

Chapter 8

A Sister in Madness: Figures of ‘Primitive Thinking’ in Robert Musil

Robert Musil knew and admired Robert Müller. In the obituary he wrote for him in 1924, he calls *Tropen* “one of the best novels of modern literature.”¹ The two authors share not only an interest in ethnological and psychological literature on the ‘primitive,’ but also a fondness for expedition stories. The chapter at hand treats Musil’s readings in ethnological research and demonstrates its relevance for his literary works. Examining the character Clarisse in *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften* (1930–1944; *The Man Without Qualities*, 1953) and the motifs of madness, music, and language associated with her, I argue that the novel contains a complex engagement with the paradigm of the ‘primitive’ and that the movement from expedition to self-experiment that I trace in the author’s earlier narratives emerges as the principle of construction behind his major novel as well. The book’s protagonist and its author share equally in the primitivisms the novel contemplates, as a mimetic concept of primitivist narration is overwritten with a reflective one, thus realizing the potential of primitivist discourse for a genuinely modern understanding of literature.²

Musil’s Ethnological Readings

Musil’s interest in ethnology has so far received relatively little attention from scholars. Even though there has been discussion of his engagement with the works of Lévy-Bruhl in the essay, “Ansätze zu neuer Ästhetik” (1925, “Toward a New Aesthetic,” 1990), this interest has only rarely been examined as part of his larger, in-depth study of additional ethnological and ethnopsychological

1 Robert Musil, “Robert Müller,” in *Klagenfurter Ausgabe. Kommentierte Edition sämtlicher Werke, Briefe und nachgelassener Schriften. Mit Transkriptionen und Faksimiles aller Handschriften*, ed. Walter Fanta, Klaus Amann, and Carl Corino, *Lesetexte*, vol. 12 (Klagenfurt: Drava, 2009), 9. Hereafter KA.

2 An earlier and shorter version of this chapter appeared as Nicola Gess, “Expeditionen im Mann ohne Eigenschaften. Zum Primitivismus bei Robert Musil,” in *Robert Musil und die Fremdheit der Kultur. Musil-Studien 2010*, ed. Norbert Christian Wolf and Rosmarie Zeller (Munich: Fink, 2011).

works,³ which took place primarily during the early 1920s and continued to a lesser extent into the 1930s.⁴ Apart from Lévy-Bruhl's *How Natives Think* (translated into German in 1923), Musil took particular interest in Erich Rudolf Jaensch's "Die Völkerkunde und der eidetische Tatsachenkreis" ("Ethnology and the Eidetic Ring of Facts," 1923),⁵ Ernst Kretschmer's chapter "Entwicklungs-

3 For a thorough discussion of Lévy-Bruhl, see Renate von Heydebrand, *Die Reflexionen Ulrichs in Robert Musils Roman 'Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften'* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1966), 103–111. Likewise, Roger Willemsen devotes a chapter to Musil's interest in ethnology and contextualizes his reading of Lévy-Bruhl with conceptions of language deriving from Giambattista Vico and Erich Rudolf Jaensch's *Das Existenzrecht der Dichtung* (Munich: Fink, 1984), 286–297. A thorough analysis of Lévy-Bruhl is also found in Ritchie Robertson, "Musil and the 'Primitive' Mentality," in *Robert Musil and the Literary Landscape of His Time*, ed. Hannah Hickman (Salford: University of Salford Press, 1991). Wolfgang Schraml has offered a more comprehensive engagement with Musil's ethnological readings: besides Lévy-Bruhl, Müller-Lyer, Jaensch, and Groos, Schraml takes particular interest in the "appetitive" depiction of the "archaic" in Musil's works (*Relativismus und Anthropologie. Studien zum Werk Robert Musils und zur Literatur der zwanziger Jahre* [Munich: Eberhard, 1994], 127–139). Florence Vatan (*Robert Musil et la question anthropologique* [Paris: PUF, 2000], 73–88) points to the affinities between Agathe, Moosbrugger, and Clarisse and the thinking of 'primitives' in Lévy-Bruhl, as well as to collective rituals in which Musil sees the society of his own day connected to "the childhood of civilization" (80). As the original version of the book at hand was being written, Sven Werkmeister published *Kulturen jenseits der Schrift*, which discusses Musil's interest in ethnology (338–346), but not *The Man Without Qualities*. Other relevant works include Brigitte Weingart, "Verbindungen, Vorverbindungen. Zur Poetik der 'Partizipation' (Lévy-Bruhl) bei Musil," in Ulrich Johannes Beil, Michael Gamper, and Karl Wagner, eds., *Medien, Technik, Wissenschaft: Wissensübertragung bei Robert Musil und in seiner Zeit* (Zurich: Chronos, 2011), and Marcus Hahn, "Zusammenfließende Eichhörnchen. Über Lucien Lévy-Bruhl und die Ethnologie-Rezeption Robert Musils," in the same collection. Confirming my own findings (Gess, "Expeditionen im Mann ohne Eigenschaften"), cf. Norbert Christian Wolf, "Das wilde Denken und die Kunst: Hofmannsthal, Musil, Bachelard," in *Poetik des Wilden. Wolfgang Riedel zum 60. Geburtstag*, ed. Jörg Robert and Friederike F. Günther (Würzburg: Königshausen + Neumann, 2012); and Florian Kappeler, *Situiertes Geschlecht. Organisation, Psychiatrie und Anthropologie in Robert Musils Roman "Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften"* (Munich: Fink, 2012), who, especially in chapter 3.1–3.2 and in reference to Lévy-Bruhl, elaborates in detail the role played by the theorem of "pre-logical thinking" in Musil's critique of modernity.

4 Wolfgang Schraml points out that Musil developed an interest in anthropology as early as 1913–1914 on a visit to Rome, where he visited the institute for anthropology and ethnology, the insane asylum, and the "monkey island" at Villa Borghese (among other places) (*Relativismus und Anthropologie*, 89).

5 Musil refers to Jaensch in the context of his review, "Aus der Begabungs- und Vererbungs-forschung" (Musil, *KA, Lesetexte*, vol. 10, n.p.), and also in Musil, *KA, Transkriptionen*, Mappe II/8/22.

geschichte der Seele” (“Evolution of the Psyche”) from his *Text-book of Medical Psychology*,⁶ and Franz Carl Müller-Lyer’s *Phasen der Kultur* (Phases of Culture, 1915/1908),⁷ from which Musil copied out excerpts into his 1922–1923 notebook entries. Other texts include Erich von Hornbostel’s reflections on poetry and music⁸ and Ernst Cassirer’s discussion of the “languages of peoples living in a state of nature,”⁹ which Musil read in the early 1930s. Numerous related titles that the author made note of in 1923 also warrant mention, even though there is no record of him having written out excerpts from them. These include studies by Konrad Theodor Preuss (e.g., *Die geistige Kultur der Naturvölker* [The psychic culture of primitive people, 1914]), Richard Thurnwald’s *Forschungen auf den Salomo Inseln und dem Bismarck Archipel* (Research on the Solomon Islands and the Bismarck Archipelago, 1912), Alfred Vierkandt’s *Naturvölker und Kulturvölker* (Primitive Peoples and Civilized Peoples, 1896), and a series of publications on early petroglyphs.¹⁰

In his readings, Musil proceeded selectively, picking out particular aspects of often voluminous studies. A common thread runs through his choices: First, his interest concerns the perception, imagination, and thinking of indigenous peoples – or, more precisely, the phenomenon of participation, their eidetic faculties, and affect-driven thought. Second, he concentrates on the peculiarities of the languages these peoples speak and their relations to them, especially the vividness of such languages, literal understandings of figurative expressions, and the participation of words with their objects. Finally, he takes note of the magical function of indigenous art, which is oriented on producing, not representing, the desired object. These three points will each be briefly elaborated in the following sections.

6 Musil refers again and again to Kretschmer (e.g., Mappe II/9/166; IV/3/299, 300, 301, 305; Mappe V/4/19, 108, 109; Heft 21/59). In a footnote to “Toward a New Aesthetic” (in *Precision and Soul: Essays and Addresses*, trans. Burton Pike and David S. Luft [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994], 197), he makes reference to Kretschmer’s *Text-book of Medical Psychology*.

7 Musil, KA, *Transkriptionen*, Heft 21/55.

8 Musil, KA, *Transkriptionen*, Mappe VI/3/6.

9 Musil, KA, *Transkriptionen*, Mappe II/9/144.

10 For the complete list, see Musil, KA, *Transkriptionen*, Heft 21/114–115. The preceding page presents another bibliographical list taken from Ludwig Klages’s *Zum kosmogonischen Eros* (Munich: G. Müller, 1922) on mythology, especially ancient cults and mysteries. There are also further texts that appear neither in bibliographies nor in excerpted form but are mentioned briefly. For instance, in the same notebook, Alexander von Humboldt’s *Reise in die Äquinoktial-Gegenden* (Heft 21/73) and “Frobenius’s Africa book” (KA, *Transkriptionen*, Mappe VII/11/36) are noted.

Red Parrots or 'Primitive Thinking'

In his 1923 review of Jaensch's "Die Völkerkunde und der eidetische Tatsachenkreis,"¹¹ Musil focuses on a case treated extensively by ethnologists: the Bororo tribe in Brazil, whose members claim to be red parrots, a phenomenon that Lévy-Bruhl explains as "mystical participation" with a totem animal, appealing to collective representations that shape perception. Musil takes up Lévy-Bruhl's notion in "Toward a New Aesthetic" in order to describe the "extraconceptual correspondence of the human being with the world along with abnormal or correlative moments" in "ancient cultural conditions," whose "late form of development" is to be found in the "experience of art."¹² However, he does not take up Lévy-Bruhl's sociological explanation of participation as a form of collective representation, and indeed he contradicts it by tying participation to the *rupturing* of "preformed stable representations"¹³ and affirming its status as a radically subjective experience.

In contrast, "Toward a New Aesthetic" displays a closer proximity to Kretschmer's alternative explanation of the same phenomenon. Kretschmer traces the "magical thinking" of the Bororo back to affective projection and catathymia (that is, affect-driven thought): "If scientific thinking (in terms of causality) classifies objects in accordance with the principle of coincidence, magical thinking relates things on the principle of affective identity."¹⁴ For Musil, in order to establish the opposite of "the normal condition of our relationship to the world,"¹⁵ art takes "pre-civilized" measures that obey catathymic laws: "images stimulated by the same affect are [condensed] in masses, to which the sum of the affect attaches itself"; alternatively, a single image becomes "laden with the inexplicably high affective value of the whole" through the process of displacement.¹⁶ It follows that the conception of affect-driven thinking is central for the diverse manifestations of "the other condition" in *The Man Without Qualities* and their recourse to figurative language, whether those be mysticism, delusion, or incestuous sibling-love.

Finally, Jaensch's essay offers Musil yet another explanation for the Bororo's parrot phenomenon. Jaensch traces the peculiar "identification of primitives" back to "[eidetic] images" and groupings of seemingly heterogeneous elements

11 Musil, "Aus der Begabungs- und Vererbungsforschung," in *KA, Lesetexte*, vol. 10, n.p.

12 Musil, "Toward a New Aesthetic," 196–197.

13 Musil, "Toward a New Aesthetic," 201.

14 Kretschmer, *A Text-book of Medical Psychology*, 96.

15 Musil, "Toward a New Aesthetic," 198.

16 Musil, "Toward a New Aesthetic," 195.

into “inner images” that precede optical perception in time (evolutionarily and phenomenologically).¹⁷ Musil’s detailed and largely appreciative review affirms his interest in this theory of eidetic intuition among children and indigenous peoples. Jaensch’s theories also influence Musil’s literary works. For example, in *The Man Without Qualities*, intuitive modes of cognition shape the characters of Moosbrugger and Clarisse. The resulting blurring of the boundaries between perception and cognition culminates in illusions and hallucinations, and the lines separating image from object and self from other vanish. In such cases, the novel presents what Jaensch would call an “immediate” and “emotional” experience of the “inner essence” of things,¹⁸ which Musil in his review of Jaensch’s essay associates with “mystic vision,”¹⁹ also featured prominently in *The Man Without Qualities*.

In particular, however, Musil embraces Jaensch’s nonjudgmental handling of eidetics, his warning against drawing the wrong conclusion from the atrophied condition of the eidetic faculty, and his aim to return to “primitive stages of development.”²⁰ He follows Jaensch’s enjoinder, however, that one should “not return to one’s first home without at the same time building a higher and worthier storey”²¹ over it. Jaensch’s scientific treatise fulfills this demand by representing such a superstructure: it provides rational insights into eidetic phenomena without evaluating them. Musil does the same by calling for a higher level – what he calls “suprationalism” – that examines the “logic of the analogical and the irrational.”²² Musil’s essays, as a genre straddling science and literature and aspiring to investigate supposedly irrational phenomena with both logic and sensitivity, thus attempt to answer Jaensch’s call.

Given his many points of overlap with the latter, it is not surprising that in “Toward a New Aesthetic” – though it includes no mention of him – Musil’s explanation of the “extraconceptual correspondence of man with the world” closely resembles Jaensch’s theory of eidetics. What is new with Musil, however, is the moment of rupture (*Sprengung*), which always only acknowledges such a correspondence momentarily and only against the backdrop of a long-established world of schemata that is in need of disruption.

17 Erich Rudolf Jaensch, “Die Völkerkunde und der eidetische Tatsachenkreis,” *Zeitschrift für Psychologie* 91 (1923): 106–107.

18 Jaensch, “Die Völkerkunde und der eidetische Tatsachenkreis,” 107.

19 Musil, “Aus der Begabungs- und Vererbungsforschung,” in *KA, Lesetexte*, vol. 10, n.p.

20 Jaensch, “Die Völkerkunde und der eidetische Tatsachenkreis,” 97.

21 Jaensch, “Die Völkerkunde und der eidetische Tatsachenkreis,” 111.

22 Musil, “Mind and Experience,” in *Precision and Soul*, 142. Emphasis added.

On 'Primitive Language' and Its Magic

Musil's notes reveal his particular interest in the languages of indigenous peoples and their understandings of language. Vivid or pictorial language is central for him. Thus, he appreciatively remarks on Franz Carl Müller-Lyer's word choice in his distinction between the "paper money of words" and the "hard currency of mental representation" (*Scheidemünze der Vorstellung*).²³ Even though Müller-Lyer wishes to express the superiority of conceptual thinking ("paper money"), Musil makes use of those same metaphors to reach the opposite conclusion. He is drawn more to the imagery employed by language (ascribed by Müller-Lyer to "peoples in a state of nature") than to its conceptual content.

For Lévy-Bruhl, the vividness of indigenous languages results from their precise and detailed representation of objects. Kretschmer, on the other hand, focuses on their pictorial or figurative character by examining the laws of "image agglutination" and stylization at work in them. Musil took notes on the latter's analysis,²⁴ and his later notes on Cassirer demonstrate interest in the similar argument that the first "image-concepts" are formed according to pre-existing similarities or analogies.²⁵ Hereby, Musil distinguishes between sensory and emotional associations. The latter hold particular significance; his notes on Kretschmer emphasize this point, and in *The Man Without Qualities* characters associated with the "other condition" think along lines determined by affect and make use of figurative language.

According to Musil's notes on Lévy-Bruhl and Jaensch, this dimension and understanding of language went missing in the course of phylogenetic development. "Advance in conceptual and abstract thought is accompanied by a diminution in the descriptive material which served to express the thought when it was more concrete,"²⁶ Lévy-Bruhl observes. Or, in Musil's own words (apropos of Jaensch), "precisely this transition from intuition to non-intuition is [...] connected with the acquisition of conceptual thought."²⁷ The notes on Lévy-Bruhl extend this thesis from individual words to sentences, which, in Musil's view, are subject to the same "process of typification."²⁸ This is one reason why he laments that

²³ Franz Carl Müller-Lyer, *Phasen der Kultur und Richtlinien des Fortschritts. Soziologische Überblicke* (Munich: Lehmann, 1915), 34; Musil, *KA, Transkriptionen*, Heft 21/59.

²⁴ Musil, *KA, Transkriptionen*, Mappe I/5/171.

²⁵ Musil, *KA, Transkriptionen*, Mappe II/9/144.

²⁶ Lévy-Bruhl, *How Natives Think*, 152.

²⁷ Musil, "Aus der Begabungs- und Vererbungsforschung," in *KA, Lesetexte*, vol. 10, n.p. Jaensch, "Die Völkerkunde und der eidetische Tatsachenkreis," 105.

²⁸ Musil, *KA, Transkriptionen*, Heft 21/115.

the modern world lacks a formal language for expressing “the non-ratioid,” his coinage for what lies beyond the grasp of reason.

Unlike many of his contemporaries, this insight does not prompt Musil to demand a “redemption from the conceptual” (for which he criticizes Béla Balázs in his notes on Kretschmer).²⁹ Instead, taking up Kretschmer’s reflections, he credits “primitives” with having concepts – “primitive art is conceptual”³⁰ – albeit ones that follow different rules or still retain pictorial traits. To employ Lévy-Bruhl’s and Kretschmer’s shared terminology, at issue are image-concepts whose meanings still refer to singular entities but are also already inching toward classification. This is why Musil has no wish to do without the concept, as it would lead to amorphous “chaos.”³¹ Instead he seeks to revitalize the pictorial or figurative potential of the concept in order to articulate the non-ratioid.

In addition to the vividness of language treated thus far, Musil is interested in the identification of figurative language with its object. This aspect of language is equally emphasized by Lévy-Bruhl, Jaensch, and Kretschmer and plays an important role in Musil’s notes on them. It involves taking figures of speech literally as well as the idea that an actual, ontological connection exists between objects joined by figurative language (e.g., the lightning is a snake). At the same time, the operation involves the idea that the word participates in the object it designates. Thus, in a notation to excerpts he had copied from Kretschmer, Musil observes, “these ‘schizophrenic symbols are . . products of incomplete thinking, imagistic forerunners of concepts that . . do not . . get formed’ [...]: burning becomes real fire, etc.”³²

According to Lévy-Bruhl, figurative language’s double identification with its object derives from the participatory thinking of indigenous peoples: “To their minds [...] there is no perception unaccompanied by a mystic complex, no phenomenon which is simply a phenomenon, no sign that is not more than a sign: how, then, could a word be merely a word?” Indeed, because the vividness of the language creates a relationship of likeness, the word displays the same mystical qualities as the object. Hence the participations it can produce may be equally significant and “frightening”: “There is magic influence in the word, and therefore precaution is necessary. Special languages for certain occasions, languages reserved for certain classes of persons, begin to take shape.”³³ This linguistic magic stands at the center of Musil’s interest in ethnology in the early 1930s.

²⁹ Musil, *KA*, *Transkriptionen*, Mappe IV/3/303.

³⁰ Musil, *KA*, *Transkriptionen*, Mappe IV/3/307, 303.

³¹ Musil, “Toward a New Aesthetic,” 204.

³² Musil, *KA*, *Transkriptionen*, Mappe I/5/171.

³³ Lévy-Bruhl, *How Natives Think*, 154.

In the context of the essay “Literat und Literatur” (1931; “Literati and Literature,” 1990), he took detailed notes on a lecture by Hornbostel on the music/poetry of ancient civilizations. Two aspects of the discussion command his attention: First, poetry is ritual song that does not represent an event but produces it. Second, to this end, a highly specific content is necessary, which says “what must be done,” as is a highly specific form that indicates “how it must be done.” At the same time, “the form [is] given in the course of the event, which is its content.”³⁴ This complex structure amounts to the same performative logic of ritual theorized by Durkheim as well as Mauss and Hubert addressed in Chapter 2. Accordingly, Musil also talks of magic words that express nothing other than the performative force of speech itself.³⁵

In sum, Musil’s theory of ‘primitive language’ concentrates on its vividness, guided by an affective logic, as well as on its performative force, where representation and creation collapse as one. As we will see below, Musil adapted these notions for his own writing.

Animal-Humans: From Expedition to (Self-)Experimentation

Musil’s fiction of the early 1920s also reflects his fascination with ethnology. On the model of works such as Müller’s *Tropen* and Jensen’s *Skovene* (1907), which he held in high regard,³⁶ Musil wrote expedition stories including *Grigia* (1921; in *Five Women*, 1999) and the unfinished *Land über dem Südpol* (Land over the South Pole, 1911–1929). Both works describe a shift from the foreign to the familiar (accompanied by a turn from expedition to self-experiment) and reflect on the animalistic nature of humans.

The beginnings of *Land über dem Südpol* date back to 1911, and the author’s final notes on the project are from 1929. The outlines for its plot call to mind

³⁴ Musil, *KA*, *Transkriptionen*, Mappe VI/3/6.

³⁵ Musil, *KA*, *Transkriptionen*, Mappe VI/3/8.

