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MODERN INTERSECTIONS OF UTOPIAN IMAGINATION AND GENDER DISCOURSE WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO TEXTS BY HAUPTMANN AND WEDEKIND

Submitted for the degree of Ph.D.

2004

Caitríona Ní Dhubhghaill

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Modern Intersections of Utopian Imagination and Gender Discourse with special reference to texts by Hauptmann and Wedekind

Gerhart Hauptmann's novel *Die Insel der grossen Mutter oder das Wunder von Île des Dames* together with its paralipomena, and Frank Wedekind's incomplete and fragmentary *Die grosse Liebe* together with the published novella *Mine-Haha oder über die körperliche Erziehung der jungen Mädchen* and the related text *Eden* constitute the textual focus of this thesis. Two culturally and socially significant and, at this period of modernity, problematic discourses intersect in this text corpus: sex/gender and utopian imagination. Counterfactual social orders are imaginatively constructed in the texts under discussion: specifically, pedagogical province, primitivist theocracy, arcadian matriarchy, Spartan male colony and matrimonial Robinsonade. These constructs are examined here with reference to three central criteria of utopian writing: alternativity, collective focus, and critical dimension (directed both inwards at the world of the text and outwards at the extra-textual world).

In order to contextualise the self-professed utopian dimension of these texts, the first chapter of the thesis examines the uncertainties that characterise utopian imagination in this period of modernism's critical engagement with modernity. The problematisation of the concept utopia proceeds through a critical focus on a number of issues, including rationalism, collectivity, ease/idleness/affluence, and the totalitarian aspect of utopianism. Chapter one examines the ways in which these issues are addressed in dystopian narratives of the early twentieth century, showing how the dystopian refutation of modern utopian optimism paves the way to a productive re-engagement with the idea of utopia rather than negating altogether the legitimacy of the utopian tradition. Dystopian strategies and anti-utopian perspectives are reviewed in this chapter with reference to a number of fictional and theoretical texts, the main issues crystallising in a more detailed excursus on Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* and its reception by Theodor W. Adorno.

Traumatic pictures of the future which facilitate a critical perspective on the present are one strand in the twentieth-century reformulation of the utopian concept. Later twentieth-century conceptualisations of utopia seek modes of understanding and expressing utopian desire which would take account of dystopian misgivings and of the human cost of the totalitarian experiments in the mid-century which were linked explicitly to utopianism by

Karl Popper. Steering clear of monolithic or detailed formulations of 'the good society', the late-twentieth century approach tends instead towards 'meta-utopian' formulations in which the emphasis is on creating whatever conditions may be necessary for the free unfolding of individual and social potential in a variety of realms. Chapter one examines these reformulations with particular reference to Richard Rorty, and shows how elements of the reinvented utopianisms of postmodernity are foreshadowed in the work of Ernst Bloch. Bloch's anatomy of hope and utopian striving in *Das Prinzip Hoffnung* characterises the utopian moment as a dynamic attitude, a refusal to be contained or restricted by given conditions. His focus on the refusal of current limitation through an ongoing process of utopian critique and desire looks forward to the critical utopianism of the post-totalitarian period, although the differences between his avowedly Marxist analysis and later appropriations of his theory should not be occluded. The three essential criteria of utopian writing and thinking referred to above — alternativity, collective focus, and critical dimension — are shown in this chapter to hold good throughout the fluctuating approaches to the concept.

Given that both *Die Insel der grossen Mutter* and *Die grosse Liebe* employ aspects of the utopian tradition as a framework for exploring questions of sex, gender and reproduction, the approaches to these questions in the texts must be situated in the broader context of contemporary gender discourse. In that they foreground the body and the physical experiences of sex, pleasure, pain, and reproduction, the utopian writings of Hauptmann and Wedekind can also be understood to partake of a more general intensification of discursive concern with the body and with its function as both origin and limit of language and meaning. Chapter two thus deals with the ways in which questions of the body, of sex and of gender are framed in the cultural milieu of these texts. The chapter focusses on the ways in which gender discourse reflects the contemporary challenge of a modernity increasingly perceived as problematic. In the face of rapid social change and epistemological uncertainty, concern with the seemingly eternal givens of masculine and feminine can be understood as a compensatory counter-move: the masculine/feminine polarity is furthermore employed to render the body knowable, and determines its representation. The sheer variety of interpretations that emerges from the cultural preoccupation with gender difference and sexual relations is demonstrated in this chapter, from Otto Weininger's antagonistic model of 'principles' (*W* versus *M*), to the harmonious complementarity exhorted by maternalist feminism (a

model we encounter again in Hauptmann's utopia), to the culturally critical and morally subversive views of Kraus and Wedekind which are nonetheless indebted to the essentialist models of contemporary discourse. It is not just a question of identifying the familiar binary oppositions of active and passive, dynamic and static, transcendent and immanent and tracing their gendered application in *fin de siècle* and early twentieth-century discourses; it is a matter of recognising ways in which such gendered oppositions may function as a conceptual framework for a critique of modernity which privileges organic models and concepts of 'naturalness'. The masculine/feminine polarity is not incidental to utopian imagination, but embedded within it, as the analysis of gendered language in Ernst Bloch's utopian philosophy in this chapter reveals: the feminisation of utopian space in Bloch's *Das Prinzip Hoffnung* proceeds through a gendered discourse of desire which rehabilitates an active, desiring subject and draws metaphorically from the broader cultural practice of 'utopising' the feminine.

Chapters three and four not only reveal the workings of contemporary gender discourse in Hauptmann's and Wedekind's utopian writings respectively, but return to the questions raised in the first chapter concerning the changing fortunes of the utopian concept in modernity. These chapters demonstrate the presence of the complex legacy of the utopian tradition in both Hauptmann's and Wedekind's approach to fantasy-writing. Certain motifs are inherited from earlier utopian texts, such as the focus on a collective or group, the communal upbringing upbringing of children, the (spatial or temporal) isolation of the society portrayed from contemporary society, the regimentation of existence within the imagined society and the alternative ordering of sexual relations. The texts also reflect the modernist problematisation of the traditional utopian model of a rationally organised collective: the fictional societies they portray are dominated by sensuality, mysticism and ritual, in archaic or paradisal settings.

Chapter three demonstrates the presence in Hauptmann's alternative societies of an irreducibly pluralistic approach to the utopian concept. The maternalist colony of *Die Insel der grossen Mutter* facilitates an exploration of the potential for cultural renewal which supposedly inheres in the 'motherly' values of altruism, nurture, mutual aid and care for the weak. Simultaneously, the narrative portrays an alternative to a modernisation process perceived as negative: cultural pessimism and the 'degenerative' aspects of modern urban civilisation inform the construction of a tropical idyll in which the body,

exposed to air, sun and water, can flourish and throw off cultural constraints. The utopisation of the natural, and specifically of the natural body, in *Lebensreform* discourse is thus echoed in the novel's scenario, but the ironic narration refuses monoperspectivalism, occasionally disrupting the paean to naturalness. The alternative colony on the novel's island, the male colony, is portrayed as a site of industriousness and innovation, in which the transcendence of current limitations effects an ongoing expansion of horizons which contrasts with the cyclical nature of existence in the female colony. The utopian core of Hauptmann's thought-experiment lies in the vision of complementarity implied by an essentialist model of gender difference. The outcome of the main narrative suggests that the desired equilibrium may not be achievable on a social scale due to current antagonistic conceptions of gender difference, but the frame narrative holds out the possibility of establishing a microcosm of complementarity in an idealised state of matrimony.

