einer Pause, wo der Mond fort ist'.³ Tellingly however, the realistic lighting of the scene is revoked, as verbal intercourse intervenes to defer sexual intercourse: '(Gespräch) Der Mond ist wieder da u. das Eindringen beginnt'. The fallacy of the 'Vereinigung' is thus ironically signalled, but at the same time Musil sustains the possibility of resolving momentary union into a condition. While discourse interrupts the programme in the shorthand of the notes, the parenthetical 'Gespräch' playing the familiar role of the 'Vorwand' as diversion, the condition of sexual union is only deemed possible by way of an intellectual (that is, discursive) system: 'Kann man das wiederholen? Nur wenn ein intell. System dabei ist wie bei unio myst. odgl. Dieses System wäre ja vielleicht möglich' (MoE 1835). The dialogic quest for a system is thus affirmed, and with it the possibility of repetition (his 'faktische Grundsatz der Literatur' Ta I 913) as recreative of union, rather than morbidly compelled to replay the 'wiederholbaren physiologischen Mechanismus' (MoE 1674) of the sexual act. Musil never abandons the hope which he has Ulrich moot ironically in the sketch for the 'Gartenfest': 'Hoffnung vom Unfaßbaren solange zu reden, bis . . .' (MoE 1396). This is the hope which impels the narcissistic narrative: that discourse might yet be able to create the transcendent condition which can only be marked here as an ellipsis.

The mutism before the transcendent perspective is concomitant with Musil's inability to coordinate his vision of the 'aZ' with the exigencies of sexual desire. As long as this is so, the only alternative to the frenzied portrayal of the 'Lustmord' is the silence of narrative self-censorship. The discursive emancipation of sexuality, which Musil dubbed the 'ungeheure zivilisatorische Leistung' (VII 832) of psychoanalysis, would seem to have its limitations. A note reveals the repressive

impulse operating under the 'Vorwand' of the 'natürlich', and thereby answers the question of how far the quest for union might lead: 'wie weit führt diese Kombination des anderen Fühlens mit einem Triebbedürfnis? Wahrsch. Coit. vorraussetzen, aber, als natürlich, darüber schweigen' (MoE 1282).

These alternative variations on the sexual act, repetition as compulsive, as re-creative, or as repressed, may be seen as symptomatic of the text's variegated response to the possibility of finding an end. As long as the narrative's 'faktische Grundsatz' of repetition prevails, there can be no effective conclusion. The fear of the act of union being 'wiederholbar' and the fear that it might not be ('Kann man das wiederholen?') indicate the paradoxical desire, at once self-preservative and self-destructive, which motivates the narrative.

NOTES TO CHAPTER IX

1. The 'Begriffsbildungsvermögen' becomes the 'wahre Ruhesitz der Manneswürde' when the phallus loses its potency 'bei älteren Männern' (MoE 1134).
2. Musil anticipates De Man's notion of the dialectic interaction of analogical and conceptual discourse: 'The literal is the opposite of the figurative, but a literal expression is also a metaphor whose figurality has been forgotten'. Paul De Man, 'The Epistemology of Metaphor', *Critical Inquiry*, 5 (1978), 13–30 (p. 28).
3. They are joined 'wie zwei Einzeller', which would seem to allude to Freud's discussion of Weismann's biological theory in 'Jenseits des Lustprinzips'. Weismann argues that in 'Einzelligen' there is no separation of 'Soma' and 'Keim', mortal and immortal substance, so that they are 'potentiell unsterblich' (StA III 255). The 'Vereinigung' of Ulrich and Agathe seeks to realise this potential and share the immunity of the protozoa to the repetition compulsion of the 'Lustmord'.

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This book undertakes a comparative reassessment of psychosexual concerns in the works of Georg Trakl and Robert Musil. The two authors, so different in other respects, are shown to converge in their coordinated treatment of the problematics of sense and sensuality. In either case a narcissistic ideal of androgynous union with the sister as 'Doppelgänger im anderen Geschlecht' is set up, only to be revoked by the compulsive return to incestuous violence and inner division. By disrupting the quest for poetic and discursive sense, sexual antagonism operates at once as the prime mover in the more general crisis of selfhood and as the prime stumbling-block for the pursuit of aesthetic ends in either oeuvre.