³⁶ Musil mentions both texts in his obituary for Müller. Müller also wrote other texts of this genre, e.g., the novella *Das Inselmädchen* (The Island Girl, 1919), which Musil also mentions, though without going into detail. In a letter Musil asks Arne Laurin to send a number of books to a reviewer, including several titles of the same kind, e.g., Douglas Mawson’s *The Home of the Blizzard* (1915), Paul Gauguin’s *Letters from the South Seas*, Count Vay de Vayas’s account of emigration to America (1908), J.V. Jensen’s *Das verlorene Land* (1920; The Lost Land [of *The Long Journey* series]; Danish 1908–1922) and Ejnar Mikkelsen’s *Frozen Justice: A Story from Alaska* (1922; Danish 1920) (Musil to Arne Laurin, 12 March 1921, in *KA*, *Lesetexte*, 1921, n.p.). This is further indication that Musil was familiar with the genre (or at least interested in it).

other travel narratives of the day such as Alfred Kubin’s account of a fantastic journey, *Die Andere Seite* (1909; *The Other Side*, 1973), and Müller’s *Tropen*. As in the latter work, Musil’s story is framed by the remarks of a fictitious editor, who claims to have been given a manuscript by the actual traveler-protagonist. Like Müller’s narrator-protagonist, the main character and narrator of the manuscript is a scientist (a mathematician). Grappling with the moral and intellectual limits of his day, he embarks on an expedition to a distant country that is both promising and unknown to him. As in Kubin’s novel (whose protagonist is a draftsman), the fictitious editor questions the narrator’s mental health from the outset. Musil’s narrator is obsessed with the idea that a planet exists above the South Pole and believes he can prove its existence mathematically. The manuscript reports his experiences on this other planet, much like Kubin’s explorer records an undiscovered empire deep in Siberia. In each case, the utopian otherness of an alien society fascinates its visitors. Kubin depicts a place where the laws of dreams prevail and where people live somewhere between the realm of “fairytales” and that of “mass hypnosis,” both protected by and under the thumb of a dictator whose metamorphoses make him present and absent at once. Musil, in turn, devises a culture centered on human experiments occurring on the planet Ed. Kubin’s novel culminates in an apocalyptic scenario triggered by the explorer’s eventual resistance to the way of life of the inhabitants of the foreign society, whose entire culture is then wiped out. Musil never finished *Land über dem Südpol*; the fate of Ed remains unknown, but the protagonist winds up in an insane asylum.

The notebook in which Musil collected notes on Müller-Lyer, Lévy-Bruhl, and other ethnologists also contains a number of entries that loosen the boundary between animals and humans.³⁷ In one regard, this is found in attributions of human (i.e., cultivated) behaviors to animals – for instance (apropos of a work by Müller-Lyer), chimpanzees build huts similar to those of indigenous peoples.³⁸ Yet, in the other direction, humans are ascribed behaviors that seem animalistic, even brutish. Thus (again relying on Müller-Lyer) Musil writes, “the inferior hunter” will gladly eat “ant eggs, worms, frogs, larvae [...], snakes, lice,” and other things that elicit disgust in the civilized European;³⁹ he also records that an “intelligent Indian” with whom Alexander von Humboldt interacted was a cannibal.⁴⁰ Along similar lines, Musil notes how simple fishermen on

³⁷ Musil, *KA*, *Transkriptionen*, Heft 21.

³⁸ Musil, *KA*, *Transkriptionen*, Heft 21/59.

³⁹ Musil, *KA*, *Transkriptionen*, Heft 21/59.

⁴⁰ Musil, *KA*, *Transkriptionen*, Heft 21/73.

the island of Usedom tear apart worms and impale them with hooks with perfect peace of mind.⁴¹ One page earlier, he mentions the cruelty of children at play – which he explains as a means of acting out “the mightiest instincts of the genus,” thereby also likening them to animals (the same occurs in Karl Groos’s *Die Spiele der Tiere* [1896; *Play of Animals*, 1898], to which Musil is referring).⁴²

This convergence is also evident in Musil’s most fully outlined human experiment in his drafts for *Land über dem Südpol*. Here, “human beings are made to run through all [cycles] of animals. By biological means. They sate themselves and work off [animal impulses].”⁴³ Specifically, Musil took keen interest in the reproductive habits of amphibians and took copious notes on them from Alfred Edmund Brehm’s *Tierleben* (1864, 1869; *Brehm’s Life of Animals*, 1896), particularly on rites involving the killing of a mate and passages finding parallels between those and human behaviors (such as sexual murder, exhibitionism):

Mating with newts and salamanders: They swim past each other several times, then the male deposits the sperm on the ground, the female fetches it and introduces it to herself. – Utter cessation of the pleasure of coitus, the stealth of the female, like an exhibitionist at the streetlight.⁴⁴ The praying mantis begins eating the male already during the sexual act, which neither one minds. Male toad carried around for days by the female. Sometimes jumps on passing fish, rides clinging to eyes and doesn’t let go until it has killed it. (Sex murder). [...] Men whose whole frame is enlarged in erection. Grows four times as large in length and width.⁴⁵

Musil’s notes reflect the stereotypical assumption that every human harbors a “beast” within that must be “worked off” and that such abreaction can take the form of sexual violence.⁴⁶ This may sound like a culture of perverse desires, but in fact it is devoted to experimentation:

a world ruled by few who live in a kind of monastery. A world divided into experimental fields. [...] People who live out all intellectually possible constellations [...], people, whose energy lies entirely in the spiritual realm.⁴⁷ Their moral experiments cannot be verified on earth, or only with difficulty, and are therefore restricted to their astral laboratory.⁴⁸

⁴¹ Musil, *KA*, *Transkriptionen*, Heft 21/54, 56.

⁴² Musil, *KA*, *Transkriptionen*, Heft 21/53.

⁴³ Musil, *KA*, *Lesetexte*, vol. 16, IV. Wien/Berlin, 21: *Die zwanzig Werke* III, 210.

⁴⁴ Musil, *KA*, *Transkriptionen*, Mappe IV/2/521.

⁴⁵ Musil, *KA*, *Lesetexte*, vol. 16, IV. Wien/Berlin, 8: *Die zwanzig Werke* I, 210 – 211.

⁴⁶ Musil, *KA*, *Lesetexte*, vol. 16, IV. Wien/Berlin, 21: *Die zwanzig Werke* III, 210.

⁴⁷ Musil, *KA*, *Lesetexte*, vol. 15, *Erzählerische Fragmente*, *Die zwanzig Werke*, *Das Land über dem Südpol* (Planet Ed), 1–2.

⁴⁸ Musil, *KA*, *Lesetexte*, vol. 16, III. Erster Weltkrieg, II: Klein Grau, 79.

As both experimenters and test objects, these people lead separate mental and physical lives, but they identify only with the first state of existence. The events that affect them corporeally concern them but little. Their only true concern is their research.

They themselves are not subject to passion [...] While they do have sympathies and the like, they know what they derive from (the animal kingdom) and don't take them seriously. Their life might be monotonous, but an immense pressure to work makes it complete. Ataraxia, or the contemplation of God, might represent something higher, but this and other things are precisely what they're trying to discover. They don't have any solutions yet – there's not enough time for that – but they're conducting interesting experiments.⁴⁹

These researchers display an attitude that may be described as selective self-estrangement: they observe the animal inside, but they do not identify with its appetites or actions. Here, the exploration into alien space leads to an experiment on the alienated element within the explorer-protagonist. Tellingly, the ‘aliens’ living on the planet turn out to be alienated forms of the self, Germans who had emigrated long ago. The visitor is thus not conducting ethnology so much as inverse-ethnology.⁵⁰

The novella, *Grigia*, where Musil processes his experiences of the First World War, tells of another expedition. Homo, a scientist who has grown weary of civilization, sets out for foreign terrain, but, like Müller's *Tropen*, this work is set in a pre-civilized society rather than a futuristic setting.⁵¹ The protagonist arrives at a “pre-historic lake village built on piles” where the ways of “bygone centuries” live on, and the narrative compares the practices of the villagers to those of “Negroes”: they speak “magic words,” and the explorer's time among them is likened to “living among savages.”⁵² As on the planet Ed, the female residents, who alone retain the third-person limited omniscient narrator's interest, display a marked proximity to animal existence characterized not by bizarre sexual practices but because the women exhibit a gentle bovine nature. Their instincts are intact (e. g., the animalistic will to survive), yet they are expressed through an un-

⁴⁹ Musil, *KA*, *Lesetexte*, vol. 16, III. Erster Weltkrieg, II: Klein Grau, 79–80.

⁵⁰ According to Vatan (*Robert Musil et la question anthropologique*, 75), Musil adopts the attitude of an ethnologist in order to distance himself from the world with which he is familiar and obtain a new perspective. See also Werkmeister, *Kulturen jenseits der Schrift*, 341–343.

⁵¹ This is convincingly demonstrated by Schraml (*Relativismus und Anthropologie*, 140–142). See Werkmeister, *Kulturen jenseits der Schrift*, 343–353, for a reading of Musil's ethnological interest in light of media theory.

⁵² Robert Musil, “Grigia,” in *Five Women*, trans. Eithne Wilkins and Ernst Kaiser (Boston: Godine, 1999), 21, 27, 50.

reflecting oneness with nature, involving a placid fulfillment of basic natural needs, including sexual ones. Accordingly, the traveler calls his local love interest by the name of her cow, Grigia.

As in *Land über dem Südpol*, the novella soon reveals that the women of this faraway village actually represent an alienated form of the self – they descend from German emigrants – and the expedition into the foreign turns out to be inverse-ethnology instead. Moreover, and as occurs in Müller's *Tropen*, the travelers themselves quickly regress to a state of savagery. However, the post-civilized, masculine savagery takes the form of uninhibited indulgence in egocentric desires – for instance, sexual assaults on the women, cruel punishments of workers, and the sadistic slaughter of animals. In the course of evening drinking bouts, members of the expedition even lose the ability to speak, interacting with each other only in an “animal language”; meanwhile, the women communicate in a language that belongs to the past but is still human.⁵³

The bestiality displayed by once-civilized men – which serves Musil's critique of civilization itself – contrasts with the experience of participation that Homo makes in the course of the same regression:

Here, amid the secrets of Nature, their belonging together was only one secret more. [...] Among the trees with their arsenic-green beards he sank down on one knee and spread out his arms, a thing he had never done before in all his life, and it was as though in this moment someone lifted him out of his own embrace [...] as though he were being cast in the mould of some other body.⁵⁴

This “belonging together” involves Homo's relationships to his absent wife and to nature, which both merge in Grigia. Yet in contrast to Grigia, such belonging leads Homo to an anticipation of death, which distinguishes him from her as a former member of modern civilization. For him participation is incompatible with the civilized view of life, defined as an agonistic relationship between the self and other, where no integration between the two is possible outside of death.

Thus, Musil's ethnological interest in the phenomenon of participation reemerges in *Grigia*. Once again, this phenomenon is relocated from an ethnological expedition to a confrontation with the alienated self. This estranged self has two faces: The first is the post-civilizational face of savage masculinity that conceives of sexuality in relation to cruelty and crime. The second is the face of a pre-civilizational, feminine, and creaturely devotion to the laws of nature. Homo – whose very name dictates his anthropological significance to the reader

⁵³ Musil, “Grigia,” 37–38.

⁵⁴ Musil, “Grigia,” 32.

– wears both countenances. He stalks the women of the village and calmly observes the agonizing death of a fly while musing about how he can “feel the presence of God and yet kill.”⁵⁵ But in other instances, he experiences moments of participation like the one I have cited above. On this score, he resembles the inhabitants of Ed, who experiment with cruel mating rituals while at the same time aiming to see God.

Clarisse – A Sister in Madness (*The Man Without Qualities*)

Musil’s great novel, *The Man Without Qualities*, also contains a complex treatment of the paradigm of the ‘primitive.’ Here, too, the movement from expedition to self-experimentation acts as the novel’s constructive principle. By this I do not refer only to the laboratory gaze of the narrator, Ulrich, and the author himself (in his comments on the novel),⁵⁶ but also to how the thematic treatment of the ‘primitive’ in his earlier stories returns in the structure of this highly reflective work. Musil’s early works expose the ‘primitive’ as an obvious construction – after all, no land or planet exists above the South Pole. Rather, the ‘primitive’ refers to a defamiliarized version of the familiar and an alternative relationship to the world. Therefore, in his novel, and in contrast to Müller and his protagonist Brandlberger, Musil and his alter ego, Ulrich, are not interested in examining the ethnographic other so much as inverting this ethnological perspective to discern the foreign within their own culture: “The primitives here at home are more foreign to us than those of the South Seas.”⁵⁷ Thus, psychology replaces ethnology; however, it remains inspired by an ethnological perspective. Among other things, this means that foreign aspects of one’s own culture remain encoded as ‘primitive.’ Such coding is tied to a genealogy (whereby alien elements of the self have ancient roots), to an anthropological thesis (that an authentically human faculty is at work in such elements), and to a negative evaluation of re-

⁵⁵ Musil, “Grigia,” 40.

⁵⁶ Cf. Thomas Hake, ‘Gefühlserkenntnisse und Denkerschütterungen.’ *Robert Musils ‘Nachlaß zu Lebzeiten’* (Bielefeld: Aisthesis, 1998), 122–161; see also Andrea Pelmtner, ‘Experimentierfeld des Seinkönnens’ – *Dichtung als “Versuchsstätte.” Zur Rolle des Experiments im Werk Robert Musils* (Würzburg: Königshausen + Neumann, 2008). On experimentation in literature more broadly, cf. Marcus Krause and Nicolas Pethes, eds., *Literarische Experimentalkulturen. Poetologien des Experiments im 19. Jahrhundert* (Würzburg: Königshausen + Neumann, 2005).

⁵⁷ Robert Musil, “Bücher und Literatur,” in *Gesammelte Werke in neun Bänden*, ed. Adolf Frisé (Reinbek: Rowohlt, 1978) 8: 1171. Werkmeister also speaks of “inverted ethnology” in reference to the “possibility of a foreign culture calling into question European forms of knowledge and thinking” (*Kulturen jenseits der Schrift*, 341–342).

gressive movements. The self-experimenter's gaze that forms over the course of the expedition furthermore differs from a typical laboratory situation in that the subject conducting the experiment is himself involved in it – be that in the sense of a change in thinking, as seen in Ulrich, or in writing, as was the case for Musil himself. Both participate in the primitivisms the novel reflects.

The following develops the first part of my thesis (that the novel can be read as an expedition into the 'primitive') by examining the figure of Clarisse. (The second part of my thesis – that the novel moves from expedition to self-experiment – will be treated in the second half of the chapter.) Earlier drafts of *The Man Without Qualities* contain numerous indications that the mentally ill Clarisse has been shaped by the paradigm of the 'primitive.'⁵⁸ In a draft from the "Siamese Twins" stage of the novel (1923–1926), when Clarisse is hospitalized for the first time, she writes that in earlier times "religiously awakened" individuals such as Francis of Assisi had the opportunity to "live, teach, and lead their contemporaries" – whereas now they get locked up in psychiatric institutions for mania.⁵⁹ In a draft from the "Spy" stage of the novel (1918–1921), Musil still brings up these thoughts in his reflections on his novel, noting, "What

⁵⁸ The novel's genesis is complex and took place over multiple writing phases. Musil worked on it between 1918 and 1921 under the title "Der Spion" (The Spy), during the period from 1921–1922 under the title "Der Erlöser" (The Savior), between 1923–1926 under the title "Die Zwillingsschwester" (The Siamese Twins), and finally during the period from 1927–1830 under the title *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften* (*The Man without Qualities*). In 1930, the first volume of the novel was published in two parts (cited here as Kap. I/1–I/19; I/20–I/123). From 1930 to 1932 Musil worked on the second volume and published its first part in 1932 (Kap. II/1–II/38). Countless sketches, notes, and drafts dating back as far as 1918 that relate to both volumes are found in Musil's posthumously published papers. After 1932 Musil worked on various strands for the continuation of the second volume, including the chapter complex "Clarisse" (1933–1936), which would eventually consist of six chapters (including "Besuch" [Visit] und "Insel" [Island]), but these were only published posthumously. The so-called "Druckfahnen-Kapitel" (Galley-proof chapters), which also include the chapters on the psychology of emotion, are dated to 1937–1938 and include 20 chapters that Musil put into print during these years, but then continued to work on and withdrew from publication. These chapters should have been the sequel to Part 1 of the novel's second volume, but were in fact never published during Musil's lifetime. The "Mappen" (files) und "Hefte" (notebooks) cited in the following are part of Musil's posthumously published papers, as are the s-Drafts (1924–1925) and the C-Drafts (1918–1921). These papers are cited from the Klagenfurter Edition (KA), which is organized into four parts: *Lesetexte* (Readings), *Transkriptionen* (Transcriptions), *Faksimiles* (Facsimiles), and *Kommentare und Apparate* (Commentary and Critical Apparatus).

⁵⁹ Whenever possible, quotes are taken from Robert Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, trans. Sophie Wilkins, 2 vols. (New York: Vintage, 1996). Otherwise, they follow Robert Musil, *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*, ed. Adolf Frisé (Reinbek: Rowohlt, 1995). Here: Musil, *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*, 1734.

today is still possible only in a mountain village (with consequences corresponding to this situation), then [could] occur at a center of culture."⁶⁰ In other words, Clarisse is identified as a relative of the primitivist figure of Grigia. Other indications of the relationship between Clarisse and figurations of the 'primitive' are the "discoveries" she makes in the s- and C-drafts of the "Island" chapter (1924–1925, 1918–1921, respectively) – for instance, that "vanished forests of the carboniferous era [...] are being freed again today [...] as psychic forces." Accordingly, the narrator compares the nighttime noises on the island to the excitement of an "African village starting a ritual dance,"⁶¹ and credits Clarisse with a native understanding for the secret "dance rhythms of primal peoples."⁶² The drafts for *The Man Without Qualities* thus provide some cues that the Clarisse storyline involves yet another variation on Musil's expedition narratives. In 1932, Musil in fact called the book "a mental expedition and research trip."⁶³ In the following, the novel's references to Clarisse as a figuration of the 'primitive' will be explored in light of three complexes: primitivism in mania and schizophrenia, in music, and in language and poetry.

Primitivism in Mania and Schizophrenia

Early twentieth-century psychopathology understood certain mental disorders, especially schizophrenia, in terms of regression to the phylogenetic stage of 'primitive thinking' (see Chapter 4). Ernst Kretschmer expresses a view held by many others: "In schizophrenic thinking, [...] large cohesive features of the primitive world-pictures are made to live again before our eyes."⁶⁴ Freud, for instance, expected psychoanalysis to shed light not only on mental illness but also on the mental operations of prehistoric humankind.

Neuroses seem to have preserved more mental antiquities than we could have imagined possible; so that psycho-analysis may claim a high place among the sciences which are concerned with the reconstruction of the earliest and most obscure periods of the beginnings of the human race.⁶⁵

⁶⁰ Musil, *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*, 1801.

⁶¹ Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 1566.

⁶² Musil, *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*, 1787.

⁶³ Musil, KA, *Transkriptionen*, Mappe II/1/65.

⁶⁴ Kretschmer, *A Text-book of Medical Psychology*, 134.

⁶⁵ Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, 550; cf. 566.

According to this reasoning, the appropriate science for researching the ‘primitive’ would not necessarily be ethnology, but rather psychology, which uses psychological disorders of its present day to explore the secrets of ‘primitive thinking.’ In this sense, medical psychopathology and depth psychology of the early twentieth century establish a primitivism of mental illness. Musil takes up this discourse by characterizing Clarisse as a manic-schizophrenic and therefore ‘primitive figure.’⁶⁶

Three studies in particular informed his work on the novel in the early 1930s, when Clarisse’s character was taking shape in the chapters “Early-morning Walk,” “Armistice,” and “Hermaphrodite,” where her illness (Musil speaks of “incipient manic activity”⁶⁷) erupts and becomes a chronic condition.⁶⁸ In 1933–1934 he engaged intensively with Eugen Bleuler’s *Lehrbuch der Psychiatrie* (1904; *Text-book of Psychiatry*, 1924) (whose chapter on affectivity he had already taken copious notes on while working on another of the novel’s characters, Moosbrugger, in 1927). Other works the author consulted at this time include Kretschmer’s *Text-book on Medical Psychology* (whose chapter on folk psychology [*Völkerpsychologie*] he had already read carefully while writing “Toward a New Aesthetic” in 1924) and Traugott Konstantin Oesterreich’s *Die Phänomenologie des Ich in ihren Grundproblemen* (*The Phenomenology of Ego in its Fundamental Problems*, 1910).