Wedekind's utopian project reveals a less harmonious vision: the primitivist theocracy sketched in *Eden/Die grosse Liebe* is premised on a radical refusal of sentimental-romantic and moral discourses on sex, and explores the negation of subjectivity and the conflation of sex and violence. Chapter four shows how the imaginary state of *Eden/Die grosse Liebe* superimposes a primitivist aesthetic onto a sexual economy which is extrapolated from reality but divested of the dissembling strategies of bourgeois morality. By pursuing to their ultimate limit the contemporary affirmation of bodily and sensual experience and the utopisation of the physical through the discourse of *Lebensreform*, Wedekind's ambivalent text anticipates Georges Bataille's view of eroticism as an 'assenting to life to the point of death'. Tracing the ways in which contemporary gender discourse is present in Wedekind's work, the fourth chapter outlines the contradictions in Wedekind's position, his simultaneous refusal and endorsement of the institutions, prejudices and norms that pervade the gender discourse of his time. Wedekind attempts to imagine alternative social regulation of sex and education in *Mine-Haha* and the *Die grosse Liebe* sketches, and chapter four assesses the extent to which these alternatives are framed within the ideology of gender that gave rise to and legitimised the sexual morality of the contemporary bourgeoisie derided elsewhere in Wedekind's work. The contemporary discourse of eugenics, which harnesses sexual politics to a utopian model of humanity's 'upward evolution', is revealed as a central strand of both Wedekind's and Hauptmann's alternative social orders.

As both Hauptmann and Wedekind explicitly evoke the utopian tradition in relation to the texts examined here, and as an engagement with questions of sex and gender are combined in these texts with the 'alternativity', 'collectivity' and 'critical dimension' criteria of utopian writing, the initial task in chapter one will be to set out the key issues at stake in the modernist use and problematisation of the utopian concept. To this end, a brief overview of the history, usage and definition of 'utopia' will be provided at the beginning of the first chapter.

CHAPTER ONE: UTOPIAN IMAGINATION AND ITS DISCONTENTS

1.1 Utopia — anti-utopia — dystopia: preliminary remarks.

The semantically flexible concepts 'utopia' and 'utopian' range in meaning from a strictly literary genre, confined by definition to the realm of fantasy, to a political programme for a better or ideal society, to more generally applied concepts which can be positively inflected to imply the socio-critical attitude and motivating vision behind any effort to ameliorate existing reality, or negatively inflected to imply an attitude that has lost touch with reality. The ways in which these concepts are used and understood are not immutable, but are determined by a range of social, cultural and historical factors which I attempt to illuminate here.

While some writers on the subject have retrospectively attributed utopian characteristics to folk traditions, fairy-tales and elements of religious scripture, it is reasonable to take as a starting point for a survey of usage Thomas More's *Utopia or the Best State of a Commonwealth*, written in Latin in 1516, while acknowledging that this text draws on a tradition of writing about imaginary societies that dates from Plato's *Republic* and is traceable through St Augustine's *City of God*. The form and content of texts such as More's *Utopia*, Tommaso Campanella's *City of the Sun*, Francis Bacon's *New Atlantis* and other works of Renaissance humanism provided the classical model for subsequent literary utopias, laying the basis for certain generic conventions. Characteristic features of utopian writing found in these and later texts include the island motif, the common ownership of property and wealth, and the somewhat regimented character of existence in a utopian state. A key device of the genre is an encounter between the known and the unknown, whereby representatives of contemporary reality are confronted with the unfamiliar, imagined society. Utopian writing is a form of socio-cultural criticism insofar as the contrast between the unknown/imagined society and the known/real facilitates the development of a critical perspective on the latter.

Utopian writing thus has a dual function: the envisioning of alternative practices on the one hand, and the critique of actual practices on the other. Secondary literature on utopian texts, and theoretical writing on utopianism, respond to this duality in several ways, and the wide range of definitions of 'the utopian' reflects the diversity of this response. One approach is to emphasise the *alterity* of the utopian text, its deviation from

historical reality; another is to focus more on its *indebtedness* and *referentiality* to its real context. These two approaches to defining and writing about utopia are by no means mutually exclusive; utopia's alterity ultimately refers to the reality from within which it is written, through its function as satire, accusation, projection of unfulfilled potential or exploration of untried possibilities.

Three criteria determine the utopian quality of a literary text as far as this thesis is concerned: 1) its *collective* focus and 2) its socio-culturally *critical* dimension, the latter established through 3) the *alterity* of the imagined world in the text. These criteria are met equally by utopian and by dystopian texts: the utopian/dystopian opposition can and does converge in places, as utopian and dystopian thought-experiments share the prerequisite of a critical engagement with the existing social reality, and proceed from a perception that existing conditions are flawed in some way — inadequate, corrupt, unhealthy or unjust. It may seem surprising that a definitional opposition between utopia and dystopia cannot be taken for granted. The tendency for their meanings to converge is illustrated by the subtitle of the 1950 German edition of George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*: *Ein utopischer Roman*.[1] (Their relationship is further complicated by the frequent presence in dystopian writings of *anti*-utopian sentiment, that is, of fundamental disagreement with the notion of a utopian project.[2]) The position of a text on the spectrum from utopian to dystopian is determined by the way in which it articulates its critique of reality, either by exaggerating the negative features of the given situation or by positing a counterfactual situation which imagines their absence.

One way to imagine the absence of social problems is to dispense with society altogether, and thus a key genre in the history of utopian writing between the corporatist Renaissance utopias of More, Campanella *et al.* and the utopian socialism of the nineteenth century, is the Robinsonade. As the imagined orders sketched by Gerhart Hauptmann to be examined in chapter three draw explicitly on this genre, it will be discussed in more detail in that chapter (see below, p. 121 ff). The Enlightenment

[1] Horst Glaser also uses the term 'Utopie' for *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, and points to the inherent doubleness of the utopian, whereby 'das Vor- und das Schreckbild' together constitute 'die zwei Seiten, die der Utopie von Anfang an zu eigen waren'. Horst Glaser, *Utopische Inseln: Beiträge zu ihrer Geschichte und Theorie* (Frankfurt a.M.: Lang, 1996), p. 14.

[2] The terms 'anti-utopia' and 'dystopia' are not always consistently differentiated in literary criticism. Dystopia refers here to a fictional social order portrayed in a negative light (e.g. Yevgeny Zamyatin's *We*), whereas anti-utopia is understood as the theoretical objection to utopia (e.g. Fyodor Dostoevsky's *Notes from Underground*).

concern with the impact of environmental factors on character and development, as theorised by Rousseau, was imaginatively explored in Defoe's island fantasy in a way that gained popular appeal and enduring resonance through its focus on the heroic individual and his quest for self-reliance. The function of the desert island topos as a fertile ground for the exploration of complex questions concerning the interaction of human nature with culture and civilisation is exploited in various ways by Hauptmann in his 'Geschichte aus dem utopischen Archipelagus'; what is important in the context of the current discussion of the utopian tradition is the clear distinction between the Robinsonade *à la* Defoe and the criteria of utopian writing outlined above. The individual, isolated from society and thrown upon his own ingenuity and ability to survive, is the focus of the Robinsonade, whereas the utopian texts discussed here are concerned with the reconfiguration of the social order and have as such a collective focus.

The *coincidentia oppositorum* of utopia and dystopia is a function of the ambivalence inherent in Thomas More's original pun, its evocation of both 'no place' and 'good place'.[3] The relationship between these two facets of the word-play can be variously inflected. Recent instances of usage may serve to illustrate this semantic flexibility: a literary critic and Joyce scholar calls *Ulysses* an 'endlessly open book of utopian epiphanies';[4] an historian of the Nazi period repeatedly uses the term 'utopia' when referring to the ends invoked by Hitler to justify the most barbaric means;[5] the leader of the British Conservative Party accuses the Labour Prime Minister of having a 'utopian' foreign policy.[6] To clarify the various possible positions within the semantic range of 'utopian' from 'revelatory' through 'better than this' and 'imaginary' to 'dangerously unreal', a variety of definitions will now be surveyed, drawn mostly from literary criticism but also from political science and sociology. This account of different definitions of the concepts utopia/utopian does not claim to be exhaustive, but serves to demonstrate the variety of definitions available.

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[3] *The Complete Works of St Thomas More*, ed. by Edward Surtz and J. H. Hexter, 4 vols (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965), IV, p. 20.

[4] James Joyce, *Ulysses* [1922], annotated student edition with an introduction and notes by Declan Kiberd (London: Penguin, 1992), p. lxxx.

[5] Michael Burleigh, *The Third Reich. A New History* (London: Macmillan, 2000), p. 160-165.

[6] Anne Perkins, 'Duncan Smith attacks Blair's 'designer diplomacy',' *The Guardian,* 1 February 2002.

The second most significant phase in the history of the utopian concept after Renaissance humanism is constituted by the theory and practice of nineteenth-century utopian socialists, chiefly Robert Owen, Claude-Henri de Saint-Simon, and Charles Fourier.[7] The thought-experiments and utopian colonies in this phase of utopianism preserve the features that had characterised the utopian genre at its Renaissance inception, namely: the common ownership of property, the ideal of a stable and harmonious collective, and the critical perspective on contemporary society facilitated by the experiment, whether theoretical or practical. These experiments were inspired by the flaws and injustices of the contemporary social system, namely industrial capitalism and the class-structure on which it relied. Thus, utopian socialism and the subsequent history of utopian thought provide a counterpoint to Marxism's critical analysis of capitalist society, alternately converging with and diverging from the Marxist perspective. Marxist theory in its earlier phase defines itself as scientific socialism in deliberate opposition to utopian socialism, but this opposition subsequently gives way to a more complex interaction between Marxism and utopianism, as twentieth-century Marxist theorists such as Karl Mannheim and Ernst Bloch seek a rapprochement between utopian imagination and Marxist consciousness. The brief survey of usage offered here thus begins with Karl Mannheim's definition of the utopian in *Ideologie und Utopie* (1929), according to which the definitive characteristic of the utopian is its transcendence of reality and consequent transformative power:

> Utopisch ist ein Bewußtsein, das sich mit dem es umgebenden 'Sein' nicht in Deckung befindet [...] Nur jene 'wirklichkeitstranszendente' Orientierung soll von uns als eine utopische angesprochen werden, die, in das Handeln übergehend, die jeweils bestehende Seinsordnung zugleich teilweise oder ganz sprengt.[8]

Mannheim emphasises those aspects of utopian consciousness and imagination which transcend and transform reality. Where the utopian takes literary form, it becomes clear that utopia's dialogue with reality cuts both ways, as the utopian is imagined from within, and is thus inextricable from, the status quo. A utopian text sets out to describe a transformed reality, but the reality it imaginatively transforms is indelibly inscribed within it. The interrelatedness of real and imagined is thus central to Hans-Jürgen Krysmanski's understanding of what constitues a utopian text, namely:

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[7] See Krishan Kumar, *Utopia and Anti-Utopia in Modern Times* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987), pp. 33-68.
[8] Karl Mannheim, *Ideologie und Utopie*, 8th edn (Frankfurt a.M.: Klostermann, 1995), p. 169.

> die literarische Erscheinungsform der spielerischen Zusammenschau von Mensch, Gesellschaft und Geschichte in einem variablen, bildhaften Denkmodell von raum-zeitlicher Autonomie, das die Erkundung von Möglichkeiten losgelöst von der sozialen Wirklichkeit, *jedoch mit Bezug auf sie*, erlaubt.[9]

It is the contrast between the real and the imagined that constitutes the critical dimension of utopian writing and thinking.

Utopian imagination provides a 'Gegenbild' to historical reality. The word 'Gegenbild' is inherently ambiguous, as it refers both to the *opposite* and to the *similar* or the *counterpart*; it is defined by *Wahrig Deutsches Wörterbuch* as follows: 'zu einem Bild den Gegensatz darstellendes Bild, Gegenstück; *or* zu einem Bild passendes Bild, ähnliches Bild.' A 'Gegenbild' can therefore relate to the primary object in two contrasting ways, showing what is *not* in order to show what *is*; like a mirror, it reverses in order to reflect. H. Schulte Herbrüggen draws on the 'Gegenbild' concept to elucidate the satirical-critical function of Thomas More's *Utopia*:

> Das Ethos der *Utopia* ist nicht die *Vorbildlichkeit* des imaginären Ideals für unsere Welt etwa im Sinne eines praktischen politischen Programms als vielmehr die *Gegenbildlichkeit* des utopischen Staatswesens, um daran wie in einem Spiegel die Schwächen dieser Welt zu erkennen.[10]

The idea of the 'Gegenbild' is also central to Hans-Joachim Mähl's definition of utopias generally; for Mähl, utopia is an

> Entwurf einer hypothetisch möglichen, d.h. unter Setzung bestimmter Axiome denkbaren/vorstellbaren Welt [...] entworfen in räumlicher oder zeitlicher Projektion als Gegenbild (Negation) zu den explizit oder implizit kritisierten gesellschaftlichen Mißständen der jeweiligen Zeit.[11]

Mähl downplays the ambiguity of the 'Gegenbild' by equating it with negation, but the dual function of 'showing what is not' in order to 'show what is' persists: the reversal of contemporary 'Mißstände' entails reflection on the same through explicit or implicit critique.

It is by referring back to the real through 'Gegenbildlichkeit' that the utopian imagination attains its critical dimension. Ruth Levitas identifies this critical dimension in three

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[9] Hans-Jürgen Krysmanski, *Die utopische Methode. Eine literatur- und wissenssoziologische Untersuchung deutscher utopischer Romane des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Köln: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1963), p. 19, emphasis added.
[10] Cited in Edward Surtz, '*Utopia* as a work of literary art' in *The Complete Works of St Thomas More*, IV, p. cxxv.
[11] As cited by Silvio Vietta, *Die literarische Moderne* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1992), p. 52.

discrete but related functions: the articulation of dissatisfaction and of a preferred alternative way of being; the embodiment/fantasy of alternative values; the informing of political action and social transformation.[12] Wolfgang Biesterfeld's description of utopian fictions as 'Fiktionen, die die Realität korrigieren, karikieren, umpolen, bekämpfen' also emphasises the multiple functions of utopian imagination.[13]

Krishan Kumar's definition reflects the historical specificity of the term's emergence:

> The modern utopia – the modern western utopia invented in the Europe of the Renaissance – is the only utopia. It inherits classical and Christian forms and themes, but it transforms them into a distinctive novelty, a distinctive literary genre carrying a distinctive social philosophy.[14]

Crucial here is the emphasis on the modernity of utopia. This will be explored in more detail below in connection with the historical and cultural context of the literary texts to be examined in subsequent chapters. If utopia is a modern genre that gives literary form to a modern world-view, then the self-problematising turn in modernity, which is particularly acute around 1900, can be expected to effect a problematisation of utopia.

While Kumar orients his definition to the question of genre, he nevertheless recognises that the term 'utopian' cannot be restricted to a literary-taxonomical tool. The exercise of testing existing literary utopias — or texts with a utopian element — against available definitions of the term *as genre* fails to come to grips with the full scope of the term. Ernst Bloch, whose utopian philosophy will be discussed at greater length below, notes that a genuine engagement with the concept soon transcends the limits of the word as coined and used by More.[15] Taxonomical approaches primarily concerned with genre are usually frustrated in their attempts to pin down the generic attributes of utopia, a circumstance which suggests the resistance of the utopian concept to strict delimitation. Literary-critical discussions of utopia thus often open with disclaimers which tell the reader that the authors know that other authors have already pointed out that it is difficult to define utopia 'definitively'. For example:

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[12] Ruth Levitas, 'Utopia as Literature, Utopia as Politics' in *Zeitgenössische Utopieentwürfe in Literatur und Gesellschaft: zur Kontroverse seit den achtziger Jahren*, ed. by Rolf Jucker, (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1997), pp. 121-137 (p. 122).

[13] Wolfgang Biesterfeld, *Die literarische Utopie* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1974), p. 41.