During this writing period, many of Clarisse’s idiosyncrasies, which had already been developed in previous chapters and chapter drafts, are reworked into manic symptoms and receive diagnosis. The latter, however, is only made explicit in the notes. And while the narrator still draws attention to the symptoms in early drafts, these markers are cut from later versions. These revisions point to the difference between the Clarisse narrative and the case history genre. Case histories usually serve to prove a certain theory or diagnosis.⁶⁹ Yet here the case comprises the theory, or rather the latter is not to be had without the former.

66 For the cultural and historical context, cf. Anz, “Schizophrenie als epochale Symptomatik.”

67 Musil, KA, *Transkriptionen*, Mappe V/4/205.

68 In contrast to discussions of Moosbrugger, scholars have devoted little attention to Clarisse. See especially, Silvia Bonacchi, *Die Gestalt der Dichtung. Der Einfluss der Gestalttheorie auf das Werk Robert Musils* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1998), 249–259; Gisli Erna Pietsch Pentecost, “Clarisse. Analyse der Gestalt in Robert Musils Roman ‘Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften’” (PhD thesis: Purdue University, 1990), 12–44; at the same time as the German version of the study at hand appeared, so did Norbert Christian Wolf, *Kakanien als Gesellschaftskonstruktion. Robert Musils Sozialanalyse des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2011), cf. 684–694.

69 On the relation of case history and literature in general, cf. Pethes, “Vom Einzelfall zur Menschheit”; and Pethes, “Versuchsobjekt Mensch. Gedankenexperimente und Fallgeschichten als Erzählformen des Menschenversuchs,” in *Experiment und Literatur. Themen, Methoden, Theorien*, ed. Michael Gamper (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2010).

I will return below to Musil’s criticism of the procedures of psychology implicit in this arrangement.

According to Bleuler and Kretschmer, a key feature of mania is the flight of ideas:

The *thinking* of the manic is flighty. He jumps by by-paths from one subject to another and cannot adhere to anything. With this the ideas run along very easily and involuntarily, even so freely that it may be felt as unpleasant by the patient. [...] The thinking is incomplete and flighty but not “unclear” in the sense of psychopathology. Up to advanced stages of the disease one can converse with the manic.⁷⁰

Clarisse displays precisely this way of thinking even in the early stages of her illness:

In fluttering mists, images sprang up, overlapped, fused, faded – that was Clarisse’s thinking. She had her own way of thinking; sometimes several ideas were intertwined simultaneously, sometimes none at all, but then one could feel the thoughts lurking like demons behind the stage. The temporal sequence of events that gives such real support to most people became in Clarisse a veil that threw its folds one over the other, only to dissolve them into a barely visible puff of air.⁷¹

In turn, a flighty state of mind becomes her permanent condition. As Musil puts it in a draft,

[w]hen she gave herself over to reflection, a thousand and one things occurred to her. For example, just as she could see herself addressed as a man [...] and feel herself a man and a woman at once, and therefore really [...] a double being, [...] she could feel herself also to be related to the [mentally] ill, for they are double beings, too [...]. But relations also extended in many other directions. [...] The reciprocal relations yielded a whole, and new points of departure emerged in almost unlimited number.⁷²

Indeed, “a thousand and one things” (*vom Hundertsten ins Tausendste*, literally, “from the hundreth to the thousandth,” meaning to ramble and get carried away) is a turn of phrase taken from Bleuler, who uses it to describe thoughts that jump erratically from one thing to the next. Such activity is defined by lightness and speed and evidently leads to deception as “the patient spends much less than the normal time on the individual idea.”⁷³ As Kretschmer elaborates, “in the case of the manic very many more images are rushed through the

⁷⁰ Eugen Bleuler, *Textbook of Psychiatry*, trans. A. A. Brill (New York: Macmillan, 1924), 466.

⁷¹ Musil, *KA, Transkriptionen*, Mappe I/5/107; quoted from *The Man Without Qualities*, 152.

⁷² Musil, *KA, Transkriptionen*, Mappe II/1/12.

⁷³ Bleuler, *Textbook of Psychiatry*, 72.

focal zone of consciousness,”⁷⁴ but none of them stays put, and nothing is thought through. In Bleuler’s words, “flighty thinking is not aimless in content, although its aim is forever changing.”⁷⁵ The rapidity with which mental representations change implies, as Kretschmer writes, that the manic individual “feels a pressure of thought.”⁷⁶ This pressure is exhibited in Clarisse’s sense that her thoughts are not her own, that she is their object and not the other way around: “Her thoughts went now one way – as if she were only an instrument on which a strange and higher being were playing.”⁷⁷ This impression corresponds to Bleuler’s remark that “patients feel that ‘it’ thinks in them.”⁷⁸

Musil accounts for the correlations between the various thoughts racing through Clarisse’s mind in different ways. In the narrator’s estimation, they follow a logically accidental but nonetheless organic sequence:

[w]hat of such possibilities became reality in Clarisse’s mind and what did not, could not be predicted in detail, and it may be called coincidence. She felt it herself. There was something in her that could not be expressed in ordinary terms, and from it arose, as naturally as a tree brings forth a thousand leaves, manifold thoughts, indeed an unlimited multiplicity of them.⁷⁹

The coincidental impression made by such thoughts is due to them having no discernible bracket or heading grouping them together. The appearance of organic continuity prevails, however, because individual connections between elements can be identified. In Kretschmer’s words, there is “no trace of a dominant concept; on the contrary, each idea is recognizably linked to the next.” Because the dominant concept is not clear, he also describes such flights of ideas as “picture-strip thinking,”⁸⁰ whose proximity to the “asyntactical series of images” that play a key role in concepts of ‘primitive thinking’ is unmistakable.⁸¹ Whereas, according to Kretschmer, ‘primitive thinking’ works its way up to abstraction by agglutinating images that ultimately yield logical categories, thinking directed by flights of ideas takes the opposite course; here, sensory images, which are given with language, “become once more detached from the abstractions.”⁸²

74 Kretschmer, *A Text-book of Medical Psychology*, 148.

75 Bleuler, *Textbook of Psychiatry*, 72.

76 Kretschmer, *A Text-book of Medical Psychology*, 149.

77 Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 1611.

78 Bleuler, *Textbook of Psychiatry*, 152.

79 Musil, *KA, Transkriptionen*, Mappe II/1/12.

80 Kretschmer, *A Text-book of Medical Psychology*, 147.

81 Kretschmer, *A Text-book of Medical Psychology*, 84.

82 Kretschmer, *A Text-book of Medical Psychology*, 143.

In brief, such thought becomes eidetic again – without super- or subordination – structured only by juxtaposition.

The principle governing juxtaposition, according to the narrator, is association or analogy: “It was analogies in which [...] Clarisse thought [...]. For what Clarisse considered a special way of thinking were apparently analogies.”⁸³ This view corresponds to Kretschmer’s position when he observes that elements of thought entertain a relationship of contiguity or similarity. Likewise, Bleuler stresses secondary associations, that is, “external” features that do not demonstrate logical coherence, as when he notes that “in place of inner associations there may be accidental connections, [...] which do not even emanate from the sense of the word but from its sound.”⁸⁴ This dynamic characterizes Clarisse’s thinking throughout, for example in chapter I/38:

“Snakes!” Clarisse thought. “Snakes!” These events entangled her, trapped her, kept her from getting where she wanted to go, were slippery, and made her aim at a target she did not want. Snakes, snares, slippery; that was life’s way. Her thoughts began to race like life.⁸⁵

Since such thought lacks a dominant concept, it can be led astray not only by secondary associations, but also – and just as readily – by sensory impressions. For both Bleuler and Kretschmer, manic thinking is especially susceptible to distraction.⁸⁶ The passage quoted above illustrates this point. Playing the piano, Clarisse’s thoughts form out of the image of the black and white keys moving before her.

She saw it all before her like swarms of black birds fluttering around a little girl standing in the snow. But somewhat later she saw a black wall with white spots in it; black stood for – she didn’t know, and while the white ran together to form little, and sometimes larger, islands, the black remained unchangingly infinite. This blackness emitted fear and agitation. “Is this the devil?” she thought. “Has the devil turned into Moosbrugger?” Between the white spots she now noticed thin gray tracks; on these she had moved from one thing to the next in her life.⁸⁷

The scene also shows yet another feature of “flights of ideas” at work. When a perceptible contiguity or similarity between successive thoughts is missing, intel-

⁸³ Musil, *KA*, *Transkriptionen*, Mappe II/1/13.

⁸⁴ Bleuler, *Textbook of Psychiatry*, 72.

⁸⁵ Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 154.

⁸⁶ Kretschmer, *A Text-book of Medical Psychology*, 145; Bleuler, *Textbook of Psychiatry*, 72, 237.

⁸⁷ Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 154.

lectual activity proceeds along the lines of affect or “catathymia.” Bleuler writes that affect conditions thinking in two ways: by favoring associations that correspond to an actual emotion and by increasing the value attached to ideas associated with it. In consequence, “logic becomes falsified.” Bleuler speaks of a catathymic impact of unconscious affects on thought processes.⁸⁸ By contrast, Kretschmer applies the term catathymia to every “transformation of the psychic content by affective influences.”⁸⁹ Catathymia also plays a central role in Musil’s characterization of Clarisse’s mental world, as displayed in his notes on her character: “some catathymic tendencies of feeling produce a much larger, indeed an unlimited, multiplicity of thoughts.”⁹⁰

Considerations of affect-driven thinking shaped the character of Clarisse from the outset. Thus, in one of the s-drafts from the early 1920s, one reads,

[w]hat was taking place might have been causal, necessary, mechanical, and psychological, but aside from that it was moved by a secret driving force; it

might have happened precisely that way the day before, but today, in

some indescribable and fortunate way, it was different. – Oh – Clarisse immediately said to herself – I am freed from the law of necessity, where every thing depends on some other thing. [...] Clarisse discovered that what she was acting from was a veil of emotions, with things on the other side.⁹¹

At this point in the novel’s composition, her symptoms still entertain a relationship with Musil’s apperceptor theory of the early 1910s, inspired by Oesterreich’s *Entfremdung der Wahrnehmungswelt* (Alienation of the World of Perception, 1907). In the fifth notebook of his journal, Musil notes that the theory applies directly to Alice, whose name would later change to Clarisse. The central idea here is that the balance between the individual and the world is regulated by the apperceptor, an organ mediating emotional adaptation between the individual and the world.⁹² Under normal circumstances, equilibrium prevails, but in manic phases, the emotional adaptation of the world gets the upper hand (“all things change in harmony with this; one might say they remain the same but now find themselves in some other space, or that everything is tinged with another

⁸⁸ Bleuler, *Textbook of Psychiatry*, 33.

⁸⁹ Kretschmer, *A Text-book of Medical Psychology*, 96.

⁹⁰ Musil, *KA, Transkriptionen*, Mappe I/5/107.

⁹¹ Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 1560–1561.

⁹² For a detailed discussion, see Bonacchi, *Die Gestalt der Dichtung*, 94–126.

sense"⁹³). In the s-drafts of the novel, Clarisse relates this shift to genius, and the narrator follows her lead as his alter ego does the same. The difference between the mentally ill and geniuses (among whom Clarisse numbers herself) is that, for the latter, instability is in fact "full of strength"; while "constantly disturbed," it is "constantly inventing new forms of equilibrium."⁹⁴ Later drafts split this affect-driven thinking into a pathological form attributed to Clarisse, and a utopian one explored by Ulrich in his reflections on emotional psychology.

Affect-driven thinking also defines Clarisse's character in the published novel (1930, 1932). In the scene at the piano (quoted above), her thoughts shift from the color black to the devil and then to Moosbrugger, mediated in turn by the affect each mental representation triggers. In Chapter II/14, the narrator observes, "it was not so much that her ideas were confused as that they left out connections, or that they were saturated with affect in many places where other people have no such inner wellspring."⁹⁵ Finally, in late (unpublished) chapters, Clarisse's catathymic tendencies are omnipresent. Thus, when she fails to see Moosbrugger at the prison, she claims that she is being prevented from doing so so that he will disappear. The narrator comments, "Surely other, much more probable explanations could have been found, but this one also agreed with the uncanniness of [the asylum] through which she had wandered [...], bringing forth an uncannily clear kind of deep certainty."⁹⁶

Catathymic mental connections are much more difficult for others to understand than contiguities or similarities perceptible to the senses. According to Bleuler, comprehensibility is precisely what distinguishes mania from schizophrenia.⁹⁷ Kretschmer hints at the same point of difference. In his view, the flighty thoughts of the manic individual are linked with each other "on the principle of the simple laws of association."⁹⁸ In contrast, he considers schizophrenic thinking to be "almost entirely catathymic, even to the extent of the loss of all contact with the realities of the moment."⁹⁹ Inasmuch as catathymia is in evidence, Clarisse's condition approaches schizophrenia. Not only is "a peg on which the whole hangs"¹⁰⁰ missing; the connection between thought elements

93 Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 1561.

94 Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 1562.

95 Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 857. The author also took note of this passage in reference to Clarisse's thinking: Musil, KA, *Transkriptionen*, Mappe I/5/107.

96 Musil, KA, *Transkriptionen*, Mappe II/1/11–12.

97 Bleuler, *Textbook of Psychiatry*, 79.

98 Kretschmer, *A Text-book of Medical Psychology*, 148.

99 Kretschmer, *A Text-book of Medical Psychology*, 134.

100 Kretschmer, *A Text-book of Medical Psychology*, 145.

is imperceptible for her interlocutors because it is completely detached from any sensory experience they would be able to comprehend. What Clarisse says prompts confusion. For example: “Ulrich observed her, trying to understand. He must have missed something – an analogy, or some ‘as if’ that might have given a meaning to what she was saying”¹⁰¹; “I can never follow your leaps from one point to another, or see how it all hangs together.”¹⁰² As Bleuler observes, all connection disappears in extreme cases, leaving only individual words; the “lyricism” Clarisse displays in the C-drafts of the “Island” chapter tends in this direction: “Swallow. Arrow. / Flows green into God. / Steeply rising alb easily / Greened in god” (*Schwalbe. Pfeil. / Fährt grün in Gott. / Steil steigende Albe leicht / Vergrünt in Gott*).¹⁰³ Achilles, Ulrich’s predecessor, admires this utterance for its re-concretization of words and syntactical revitalization.

According to Bleuler, “the separation of associations from experience” facilitates so-called dereistic thinking, whereby “the faintest wishes and fears are endowed with the subjective reality of the delusion.”¹⁰⁴ Such thought obeys only the “logic of feeling.”¹⁰⁵ The examples he cites include not only the connections among ideas in schizophrenia and dreams, but also the dual beings of mythology. In the “Armistice” chapter, Clarisse invokes this notion when speaking to Walter”:

“The insane are just double beings.”

“Well, you said that before. But what does it mean?” [...]

Clarisse reflected. “In many depictions, Apollo is man and woman. On the other hand, the Apollo with the arrow was not the Apollo with the lyre, and the Diana of Ephesus wasn’t the Diana of Athens. The Greek gods were double beings, and we’ve forgotten that, but we’re double beings too.”¹⁰⁶

A pillar of Clarisse’s delusion is the theory of dual beings. The fact that she has a system – fixed points of reference to which she returns again and again – also points to her schizophrenic tendencies. By Bleuler’s account, certain thoughts tend to recur persistently in schizophrenia. At the same time, the existence of a delusional system is typical for the condition, with affective connections taking the place of logical ones.¹⁰⁷ The more common elements Bleuler mentions – meg-

¹⁰¹ Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 233.

¹⁰² Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 719.

¹⁰³ Musil, *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*, 1796.

¹⁰⁴ Bleuler, *Textbook of Psychiatry*, 79.

¹⁰⁵ Bleuler, *Textbook of Psychiatry*, 45.

¹⁰⁶ Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 1378.

¹⁰⁷ Bleuler, *Textbook of Psychiatry*, 390.

alomania, a perceived change of sex, and split personality – are all evident in Clarisse.

Musil also drew heavily on Kretschmer, and even more so on Oesterreich’s *Phänomenologie des Ich*, to represent Clarisse’s condition.¹⁰⁸ In the former’s works he found the phenomenon of “double consciousness,”¹⁰⁹ which allows the schizophrenic to be two people at once without perceiving a problem. For instance, “[a] female patient perceives her doctor as her doctor but at the same time as her former lover, possibly even as a third person, her father perhaps or an elderly neighbour.”¹¹⁰ Along these lines, Clarisse believes Nietzsche has been reborn in her doctor.¹¹¹ The same double perspective also bears on her own person. In notes to the passage above, Musil wrote, “Cl. experiences herself in the actions of others a[nd] feels the actions and feelings of others in herself.”¹¹² Indeed, this is one of the first symptoms she presents with. Chapter I/97 speaks of Clarisse being

so beside herself that she can’t tell where she is, except that she is definitely not absent. On the contrary, she could be said to be more inwardly present than ever, inside some deep inner space somehow contained inside the space her body occupies in the world.¹¹³

Similarly, later passages in the published novel connect the experience of “going outside oneself” with the sense of being connected with everything¹¹⁴ or, alternatively, making room for another person within oneself: “When do you understand another human being? When you feel with him. [...] You have to be like him: not by putting yourself *into him* but by taking him *out* into yourself! We redeem *outward*.”¹¹⁵ The unequaled importance of this passage for Clarisse’s character is made plain by the fact that Musil works it into the novel at least four times (in various forms) before featuring it front-and-center in her letter in Chapter II/7.

108 Regarding Oesterreich’s importance for Musil’s emotion-based conception of ego psychology as it bears on Clarisse (and incorporating discussion of Oesterreich’s account of mystical experience), see Bonacchi, *Die Gestalt der Dichtung*, 249–258.

109 Musil, *KA*, *Transkriptionen*, Mappe I/5/171.

110 Kretschmer, *A Text-book of Medical Psychology*, 135.

111 Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 1578.

112 Musil, *KA*, *Transkriptionen*, Mappe V/4/19; Kretschmer, *A Text-book of Medical Psychology*, 135.

113 Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 482.

114 Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 719.

115 Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 775.

Clarisse's proximity to participation as the "extraconceptual correspondence of the human being with the world along with abnormal or correlative moments" (as Musil puts it in "Toward a New Aesthetic"¹¹⁶) is particularly pronounced here, and with that her proximity to the "other condition" that Ulrich orbits and whose characterization is at this point shaped by Musil's reading of Lévy-Bruhl's work on "primitive mentality." Thus she declares,

[t]here are days when I can slip out of myself. [...] one feels connected by the air with everything there is, like a Siamese twin. [...] But you know all about that. That's what you meant when you said that there's something impossible about reality.¹¹⁷

Her willingness to detach herself from herself goes along with the tendency toward a split personality. The core delusion in all these splintered identities is Clarisse's belief that she has changed sex, becoming at different times "the seventh son of our Emperor,"¹¹⁸ a boy, or a doctor.

She had [...] been transformed into a doctor [...]. A wonderful feeling opened [...] her eyes. A deep aperture of her whole being – similar to the [...] repeated address of royal majesty – made her feel, with inexpressible pleasure, the spiritual condition of doctorhood [*Arztseeligkeit*], that she [...], in mysterious fashion, was a man.¹¹⁹

The narrator also describes this transformation as the "voluptuous protrusion of another being out of the root of her own,"¹²⁰ which underscores the affective logic and psychic heteronomy (i.e., the dependency on an alter ego) at work in this event.

Oesterreich's survey of split personality also offered Musil a treasure trove of case studies, from which he made extensive excerpts. Under the heading "Cl." in his notebook, he groups numerous examples of depersonalization and split personality in cases of conversion,¹²¹ acute schizophrenia,¹²² experiences of reincarnation (which Oesterreich describes as a "well-known form of som-

116 Musil, "Toward a New Aesthetic," 196–197.

117 Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 719.

118 Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 1072.

119 Musil, KA, *Transkriptionen*, Mappe II/1/8.

120 Musil, KA, *Transkriptionen*, Mappe V/4/200.

121 Musil, KA, *Transkriptionen*, Mappe II/1/79; Konstantin Traugott Oesterreich, *Die Phänomenologie des Ich in ihren Grundproblemen* (Leipzig: J.A. Barth, 1910), 346–349.

122 Musil, KA, *Transkriptionen*, Mappe II/1/79; Oesterreich, *Die Phänomenologie des Ich*, 359.

nambulism”¹²³), and devilish whisperings, among others.¹²⁴ All of these symptoms appear in connection with Clarisse in draft or published chapters. To take just two of many examples: she recognizes that the “ecstatic thirst for love” is “nothing other than an incarnation, [...] a manifestation in the flesh of something not of the flesh: a meaning, a mission, a destiny, such as is written in the stars for the elect”¹²⁵; later, she identifies Ulrich as “a great devil” who “knows what’s good”¹²⁶ and could redeem the world with her help. In a note to the “Early-morning Walk” chapter, Musil stakes out the space extending from mere change in Clarisse to her full-scale transformation.¹²⁷ The model he employs is “alternation from manic to depressive,”¹²⁸ which is accompanied by a comprehensive shift in self-perception and sense of the world explained above in reference to catathymia. The motif bracketing all of Clarisses’s metamorphoses is her passage from “a figure of sin to a figure of light.”¹²⁹ In this context, the splits in her character appear as precursors to the final metamorphosis into one being that transcends and thus unifies the division within herself.