[14] Kumar, *Utopia and Anti-Utopia in Modern Times*, p. 3.

[15] See Ernst Bloch, *Das Prinzip Hoffnung* [written 1938-1947, revised 1953 and 1959], 3 vols (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1985), I, p. 13. Henceforth volume and page numbers in main text.

> Es [ist] — das hat schon Ludwig Stockinger bemerkt — zumindest in der literaturwissenschaftlich orientierten Utopieforschung nachgerade zum Topos geworden, auf die erdrückenden Probleme einer Begriffspräzisierung [der Utopie] immerhin hinzuweisen.[16]

Jost Hermand has argued that an over-emphasis on generic classification in literary criticism effectively seeks to neutralise the utopian by subjecting its expressions to taxonomic and cataloging operations at the expense of proper attention to their dimension of social and cultural criticism.[17] Some writers on utopia abandon altogether the reference to genre, following Bloch's lead in allowing a much broader array of human activity to qualify as 'utopian'.

> Grundlage aller Utopiebildung ist die zentrale Differenz zwischen der vorgefundenen, gelebten Wirklichkeit und einer virtuellen Welt, die eine Möglichkeitsform derselben Wirklichkeit ist. [...] Das Ergebnis kann ein individuelles Lebenskonzept, ein literarischer Text, ein architektonischer Entwurf, eine philosophische Idee, ein Musikstück, ein Film, ein politisches Programm oder eine Sozialtheorie sein.[18]

This kind of usage broadens the term to such an extent that it is rendered effectively synonymous with any creative intellectual or artistic activity that seeks to bring forth that which has not previously existed. Expansion of the utopian concept in this way entails the possibility that art or literature may be considered a utopian sphere — as is implicitly the case in aesthetic theories from Schiller to Bachmann and Marcuse. Enquiries into the utopian would thus be understood as a subset of a more general discourse concerning the alterity of literature and the operation of imagination. The relationship between the *alter mundus* of literature and the specific alterity of utopian texts is discussed more extensively below (see p. 54).

A definition in the abstract is, however, of only limited value unless it takes account of the particular issues and problems that surround the terms of which it consists. The following example demonstrates how the certainty seemingly offered by a working definition begins to dissolve when tested against specific questions. Theodor Verweyen and Gunther Witting, exploring the usefulness of the utopian concept for a reading of Grimmelshausen and Goethe, adopt a definition advanced by Jürgen Mittelstraß. For

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[16] Theodor Verweyen and Gunther Witting, 'Zum deskriptiven Gehalt des Utopiebegriffs, dargelegt anhand von Grimmelshausens *Simplicissimus* und Goethes *Meister*-Romanen', in *Ideologie und Utopie in der deutschen Literatur der Neuzeit*, ed. by Bernhard Spies (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 1995), p. 6.
[17] Jost Hermand, *Orte, irgendwo. Formen utopischen Denkens* (Königstein/Ts: Athenäum, 1981), p. 7.
[18] Inge Münz-Koenen, *Konstruktion des Nirgendwo. Die Diskursivität des Utopischen bei Bloch, Adorno, Habermas* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1997), p. 14.

Mittelstraß, the utopian is embodied in 'Entwürfe der praktischen Vernunft' which try to show 'wie man gemeinsam besser leben kann'. The question is left open as to whether and how such 'Entwürfe' could be realised.[19] This definition includes two of the dimensions which the current study treats as indispensible criteria of the utopian: 'gemeinsam' and 'besser' refer respectively to the collective and the critical dimensions.

But Mittelstraß's definition, succinct as it is, begins to unravel when subjected to certain questions. Utopias are 'Entwürfe', blueprints or sketches; but drafted by whom? and for whom? Practical reason is their guiding light; why then does the critique of rationalism inform most dystopian texts from Zamyatin onwards? The rational is not always utopian in method and aims, nor is the utopian reducible to the rational, as Ernst Bloch's analysis of the anticipatory content in dreams, religion and mysticism demonstrates. 'Wie man gemeinsam besser leben kann'; who is included by 'man'? Any reference to a collective or group throws up the question of belonging and non-belonging, of boundaries and exclusion. Modern dystopias often confront the tension between collective weal and individual will, exploring the threat to individual freedom entailed by the project of establishing 'wie man gemeinsam besser leben kann'. To determine what is meant by 'besser leben' requires knowing what constitutes 'besser', whose definition of 'besser' is to be accepted, and to what degree a commonality of purpose can be achieved, given the challenge of consensus, co-operation and compromise this entails. This somewhat cursory problematisation of a working definition of utopia has served to raise some of the questions that motivate dystopian critique of modern rationalist utopianism, questions that in turn point towards the postmodern reinvention of the utopian concept. These questions will now be dealt with more thoroughly.

1.2 Utopia and modernity

Characteristic of the utopian concept not only at its Renaissance-humanist inception but throughout its history is the close alignment of faith in humanity's rational powers with the ability to visualise and work towards the ideal state. Some commentators have suggested that More's *Utopia* anticipates Enlightenment rationalism,[20] and the classical

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[19] Verweyen and Witting, 'Zum deskriptiven Gehalt des Utopiebegriffs', p. 10.

[20] 'The equation *reason equals nature equals virtue*, the deism precariouly perched on rational foundations of doubtful solidity, the feeble and slightly apologetic hedonism wavering between the logical need for a this-worldly base and the psychological need for other-worldly sanctions – all these positions, common to so

utopia is, as Götz Müller puts it, 'der Traum der verwirklichten Vernunft'.[21] A thoroughgoing application of humanity's rational powers is seen by traditional utopian vision as the means of emancipation from disorder, injustice and corruption in leadership; these were the main targets for Renaissance satire,[22] and the classical utopia combines the criteria of alterity and critique by presentating a this-worldly, secular vision of an alternative mode of existence in which these social problems are absent.

Given that Thomas More was a devout Christian martyred for his loyalty to Roman Catholicism and later canonised, it seems surprising that he allowed his Utopians to achieve 'the best state of a commonwealth' in the absence of Christianity. More sought to guarantee the success of his imagined commonwealth without recourse to other-worldly legitimation, by reasonably working out social structures with maximum regard for fairness and efficiency in a way that foreshadows Enlightenment hopes regarding the effect of reason on social organisation. The abolition of private property is seen as the first step towards a rational, enlightened social order:

> Bei den Utopisten [der Renaissance] wird also die Theorie Rousseaus vorweggenommen, daß die von Natur guten Menschen durch das Eigentum verdorben seien [...] ebenso wie die Vertragstheorie die Gesellschaft auf einem freien Willensakt der Bürger begründet sein läßt, glauben die Utopisten ohne Rücksicht auf die zeitlichen Umstände unmittelbar eine neue Gesellschaft *bloß auf Grund freier rationaler Entschließungen der Menschen* begründen zu können.[23]

By investing reason with social hope, utopian imagination in its Renaissance and Enlightenment manifestations reveals two related secular tendencies: it rejects the notion of original sin and it undermines the belief that the solution of this-worldly problems is solely the remit of other-worldly powers. The belief that social transformation or revolution can achieve a better world conflicts with the doctrine of original sin, and this fundamental conflict has its roots in the gradual rejection of millenarianism by institutionalised Christianity. St Augustine's *City of God* indicated the unlikelihood of any

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many eighteenth-century *philosophes*, recapitulate the 'philosophy' of the Utopians.' J. H. Hexter, '*Utopia* and its Historical Milieu', in *The Complete Works of St Thomas More*, IV, p. cxvi.

[21] Götz Müller, *Gegenwelten: Die Utopie in der deutschen Literatur* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1989), p. 38.

[22] 'Die Sozialutopien der Vergangenheit z.B. reagierten auf die je unterschiedlichen Defizite ihrer Ausgangsgesellschaften. Auf Zeiten, die als chaotisch empfunden werden, antworten die Ordnungsutopien mit Entwürfen eines streng geregelten Lebens, zu Zeiten allzu rigider Ordnungsmacht entstehen Utopien der Freiheit und der individuellen Menschenrechte.' Inge Münz-Koenen, *Konstruktion des Nirgendwo*, p. 18.

[23] Max Horkheimer, 'Die Utopie', in *Utopie. Begriff und Phänomen des Utopischen*, ed. by Arnhelm Neusüss (Berlin/Neuwied: Luchterhand, 1968), pp. 178-192 (pp. 181-3), emphasis added.

possible rapprochement between the official Church position and the millenarianist hope that the kingdom of God might be established on earth. The following remark of the Roman Catholic writer G.K. Chesterton, made some fifteen hundred years after St Augustine, illustrates the endurance of this position:

> The weakness of all utopias is this: that they take the greatest difficulty of man [i.e. original sin] and assume it to be overcome, and then give an elaborate account of the overcoming of smaller ones.[24]

The reliance of anti-utopian positions on the doctrine of original sin, or on its secular analogue, the idea of a flawed 'human nature', is a question dealt with more extensively below in the discussion of dystopian writing (see p. 34 below). Returning again to the two sides of Thomas More's word-play, the supposition of original sin would firmly inflect 'utopia' as 'no place'. Horst Glaser notes the tautology of such a position: 'Die Laster der Menschen [...] stehen also einer Einrichtung der Welt entgegen, in der die Menschen keine Laster mehr hätten'.[25] The doctrine of original sin, through its reliance on divine intervention for the attainment of salvation, refutes the idea of a humanly achievable utopia.

> [...] nicht nur die Erbsünde, auch die Erlösung ist ein Hinderungsgrund für die Möglichkeit einer innerweltlichen Utopie [...] Erst wenn der Mensch zum Selbstschöpfer und Selbsterlöser wird, kann er sich metaphysisch eine Welt ohne Sünde und Leid denken.[26]

Religious belief, as Sigmund Freud compellingly suggested, expresses a double desire and is animated by a double motivation: 'sich gegen die erdrückende Übermacht der Natur zu verteidigen' and 'die peinlich verspürten Unvollkommenheiten der Kultur zu korrigieren'.[27] The emerging scientific world-view of modernity contests religion's monopoly on this double task of promising respite from uncontrolled nature and correcting imperfect culture, and supplants the religious vision of heaven with the vision of a humankind rationally and scientifically equipped both to wrest its needs from the natural world and optimally to shape the cultural and social world.[28] This modern vision

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[24] G.K. Chesterton, 'Mr. H. G. Wells and the Giants', in *Heretics* (London: Bodley Head, 1905), p. 73-4.
[25] Horst Albert Glaser, *Utopische Inseln*, p. 48.
[26] Götz Müller, *Gegenwelten*, pp. 34-35.
[27] Sigmund Freud, *Die Zukunft einer Illusion* in *Studienausgabe*, 11 vols (Frankfurt a.M.: Fischer, 1974), IX, p. 155.
[28] 'The impregnable position of science may be described in a few words. We claim, and we shall wrest from theology, the entire domain of cosmological theory. All schemes and systems which thus infringe upon the domain of science must, in so far as they do this, submit to its control, and relinquish all thought

renders redundant the supernatural elements of an older world-view by adapting other-worldly aspirations to a this-worldly discourse of progress, which, as a mutation of religious hopes,[29] becomes 'Enlightenment's surrogate for redemption'.[30]

The critique of utopia that forms the intellectual-historical context to the early twentieth-century literary texts to be discussed in subsequent chapters is part of a more general critique of the modern Enlightenment project to subordinate all aspects of life to science and reason. The dream of gaining gradual mastery of the human environment through science and technology, of creating a predictable and rational life-world: in short, the dream of 'humanising' nature (a Marxian phrase frequently used by Bloch) has been a significant strand within utopian writing at least since Francis Bacon's *New Atlantis* (1627) (see p. 127 below). In the utopian colony described in Bacon's text, the approach to nature is threefold, encompassing penetration, interpretation and use.[31] As the patriarch of the colony's headquarters, Salomon's House, explains to the newcomers, 'the End of our Foundation is the knowledge of Causes, and secret motions of things; and the enlarging of the bound of Human Empire, to the effecting of all things possible'.[32] The scientific understanding of nature not only facilitates the domination of nature for human needs, but also entails the possibility that nature itself may be changed or improved upon:

> And we make (by art) [...] trees and flowers to come earlier or later than their seasons; and to come up and bear more speedily than by their natural course they do. We make them also by art greater much than their nature; and their fruit greater and sweeter and of differing taste, smell, colour, and figure, from their nature.[33]

As Horst Glaser has observed, Bacon's optimistic faith in progress and enthusiasm for the technical mark a departure from both More's and Campanella's approach to solving the problem of sufficient material provision. The economic autarky and traditional production methods of the states envisaged by Campanella and More are, according to Glaser, anachronistic given the contemporary context: the voyages of discovery, the

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of controlling it.' John Tyndall, 'The Belfast Address' (1874), cited in *Literature and Science in the Nineteenth Century: an Anthology*, ed. by Laura Otis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 3.

[29] John Gray, *Al Qaeda and what it means to be modern* (London: Faber, 2003), p. 7.

[30] Gershom Scholem, cited in Michael Löwy, 'Jewish Messianism and Libertarian Utopia in Central Europe (1900-1933)'. *New German Critique*, 20 (1980), 105-115 (p. 107).

[31] Francis Bacon, *New Atlantis* in *Francis Bacon: The Great Instauration and New Atlantis*, ed. by J. Weinberger (Illinois: AHM, 1980), p. 79-80.

[32] ibid., p. 70.

[33] ibid., p. 72.

internationalisation of trade and the revolutionary developments in the natural sciences.[34] It is Bacon who realises in the form of a utopian fantasy the full import of contemporary advances in scientific method and who gives textual form to the dream of the absolute subordination of the natural environment to human needs, a dream that persists in utopian theory up to Ernst Bloch. The view of nature propounded in *Das Prinzip Hoffnung* relies on a telling set of metaphors: 'der noch gar nicht geräumte Bauplatz, das noch gar nicht adäquat vorhandene Bauzeug für das noch gar nicht adäquat vorhandene menschliche Haus' (II:807). Bloch, reclaiming utopian imagination for a Marxism that antedates the urgency of later twentieth-century ecological consciousness, operates with an anthropocentric model in which nature is viewed primarily as a resource at the disposal of humankind. Hence, his socialist critique of capitalism does not seek to problematise or relativise ideas such as plenty, use, exploitation of resources, affluence or growth. While the project of 'die Humanisierung der Natur' is usually balanced in *Das Prinzip Hoffnung* by its correlate, 'die Naturalisierung des Menschen', suggesting a more complex and symbiotic relationship between humans and their natural environment than merely that of subject to object, Bloch nevertheless continues to align 'Technisierung' — 'die Zurückdrängung der Naturschranke' — with emancipation (II:728) in a way that is particularly problematic where it leads him to suggest, for example, that a 'utopian potential' inheres in atomic energy (II:775).