The figure of light is the “double being” at the utopian center of her system of madness. It takes concrete form first of all in the Nietzschean satyr (that is, the fusion of “goat” and “god,” which Clarisse envisions as a sublimation of the “great forces of desire in people”: “the goat would become the god!”¹³⁰). And secondly in the related idea of the “hermaphrodite” Clarisse believes herself to be: “I’m not a woman! Clarisse exclaimed, and jumped up. (Didn’t you call me ‘little fellow’ when I was fifteen years old?) [...] I’m no woman, Meingast! *I am the hermaphrodite!*”¹³¹ As such, Clarisse reconciles herself with her double existence consisting of a passive, feminine existence that flows into the world, and an active, masculine life that takes in and shapes the world. As “the hermaphrodite,” she can also redeem other people who suffer division from the other halves of themselves – for instance, Nietzsche and Christ (“Both the hostile kings, Nietzsche and Christ, met up in her. [...] Each died in his halfness. Yet they were one, the two great enemies, together a Whole! Double-man [*Der Doppel-*

123 Oesterreich, *Die Phänomenologie des Ich*, 365; Musil, KA, *Transkriptionen*, Mappe II/1/79.

124 Oesterreich, *Die Phänomenologie des Ich*, 422–424; Musil, KA, *Transkriptionen*, Mappe II/1/79.

125 Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 481.

126 Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 718.

127 Musil, KA, *Transkriptionen*, Mappe V/4/204.

128 Musil, KA, *Transkriptionen*, Mappe V/4/204.

129 Musil, KA, *Transkriptionen*, Mappe V/4/204.

130 Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 1380.

131 Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 1596. Emphasis in original.

menschen! The body of a woman overcame them by unifying them”¹³²). Invoking Greek mythology, Clarisse extends the notion of a double being to everyone around her and affirms the belief (which Walter identifies as totemism) that “every person has an animal in which he can recognize his fate.”¹³³

The construction of dual existence in *The Man Without Qualities* follows the principle of condensation outlined by Freud in *Interpretation of Dreams*, which served as a key reference for Bleuler and for Kretschmer especially, who elaborates the idea first in relation to ‘primitive thinking’ and then to schizophrenia. The examples Kretschmer cites include not only the doctor, who is at once also a lover, neighbor and father, but also the “hybrid forms of man and animal”¹³⁴ often encountered, according to Kretschmer, in ‘primitive thinking.’ Such entities do not split so much as accumulate the capacities of both identities so that they acquire a superhuman, quasi-divine status. Kretschmer describes these combinations of man and animal as “symbols” but maintains that “the primitive man” is unaware of the symbolic nature of such ideas.¹³⁵ Bleuler, whom Kretschmer cites, identifies this peculiarity as a symptom of schizophrenia and observes that many schizophrenic delusions are meant “entirely symbolically” – for instance, when “a female patient ‘is’ the cranes of Ibycus because she is ‘free from blame and error,’ and ‘free,’ that is, she should not be confined.”¹³⁶ However, the symbol also usurps the “original concept,” and thus the same patient “hallucinates” symbols “as realities”¹³⁷ and truly believes she is a bird.¹³⁸

Clarisse, in contrast, demonstrates occasional awareness of the symbolic quality of her double being. In the “Early-morning Walk” chapter, she whispers to Walter (who is trying to understand her delusional system) “that the goat *signified* sensuality, which had everywhere separated itself from the rest of man-

132 Musil, *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*, 1737.

133 Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 1379.

134 Kretschmer, *A Text-book of Medical Psychology*, 86. Caption to Figure 9.

135 Kretschmer, *A Text-book of Medical Psychology*, 87.

136 Bleuler, *Textbook of Psychiatry*, 390.

137 Bleuler, *Textbook of Psychiatry*, 375.

138 The same holds for Bleuler and Kretschmer with regard to symbols stemming from the process of displacement. For Clarisse, many more arise from condensation. In particular, the image of the cross warrants mention, which derives its power from its original religious matrix: “She took a new sheet of paper and drew a cross through the middle. It hardly surprised her any more that this naked, broken piece of paper sprang to life right away. One needed only take a look to find a wealth of strange confirmations. [...] ‘There are no more men today!’ Cl. said to herself. When this had been confirmed by the magic cross, she looked for new facts. [...] Didn’t the cross tell her everything she had experienced in her weeks-long struggle against pity for W.?!” (Musil, *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*, 1736).

kind."¹³⁹ This statement identifies her as having a manic personality, which, unlike schizophrenics, supposedly remains tied not only to 'primitive' but also – through the process of decomposition – to 'developed' culture. Consequently, Clarisse accrues a creative sovereignty that (as Kretschmer observes of an unusual case of schizophrenia¹⁴⁰) brings her close to being perceived as an artist.

With these double human/animal identities, Musil returns to another aspect of his earlier ethnologically-inspired expedition narratives. As I have noted, animals play both a symbolic and participatory role in Clarisse's madness,¹⁴¹ and they are also concurrently invested with the bestial function of Musil's earlier works. This feature is revealed in the figures of the bear and the goat (both of which she associates with Walter and Ulrich, among others). The beasts stand for a split-off (and thus barbarized) form of sensuality appearing especially as male sexuality. As Walter exclaims to Clarisse, "You seem to associate all men with 'goat'!"¹⁴² The figurative meaning she attaches to the goat is also made evident by her association of it with the exhibitionist she sees ("She was telling him that the man under the window had been sent by the goat"¹⁴³). Her perception of male sexuality as violent and perverse has also a biographical basis. As a girl she was abused by her father, and as an adult she was raped by her husband. By creating the goat figure, she mythologizes and excuses these acts of sexual violence. At the same time, she takes on the role of redeemer who unites goat and God and thus takes the guilt of man's weakness upon herself.

In this case, this perspective on male sexuality comes from the mouth of a mentally ill individual. Yet male sexuality is cast in the same dubious light elsewhere in *The Man Without Qualities*. Besides the three sex crimes perpetrated by men already noted, the novel also features Moosbrugger, the murderer of girls, who fascinates all of the novel's main characters. What is more, Ulrich's sexual encounters are characterized more by aggression and emotional coldness than devotion or tenderness. Consistent with this, transcending sexual desire forms part of the experiment in the sibling-love he undertakes with his sister Agathe, which is why the experiment fails when abstinence is abandoned. In this manner, Musil's novel itself carries out a dissociation from male sexuality and the resulting bestialization of it that shape Clarisse's delusional ideas.

¹³⁹ Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 1380. Emphasis added.

¹⁴⁰ Kretschmer provides the rare example of a young schizophrenic and connects the disintegration of the abstract concept into an asyntactic series of images to Expressionism (*A Text-book of Medical Psychology*, 137–138).

¹⁴¹ Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 1380.

¹⁴² Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 1379.

¹⁴³ Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 1380.

Bearing these stereotypes in mind, one finds that Clarisse occupies a special position in regard to gender. Musil does not describe her with the typically feminine attributes of sexual devotion and passivity, but in terms of the conventionally masculine trait of sexual aggression. This is especially evident when she tries to force Ulrich to have sex with her: “Clarisse suddenly made a physical assault on him. She flung an arm around his neck and pressed her lips to his so quickly that it took him completely by surprise and he had no time to resist.”¹⁴⁴ In this context, it is not Clarisse’s delusion so much as the novel itself which identifies her as a hermaphrodite. At once masculine and feminine (in psychological terms), she has identified so completely with the perpetrator that she now must bear “the figure of the goat” within herself as an aggressor.¹⁴⁵ A critical perspective on this aspect of Clarisse’s delusion thus emerges. It expresses a repressive and stereotyped treatment of sexuality and gender that shaped both Musil’s novel and early twentieth-century bourgeois society and was essentialized in primitivist fantasies about the beast within man.

The above sub-chapter demonstrates the extent to which Musil drew on psychological theory to characterize Clarisse as a manic figure with schizophrenic tendencies. Up until this point, I have shown the similarities between *The Man Without Qualities* and contemporary psychological research. (The distance that the author and his protagonist, Ulrich, take from psychology will be thoroughly discussed below.) Furthermore, I have made clear that the manic-schizophrenic thinking constructed by Musil for the Clarisse character is closely related in its structure and content to notions of the ‘primitive’ outlined in the ethnological and psychological sources he so carefully consulted. This relationship involves especially the recurrence of the asyntactic, eidetic images typical of mania, which obey the principle of association on the basis of external similarities or contiguities. At the same time, Clarisse’s mania follows a catathymic logic, which is yet another feature it shares with so-called ‘primitive thinking.’ Finally, with desire-driven, dereistic thinking, Bleuler, Musil, and ultimately also Clarisse herself refer to the relationship between schizophrenic and mythical thinking. Bleuler writes, “Apollo is split into several personalities [...] indeed he may even be a woman although he is ordinarily a man.”¹⁴⁶ As we saw above, Musil takes up this observation in Clarisse’s theory of double beings. Through this theory, Clarisse’s insanity is not only structurally related to the participatory worlds of ‘primitive thinking,’ but also by virtue of its content: Clarisse takes

¹⁴⁴ Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 720.

¹⁴⁵ Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 1379.

¹⁴⁶ Bleuler, *Textbook of Psychiatry*, 45–46.

the symbolic construction of double beings literally, understands them as metamorphoses in her own person, and views human beings as animals on the way to divine status. From the associative links of 'primitive thinking,' Kretscher also derives the belief in magical practices. Such belief is likewise shared by Clarisse when she reads patterns formed by animals and colors to discern omens of and instructions for the future.¹⁴⁷ Indeed, she practices magic by onomastic means: "Wherever his name fell, the earth melted. When she uttered it her tongue was like a wisp of sun in a mild rain."¹⁴⁸ At several points she even calls herself a sorceress: "'I deem myself a Thessalian witch!' she screamed into the uproar that now broke loose from all sides" of a thunderstorm (believing that she has caused it).¹⁴⁹

Music and 'Primitive Thinking'

In an early draft, Ulrich displays an ambivalent attitude toward music. The making of music, primitivity, and mental illness are brought into direct relation because of the emotional volatility they supposedly share.

You're primitive, you musicians. What kind of subtle, unheard-of motivation does it take to produce a raging outburst after sinking into oneself in silence! You do it with five notes!

– It's something you don't understand, Uli. Clarisse laughed. [...] – You were never sick.¹⁵⁰

If one pursues this connection, a genealogical and symptomatic proximity between Clarisse's manic 'primitive thinking' and music emerges.¹⁵¹ The earliest indications of her flight of ideas appear when she plays the piano. The passage quoted above concerns the way her mind works under such circumstances: "In fluttering mists, images sprang up, overlapped, fused, faded – that was Clarisse's thinking."¹⁵² Her flitting thoughts follow musical laws: "the music did not stop for a second."¹⁵³ The shift from sequential to synchronous mental representations ("several thoughts were often present in one another at the same time")

¹⁴⁷ Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 1005.

¹⁴⁸ Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 1626.

¹⁴⁹ Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 1573.

¹⁵⁰ Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 1546.

¹⁵¹ For discussion of the role of music, see Pietsch Pentecost, "Clarisse," 73–96, who does not, however, remark on the connection to Clarisse's primitivistic, manic-schizophrenic traits.

¹⁵² Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 152.

¹⁵³ Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 155.

matches the layering of motifs in polyphonic compositions, as does the impression of constant thinking and images blending into one another, which corresponds to the modifications of musical motifs carried in development and fortspinnung.¹⁵⁴ By the same token, flights of ideas resemble instrumental music inasmuch as propositional content tends to be absent in both. Even though any number of manic thoughts appear in alternation, their substance plays a role secondary to the process through which they succeed each other. Clarisse's mood swings, which are typical of mania, also find a model in music:

The transitions from charming, gentle, and soft to gloomy, heroic, and tumultuous, which the music went through several times within the space of a quarter hour [...] seemed [...] [like] the carryings-on of a company of drunks that alternates periodically between sentimentality and fistfights.¹⁵⁵

Ulrich, who makes this observation, resists music's emotional influence. In contrast, Clarisse gives herself over to it: "When I hear music I'd like to either laugh or cry or run away."¹⁵⁶ The process offers a model for the split personality. Her experience of music leads to her claim that one can only understand another person by incarnating their personality ("You have to be like him: not by putting yourself *into him* but by taking him *out* into yourself!"). Clarisse proceeds with other people in the same way she does as a performer or listener of music: she "*plays it inside [herself]*."¹⁵⁷

The musical genre whose conventions come closest to the principle at work in flights of ideas is free fantasia.¹⁵⁸ This kind of music, which emerged at the end of the eighteenth century in works for the piano, gives composers license to indulge their imaginations in a manner bordering on improvisation. It is distinguished by a "loosening of bars, free choice of theme, rapid shifts between parts and in tone, freedom from distinct periods, harmonic norms, and formal order oriented on other genres."¹⁵⁹ Its earliest and best-known exponent was Carl Philipp Immanuel Bach. At first the lack of determinate content and absence

154 It is not said what kind of piece Clarisse and Walter are playing. However, in light of music identified elsewhere, one may assume that it is a Romantic or late-Romantic composition.

155 Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 1615.

156 Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 1546.

157 Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 775.

158 On the proximity of free fantasia to inner monologue, see Nicola Gess, "Intermedialität reconsidered. Vom Paragone bei Hoffmann bis zum Inneren Monolog bei Schnitzler," *Poetica. Zeitschrift für Sprach- und Literaturwissenschaft* 42, no. 1–2 (2010).

159 Peter Schleuning, *Die Freie Fantasie. Ein Beitrag zur Erforschung der klassischen Klaviermusik* (Göttingen: A. Kümmerle, 1973), 36, 104.

of recognizable forms posed a problem for contemporary critics, who considered such music the expression of insanity – and a potential cause of madness for those who heard it. Advocates of free fantasia, however, thought these very qualities gave voice to the imagination, but not so much to its contents as to its motions as such. In other words, they did not approach this music semantically, but understood it as a reflection of particular mental processes. Their affinities with the principle of flights of ideas are plain: rapid changes of theme and affect, connections between individual elements without regard for overall coherence, and hints of madness tempered by thought devoted to the drive of imagination alone. Comparable to the thesis advocated by free fantasia’s defenders is the thesis held by Ulrich’s predecessors Anders and Achilles that Clarisse’s so-called madness exemplifies the pathologization of an artistic norm-breaking creativity.

The musical origins of Clarisse’s delusions are also evident in their synaesthetic quality. When experiencing her “other condition,” “everything turns into music and color and rhythm;”¹⁶⁰ as she puts it, “I hear-see a world in which the things stand still and the people move around, just as you’ve always known it, but in sound that’s visible!”¹⁶¹ Clarisse claims that music connects “with sight [*Gesicht*].” At stake is a listening, that is also a seeing, or rather music-inspired vision. Visions, that play a major role in her delusional system are therefore often connected with musical phenomena. For example, she repeatedly describes Moosbrugger, whom she encounters in the flight of ideas induced by piano music, musically,¹⁶² and in a letter to Ulrich, she also remarks on the sonorous quality of the three syllables in Moosbrugger’s name.¹⁶³ The acoustic dimension of language furthermore plays a major role in her associations, as noted above (“Snakes, snares, slippery”¹⁶⁴). When Clarisse speaks, semantics take a secondary position relative to alliteration and assonance (e.g., “Steil steigende Albe leicht”¹⁶⁵), the “rhythm of arousal, or the “wild refrain” of repeated words.¹⁶⁶ Finally, her letters abound with exclamation marks, italics, and underlining, all meant to convey the sound of spoken language through writing.¹⁶⁷ Ulrich/Anders remarks that the results “[look] like a cryptic musical score.”¹⁶⁸

160 Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 719.

161 Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 773–774.

162 E.g., Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 233.

163 Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 773.

164 Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 154.

165 Musil, *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*, 1796.

166 Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 719; 1564.

167 Cf. her letter, Musil, *Man Without Qualities*, 773–777.

168 Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 1564.

Semantics play hardly any role in the musical rollercoaster of affect that Ulrich/Anders criticizes. Thus, Clarisse's desire to speak with a madman is defined by the "drumming" of the answers he provides, not their content; her own questions then "[make] as little sense as a random sound one might entice from a bugle."¹⁶⁹ Everything that comes out of her is acoustically mediated affect: "she felt tremendously sure of herself as she said it."¹⁷⁰ The letter she writes to Ulrich from the island is confused in its content yet "held together" "by a rhythm of excitement."¹⁷¹ In an earlier draft, its forceful dynamism is described as follows: "Like an arrow between narrow walls, it shot into the heights, unfolded in a coil; something invisible was rolling, striking, speeding over the tops and crests of the houses."¹⁷² Similarly, Clarisse is credited with a unique understanding for the "dance rhythm" of indigenous peoples.¹⁷³

'Primitive Language'

Oesterreich granted hardly any attention to the language of the mentally ill. Though none are pursued in detail, Bleuler's study does list an array of linguistic symptoms of mania such as logorrhea, the interference of a foreign lexicon (which can go so far as to yield a new language), and messy, disordered writing.¹⁷⁴ Schizophrenia, the author notes, can involve logorrhea, "mutism," abnormal intonation and "speech mannerisms," neologisms, disintegrated syntax, "improper use of words," and "word-salad" or artificial language, as well as writing in an eccentric graphic style with frequent breaks and repetitions, and excessive punctuation.¹⁷⁵ That said, Bleuler does not seek out the laws underlying these peculiarities or assess the relationship of patients to the language they use.

Only Kretschmer, motivated by previous work on 'primitive language,' dedicates attention to those questions and pays close notice to the symbols of schizophrenics. In his estimation, these symbols are to be understood as "preludes to an abstract understanding" whereby the schizophrenic occupies a 'primitive' level of human development. The 'civilized' individual, in contrast, understands such symbols as "translations of fully formed abstractions back again into a sim-

169 Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 1076.

170 Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 1076–1077.

171 Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 1627.

172 Musil, *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*, 1739.

173 Musil, *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*, 1787.

174 Bleuler, *Textbook of Psychiatry*, 468.

175 Bleuler, *Textbook of Psychiatry*, 394–398.

pler kind of picture-language.” Kretschmer describes how abstract concepts and syntactical order regress into discrete words, into nonverbal, fantastical agglutinations of images, which, however, for the doctor can be “translat[ed]” back into language.¹⁷⁶ At the same time, he grants that agglutinated images involve combinations of image-words, from which new concepts arise as they gradually shed their visual meaning and sound so that ultimately only an abstract concept remains behind.¹⁷⁷ It remains unclear then whether schizophrenics operate on a prelinguistic level or on that of purely vivid language.

Kretschmer, as I have noted, attends to the laws of agglutination and stylization followed by indigenous peoples and schizophrenics alike, specifically their literal understanding of figurative language.¹⁷⁸ Musil demonstrates the same interest, drawing inspiration from Kretschmer but going much further in outlining Clarisse’s character. Three of her features stand out: her handling of figurative language, her reenactment of the phylogenetic development of language, and her identity as an almost-poet.

I have already discussed Clarisse’s affinity for the acoustics of language at some length. However, the “snakes, snares, slippery” passage cited in that context offers another item of note. This associative thread derives from a literal interpretation of a metaphor from earlier in the narrative when “the thin gray paths coiled like snakes.”¹⁷⁹ Such literalizing exemplifies a process that reveals Clarisse’s relationship to language more than any other part of the published novel. A few examples will make as much clear. In Chapter I/54, Ulrich is irritated by the inferred absence of the particle “like” in Clarisse’s discourse. When he speaks by “analogy or some ‘as if’” governs his propositions, she takes his words literally and in such cases thinks that he really might “be transformed.”¹⁸⁰ Chapter I/97 describes the meaning of the abundant quotation marks and underlining of Clarisse’s written, spoken, or internal discourse: “the words thus emphasized [tense] up with meaning,” that is, they take on a literal meaning. Thus, she takes the expression, *etwas ins Auge fassen* (a figure of speech meaning “to take a [close] look,” “consider”) literally: as if the eye were able to reach out and grab what it sees as well as be grabbed by the eyes of others. Such (mis)understanding invests the terms with a performative force. When she speaks of “catching someone’s eye” with her own, she also acts in this way: the word becomes

176 Kretschmer, *A Text-book of Medical Psychology*, 116.

177 Kretschmer, *A Text-book of Medical Psychology*, 85.

178 Kretschmer, *A Text-book of Medical Psychology*, 136.

179 Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 154.

180 Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 233.