Bacon's *New Atlantis*, as a canonical statement of the emerging scientific worldview, clearly demonstrates the affinity between the modern utopian attitude and the anthropocentric and colonial tendency to objectify the natural world. Utopian striving, where it aims for the optimally efficient exploitation of nature for human ends, follows the logic of rationalist-technological modernity. The desire to shape a better world is premised on the idea that the given world exists primarily to meet human needs and is furthermore malleable: it is there to be used, or it is empty, null, devoid of value until the human story can be inscribed onto it. The tabula rasa model of the natural environment — nature as an empty page or formless mass awaiting the form-giving, meaning-giving action of human will upon it — underlies the Robinsonade narrative, a genre closely related to the classical insular utopia. Robinson Crusoe overcomes the despair of his early

[34] Horst Glaser: *Utopische Inseln*, p. 60. Kumar also notes the 'dynamism' of Bacon's *New Atlantis* and its foreshadowing of the nineteenth-century utopisation of progress, and Northrop Frye sees in Bacon's portrayal of technology as the driving force of social change an anticipation of Marx. See Kumar, *Utopia and Anti-Utopia in Modern Times*, p. 34 and Frye, 'Varieties of Literary Utopias' in *Utopias and Utopian Thought*, ed. by Frank E. Manuel (London: Souvenir Press, 1973), pp. 25-49 (p. 26).

days as a castaway to become 'like a king' in a country in which he views himself as having 'an ondoubted right of dominion'.[35] Horst Glaser observes that 'Robinson gilt [...] als Inbild neuzeitlicher Eroberungslust und Geschäftstätigkeit'; the peculiarly modern quality of the Robinsonade does not derive merely from the Robinsonian work ethic, or from the emphasis placed on effort and ingenuity in the wresting of improved living conditions from one's surroundings, but also from the more general objectification of the natural environment implied by the scenario, from the Western anthropocentric perspective from which the rest of nature — and the rest of the globe — is viewed as either resource or obstacle.

At the heart of the modern utopia, then, lies the fantasy of total control. In this fantasy, the natural world is controlled in such a way that it can no longer cause humans to suffer, through inconvenience, hardship or catastrophe. The social world is ordered in such a way as to minimise the suffering humans can inflict on each other, through violence, crime, exploitation or war. The psychological worlds of individuals are harmonised with the needs of the 'greater good'; again, this involves a fantasy of control in that tendencies within individuals which can cause them to disrupt the social order, to 'sin', are held in check through a combination of upbringing and incentive. Utopian texts focus on the regulation of the social sphere, working from the premise that if the affairs of the collective are well-regulated, the co-operation of the individual will follow, because 'in a corrupt society, corrupt action is reasonable; in a decent society, decent action is reasonable'.[36] More's *Utopia* solved the problem of social stability by an appeal to reason: in the just, sane, healthy society he depicted, there was no rational justification for anti-social behaviour, no incentive for dissent, no motivation to agitate for change, and so the freedom of the individual posed no threat to the stability of the existing order. The inadequacies of such a straightforward model of the interaction between social structures and the individual psyche fuel dystopian critique in the post-Freudian era, even if the fundamental contention that the former do affect the latter is never dispelled. The appeal to the 'social glue' of reason cannot survive unscathed what Götz Müller describes as 'die Krise der Utopie im 20. Jahrhundert, eine Krise, die sich philosophisch in der Vernunftskritik Schopenhauers und Nietzsches ankündigte'.[37] How can the stability of a

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[35] Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe* [1719] (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2001), p. 190.
[36] J. H. Hexter, '*Utopia* and its Historical Milieu', in *The Complete Works of St Thomas More*, iv, p. cxiv.
[37] Götz Müller, *Gegenwelten*, p. 185.

utopian order be guaranteed in the context of such a crisis? Only by totalitarian methods — at least, that is what dystopian narratives suggest.

As a control fantasy which seeks the eradication of unpredictability and inconvenience, the negation of the spontaneous and unruly, the modern utopia can be understood as an expression of fear. The ongoing dialogue between dystopian and utopian imagination, which comes to a head in the powerful dystopian visions of the first half of the twentieth century, is a conversation between two different kinds of fear: fear of the uncontrollable/uncontrolled versus fear of total control.

1.2.1 Critique of modernity, critique of utopia

The modern utopian tradition builds on the premise that the optimal social order is one in which the co-operation of its members is guaranteed. In the 'best state of a commonwealth', citizens want to do what they have to do. This tradition is then problematised by modernist dystopian texts and stances, which emphasise the totalitarian negation of choice that inheres in a state in which individual desire is moulded to coincide with collective interests and needs. Furthermore, the insularity or stasis of the classical utopia is characterised by the modernist dystopian position as deadening or death-like, in that it is inimical to the flux and unpredictability of life. The utopian tradition, then, cannot be grasped in its full problematic complexity without reference to its troubled counterpart dystopia.

The crisis in utopian vision referred to by Götz Müller is to be understood in the context of, and as a particular manifestation of, a more general sense of cultural crisis that grew out of the critical voices that accompanied and commentated upon the phenomenon of modernity.[38] This critical and self-reflexive moment within modernity is terminologically denoted as cultural modernism.[39] Around 1900, the sense of a need for cultural renewal was inseparable from a sense of the difficulty of achieving the same. The babble of voices for change satirised in Robert Musil's *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften* reflects parodically the confused sense of the need for a vision of something other than the given relations — whether these be relations of production or consumption, international relations, class relations, gender relations, generational relations, relations between urban and rural, nature and culture, old and new, past and present.

> 'Ich habe übrigens' fuhr Ulrich fort 'schon zwei Mappen voll schriftlicher Anträge allgemeiner Natur [...] Ich habe ein davon mit der Überschrift 'Zurück zu...!' versehen. Merkwürdig viel Menschen teilen uns nämlich mit, daß die Welt in früheren Zeiten auf einem besseren Punkt gewesen sei als jetzt [...] Wenn ich von dem selbstverständlichen Verlangen Zurück zum Glauben absehe, so ist noch ein Zurück zum Barock, zur Gotik, zum Naturzustand, zu Goethe vertreten, zum deutschen Recht, zur Sittenreinheit und etliches andere...Der zweiten [Mappe] habe ich die Überschrift 'Vorwärts zu...!' geben müssen [...]'[40]

The texts to be investigated in subsequent chapters take 'Zurück zu' as the starting point for the imaginative construction of alternative social orders. They thus reflect a self-problematising turn in modernity, which manifests itself in many conflicting ideas: the need to reaffirm the instinctual against the rational, the need to question cultural developments (mass culture, mass society, massive deployment of technology) seen to threaten the individual, and the need to counteract the social atomisation seen to preclude a truly communal experience are variously prioritised. A comprehensive differentiation of the proto-fascist, individualist-emancipatory, socialist and proto-environmentalist strands within this web of cultural criticism would lie beyond the scope of this study and has in any case been carried out elsewhere.[41] What matters for the task

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[38] See also Krishan Kumar, *Utopia and Anti-Utopia in Modern Times*, p. 423.

[39] See Richard Sheppard, 'The problematics of European modernism', in *Theorizing Modernism. Essays in Critical Theory*, ed. by Steve Giles (London/NY: Routledge, 1993), pp. 1-51.

[40] Robert Musil, *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1978), pp. 233-4.

[41] See Richard Hamann and Jost Hermand, *Stilkunst um 1900*, 2nd edn (München: Nymphenburger Verlagshandlung, 1973), esp. pp. 7-22. Also *Die Lebensreform. Entwürfe zur Neugestaltung von Leben und Kunst um 1900*, ed. by Kai Buchholz and others (Darmstadt: Institut Mathildenhöhe, 2001).

at hand here is an awareness that, amid the cacophony of criticism by which modern civilisation gave voice, in a variety of often conflicting and mutually contradictory ways, to its discontents, there were notes that would resonate in utopian and dystopian narratives both at that time and throughout the remainder of the twentieth century. These included: a growing distrust of rationalism; a recognition of the limitations of progress (particularly given its materialistic emphasis); an increased insight into the complex nature of the human psyche; and a fear of tyranny, of the domination of any one vision of an improved or perfected humanity. While radically questioning the possibility and even desirability of the traditional utopian goal of rational control of self and environment, the modernist crisis in utopian vision nevertheless did not eschew the utopian functions of socio-cultural criticism and the imaginative formulation of alternatives.[42]

The problematisation in this period of the traditional rationalist utopia of modernity has been explained as a reaction to a variety of phenomena. Firstly, social and demographic changes lead to increasing levels of anonymity in the great urban centres, with the result that the city, which in the utopias of Renaissance humanism was the scene and apotheosis of human regulation of society and environment, is increasingly characterised as the chaotic and threatening scene of confrontation with the unknown.[43] The urban landscape may be fascinating in its unpredictability and variety (as it is for Charles Baudelaire and James Joyce) but its potentially inhuman or dehumanising aspect is also realised (as for example in Rainer Maria Rilke's Paris and Bernhard Kellermann's New York). Secondly, technological advances, while contributing to the ongoing taming of nature and to increased production, mobility and convenience, also effected an increase in the scale of human misery through the social implications of large-scale industrialisation, as well as massive changes in the relationship between labourer and labour, worker and product through mechanisation. Thirdly (this applies to the latter end of the period dealt with in this study), the disastrous conjunction of modern weaponry and anachronistic military strategy, which unleashed the hitherto unknown scale of destruction of World War I, brought home at every level the fatal mismatch between the pace of change and the inability of inherited structures (in this case, military) to keep

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[42] Formulations such as 'romantisch-utopischer Irrationalismus' and 'fortschrittliche Reaktion' capture the co-existence of, and tension between, utopian and reactionary elements in cultural criticism, particularly on the right. See Richard Hamann and Jost Hermand, *Stilkunst um 1900*, p. 9. See also Malachi Smyth, 'Utopia and the Radical Right' (unpublished M. Litt thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1994).

[43] See Richard Sheppard, 'The problematics of European modernism', p. 11.

abreast of that pace, with the resultant impasse that to accept change and to refuse it could alike have catastrophic consequences. Lastly, currents and developments in philosophy and psychology, from Nietzsche's celebratory characterisation of Schopenhauer's concept of will and Bergson's vitalistic affirmation of the intuitive over the intellectual to Freud's focus on forces in the psyche beyond the operation of the conscious mind, chipped away at, and threatened to dislodge, the cornerstone of utopian optimism: faith in the human faculty of reason. The utopia of a consistently rational world begins to recede or is rejected outright — as is the case in Dostoevsky's nihilistic riposte to Cherneshevsky's 'crystal palace' utopia, *Notes from Underground.* Carl E. Schorske, discussing the intellectual climate of *fin de siècle* Vienna, comments as follows on the paradigm shift with regard to the centrality of reason and on its consequences for utopian vision:

> Traditional liberal culture had centered upon rational man, whose scientific domination of nature and whose moral control of himself were expected to create the good society. In our [twentieth] century, rational man has had to give place to that richer, but more dangerous and mercurial creature, psychological man.[44]

[44] Carl E. Schorske, *Fin de Siècle Vienna* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1961), p. 4.

1.2.2 Limits of a rational utopia: sex and the body as the other of reason

'Psychological man' is defined by a more volatile relationship with 'sexual' and 'instinctual' man than was seen to pertain to his 'rational' predecessor. The modernist problematisation of utopian vision, whereby 'the European mind lost its capacity to project satisfying utopias',[45] is not only part of a broader critique of rationalism but also reflects an increasing preoccupation with the role played by sexual and instinctual forces in the existence of individuals and groups alike. The articulation of utopian vision is affected not only by the process of questioning and relativisation to which the rationalist heritage of the Enlightenment is subject at this time, but also by the increased discursivisation of sex and the body that has been noted as a significant feature of the period. The decision to focus in this thesis particularly on questions of gender and sexuality in the texts under consideration reflects the increasing centrality of sex to literary discourse around 1900 — as, in fact, does the centering of these issues in the texts themselves.

This shift towards a discursive prioritisation of sex is at least partially attributable to the contemporary biological transformation of the concept of nature. The natural phenomenon of sexual dimorphism is increasingly a focus of the 'life sciences', and sex and reproduction are placed at the core of the scientific understanding of life itself. In Wolfgang Riedel's formulation, 'Wer um 1900 von Natur reden will, muß von der Sexualität reden'.[46] Riedel argues that literature, in the light of this paradigm shift, increasingly becomes a discourse about sexuality. Concurrent social developments and movements, including the women's movement in its many guises, also reflect and contribute further to an ongoing discursivisation of the sexual. Philosophical currents such as vitalism and the post-Schopenhauerian emphasis on 'will' sexualise the triadic narrative of sentimental discourse: the intense experience of sexual desire is read existentially, as a manifestation of the longing for unity which pervades the divided, alienated or fragmented human condition and through which the individual subject becomes most painfully aware of his individuation. Differing conclusions may be drawn from the postulate of the existential centrality of sex, from the vitalistic affirmation of the instinctual, variously expressed by writers as diverse as Walt Whitman, D. H. Lawrence

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[45] ibid., p. 279.
[46] Wolfgang Riedel, *'Homo natura': literarische Anthropologie um 1900* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1996), p. xiii.

and Lou-Andreas Salomé, to the radical renunciation of the physical that constitutes the telos of Otto Weininger's analysis. Weininger's misogynist asceticism carries to extremes a more prevalent sense that the subjectivity of the individual proceeds from a split or lack it then perpetually seeks to overcome.

> Die begriffliche Funktion hat Subjekt und Objekt gespalten, und jenes einsam gemacht: *wie alle Liebe*, so sucht damit sogleich auch die Sehnsucht des Erkenntnistriebes das Entzweite wieder zu einen.[47]

The acknowledgement of sexual desire as the most keenly felt manifestation of this fundamental incompleteness is expressed in a variety of ways on an affective spectrum from resignation to celebration.

1.3 Utopia as social desire

The view of 'alle Liebe' as the intense manifestation of a split or absence at the heart of subjectivity anticipates a notion later associated with Lacanian theory, namely the idea that desire is born of lack, 'driven by privation and negativity'.[48] Desire, according to this notion, both acknowledges lack in the sense that it is produced by it, but also simultaneously refuses it in the sense that it resists being contained or exhausted by it — it is characterised by a 'perpetually receding horizon and expanding expectation'.[49] The dual function of utopia — critique and vision — effectively adapts this concept of desire for the realm of socio-cultural criticism. Utopian imagination can be understood as the *social* form of desire, as desire wherever it transcends individual concerns and is focussed on the level of community, society, nation, or humanity. Utopian desire is born of the perceived lacks and defects of the existing social order; in Bloch's formulation, the 'not' — 'das Nicht' — of the available reality is the starting point, the beginning of every movement away from the lacking or the negative, 'der Anfang zu jeder Bewegung nach Etwas' (I:356). For Bloch, this ubiquitous movement constitutes the utopian, which is 'ein Suchen, das hat und nicht hat, was es sucht', 'ein gezieltes Treiben' (I:50).

Utopian imagination, as the specifically political and social form taken by desire, is not limited to the concerns or psychology of the individual, although these two forms of

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[47] Otto Weininger, *Geschlecht und Charakter. Eine prinzipielle Untersuchung* [first published Vienna, 1903] (München: Mathes & Seitz, 1980), p. 249, emphasis added.
[48] See Michael Payne, *Reading Theory. An Introduction to Lacan, Derrida, and Kristeva* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), p. 98.
[49] Michael Payne, *Reading Theory*, p. 97.

desire are clearly interlinked, as the individual's psychology develops within a social context and exists within and in turn impacts on the social arena. It is primarily because of the reciprocal relation of the individual and the social that Bloch rejects as inadequate the (pre-Lacanian) psychoanalytic account of the operation of desire (I:57). His critique of Freud and Jung accuses their approach of being past-focussed ('im Freudschen Unbewußtsein ist nichts Neues', I:61), ahistorical, and exclusively concerned with erotic drives, and of occluding the role played by social and economic forces in the psychological formation and condition of the individual. Bloch insists that the omissions of psychoanalysis, as he perceives them, must be made good. The first step in this direction is to place economic questions at the centre of his considerations — in their most basic form, hunger, 'der *psychoanalytisch überall Ausgelassene*' (I:71). From the psychoanalytic concern with how humans are *shaped by* their past, Bloch moves to an exploration of how humans rather can actively *shape* their future. In the face of the psychoanalytic unravelling of subjectivity and motivation into their constituent unconscious parts, Bloch seeks to reinstate the possibility of an active, forward-looking human subject. If the significance of Bloch's reformulation of utopianism in terms of desire and of a dynamic attitude is to be fully grasped, the stasis that inheres in the classical utopian concept must first be explored.