“part of the smashing force in her arm,” “like a stone to be flung at a target.”¹⁸¹ The same occurs in Chapter I/118. Clarisse’s mental emphasis in the phrase, “the situation had come *to a head*,” indicates that she actually sees a “head” forming, which yields an actual weapon: “Ulrich [...] was on the other side of the conflict, the side against which this *spearhead* would be directed, if there was trouble.”¹⁸² Clarisse thus revitalizes the language of metaphors whose tensions with their literal meanings have grown all but invisible over time.¹⁸³ At the same time, she activates a magical potential in language, endowing it with a force of action exceeding representation.

A further aspect of her interaction with figurative language concerns the “double word,” which plays a key role in Clarisse’s system of madness and theory of “double identities.”¹⁸⁴ Following this principle, she revitalizes lexicalized metaphors that are compounds of two words – for instance, “birthmark” (*Muttermal*). Clarisse, who has a conspicuous birthmark, reads this “sign” as an indication that she is destined, from birth, to give birth, become a mother (*Mutter*), spe-

181 Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 475.

182 Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 665. Emphases in the original.

183 Scholars have focused on this process almost exclusively in relation to Moosbrugger. See, e.g., Wilhelm Braun, “Moosbrugger Dances,” *The Germanic Review* 35 (1960): 220–221; Claudio Magris, “Musil und die Nähte der Zeichen,” in *Philologie und Kritik. Klagenfurter Vorträge zur Musilforschung*, ed. Wolfgang Freese (Munich: Fink, 1981), 189; and Fred Lönker, “Der Fall Moosbrugger. Zum Verhältnis von Psychopathologie und Anthropologie in Robert Musils *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*,” *Jahrbuch der Deutschen Schillergesellschaft* 47 (2003): 288–289. Lönker incorrectly assumes that “similar phenomena are hardly described in contemporary psychiatric literature” (289), missing their central role for Kretschmer. See also Eberhard Ostermann, “Das wildgewordene Subjekt. Christian Moosbrugger und die Imagination des Wilden in Musils *Mann ohne Eigenschaften*,” *Neophilologus* 89 (2005): 608–609, and, on the philosophy of language and ethnology, 610–611; as well as Robert Krause, *Abstraktion – Krise – Wahnsinn. Die Ordnung der Diskurse in Robert Musils Roman ‘Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften’* (Würzburg: Ergon, 2008), 110–114. In contrast, Gerd-Theo Tewilt (*Zustand der Dichtung. Interpretationen zur Sprachlichkeit des ‘anderen Zustands’ in Robert Musils ‘Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften’* [Münster: Aschendorff, 1990], 172–184) analyzes Clarisse’s propensity to take metaphors literally and concludes that she is out to “destroy difference” (173), which makes her own language violent (174); and also Robert Krause, “‘Man könnte die Geschichte der Grenzen schreiben.’ Moosbrugger’s wildes Denken und die Kultur des Okzidents,” *Musil-Forum* 31. *Studien zur Literatur der klassischen Moderne: Musil und die Fremdheit der Kultur* (2009–2010); this essay situates the killer’s “wild thinking” (which is the basis for his idiosyncratic use of language) in the context of Musil’s reading of Lévy-Bruhl.

184 Jutta Heinz (“Grenzüberschreitung im Gleichnis,” in *Grenzsituationen. Wahrnehmung, Bedeutung und Gestaltung in der neueren Literatur*, ed. Dorothea Lauterbach, Uwe Spörl, and Uli Wunderlich [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2002]) points out that Clarisse’s double words, like Moosbrugger’s metaphors, do not serve the purpose of communication (251).

cifically the “mother of God” (*Gottesmutter*).¹⁸⁵ By the same token, when looking for a fitting way to express her relationship to Walter, she takes up the conventional metaphor, *Schirmherr*. The term means “patron” or “protector,” but it breaks down into the words *Schirm* (“shield,” but also “umbrella”) and *Herr* (lord and master), roles filled by Walter as her husband; but this shield becomes a floppy umbrella without the support that Clarisse – the “shaft” – provides.¹⁸⁶

In Chapter II/26, when Clarisse’s illness has reached an advanced stage, the meaning of double words for her theory of dual existence is explained. From the existence of double words, she infers dual existences: “The double words were signs [...] to mark a secret path. [...] But a double language means a double life.” Hereby, the conventional understanding of the double word is understood as the official meaning, and its literal significance is “secret and personal,” which is interpreted further as a meta-sign for the existence of another dimension of a person, of life, and the world. In this light, Clarisse interprets altogether ordinary words on two registers (for instance, “quick” receives a new meaning in becoming a verb: “everything [quicks] in joyful leaps and bounds”¹⁸⁷) and finds meaning in the second half of two-syllable words: “My darling [...]! Do you know what a *ling* is? I can’t work it out. [...] [All the ‘lings’ were heavily underlined].”¹⁸⁸ This operation combines with the performative process of creating a secret world governed by omnicausality or “delusion of reference,”¹⁸⁹ whereby mere coincidences appear to be matters of fate. Clarisse, for instance, is convinced of a far greater narrative by the sight of a bird eating a caterpillar.

Fate had placed the two creatures in her path, as a sign that she must act. One could see how the blackbird assumed the caterpillar’s sins through its flaming orange-red beak. Wasn’t the bird a “black genie”? Just as the dove is the “white spirit”? Weren’t these signs linked in a chain? The exhibitionist with the carpenter, with the Master’s flight?¹⁹⁰

While the published novel foregrounds Clarisse’s use of figurative language, the drafts highlight her invention of her own language. Especially in the “Island” chapter, Clarisse replays the phylogenetic development of language and displays a marked tendency toward gestural communication. An early draft

¹⁸⁵ Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 483.

¹⁸⁶ Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 716.

¹⁸⁷ Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 1001.

¹⁸⁸ Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 773. Square brackets and enclosed language are from the original. Emphasis in the original.

¹⁸⁹ Bleuler, *Textbook of Psychiatry*, 94.

¹⁹⁰ Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 1005.

reads, “A. was accustomed to how hard it was for her to find the right words and how she often tried to seize them with her whole body, so that the meaning for which the words were lacking lay in the movement.”¹⁹¹ Further evidence that words and bodily gestures are directly connected for her can be seen in the passage: “One simply spread out one’s arms – and for her that included words [...] – like wings [...]! ‘Joyful world aslant’ was what she named her wingspread arms and her gaze down the stairwell.”¹⁹² The motions she performs and words she speaks are interchangeable; as soon as the gesture is made, its name follows. As early as Chapter I/82, Ulrich remarks that

[h]er whole slender body was involved; she actually felt everything she wanted to say with her whole body first of all, and was always needing to do something with it. [...] Ulrich [...] now [...] saw Clarisse as a Javanese dancer. Suddenly it occurred to him that he would not be surprised if she fell into a trance.¹⁹³

The chapter “Early-morning Walk” also culminates in Clarisse dancing, expressing her higher insights and high spirits without words. The tendency toward gestural language, the affinity for dance, and above all the references to a trance state call to mind Lévy-Bruhl’s writings on the body languages employed by ‘primitives.’

The s-drafts of the “Island” chapter, where Clarisse cycles through the phylogenetic development of language, confirm as much.¹⁹⁴ The first stage is based on using objects as symbols.

Two stones and a feather laid on top, perhaps; that meant: I want to see you, come to me, but you won’t find me, as fast as a bird flies. [...] But a piece of coal in the white sand

191 Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 1541.

192 Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 715.

193 Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 383–384.

194 Christian Kassung (*Entropie-Geschichten. Robert Musils ‘Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften’ im Diskurs der modernen Physik* [Munich: Fink, 2001]) likewise examines this process, but he does not see phylogenetic development at work. Instead, from the “standpoint of physics” (429), he identifies the graduated progression from “pressed-together language” (428) to signs not yet amounting to concepts that, through non-grammaticality (429) and analog coding (double words), are supposed to yield an unmediated “onomastic language” (430) and finally a stage of silence punctuated by dashes (431). Claudio Magris (“Musil und die Nähte der Zeichen”) also offers a brief discussion of Clarisse’s linguistic inventions, focusing on how she forges signs radically detached or independent from context (191) and material language without syntax (192). In the chapter entitled “Word Magic,” Genese Grill (*The World as Metaphor* [Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2012]) explores Clarisse’s “mystical theory of language” against the background of Musil’s readings on the subject (104).

meant: I’m feeling dark today, gloomy and sad. [...] A pepper meant: I’m hot, impatient, and waiting for you.

The thing-symbols that Clarisse constructs function according to the principles of similarity or contiguity. But at the same time, they are strictly speaking neither iconic nor indexical. Instead they are already in such an advanced symbolic stage that Ulrich/Anders must “learn to understand” them.¹⁹⁵ What’s more, they are inherently polysemous and relate to multiple referents:

Something was a stone and meant [Ulrich]; but Cl. knew that it was more than U. and a stone, namely what was rock-hard about [him] and all the heavy matters oppressing her, and all the insight into the world one obtained by recognizing that the stones were like U.¹⁹⁶

It seems that thing-symbols are the consequence of Clarisse’s interest in double words, which possess not double, but rather numerous meanings – as she puts it, “many feelings, which otherwise are separate, crowded around a sign like this”¹⁹⁷ – that tie back to the materiality of their objects. Thus, in the passage above, the symbol “stone” is no longer a word, but an object in its own right that can serve as a weapon. On the basis of their unity, thing-symbols are a communicative medium, but at the same time they are a form of communication with those material things themselves: “Between her and things there existed a continual exchanging of signs and understandings, a conspiracy, [...] heightened correspondence.”¹⁹⁸

The level following thing-symbols is the picture-language Clarisse creates by drawing in the sand: “arrows and circles, a burning heart and a leaping horse, all of them usually hinted at with so few lines that they were comprehensible to the initiated alone.” Here the law of stylization Kretschmer develops from ‘primitive’ picture-language and the law of catathymically motivated condensation are put into striking practice: “a pressed-together language in which the heartbeats are piled on top of one another.”¹⁹⁹ Ulrich/Anders credits this language with a magical force that is located in the faculty that stores emotional and spiritual experience. Even though these signs concern others, they are meant above all for Clarisse herself, who finds herself in them.

¹⁹⁵ Musil, *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*, 1741.

¹⁹⁶ Musil, *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*, 1742.

¹⁹⁷ Musil, *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*, 1743.

¹⁹⁸ Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 1559.

¹⁹⁹ Musil, *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*, 1741.

When one had forgotten it completely and only through some chance stumbled on it again and suddenly confronted oneself, confronted an instant compressed and full of emotions and thoughts [...]: then [...] the island became populated with many Clarisses [...] it was a lust [...] to run into oneself everywhere.²⁰⁰

The magic of this picture-language lies in its affinity to the narcissistic multiplication of the ego, or manifold personality splits. Accordingly, the “continuous exchange of signs” is glossed elsewhere as “Clarisse [thinking that] she was being torn out of her slender body,” which allows her to fly over the island as a witch while still lying calmly in the sand.²⁰¹

Finally, at the third stage of linguistic phylogeny, Clarisse moves from picture-language to a development of words and even begins “to express her life in poems.”²⁰² In so doing, she seeks to free herself from conventional language. For instance, she breaks up concepts by inventing new compound words and ruptures syntactic coherence, thus relieving words from their wonted connections. Means to this end include exclamation marks or repetitions that make the weight of a word so heavy that it outbalances the force of the old syntactic order.²⁰³ Asyntactic sequences of coinages (“Ichrot” – formed from *ich* [I] and *rot* [red], for example) are the result. The resemblance of these linguistic products to the anomalous language use of manic or schizophrenic patients described by Bleuler and Kretschmer is obvious. In contrast to them, however, Clarisse reflects on and explains her rupture of syntactical restraints to the narrator, who has his own insights into her motivations.

Kretschmer mentions an unusual case of schizophrenia, in which the patient likewise has insight into the process of creating symbols and their meaning. This case, for him, calls to mind Expressionism:

A single example of this kind suffices to provide a clear explanation of the modern tendency in art known as “*expressionism*.” If we think of our patient’s inner ‘picture show’ as a painting with a title, “The Infinity of Space,” underneath, we can exactly understand the principles underlying expressionistic pictures in which the artist seeks to set down his inner feelings and ideas.²⁰⁴

200 Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 1554–1555.

201 Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 1559.

202 Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 1564. Roger Willemssen (“Dionysisches Sprechen,” 104–135) sees here the “program of expanding the revealed name” (128), which amounts to an “erotic or, more still, orgiastic relationship to language” (129) that has returned to its origins in “image and stimulation” (130).

203 Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 1564.

204 Kretschmer, *A Text-book of Medical Psychology*, 137. Emphasis in the original.

In this light, and given Clarisse’s insight into the process by which she produces certain linguistic effects, she is akin to Expressionist artists.²⁰⁵

On this score, a further point of contact with primitivist discourse emerges. Not just Kretschmer, but other contemporary psychologists viewed schizophrenia, ‘primitive thinking,’ and Expressionism in a single phenomenological and genealogical context – one that had been topical at least since *Der Blaue Reiter* exhibition. Thus, Kretschmer affirms that creative states are animated by ‘primitive thinking’: in “men and women of creative genius,” a condition of “lessened consciousness” is at work, as well as “primitive phylogenetic tendencies toward rhythm and stylization with elemental violence” characterized by spoken words “surrounded by a nebulous constellation of imaginal agglutinations and strong affective currents.”²⁰⁶

However, Musil’s profile of Clarisse as an Expressionist holds only for the earliest drafts of the novel. Later notes reveal that the author refused to identify poets with the mentally ill. At this point, Musil instead portrays this equation itself as the product of pathological thinking, the wishful thinking of relatives (Walter), and as a cliché widespread in psychology and art theory during the 1920s (as I demonstrated in Chapters 3 and 4). In keeping with Musil’s shift in thought, Ulrich grows increasingly removed from Clarisse as Musil’s revisions proceed. Whereas in the early drafts of the “Island” chapter he still allows himself to be absorbed by her delusions entirely, Ulrich later takes distance from Clarisse’s delusions and shows greater inclination to reflect on the differences he observes of their two conditions.

My discussion of mania, schizophrenia, music, and language reveals the primitivist contour of Clarisse’s character and therefore the central role that primitivist motifs play in *The Man Without Qualities*. But the features I have noted can also be read as signs of a primitivist aesthetic, at the core of which stand a participative (in the ethnological sense of the word) approach to the world as well as a symbolic language concentrated more on vividness than ab-

205 Michael Jakob (“Von der ‘Frau ohne Eigenschaften’ zum ‘Mann ohne Eigenschaften,’” in *Robert Musils ‘Kakanien’ – Subjekt und Geschichte*, ed. Josef Strutz [Munich: Fink, 1987]) reads Clarisse in the early drafts as the portrait of a “classical creative genius” (130) when she draws and writes in the throes of the “other condition” (124); in the published novel, however, such activity amounts only to pseudo-genius (121). On Clarisse’s “identificatory reading of Nietzsche” between Walter’s cultural conservatism and Ulrich’s “personification” of the “ambivalence” that results from the dissolution of traditional values, cf. Alexander Honold, *Die Stadt und der Krieg. Raum- und Zeitkonstruktion in Robert Musils Roman ‘Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften’* (Munich: Fink, 1995), 394–395.

206 Kretschmer, *A Text-book of Medical Psychology*, 125–126.

straction. At the same time, it becomes clear that this aesthetics is not informed by any foreign practices or alien forms of thought so much as by tropological language and musical procedures native to Europe. Clarisse gets caught up in the logics of such procedures and thus risks going insane. She is an explorer so influenced by her objects of study that her expedition morphs into self-experiment. Under her influence, Ulrich (Musil's alter ego) also ventures into a primitivist realm that presents itself as an alienated version of the familiar. And with that, I turn to the second part of my thesis: the movement from expedition to self-experiment in *The Man Without Qualities*.

Regression

Clarisse shares an historical and biographical place, time, and social background with Ulrich as he embarks on his expedition. She is also his friend, potential lover, and, originally, sibling (indicated by his addressing her as his "little sister"²⁰⁷ in the letter to Alice, in whom Agathe and Clarisse are fused at an earlier draft stage). Furthermore, Clarisse remains fixated on Ulrich and Moosbrugger, to whom Ulrich (and his draft predecessors, Achilles and Anders) is bound by an enigmatic sympathy.²⁰⁸ Many passages featuring Clarisse point to parallel interests, views, and experiences with Ulrich; often, these are connected to the "other condition." Thus, in the chapter entitled "The Turning Point," Ulrich notes, "during her attack [...] she had said things that were too close for comfort to much that he had occasionally said himself."²⁰⁹ From this perspective, Clarisse can be understood as an outsourced projection of Ulrich's own self-experiment. Evidence of this is also found in the C- and s-drafts, where Ulrich (or figures who would become Ulrich), like the protagonists of Musil's early expedition narratives, is infected by Clarisse and enticed into self-experiment. A sequence in an early draft of the "Island" chapter is striking in this regard:

Délire à deux: It's a question of two people, one of whom is insane and the other predisposed to insanity. [...] Through constant contact, by being constantly bombarded with confused and inchoate ideas, the predisposed person ends up acting like his companion, and gradually the same madness shows up in him.²¹⁰

207 Musil, KA, *Transkriptionen*, Mappe IV/3/450.

208 Regarding the genealogical relationship and structural similarity between Ulrich and Moosbrugger, see Ostermann, "Das wildgewordene Subjekt," 605–606.

209 Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 722.

210 Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 1585–1586.

However, the more Musil developed his material, the more Clarisse lost such direct influence on Ulrich. Instead, a distanced, critical view came into focus – evident, for instance, in the distinction between delusion and poetry absent from early drafts. In a 1930 note to himself, the author declares, “One who is mentally ill isn’t a poet, after all!”²¹¹ A brief sketch of this progressive uncoupling follows below.

In a 1919–1920 C-draft of the “Island” chapter, “the same madness” affecting Clarisse strikes Achilles (another forerunner of Ulrich): “He lives through the essence of Expressionism. He, who is so precise, writes such poems. At that time poetry had not got to that point.”²¹² Here, the reflections on language later attributed to Clarisse occur to Ulrich’s precursor. Similarly, the signs Clarisse later scatters over the island – which Anders later gives up on deciphering – are put there by her *and* Achilles.²¹³

When the novel was still called *Zwillingsschwester* (Siamese Twins, 1923–1926), Anders stops personally identifying with Clarisse in the Island episode. However, he learns to understand and participate in her languages (they “arrange signs in the sand”²¹⁴ together), is able to follow the course of her thoughts, and even justifies her delusions (“For a while, Cl. saw things that one otherwise doesn’t see. A. could explain it readily”²¹⁵). He invokes the relativity of all human perception determined by various interests, affects, and mediums and even cites his own experience of hallucination: “So unreliable and extensive is the boundary between insanity and health.”²¹⁶ A few drafts later, Clarisse’s delusions are appreciated as superior “insights.”²¹⁷ In other words, Clarisse is credited with the discovery that Musil had formulated years earlier in his apperceptor theory and on which Ulrich reflects so extensively in later chapters on emotional psychology: “Cl. [...] recognized that feelings change the world.”²¹⁸ Living out this insight provides the basis for her definition of genius and affirms her own identity as one.²¹⁹ The narrator grants that an “obscure [...] charm emanates” from her poems, “something with the glowing fire of a volcano, as if one were looking into the bowels of the earth.” Thereby, she is said to anticipate what

211 Musil, *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*, 1377.

212 Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 1586.

213 Musil, *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*, 1797.

214 Musil, *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*, 1741.

215 Musil, *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*, 1743.

216 Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 1556.

217 Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 1564.

218 Musil, *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*, 1749.

219 Musil, *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*, 1750.

will soon become “fashion among the healthy”: “Flakes of fire would be stolen by poets from the volcano of madness.”²²⁰ Clarisse appears as a madwoman, but she is at the same time a fiery muse for later poetry – as was quite topical in the discourse of artistic and psychological theory of the 1920s (see Chapters 4 and 5).

In the published novel (1930, 1932), Clarisse remains convinced that insanity expresses intellectual superiority: “‘Crazy’ to her meant being something like [...] enjoying so extraordinary a degree of health that it frightened people; it was a quality her marriage had brought out in her, step by step, as her feelings of superiority and control grew.”²²¹ However, now Walter, not Ulrich, justifies her mental state as an artistic one. When Clarisse’s doctor declares her visions and sense of omnicausality to be symptoms of mental illness, her husband justifies them as typical for an artistic gaze that only sees those parts of the outside world that fit its own picture and artistic palette. He disparages the physician for his blindness to creativity:

You’re not a creative man, after all; you’ve never learned what it means to “express oneself,” which means first of all, for an artist, to *understand* something. [...] Of course you’ll say it’s paradoxical, a confusion of cause and effect; you and your medical causality!²²²

Along the same lines, Walter (and no longer Ulrich) acknowledges Clarisse’s explanation of her own madness in the chapter “Armistice”; he elevates her delusion to a “prophecy,” deems it a creative gift that he had also once possessed (“he, too, had been this full of images once, he persuaded himself”), and ultimately rejects any need for elucidation in favor of a purely affective response: “He found this image magnificent. Of course it did not explain anything, but what good is explanation?”²²³

By introducing distance in this way, Musil follows guidelines he outlined in 1930 for the continuation of the novel, where he mentions the proximity of Clarisse’s delusions to the artistic productions of the day in order to critique them:

Green states even have their composers, who set them to music; these days sounds are painted, poems form sensory spaces [...]: this is a vague kind of associating that has become popular because thinking has lost its authority; it’s about one eighth sensible and seven eighths nonsensical.²²⁴

220 Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 1565.

221 Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 715–716.

222 Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 1007.

223 Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 1381.

224 Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 1624.

Accordingly, the narrator makes it plain that Clarisse is indeed suffering from delusions but cannot recognize as much, thus treating her character with an ironic tone not found in earlier drafts. In other notes made at the time, Musil stresses the difference between delusion and health, and therefore between delusion and poetry, stating that madness involves the “absence of the possibility of [drawing] logical consequences” from ideas.²²⁵

In sketches for the further course of the novel made in 1936, Musil held on to Clarisse’s institutionalization, travels, and the “Island” chapter with Ulrich. The latter, however, was to undergo major changes. According to note II/7/102, Ulrich would only interrupt his vacation with Agathe for half a day. Clarisse would try to seduce him, but it “probably won’t lead to coit [sic].”²²⁶ The centerpiece of the episode would be Walter’s reckoning with Ulrich when the latter comes to pick up Clarisse. There are no indications of what role her symbolic use of objects, picture-language, and lyrical flights – and therefore her affinity with Expressionism – would play.

In parallel to these changes, Ulrich’s self-experiment shifts from Clarisse to Agathe, that is, to the “other sister” who progressively splits off from the former in the successive drafts.²²⁷ This shift suggests that the novel’s construction of the ‘primitive’ does not represent the boundary separating Clarisse’s delusion from

225 Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 1711.

226 Musil, *KA*, *Transkriptionen*, Mappe II/7/102.

227 On “Clarisse’s world” as the “antisocial parallel of the asocial world of the siblings” and the “difference” between “delusional” and “utopian” totality it implies, see Willemsen, *Das Existenzrecht der Dichtung*, 315. Philip H. Beard (“Clarisse und Moosbrugger vs. Ulrich/Agathe: Der ‘andere Zustand’ aus neuer Sicht,” *Modern Austrian Literature* 9, no. 3 [1976]) stresses the sober testing that Ulrich and Agathe practice with regard to the “other condition,” as well as this state’s relationship to reality and alterity, which represents a “quasi-scientific” mode of monitoring and control (120–121). Likewise, Beard stresses that the “other condition” in Moosbrugger and Clarisse follows from isolation and compulsion, whereas for Agathe and Ulrich it leads to a broader understanding of life and greater self-control (125–127). Emphasizing the latter point differently, Richard E. Hartzell (“The Three Approaches to the ‘Other’ State in Musil’s *Mann ohne Eigenschaften*,” 217) and Maximilian Aue (“‘Pandämonium verschiedener Formen des Wahns?’ Vom Wahnsinn und seinen Grenzen in Musils *Mann ohne Eigenschaften*,” in *Literatur und Kultur im Österreich der zwanziger Jahre. Vorschläge zu einem transdisziplinären Epochenprofil*, ed. Primus-Heinz Kucher [Bielefeld: Aisthesis, 2007], 139–141) draw attention to the violence with which Moosbrugger and Clarisse experience the “other condition.” Ostermann (“Das wildgewordene Subjekt,” 619–621) also stresses that for Agathe and Ulrich the “other condition” involves mutual recognition, not the isolation or violence Moosbrugger and Clarisse experience. Hartzell places Ulrich’s sobriety and the siblings’ combination of an objective and subjective approach in opposition to Clarisse’s intuitive and emotional encounter with the “other condition” (“The Three Approaches to the ‘Other’ State in Musil’s *Mann ohne Eigenschaften*,” 206–213).

incestuous experiments. Instead, the ‘primitive’ emerges in two variations: one that is associated with the “other condition” of supposed prehistoric cultures, and the other with a regressive move leading back either to childhood (for Ulrich and Agathe) or to madness (for Clarisse).

Apropos of the first, the narrator “assume[s] the existence of a certain alternative and uncommon condition [...] which has deeper origins than religions,”²²⁸ having existed “thousands of years” ago in “primordial” times.²²⁹ Elsewhere, there is also talk of a “society of savages” now deprived of the “other condition,” which has been replaced by “properly regulated and intelligible morality.”²³⁰ However, the reference to prehistory does not simply equate the former with the “other condition”; instead, it identifies the latter as a capacity distinguishing humans as such, that is, as something innate that exists independent of varying historical and cultural standpoints. Ulrich affirms this anthropological understanding not only by invoking prehistory but also by citing mystical testimonies from very different ages, all of which are meant to prove that the condition is real. And he even describes the culture of his own day not only as the “asylum,” but also as the “temple” of the “other condition” – which, however, is neglected and rejected as delusion by that same culture.²³¹

Musil even looks for the “other condition” in the future. He puts the words of the seventeenth-century mystic Jean-Joseph Surin (quoted by Oesterreich) in Clarisse’s voice when she tries to describe her condition to Walter:

I can’t describe what happens to me then, and how this spirit unites itself with mine – without depriving me of awareness or the freedom of my own mind, but nevertheless working like another person [*ein anderes Ich*], as if I had two souls.²³²

Clarisse ties these symptoms with the idea that she has achieved “the thought of God or the next level of human evolution.”²³³ In his notes on Oesterreich, Musil writes,

Cl.: A conception of self [*ein Ich*] floats before her eyes, that she is capable of devoting herself to two or more sequences of actions or successions of thought with equal levels of at-

228 Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 832.

229 Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 833.

230 Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 835.

231 Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 834.

232 Oesterreich, *Die Phänomenologie des Ich*, 435; Musil, *KA, Transkriptionen*, Mappe, II/1/80.

233 Musil, *KA, Transkriptionen*, Mappe I/5/154.

tention and involvement. Two or several modes of functioning [*Funktionsströme*] flow from it. It can also have a male and female personality simultaneously.²³⁴

This is not the author’s own original thought, but Oesterreich’s, who writes,

[i]n such multiplicity, but taken *ad infinitum*, must the thought of God be conceived, if one accepts that it exists. – Perhaps it might also be the next-highest level of evolution beyond human thought, when manifold thinking of this kind occurs.

The fascination that this idea held for Musil probably stems from the fact that Oesterreich actually considers such a development to be really possible: “the concept of subjectivity contains nothing that would exclude phenomena of this kind.”²³⁵ From ethnology to psychopathology, Musil’s engagement with Oesterreich thus led him to science-fiction anthropology – terrain he had already approached in *Land über dem Südpol* – which follows the model of an avant-garde regression into the future (reminiscent of Brandlberger’s project in *Tropen* and in contrast to the anti-modern regression characteristic of Walter).

At the same time, Musil’s notes also establish his distance from Oesterreich. The author calls the notion “Oesterreich’s invention” and only has Clarisse, who is mad, express it. Musil goes on to give an even more ironic treatment of the thesis Oesterreich subsequently develops in *Die religiöse Erfahrung* (1915) – that the immanence of the divine is still to be observed as an immediate experience in the modern world – which Musil criticizes as both naïve and academic.²³⁶ Like Oesterreich, Musil favors an anthropological perspective on schizophrenic and ecstatic splits of personality. At the same time, however, he does not aim at a philosophical or even religious postulation of a different way of thinking and relating to the world. Instead, he aspires to study it using general psychological research, raw data from ethnology, history of religion, psychopathology, and the methods of literature.

In his conversations with Agathe, Ulrich claims that the “other condition,” subjected to centuries of neglect and repression, has been kept from developing and, accordingly, “never got beyond [...] primordial disorder and incompleteness”²³⁷; alternatively, it has been reduced to a purely irrational faculty or minimized as affected sentimentalism. Either way, no fitting contemporary expression of the “other condition” exists for the characters, as it did at other places

²³⁴ Musil, *KA*, *Transkriptionen*, Mappe II/1/81.

²³⁵ Oesterreich, *Die Phänomenologie des Ich*, 445.

²³⁶ Musil, *KA*, *Transkriptionen*, Mappe II/1/76.

²³⁷ Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 833.

and times. It may be because of this non-cultivation or even repression of the “other condition” that its second form in *The Man without Qualities*, the form of regression, appears hand in hand with madness, blind activism, and the propensity to violence.²³⁸ As such, like the regressed post-civilized characters in the early expedition stories of Musil and his contemporaries, it harbors a potential for destruction and inhumanity, expressed in *The Man Without Qualities* in the affinity of Clarisse’s delusion to the delusional mass enthusiasm for World War I, as well as in hints of the mass delusion of Nazi ideology.²³⁹

In contrast to psychological research of the time, Musil’s characterization of Clarisse also points to the importance of preformed collective representations for the delusional systems held by manic schizophrenics. In this case, “collective” refers to the highly educated bourgeois society from which she comes. Hence, alongside myths we can include any number of canonical and fashionable writings, in particular those by Nietzsche, which exercise a marked influence on Clarisse’s delusional system, and from which she draws mythological references (e.g., the connection between goat and god in the satyr). She ignores overall context, however, and picks and chooses only those passages that offer intellectual support for her moods and fancies. Accordingly, her thoughts are a patchwork of distorted textual fragments.

Sometimes she’s so hopelessly conventional, [Ulrich] thought; it’s like coming upon a page from another book bound in what one is reading. [...] [It gave] the uncanny impression that she herself consisted of many such misplaced texts.²⁴⁰

Clarisse’s delusional thought is not from lack of culture, then, as one might claim of the homicidal Moosbrugger. On the contrary, it comes from a naïve subscription to a mode of education that does not critically reflect on its content and

238 Eberhard Ostermann observes, apropos of the underlying logic: “It becomes clear that excluding the power of transgression represented by Moosbrugger – after all, he crosses the border between inside and outside, sense and madness, norm and crime – by the systems of law, morality, and science produces the opposite effect. The repressed returns with all the more vehemence from inside these systems and topples them” (“Das wildgewordene Subjekt,” 616).

239 See especially Kappeler’s discussion of Musil’s critique of irrationalism in the anti-modern movements of his day (*Situiertes Geschlecht*, 269–295), e.g., the “group around Hans Sepp,” which was part of “the German nationalist and *völkisch* opposition” (269), and the persistence of “pre-logical” thinking in the sphere of science and technology (289). Along these lines, Wolf observes that “Musil is not at all subject to the ‘secret yearning for the return of a mythical time’ (Götz Müller). [...] On the contrary, he is interested in understanding as precisely as possible different ways of *modern* thought and perception,” and therefore figures “practicing *wild thinking* to various degrees” (“Das wilde Denken und die Kunst,” 389).

240 Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 716.

judgments, but is simply accepted from childhood on as self-explanatory and as natural as the language one speaks. Thus, Clarisse takes Nietzsche’s writings literally. It never occurs to her to take distance from them and ask about their figurative meaning. She reads the same way she listens to music, aligning her own ideas with the stipulations of the text. Clarisse thus practices a modified form of identificatory reading whereby she does not lose herself in the represented material, but the reverse, that material is drawn into the ego, where the ego is formed by it. And since Clarisse’s delusion is founded on collective representations, it appears to be much more valid and is therefore more dangerous than Moosbrugger’s madness.²⁴¹ Post-civilized society and its members, caught up in its regressive primitivism, are heading for catastrophe. The parallels to Nazi ideology, which likewise made massive use of Nietzsche’s mythical motifs and slogans in order to promote and justify itself, are abundantly clear.²⁴²

Regression never really leads back to the “other condition,” but only to its distorted image. The same holds for the ontogenetic return to the ‘primitive’ that takes place in Musil’s novel: the regression to childhood. Ulrich and Agathe’s efforts to momentarily access the “other condition” through sibling-love are shaped by two retrograde movements. The first involves a return to mysticism, which has been discussed often enough to not warrant treatment here,²⁴³

241 That said, Ostermann rightly observes that Moosbrugger has “grown wild” (“Das wildgewordene Subjekt,” 615); his murders represent “falling back to archaic, quasi-precivilized behavior.” In this sense, Ostermann also sees a foreshadowing of the “collective eruption of violence” in the First World War (608; cf. 616).

242 The logic, developed by observing ‘modern primitives,’ that regression never leads back to the “other condition” as it once existed, but instead – on the basis of repression or simply the process of regression itself – to a distorted version of what it was, is clear in the example of mysticism. As I have noted, Clarisse stresses that Saint Francis of Assisi was able to lead a normal life, whereas today his counterparts exhibit only “religious mania” (Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 833).

243 Cf. Ursula Reinhardt, *Religion und moderne Kunst in geistiger Verwandtschaft. Robert Musils Roman “Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften” im Spiegel christlicher Mystik* (Marburg: Elwert, 2003); Genese Grill, “The ‘Other’ Musil: Robert Musil and Mysticism,” in *A Companion to the Works of Robert Musil*, ed. Philipp Payne, Graham Bartram, and Galin Tihanov (Rochester: Camden House, 2007); Norbert Christian Wolf, “Salto rückwärts in den Mythos? Ein Plädoyer für das ‘Taghelle’ in Musils profaner Mystik,” in *Profane Mystik? Andacht und Ekstase in Literatur und Philosophie des 20. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Wiebke Amthor, Hans R. Brittnacher, and Anja Hallacker (Berlin: Weidler, 2002); Niklaus Largier, “Mystik als Medium. Robert Musils ‘Möglichkeitssinn’ im Kontext,” in *Intermedien. Zur kulturellen und artistischen Übertragung*, ed. Alexandra Kleihues, Barbara Naumann, and Edgar Pankow (Zurich: Chronos, 2010); Robert Leucht and Susanne Reichlin, “Ein Gleichgewicht ohne festen Widerhalt, für das wir noch keine rechte Beschreibung

and the second a return to childhood. Already with his lover Diotima, Ulrich yearns for the “tender emotions of that age [which] can in a single moment of yielding cause the whole, still-tiny world to burst into flames, since they have neither an aim nor the ability to make anything happen.”²⁴⁴ But only the journey to his parents’ house in fact opens this possibility to him. Once more the narrative draws on a topos of expedition literature when a “shipwreck strands [the siblings] back on the lonely island of their childhood,”²⁴⁵ a land of the forgotten self. In the “Siamese Twins” chapter, Ulrich describes his wish to regain the participative perception of his childhood:

When I remember as far back as I can, I’d say that there was hardly any separation between inside and outside. [...] When something important happened, the excitement was not just in us, but the things themselves came to a boil.

He reflects that no child can have awareness of this state, so that it seems like a lost paradise only in hindsight to the adult, who must “see himself from the outside like a thing.” All the same, when gathered together with Agathe, he wishes to reverse this development.

Everything you touch, including your inmost self, is more or less congealed from the moment you have achieved your “personality,” and what’s left is a ghostly hanging thread of self-awareness and murky self-regard, wrapped up in a wholly external existence. What’s gone wrong? There’s a feeling that something might still be salvaged. Surely you can’t claim that a child’s experience is all that different from a man’s?²⁴⁶

But Agathe, not Ulrich, exhibits childish traits in this context:²⁴⁷ “his young sister’s questions sometimes seemed to [him] [...] like the questions of a child,

gefunden haben.’ Robert Musils ‘anderer Zustand’ als Ort der Wissensübertragung,” in *Medien, Technik, Wissenschaft. Wissensübertragung bei Robert Musil und in seiner Zeit*, ed. Ulrich Johannes Beil, Michael Gamper, and Karl Wagner (Zurich: Chronos, 2011); Ritchie Robertson, “Everyday Transcendence? Robert Musil, William James, and Mysticism,” *History of European Ideas* 43, no. 3 (2017).

244 Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 310.

245 Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 782.

246 Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 979.

247 Clarisse also embodies childishness insofar as she is described as a boyish, androgynous being whose behavior seems game like (e.g., “behind the hills, Cl. gamboled in the thistles, playing like a child” [Musil, *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*, 1745]) – but for the fact that it is consistently supported by a complex system of delusion. The child in Clarisse displays animalistic behavior that Ulrich describes as “reach[ing] out briskly for everything and set[ting] about everything ... rush[ing] over obstacles like a torrent, or foaming into a new course; [its] passions are strong and constantly changing” (*The Man Without Qualities*, 1334).

which are as warm as the little hands of these helpless beings.” Agathe asks both naïve and wise questions, and Ulrich gives answers;²⁴⁸ she thinks in eidetic images, while he does so with concepts; her inclinations are effusive, and his sober;²⁴⁹ Agathe is prepared to engage thoughtlessly with “the other condition,” whereas Ulrich tends to hesitate, doubt, and theorize.²⁵⁰ Like Clarisse, Agathe suffers from a psychic disorder, depression. In depression, however, no ‘primitive’ state of mind is realized; rather, it goes hand in hand with the sentimental longing for an “other condition” modeled after childhood and the insight into the impossibility of its realization. Musil’s notes read,

Agathe: describe a deep depression. It’s as if a secret drawer inside had been turned upside down, revealing contents never seen before. – All is darkened. Little reflection, actually an incapacity to reflect. The idea: I must kill myself, is only there in the form of this sentence, unvoiced, uncannily manifest [*bewußt*] in her presence, fills out the dark emptiness more and more. [...] “Let’s kill ourselves,” said Agathe. “We’re the unfortunate, who bear the law of another world within without being able to carry it out! We love what is forbidden and will not defend ourselves.”²⁵¹

Regression to childhood then leads at best back to a sentimental, kitschy, and highly disappointing caricature.²⁵² In the late galley-proof chapter, “Love Blinds” (1937–1938), this caricature is symbolized in the sticky grains of sugar the siblings discover inside a confectioner’s horse, whose belly had always seemed to hold a great secret to the children:

the confectioner’s horse constituted part of the large family of children’s fancies which are always chasing their desires with the zigzag flight of a butterfly, until at last they reach their goal only to find a lifeless object.²⁵³

248 Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 810.

249 Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 819.

250 Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 834.

251 Musil, *KA, Transkriptionen*, Mappe I/8/59.

252 In light of this critical assessment, it is mistaken to describe Musil’s novel as a “leap backwards into regression,” as Wolfgang Riedel does (“Robert Musil: Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften,” in *Lektüren für das 21. Jahrhundert. Schlüsseltexte der deutschen Literatur von 1200 bis 1990*, ed. Dorothea Klein and Sabine M. Schneider [Würzburg: Königshausen + Neumann, 2000], 278).

253 Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 1207.

Psychology as the Springboard for Literature

The progressive dissociation of Ulrich from Clarisse and the differences between him and Agathe correspond to his insight that the “other condition” cannot be regained through regression, which instead leads only to pathological results. Musil, like the protagonist of his novel, thus chose a different path. As early as 1913, the author expresses the view that literature should apply scientific rigor, “with its claims to profundity, boldness, and originality,” to the realm of feeling,²⁵⁴ that is, to what he would come in 1918 to call the “nonratioid.”²⁵⁵ At the same time, he underscores that the writer should not be induced to abandon thought so much as to embrace other, additional qualities. Critiquing Walter Rathenau in 1914, Musil declares that those who are prone to investigate “experience” (*Erlebnis*) and “mysticism of feeling” lack “the virtues of method and precision,” whereas those who possess these virtues “have no idea” what there is to gain from a scientific investigation of these non-rational phenomena.²⁵⁶ In 1918, he stresses that a writer is “neither ‘madman,’ nor ‘visionary,’ neither ‘the child’ nor any other deformation of reason.” Indeed, he does not “apply any different kind of reason than the rational person,” but with one exception: he “commands the greatest factual knowledge *and* the greatest degree of rationality in connecting the facts.”²⁵⁷ Three years later, Musil insists that “where everything is flowing, [reason] must grasp and discriminate that much more sharply” in order “to investigate the logic of the analogical and the irrational.”²⁵⁸ Taking aim at the anti-intellectual and irrationalist positions of his contemporaries, he observes in 1922, “we do not have too much intellect and too little soul, but too little intellect in matters of the soul.”²⁵⁹ In other words, Musil had by

254 Musil, “The Mathematical Man,” in *Precision and Soul*, 43.

255 Norbert Christian Wolf explores this critical assessment of regression in an essay that explicitly takes up Riedel’s formulation above. In particular, he points to the failure to conjure up the paradise depicted in the novel, Musil’s distance from (neo-)Romanticism, his use of concepts borrowed from Lévy-Bruhl to analyze the modern world, and his call for precision relative to the “same ontological value” attached to “normal” and “other” conditions where “anthropological insight” stands at issue (“Salto rückwärts in den Mythos?” 264). See also Eckhart Goebel, *Konstellation und Existenz. Kritik der Geschichte um 1930. Studien zu Heidegger, Benjamin, Jahn und Musil* (Tübingen: Stauffenburg, 1996), 197–219.

256 Musil, “Commentary on a Metaphysics,” in *Precision and Soul*, 57.

257 Musil, “Sketch of What the Writer Knows,” in *Precision and Soul*, 64.

258 Musil, “Mind and Experience,” in *Precision and Soul*, 142.

259 Musil, “Helpless Europe,” in *Precision and Soul*, 131. The same is also quoted by Kappeler (*Situiertes Geschlecht*, 266), who concludes, “Although Musil is an adherent of progress through

then already arrived at the critical perspective presented in “Toward a New Aesthetic” (1925): the artistic quest for the “other condition” should not concern liberation from thought, but rather the break up of normative forms of experience, fleeting moments of interruption that do not produce any kind of totality of the “other dimension.”²⁶⁰

The same stance is taken in *The Man Without Qualities* by Ulrich, who eschews regression and seeks to put an end to centuries of neglecting the “other condition” by cultivating it in a manner suited to the times. In exchanges with Agathe, Ulrich repeatedly claims to regard the “other condition” as soberly as possible and to conduct an exact investigation²⁶¹ in order to achieve a real understanding of it based on demonstrable and verifiable facts. Accordingly, his considerations of the matter are a tireless struggle for concepts and explanations, striving for the accuracy of the scientific procedure:

He himself really ought not to have thought it either: the scientific procedure – which he had just finished explaining as legitimate – consists, aside from logic, in immersing the concepts it has gained from the surface, from “experience,” into the depths of phenomena and explaining the phenomena by the concepts, the depths by the surface; everything on earth is laid waste and leveled in order to gain mastery over it, and the objection came to mind that one ought not extend this to the metaphysical. But Ulrich now contested this objection.²⁶²

Both with and without his sister’s help, Ulrich encounters one paradox after the next and abandons one scheme of explanation for another, leading to the galley-proof chapters on emotional psychology (chapters II/52 to II/58), where he provides an account of the “other condition” by cycling through old and new theories on the relationship between sensation and reality. In contrast to Clarisse, Moosbrugger and Agathe, Ulrich does not simply yield to this state but also reflects on what it involves. In his estimation, the “other condition” is not a capacity located beyond thought so much as a matter of “alter[ing] [...] consciousness.”²⁶³ He turns against the age-old “irrationalization” of this frame of mind not only to have an object of scientific knowledge but also to glimpse the subjectivity of another, but still rational mode of knowing.

knowledge and rationality, he takes the critique of one-sided rationalism seriously and calls for the ‘embedding of thought in the emotional sphere’” (132).

260 Musil, “Toward a New Aesthetic,” 206.

261 Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 831–832.

262 Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 1188.

263 Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 833.

In the chapters on emotional psychology, Ulrich declares that a “certain state” – sobriety – is the precondition for scientific insight. The “other condition” arises when this sober state of mind is replaced by another emotional state, which would make visible not only another image of the world but another world altogether.²⁶⁴ This other emotional state is characterized by indeterminate sensations that do not entail any particular behavior but simply bathe the world in a different light: “the nonspecific emotion changes the world in the same way the sky changes its colors.”²⁶⁵ In other places Ulrich compares the sensation with a certain form of love:

An emotion that is not an emotion *for* something; an emotion without desire, without preferment, without movement, without knowledge, without limits; an emotion to which no distinct behavior and action belongs [...]. Love is already too particular a name for this, even if it is most intimately related to a love for which tenderness or inclination are expressions that are too obvious.²⁶⁶

Finally, in the “Breaths of a Summer Day” chapter, he calls this feeling “vegetative” and finds something “feminine” about it, opposed to the “appetitive” and “animal” feeling, which is coded as masculine and in his eyes underlies the drive for science:

The world has the appetitive part of the emotions to thank for all its [...] progress. That man should thank for his progress precisely what really belongs at the level of the animal is, at the very least, unexpected. [...] Doubtless there are at its core the same few instincts as the animal has.²⁶⁷

In sum, Ulrich’s cultivation of the “other condition” moves on two parallel tracks. On one path, it brings together the worldview tinted by vegetative feeling with the investigation of it. On the other, this investigation is based on the (completed) cultivation of animalistic sentiment, which yields the ethos of the scientific explorer. Ulrich’s metaphors reveal this double movement to be another form of hermaphroditism. Instead of involving a transcendence of bestial sexuality into genius as Clarisse envisions, it concerns the rational comprehension of a ‘feminine’ emotional state and its corresponding world view.²⁶⁸

²⁶⁴ Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 1444–1446.

²⁶⁵ Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 1305–1306..

²⁶⁶ Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 1279.

²⁶⁷ Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 1332.

²⁶⁸ In his 1919 essay, “Abbau der Sozialwelt” (Breakdown of the Social World), Müller likewise speaks of a “vegetative” existence at the beginnings of human history, claiming that the “vege-

It would be mistaken, however, to conclude that Ulrich, who thinks at length about the psychology of emotion and values scientific ethos, is an advocate of psychology. Instead, the novel casts the discipline in a very critical light. This critique, presented in the voices of the characters as well as the narrator, bears on the pathologization of norm-breaking thought as well as on the language of science and the discursive power it exerts.

The person of Moosbrugger plays a central role in this critique.²⁶⁹ Having “discovered that it was the possession of this scientific language that gave those in power the right to decide his fate with their ‘findings,’”²⁷⁰ the criminal seeks to include foreign words and technical terms in what he says. These efforts at self-assertion are directed above all at “medical diagnoses,” the “psychiatrists” who make them, and the “science” upon which they rely. Using their own weapons against them, Moosbrugger wishes to counter those who “dismiss his whole complex personality with a few foreign words.”²⁷¹ The narrator also finds fault with forensic psychology’s blindness to the particular case and the individual behind the case: “the cruelty of a mind that shuffles concepts around without bothering about the burden of suffering and life that weighs down every decision.”²⁷² In contrast to the “angel of medicine,” this type of psychology no longer aspires to the (impossible goal of) healing each and every patient, but instead seeks only to categorize their cases.²⁷³ The narrator’s insight that there is no knowledge and no truth beyond the system of categorization put in place and maintained by the power of discourse (figuratively expressed

tative man of the senses” is followed by “civilized man [*Kulturmensch*]”; ultimately, the process will conclude in the “redemption of the “vegetative man of spirit [*Geistmensch*]” (358). In spite of superficial similarities, there are major differences: Müller relies on an evolutionary model, whereas Musil posits two sensibilities that are (supposed to be) cultivated; Müller’s aims remain esoteric, while Musil seeks rational understanding.

269 Cf. Ostermann, “Das wildgewordene Subjekt,” 611–614; and, on Musil’s intensive engagement with psychology, Sandra Janssen, *Phantasmen. Imagination in Psychologie und Literatur 1840–1939. Flaubert – Cechov – Musil* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2013), 413–422 (with particular bearing on the writer’s early works); Norbert Christian Wolf, “Wahnsinn als Medium poet(olog)ischer Reflexion. Musil mit/gegen Foucault,” *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte* 88 (2014); Maximilian Bergengruen, “Moosbrugger oder die Möglichkeiten der Paranoia. Psychiatrie und Mystik in Musils ‘Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften,’” *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie* 135, no. 4 (2006). See also Inka Mülдер-Bach, “Der Fall Moosbrugger,” in *Was der Fall ist. Casus und Lapsus*, ed. Inka Mülдер-Bach and Michael Ott (Paderborn: Fink, 2014).

270 Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 71.

271 Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 72.

272 Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 580.

273 Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 262.

as a “sea of scientific papers”) positions him as a practitioner of discourse analysis *avant la lettre*.²⁷⁴

Unlike the forensic psychiatrists and lawyers who only look for somewhere to file Moosbrugger, Ulrich and the narrator display an understanding of him. When the judge casts a “net woven from incomprehension” for Moosbrugger to get tangled up in – because he has no language to unravel it – the narrator adds what it looks like inside Moosbrugger’s mind, lending him to a certain extent the language he lacks. Likewise, Ulrich attributes Moosbrugger’s rage to his lack of education,²⁷⁵ which the judge sees merely as an excuse.

The “Visit” chapter presents three representatives of forensic psychiatry. From the start, the narrator treats it with irony, calling it a pseudo-science similar to art and theology:

In science the slighter the success in precision, the greater, generally speaking, is the artistic component, and up until a few years ago psychiatry was by far the most artistic of all modern sciences, with a literature as ingenious as that of theology and a success rate that could not be discerned in the earthly realm here below.²⁷⁶

One representative of the field, Dr. Friedenthal, is portrayed as a sorcerer obsessed with his effect on others and who enjoys dealing with demonic auras. Another, Dr. Pfeifer, is a collector of victims who takes “dangerous” pleasure in “judicial murder[s]” that he supports with expert testimony.²⁷⁷ Only the unnamed “young physician,” who wants to secure a diagnosis of insanity for Moosbrugger, is characterized as sympathetic and having integrity. Nonetheless, he finds himself in a macabre competition with Pfeifer over Moosbrugger’s head (and for the professional recognition each doctor wishes to win as a result) by means of a card game between the inmate, the psychiatrists, and a clergyman. The game is in fact a secret observation meant to collect symptoms and arrive at a diagnosis. Friedenthal, who represents the status quo of the field, justifies the practice along pragmatic and bureaucratic lines.

In passages like these, Musil distances himself from the approach and language of psychologists, especially those practicing forensic medicine, which is corrupted by jurisprudence. As the novel develops, its critique of the pathologization of norm-breaking behavior and thinking shifts to targetting the classify-

274 I owe this suggestion to Norbert Christian Wolf (“Wahnsinn als Medium poet[olog]ischer Reflexion”).

275 Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 75.

276 Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 1542.

277 Musil, *KA, Lesetexte*, vol. 3, *Kapitelkomplex Clarisse*. Besuch, 27.

ing approach and scientific language that mispresent individuals. What is now sought is not an alternative to psychology, but an alternative way of dealing with psychological phenomena. Thus, Musil’s relationship to psychology cannot be described as a transfer (from the realm of science to the realm of literature), but as critical reflection first, and only then as a transformation.

In a fragment from around 1920, Musil declares that “there never has been a literary psychology,”²⁷⁸ for psychology differs from literature in that it strives for insight by seeking out “the relatively general in the individual case.”²⁷⁹ It follows that literature can never do justice to the claims of psychology: the conclusions it offers remain “stuck” and prove to be mere “pseudoexplanation[s].” Yet Musil still locates a literary dimension in psychological case histories, which “are depictions of pathological processes of the soul that are marvelously penetrating, and so strongly metaphorical (for the ‘normal’ reader) that the addition of interpretation that would make them into great literature is hardly missed.”²⁸⁰

Musil’s notes, especially on Oesterreich, assign a major part to these same features. The task is not to compete with the explanations of psychology so much as to approach its poetic quality and take up its case histories as a springboard for creating literary art. Musil did not set out to write “a pseudoscientific novel,” but “really to go all the way to the end of the trampoline of science and only then to jump.”²⁸¹ For him, “great literature” begins precisely where science ends; it is a land that science abuts but can never reach. Inspired by the poetic aspects of psychology, the writer takes the final step (or jump) from the one territory to the next.²⁸² Unlike the psychologist, he has no interest in arriving at a final diagnosis. Instead, he sets out “to discover ever new solutions, connections, constellations, variables, to set up prototypes of an order of events, applying models of how one can be human, to *invent* the inner person.”²⁸³ In contrast to scientific experimentation, literary experiment does not focus on the rule but the exception, not what repeatedly happens but what is new. Also, the writer’s work resounds with the hermeneutic insight that interpretation is never final and requires a subject to carry it out.

278 Robert Musil, “Psychology and Literature,” in *Precision and Soul*, 66.

279 Musil, “Psychology and Literature,” 66.

280 Musil, “Psychology and Literature,” 67.

281 Musil, “Psychology and Literature,” 67.

282 “*Psychologia fantastica*: summarize Klages, part. Freud, Jung ... like this. My instinctive hostility: because they’re pseudo-poets and deprive literature of the support of psychology!” (Musil, *KA, Transkriptionen*, Heft 30/110).

283 Musil, “Sketch of What the Writer Knows,” in *Precision and Soul*, 64.

In Chapter 62 of *The Man Without Qualities*, Ulrich assigns a genre to this kind of literature. He reflects, “A man who wants the truth becomes a scholar; a man who wants to give free play to his subjectivity may become a writer; but what should a man do who wants something in between?”²⁸⁴ Literary craft starting from psychology and invention/interpretation, as its fraternal twin, springs from this “in between.” At stake is the establishment of an inter-genre and an inter-language that operate between psychological research and subjective literary art. Ulrich finds this “intermediate space” in the essay genre, for its “domain lies [...] between example and doctrine, between *amor intellectualis* and poetry.”²⁸⁵ In literary terms, the essay is the “unique [...] form” that the “inner life of a human being” takes at a certain point in time; in scientific terms, it takes the form of a “thought” that is subject to “laws that are [...] strict.”²⁸⁶ The essay’s strength is that it expresses both subjectivity and truth by representing the emotionally colored realities of each individual. Its cases are more exemplary than purely subjective fictions and at the same time more individual than psychological examples.

By demanding a scientific approach, Ulrich removes himself from any form of regressive movement. At the same time, and like the author of *The Man Without Qualities* himself, he holds psychology at arm’s length while embracing a literary method of investigation inspired by yet distinct from psychology – a procedure that is just as rational as the scientific method but more inventive, flexible, and variable. What do these reflections about an inter-genre imply about the narration of the *Man Without Qualities*? In what way does it differ from the writing of psychologists on the one hand and from regressions to the ‘primitive’ on the other?

Primitivistic Narration

Following a chapter from which Musil made extensive excerpts, Oesterreich advances the thesis that not only schizophrenics but also “novelists” are predestined for the “development of an inner double consciousness.”²⁸⁷ Although Musil took no notes on this passage, it resonates with the way he brings together

²⁸⁴ Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 274.

²⁸⁵ Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 273.

²⁸⁶ Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 253.

²⁸⁷ Oesterreich, *Die Phänomenologie des Ich*, 449.

madness and art in early sketches of Clarisse. Can Clarisse be understood as a figure for the novelist?²⁸⁸ There is no doubt that she, as Walter Fanta has demonstrated, pictures "illusionary realities" and devises "fantastic sign-systems" that may be viewed as yielding a "metafictional structure." What's more, she finds eager readers, or rather listeners, in the person of Ulrich and his predecessors of the early drafts, as well as Walter and the General in later ones.²⁸⁹ Indeed, the General lauds her capacity for storytelling ("You speak so vividly [*erzählen so plastisch*] that one understands everything"²⁹⁰). Does Musil differentiate his stylistic treatment of Clarisse from the style of psychological texts because he models his own authorship after her primitivisms? Can the in-between-space between science and literature also be understood as an interspace between the psychologist and Clarisse?

What Musil writes about Clarisse differs in narrative perspective from the psychological studies he consulted, as he often adopts her point of view. In this respect, the author follows his character's dictum that one must "participate" in the other in order to understand her.²⁹¹ Many chapters shift from a third-person omniscient narrative perspective to a third-person limited one, focalized through a single character, with the result that no external view of Clarisse is available to the reader. A case in point is the chapter, "Clarisse and Her Demons." Just after the narrator's distanced description of the abrupt shifts in topic in Clarisse's mental process, a direct demonstration of just that type of thinking follows for three full pages, until the perspective shifts yet again, this time to Walter. This move from an external perspective onto Clarisse to an internal one is particularly evident in passages where quotation marks first enclose one of her thoughts, but then further thoughts of hers proceed without such marks. The same holds, for instance, for the following, largely incomprehensible sentence shaped by Clarisse's delusional logic:

But it was also like a metaphor [*Gleichnis*], where the things compared are the same yet on the other hand quite different, from the dissimilarity of the similar as from the similarity of the dissimilar two columns of smoke drift upward with the magical scent of baked apples and pine twigs strewn on the fire.²⁹²

288 This thesis has already been proposed, albeit without reference to Oesterreich. See Walter Fanta, "Die Spur der Clarisse in Musils Nachlass," *Musil-Forum* 27 (2001/2002): 283–285.

289 Fanta, "Die Spur der Clarisse," 284.

290 Musil, *KA*, *Transkriptionen*, Mappe V/4/212.

291 As Philip Payne observes, this also holds for the narrational treatment of Moosbrugger ("Musil erforscht den Geist eines anderen Menschen – zum Porträt Moosbruggers im *Mann ohne Eigenschaften*," *Literatur und Kritik* 11, no. 106–107 [1976]: 392–396).

292 Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 152–153.

Even in context, it is unclear to what “it” refers. Might it be the “orderliness [that] long[s] to be torn apart,” which is “provoked by Moosbrugger”? Or the “thunder of the music [...] inwardly eating away at the timbers”? Most of all, however, the metaphor for the metaphor remains incomprehensible because its details establish neither similarity nor how things might fit together. In spite of the delusional logic of this passage, it is not set off in quotation marks – unlike the thoughts that precede and follow it. This indicates that at this point the narrative is focalized only through Clarisse’s perspective. The early drafts sometimes even feature first-person narration (e.g., “The most majestic sight for me was Nietzsche’s psyche – in the form of the head doctor at the institute”²⁹³).

In passages where the narrative is focalized through Clarisse’s limited perspective, the narrative takes on a paratactic and elliptical style, the latter in relation to the correlation among her thoughts. According to Kretschmer, both of these qualities typify manic thinking.²⁹⁴ An impressive example occurs at the beginning of Chapter 97, entitled “Clarisse’s Mysterious Powers and Missions.” If one compares the first one and a half pages with the relatively conventional format of the final part of the preceding chapter, it is striking how many paragraphs visually break up the left margin of the text, pointing to the disjointedness of the thoughts recorded there. If one looks at the first, comparatively long paragraph, one also notices the predominance of parataxis. Eight out of ten sentences or sub-sentences are short and paratactic constructions – a striking contrast to the last page of the previous chapter.

Furthermore, metaphorical language saturates narrative sequences regarding Clarisse. In extreme instances, it yields unintelligible comparisons like the one cited at length above. Alternatively, the literal meaning of metaphors turns into the associative principle ordering the text. The birthmark Clarisse calls the “Devil’s Eye” is a case in point: as mentioned above, the phrase leads to the expression *etwas ins Auge fassen*, which figuratively means “to take a close look.” Yet here it is taken literally and leads to the image of physically grabbing and throwing a rock.²⁹⁵ These passages may still be understood as a kind of inner monologue of Clarisse’s, and the pronounced use of metaphorical language in them may therefore be seen as a symptom of her insanity. Nonetheless, the text adopts the same procedure in passages that do not appear to be written from her internal perspective.

293 Musil, *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*, 1780.

294 Kretschmer, *A Text-book of Medical Psychology*, 144, 148.

295 Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 475.

This applies, for example, to the passage leading up to the change in narrative perspective in Chapter 38. First, Clarisse’s thoughts are described in terms of “images [springing] up, [...] fused” in “fluttering mists” and “lurking [...] demons behind the stage.”²⁹⁶ Then, when the narrative is focalized through Clarisse’s limited perspective, these “demons” are taken literally and materialize in the form of Moosbrugger, Ulrich, and Walter. The same tendency is also evident where the narrative has no direct relation to Clarisse’s subjective experience. Dietrich Hochstätter draws attention to a scene in Chapter 84:²⁹⁷ “Clarisse, looking like a little angel in the long nightgown that covered her feet, had stood on her bed declaiming Nietzschean sentiments, with her teeth flashing [...]. In the twilight of the bedroom this had made a rather gruesome spectacle.”²⁹⁸ In German, the first sentence reads, “Clarisse, im langen, die Füße bedeckenden Nachthemd wie ein kleiner Engel anzusehen, stand aufgesprungen im Bett und deklamierte mit blitzenden Zähnen frei nach Nietzsche”;²⁹⁹ *aufgesprungen*, which is lost in translation but means something like “bolt upright” (literally, “jumped-up” as well as “sprung-open”), is deployed to two ends. It not only refers to standing up quickly but also to the sudden rift in her personality that brings forth an angel *and* a beast (her “teeth flashing”) and provokes a “gruesome” feeling in the onlooker. The third-person limited narrative thus exhibits some characteristics of schizophrenic or manic ‘primitive’ language, but so does the language used by the omniscient narrator when he talks about Clarisse. In a way, he assimilates his style to those about whom he speaks.

This quality colors other parts of the novel as well, where Musil employs similar procedures. Clarisse’s “double beings” and “double words” find their counterpart in the interest Ulrich takes in Siamese twins and use of metaphorical operations.³⁰⁰ His – and the narrator’s – efforts to describe the “other condition” he experiences with Agathe rest on metaphors. In the galley-proof chapter, “Beginning of a Series of Wondrous Experiences,” the siblings experience an “instant in the midst of that shared condition,” which, as elsewhere, is likened to the existence of Siamese twins: “The fraternal stature of their bodies communicated it-

296 Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 152.

297 Dietrich Hochstätter, *Sprache des Möglichen. Stilistischer Perfektionismus in Robert Musils ‘Mann ohne Eigenschaften’* (Frankfurt am Main: Athenäum, 1972), 131.

298 Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 400.

299 Musil, *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*, 368.

300 Musil employs the term *Gleichnis* as a synonym for other tropes. Cf. Inka Mülder-Bach, *Robert Musil. Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften. Ein Versuch über den Roman* (Munich: Hanser, 2013), 333–346, and “Allegorie und Gleichnis im ‘Mann ohne Eigenschaften,’” in *Allegorie. DFG-Symposium 2014*, ed. Ulla Haselstein (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2016).

self to them as if they were rising up from a single root.”³⁰¹ It is described as a “shadowy union, of which they had already had a foretaste as in an ecstatic metaphor.”³⁰² The Siamese twins function as a metaphor for the metaphor of a union that defies conceptual understanding.³⁰³ The metaphorical quality of experience is reinforced by the fact that Ulrich can only express the state in a “senseless” declaration: “You are the moon – [...] You have flown to the moon and it has given you back to me again.”³⁰⁴ He qualifies his remark as a “metaphor” and an “impossible” one; even so, “the exaggeration was quite small and the reality was becoming quite large.”³⁰⁵

The linguistic advance toward the “other condition” thus takes place by means of metaphorical operations, which are credited with the ability to register a certain dimension of reality.³⁰⁶ At play here is the reality of emotional states or, more precisely, states determined by feeling and sensation (as Ulrich explains with the example of the moonlit night). Because they are subjective and objective at once (inasmuch as they color one’s view of the world), truth and untruth are “inextricably bound up with each other.”³⁰⁷ In this context, Ulrich also mentions dreams, art, and religion as spaces of such experiences.³⁰⁸ Elsewhere, however, a differentiation between these states and metaphor is made. While Chapter I/116 declares that “metaphor is like the image that fuses several meanings in a dream,”³⁰⁹ the preceding chapter specifies that metaphor is the “*relationship* between a dream and what it expresses.”³¹⁰ Dreams and art are likened to a use of metaphor that dispenses with interpretation and proceeds literally. In this sense,

301 Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 1177.

302 Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 1178. Cf. Musil, *KA*, *Transkriptionen*, Weitere Mappen, Gelbe Mappe/4545: “We have examined whether it might not be possible, all the same, to be wholly oneself [*eins zu sein*] and to live as two with one soul. We hinted at all sorts of answers, but I forgot the simplest one: that the two people could be well-disposed toward each other and able to accept everything they experience as a mere likeness [*Gleichnis*]! Consider that every comparison is ambiguous for the mind, but unambiguous for sentiment.”

303 Riedel draws attention to how the twin relationship transfers to thinking and speech through Ulrich (“Robert Musil,” 279).

304 Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 1178.

305 Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 1179.

306 “Similes refer to what really is similar [*Gleichnisse bezeichnen wirklich Gleiches*]” (Musil, *KA*, *Transkriptionen*, Mappe II/8/58); cf. Kerstin Schulz, “‘Als wäre mein Mund so fern von mir wie der Mond,’” in *Denkbilder. Wandlungen literarischen und ästhetischen Sprechens in der Moderne*, ed. Ralph Köhnen (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1996), 123–127.

307 Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 634.

308 Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 634–635.

309 Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 647.

310 Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 634. Emphasis added.

they act analogously to delusion, which, as Ulrich states elsewhere, involves the same relationship to metaphor.³¹¹ This stance contrasts with a scientific view that takes interest only in the “truth” and therefore deprives metaphors of their true potential. Ulrich is looking for a third possibility – for which, however, so far only the metaphor itself, representing a state of limbo between science and art, between a figurative and a literal meaning, is available.

As the preceding pages have shown, the *twin* serves as a key metaphor for grasping the “other condition.” But, in contrast to other tropes, the metaphor, i.e., the type of trope itself, is also a central metaphor for the experience of the “other condition.”³¹² “Every analogy contains a remnant of that magic of being identical and not identical,” Ulrich tells Agathe.³¹³ Figurative language does not just *represent* the “other condition” then. Instead, to receive a metaphor means to experience a version of the “other condition.” A brief but telling note by Musil reads: “metaphor [*Gleichnis*] as second state.”³¹⁴ Metaphor does not portray the other condition so much as it *induces* it in the first place, forging a momentary union between what is otherwise separated forever, between dream and truth.³¹⁵ Further evidence for this is provided in “Toward a New Aesthetic.” The reception of a metaphor opens onto the experience of “another condition” be-

311 Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 957.

312 On the fusion of metaphor and the image of twins, see Jörg Kühne (*Das Gleichnis. Studien zur inneren Form von Robert Musils Roman ‘Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften’* [Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1968], 155–166), who discusses the comparison of the two trees with the twins; as does Tewilt (*Zustand der Dichtung*, 132–171). Riedel (“Robert Musil,” 265–285) points to Ulrich’s transfer of the twin relationship to thought and language, drawing a connection to theories of “mythical” or “archaic” thinking proposed by Vischer and Lévy-Bruhl, as well as to Jung and Freud’s theories of dreams (279). The interconnection between figurative language and the “other condition” is at most hinted at by scholars; cf. Willemsen, “Dionysisches Sprechen: Zur Theorie einer Sprache der Erregung bei Musil und Nietzsche,” *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte* 60 (1986): 117; and Jutta Heinz, “Grenzüberschreitung im Gleichnis. Liebe, Wahnsinn und ‘andere Zustände’ in Robert Musils *Mann ohne Eigenschaften*,” *Grenzsituationen. Wahrnehmung, Bedeutung und Gestaltung in der neueren Literatur*, ed. Dorothea Lauterbach, Uwe Spörl, and Uli Wunderlich (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2002), 254–255.

313 Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 983. Cf. the author’s notes: “Schwester? Ein Gleichnis ... ein schönes Gleichnis...” (Musil, *KA, Transkriptionen*, Mappe II/1/227); “Schwester ein Gleichnis des Bruders” (Mappe II/4/114).

314 Musil, *KA, Transkriptionen*, Mappe II/3/54.

315 Roger Willemsen also indicates as much in “Dionysisches Sprechen,” 117. Likewise, Heinz also speaks of how “in the reception of metaphor [...] the limit that had been initially postulated between the ratioid and non-ratioid realms is selectively overcome” (Jutta Heinz, “Grenzüberschreitung im Gleichnis,” 255).

cause, as Musil writes, it explodes the formulaic schematism of standing concepts:

In [the process of expansion and contraction] art has the task of ceaselessly reforming and renewing the image of the world and of our behavior in it, in that through art's unique experiences [*Erlebnisse*] it breaks out of the rigid formulas of ordinary experience [*Erfahrung*]; [...] literature [does so] most aggressively and directly because it works without mediation with the material of formulation itself.³¹⁶

In other words, metaphors make possible a linguistic experience of the “dissimilarity of the similar” and the “similarity of the dissimilar” (*Ungleichnis des Gleichen* and *Gleichnis des Ungleichen*) (which Clarisse can only put as another metaphor: “it was [...] like a metaphor, where [...] from the dissimilarity of the similar as from the similarity of the dissimilar columns of smoke [drifting] upward with the magical scent of baked apples and pine twigs strewn on the fire”³¹⁷).

Thus, Musil's writing moves from the outward expedition to self-experimentation. The author follows Clarisse's lead insofar as his style of writing takes on traits that the novel and his discursive contexts would code as ‘primitive,’ i.e., proceeding paratactically, piling up ellipses, and being shaped by metaphors and figurative language. The novel even appropriates the performative magic of turning representation into production that Musil, with Hornbostel, ascribes to ‘primitives’ and designates as a potential model for modern literature.³¹⁸

Another Primitivist Aesthetics?

Still, Musil's method of narration cannot be defined as primitivist in precisely the *same* sense as Clarisse's. From the outset, the Clarisse passages are commented upon by the narrator. The form of these comments changes between the early drafts and the published text. The omniscient narrator of the early drafts remarks directly on Clarisse's thoughts and actions. Later in the writing process, the content of this same commentary is relocated to dialogues, voiced in Ulrich's reflections, or presented as indirect, general essayistic reflection. Paradoxically, these changes increase the narrator's distance from Clarisse. This is exemplified in the earlier mentioned turn of phrase, “vom Hundertsten ins Tausendste” (“from the hundredth to the thousandth”), words borrowed from Bleuler,

³¹⁶ Musil, “Toward a New Aesthetic,” 206.

³¹⁷ Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 152–153.

³¹⁸ See Musil, *KA, Lesetexte*, vol. 12, “Literat und Literatur”; *KA, Transkriptionen*, Mappe VI/3/6.

recorded both in early versions of the chapter³¹⁹ and in the notes Musil made while writing it.³²⁰ The drafts record a steady removal of reflections voiced by the omniscient narrator on Clarisse’s reasoning, which are then transferred to an exchange between her and the General:

“Has your mind ever raced with a thousand and one things [*Sind Sie schon einmal vom Hundertsten ins Tausendste gekommen*], General?” she asked, and he had to reply in the affirmative. “And has it ever gone the other way around [...] from a thousand and one things back down [*vom Tausendsten ins Hundertste*]?” she asked further and [the General] was even less willing to answer in the negative, because a man takes pride in thinking things through, even down to that one thing called “truth.” [...] But Clarisse concluded: “You see, that’s nothing but cowardice – always thinking in an orderly and deliberate way!”³²¹

In contrast, the earlier draft features the same expression to describe what Clarisse herself thinks and how.

When she gave herself over to reflection, a thousand and one things occurred to her. For example, just as she could see herself addressed as a man [...] and feel herself a man and a woman at once, and therefore really [...] a double being, [...] she could feel herself also to be related to the [mentally] ill, for they are double beings, too [...]. But relations also extended in many other directions. [...] The reciprocal relations yielded a whole, and new points of departure emerged in almost unlimited number.³²²

Against the backdrop of Musil’s reading of Bleuler, the early draft introduces a diagnostic distance between the narrator’s voice and the figure of Clarisse. At the same time, however, the narrator takes up a position similar to Clarisse’s in the later draft: just as Clarisse criticizes men’s overly focused way of thinking in the later draft, the narrator in the earlier draft criticizes focused thinking as “all too orderly” and thus normalizes Clarisse’s way of thinking.

Incidentally, no one thinks any differently than Clarisse, as soon as one’s thoughts go from one thing to a thousand-and-one of them [...]; it’s just that [...] another, less personal form of thinking is applied in order to get there, [...] or back to what is called “truth.” But Clarisse had started to hold such overly orderly and deliberate thinking in contempt.³²³

319 E.g., Musil, *KA*, *Transkriptionen*, Mappe II/1/12 and Mappe V/4/214.

320 Musil, *KA*, *Transkriptionen*, Mappe I/5/108.

321 Musil, *KA*, *Transkriptionen*, Mappe V/4/214.

322 Musil, *KA*, *Transkriptionen*, Mappe II/1/12.

323 Musil, *KA*, *Transkriptionen*, Mappe II/1/13.

Whereas the later draft can be read to present a typical symptom of pathological speech, not just because of the copious figurative language but also because it is reversed (“vom Tausendsten ins Hundertste”) and taken literally, in the earlier draft the narrator practices this approach to language himself and in this way resembles Clarisse.

In the published text and the later drafts, the scenes featuring Clarisse thus receive stronger commentary through dialogue, Ulrich’s thoughts about their exchanges, and generally contemplative passages. A good example of this tendency is the transition from Chapter 38, which is devoted almost entirely to Clarisse’s disordered thoughts narrated from the subjective third-person position, to Chapter 39, where the narrator and Ulrich reflect on a “world of qualities without a man” in an essayistic style. The latter can be read as an evaluation of what Clarisse thinks and says in the former, namely that human beings are pushed and pulled around by experiences and feelings for which they bear no responsibility.³²⁴ In a similar way, the chapter, “Moosbrugger Thinks,” told largely through the inner perspective of Moosbrugger, is related to the following essayistic chapter, which reflects on Moosbrugger and his treatment by jurisprudence and forensic medicine.

This interweaving of narration, metaphorical language, and essayistic reflection applies all the more to the passages involving sibling-love and the “other condition.” As I noted above, Ulrich calls for “real understanding” of the “other condition” instead of irrational effusions; he objects to the “other condition” being positioned in opposition to thought and wishes that it be seen as a “peculiar change in thinking” instead.³²⁵ Accordingly, in its investigation he calls for a combination of “visions” and “exact research.”³²⁶

While the largely narrative Clarisse passages are supplemented in this way by reflective chapters, the reverse applies to the contemplative passages: they bleed into narrative sections and abound with metaphorical language.³²⁷ Thus, the last paragraph of the essay chapter slides into a narrative sequence describing Ulrich’s nighttime walk in the garden. The passage also takes up a metaphor

324 Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 158–159; cf. Simon Jander, “Die Ästhetik des essayistischen Romans. Zum Verhältnis von Reflexion und Narration in Musils *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*, und Brochs *Hugenau oder die Sachlichkeit*,” *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie* 123, no. 4 (2004): 533.

325 Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 831.

326 Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 820, 831.

327 Convincingly demonstrated, most recently, by Jander, “Die Ästhetik des essayistischen Romans.”

("milky foam of the mist outside") that plays a part in the reflection on essayistic form two pages earlier ("soothing mother's milk").³²⁸

It follows that the linguistic style of passages involving Clarisse and the metaphorical language of those passages reflecting on the "other condition" represent only a part of what can be mustered to express the "nonratioid." They are flanked by reflections and essayistic passages also containing narrative elements and figurative language. Simon Jander argues that this combination of reflection, narration, and metaphor itself displays a metaphorical quality inasmuch as the vividness of the particular and the more general conclusions afforded by interpretation are fused or held in suspense.³²⁹ What Musil has to say in an earlier text supports such a view:

Poets are analytical. Because every comparison [*Gleichnis*] is an unintentional analysis. And one understands one phenomenon by recognizing how it arises or is composed, related, connectable with others. Of course, one can just as well say, every comparison is a synthesis, all understanding is one. Of course; they are two halves of the same activity.³³⁰

Only in this abstract sense – that the merging of reflective analysis, narrative, and figurative synthesis has a metaphorical quality – one could assert that metaphor is the appropriate linguistic form for the "nonratioid."

The form of primitivist narration oriented on Clarisse is thus counteracted by the reflective passages of the novel – in contrast to Müller's novel, where the commentary is reserved solely for the preface and remains ambivalent. This distinction introduces a different understanding of how Musil may have viewed narrative acts modeled after the 'primitive.'³³¹ It does not involve a mere assimila-

328 Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 277, 279. In this sense, the essay already combines narration, figurative language, and reflection. See Birgit Nübel, *Robert Musil – Essayismus als Selbstreflexion der Moderne* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2006), who describes it as "another reason" and "always simultaneously occupying the space of experience and reflection" in her chapter headings. See also Wolf, *Kakanien als Gesellschaftskonstruktion*, 211–257.

329 Before Jander, this feature was suggested by Gilbert Reis ("Eine Brücke ins Imaginäre. Gleichnis und Reflexion in Musils *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*," *Euphorion. Zeitschrift für Literaturgeschichte* 78 [1984]: 154) and Jutta Heinz ("Grenzüberschreitung im Gleichnis," 256). See also Vatan ("Und auch die Kunst sucht Wissen," in *Aisthesis und Noesis. Zwei Erkenntnisformen vom 18. Jahrhundert bis zur Gegenwart*, ed. Hans Adler and Lynn L. Wolff [Munich: Fink, 2013]) for discussion of the significance of metaphors and figurative language in efforts to convey the nonratioid (123–126).

330 Musil, *KA, Lesetexte*, vol. 12, *Analyse und Synthese*, n.p.

331 Elsewhere, Musil defines the "elementary, narrative mode of thought" (*das primitiv Epische*) (*The Man Without Qualities*, 709) as a linear sequence of related events, remarking that narration of this particular kind has gone missing in modernity because of the complexity

tion to the ‘primitive’ (as occurs in the primitivistic narration focalized through Clarisse).³³² Were this the case, it would be a matter of primitivistic aesthetics in the mimetic sense described above and criticized by Ulrich. But Musil has something else in mind. As I have already noted, in the context of his essay, “Literati and Literature,” Musil’s detailed notes on Hornbostel’s lecture on ethnology focused on two particular aspects: First, Musil notes, the poetry of indigenous peoples is ritual song, which does not represent events so much as bring them about.³³³ Second, he reflects on the potential that this performative quality – and its intermingling of form and content, means and ends – might hold for contemporary literature.³³⁴ In this way, Musil deploys what he considers the ‘primitive’ principle of production (instead of representation) in *The Man Without Qualities*: To begin with, Clarisse’s madness is not simply depicted; rather, the narrative is the madness it describes insofar as it bears the features of insane discourse – including the linearity of what Musil calls “the primitively epic” (*das primitiv Epische*), which characterizes Clarisse’s delusional outlook because of its lack of complexity and purely additive stringing together of thoughts.³³⁵ Second, and as noted above, the “other condition” is not simply represented by met-

of the world in which each individual life is caught up. Unlike Ulrich, whose lack of qualities represents a symptom of this diagnosis, Clarisse inhabits a delusional world without much complexity insofar as only her own perspective prevails and contradictions or conflicts are barely noticed; as such, it could be described as elementary. However, Clarisse’s subjective narratives are not linear at all, in the sense of providing a comprehensible series of events. Without logical structure, they are erratic and revolve around fixed points instead of developing. At most they are sequential in a chronological way: paratactical with purely additive conjunctions (such as “and”). In a sense, this structure holds for the novel as a whole. In a letter to Guillemin, Musil states that he is not aiming for a causal sequence of events, especially in the first book (26 January, 1931, in Musil, *KA, Lesetexte*, vol. 19, 1931, n.p.). Instead, and in the manner of Clarisse’s catathymic thoughts, he aligns himself with the logic of feeling. Readers can grasp why one event follows another only if they can grasp the underlying sentiments and their connection – that is, by engaging with characters’ specific, emotionally conditioned worldviews. Otherwise, events in the novel seem random. Gilbert Reis has suggested that “epic naïveté” is first achieved in the second book (“Eine Brücke ins Imaginäre,” 150), but by this definition, it is already evident in the first. On this problematic, see also Kappeler, *Situiertes Geschlecht*, 313–314.

332 Wolfgang Riedel (“Robert Musil”) explains the “non-narration” Musil sought to practice in terms of “a) insufficient ‘linearity,’ b) the author’s critique of ‘mimetic’ narration, and c) abandonment of plot” (266).

333 On Musil’s reading of Hornbostel in the context of “Literati and Literature,” see Bonacchi, *Die Gestalt der Dichtung*, 292–300.

334 Musil, *KA, Transkriptionen*, Mappe VI/3/41.

335 Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, 709. Also, the narrative is the emotion-tinted reality of other characters, which comes out in the affective structural logic of the novel. On both, see Musil’s letter to Bernard Guillemin, 26 January 1931, in *KA, Lesetexte*, vol. 19, 1931, n.p..

aphors; it is actualized and simultaneously, for a brief moment, made manifest in the act of reading, i.e., in making sense of tropological language. Finally, the novel not only thematizes the effort to formalize the nonratioïd (the goal of modern literature, for Musil); it already *is* this formal language, thanks to the reflective procedures I have described.

When Musil demands that the literature of his day should produce a "certain kind of spirit," his main point is the observation that writers lack the formal means for nonratioïd expression and that such a language needs to be developed. *This* is the "spirit" he seeks, and it cannot be gained by returning to some sort of 'primitive' stage. For this kind of spirit, language cannot simply be identical with the non-ratioïd itself but must at the same time perform the latter's sensitive reflection. *The Man Without Qualities* realizes this goal by interweaving primitivistic Clarisse-oriented narration and essayistic reflection. When Musil speaks in "Literati and Literature" of the "magic" of contemporary literature, he thus envisions literature creating itself as a form in which it is possible to speak and think about nonratioïd matters. Accordingly, Musil's novel not only thematizes the search for the formal language of the nonratioïd but already *realizes* this language. *This* can be grasped as primitivistic narration in the modern sense, meaning in other words that the motion from expedition to self-experiment breaks away from the problem of regressive mimesis and instead leads to self-experiment as a critical exploration of and sensitive confrontation with the alienated self and its social conditions.