1.4 Stasis in utopia

The paradox of utopianism can be expressed as follows: the ability to formulate change is a prerequisite to any critical transformative engagement with social reality, but every such formulation carries with it the risk of petrification. It has already been noted that a fear of the uncontrolled or uncontrollable underlies the classical utopian model of a perfected, static society (see p. 17 above). A utopian ideal represents the goal of social transformation, and it thus follows that once this goal is achieved, further social transformation is precluded. Michael Gardiner explicates this inherent stasis as follows:

> To suppose that all social problems could be solved conclusively at a stroke would imply that men and women in a utopian society would not be free to criticize these social arangements and the cultural values that underpin them, or to envisage other, alternative forms of life.[50]

Or, in Northrop Frye's formulation:

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[50] Michael Gardiner, 'A Postmodern Utopia? Heller and Fehér's Critique of Messianic Marxism', in *Utopian Studies* 8 (1997), 89-118 (pp.103-4).

> Considered as a final or definitive social ideal, the utopia is a static society; and most utopias have built-in safeguards against radical alteration of the structure. This feature gives it [*sic*] a somewhat forbidding quality to a reader not yet committed to it.[51]

The classical utopia is autarkic — isolated and self-sufficient. These qualities imply a rejection of the idea that any advantage might accrue from encounters with otherness or engagement with the unknown. The 'forbidding quality' of which Frye writes results from the fact that the classical utopia resists change and negotiation: 'der Utopist [läßt] keine Änderung seines Endziels im Prozeß der Verwirklichung [zu]'.[52] As the utopian society considers itself already to have achieved perfection, and change can only be understood as change for the worse, it is the apotheosis of conservatism. The frequent use of the island topos in utopian fictions illustrates spatially this desire of the alternative social order to remain intact and to minimise the risk of external influences which could cause it to change. The measures taken to ensure the stability and perpetuation of the utopian order call forth anti-utopian doubts concerning the 'human cost' of sustaining what has been achieved. As Krishan Kumar points out, part of the horror of Huxley's Brave New World resides in the fact that it has only one goal, the goal of self-perpetuation.[53]

The self-perpetuation of a particular social order relies on the continuity into the future and into the next generation of current social structures, norms and values. The enterprise of societal self-perpetuation, mainly undertaken in the interdependent spheres of family and formal education, is a key strand in the modernist dystopian problematisation of the utopian concept. Dystopian fictions portray the oppressive regulation of areas of experience that have a bearing on societal perpetuation: sexuality, procreation, child-rearing, and education. The problematic aspect of these processes and their social regulation may be illustrated through the portrayal of a social order which fails to perpetuate itself. This is the case in Hauptmann's *Die Insel der grossen Mutter* and Kubin's *Die andere Seite*. Alternatively, the critique of the society portrayed in a dystopian narrative may reside in precisely the opposite problem, in the totalitarian vision of a perfected social order which replicates itself exactly from generation to generation, representing a kind of insularity and stasis along a temporal axis.

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[51] Northrop Frye, 'Varieties of Literary Utopias', p. 31.
[52] Götz Müller, *Gegenwelten*, p. 8.
[53] Krishan Kumar, *Utopia and Anti-Utopia in Modern Times*, p. 259.

The *establishment* of the order described in utopian/dystopian writing is usually portrayed after the fact; it is its *maintenance* which poses the problems. The social cohesion, stability, maintenance and perpetuation of alternative social orders in twentieth-century texts rely not on an appeal to reason but on other, more sinister or authoritarian methods:[54] the pre-natal manipulation and 'hypnopaedic' conditioning of Huxley's *Brave New World*, the constant surveillance of George Orwell's Big Brother, the vicious Ludovico technique in Anthony Burgess's *A Clockwork Orange*, where social misfits are reduced to the status of subjects in a Pavlov's-Dog-type experiment. In Wedekind's *Mine Haha, oder über die körperliche Erziehung junger Mädchen*, the status quo is maintained by an anonymous authority which presides over the incarceration of young girls in a park (the regimented existence in this society will be discussed more extensively in chapter four). In Kubin's *Die andere Seite*, inhabitants of the *Traumreich* of Perle are kept in check by its ruler Patera through hypnosis, and the threat posed to his power by the advent of the American culminates in the community's downfall. In Hesse's *Das Glasperlenspiel*, the perpetuation of the 'pedagogical province' of Kastalien — which exists without reference to biological family as a monastic microcosm comparable to some historical communitarian utopias[55] — relies on its leaders' willingness to turn their back on the outside world, and Josef Knecht's refusal to do so leads to his own downfall. The influence of the desire for stability on the education of the young, the conservative agenda behind the transmission of values and the defence of the status quo all contribute to the authoritarian character of the social orders portrayed in these fictions. It is partly through this reliance on the infringement of liberty for the safeguarding of its stability that the dystopian order achieves its nightmarish effect.

The distorting mirror of dystopia thus reflects in exaggerated form the problematic relationship between the social goals of education and the individual goals and desires of those being educated. These may sometimes coincide, as they do in the elusive dream of an ideal 'Bildung' that haunts German literature from *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* on. Where they conflict, the institutional momentum of societal self-perpetuation works against the individual narrative of self-realisation — and this not only in dystopian fictions. The role of any system of education and upbringing is to produce citizens who will serve the

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[54] Not all the texts mentioned here are, strictly speaking, dystopias, but all contain elements of utopian/dystopian writing, specifically the alternativity of the social order portrayed and the collective focus of the narrative.

[55] As described by, *inter alia*, Krishan Kumar, *Utopia and Anti-Utopia in Modern Times*, pp. 80-98.

needs and suit the institutions of the existing social reality — in other words, education functions as an instrument of social reproduction. Antonio Gramsci has formulated as follows the role played by education in serving the needs of the given power-relations in any state:

> One of the most important functions of every state is to raise the great mass of the population to a cultural and moral level which corresponds to the needs of the productive forces of development and hence to the interests of the ruling classes.[56]

Ivan Illich argued from a similar premise when criticising the ways in which post-World War II schooling increasingly tended to inculcate the passive mentality required for participation in a consumer society.[57] The dominant socialisation process effectively determines the horizon of collective experience, transmitting and perpetuating the social values that are compatible with society's current dominant interests.

The expansion or contraction of horizons and the question of who controls the view is thus an important metaphor wherever the tension between individual self-realisation and collective socialisation is explored, not least in utopian writing. The prevalence of censorship in dystopian societies — their authoritarian limitation of the intellectual horizon — illustrates the importance of this figure of thought. The most drastic example is provided by Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, in which the institutions of Big Brother, Newspeak and the Thought Police enforce a radical curtailment of permitted experience and expression. Literature and certain branches of scientific research are also censored in Huxley's *Brave New World*,[58] technological and industrial advances are suppressed in Samuel Butler's *Erewhon*, and the matriarchal idyll of Hauptmann's *Die Insel der grossen Mutter* relies on an orthodox version of the island's history that brooks no opposition (see below, p. 114-115). The problematisation of limited perspective and narrow horizons in modernist dystopias calls forth a postmodern rethinking of the utopian concept in terms of a permanent expansion of horizons. This 'opening up' of utopianism is anticipated in Ernst Bloch's theory of hope. At the core of Bloch's anatomy of hope lies the rejection of stasis and the consequent embrace of the new. The next section looks more closely at this expansive gesture.

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[56] Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* (New York: International, 1971), p. 258.
[57] Ivan Illich, *Deschooling Society* (London: Calder and Boyars, 1971).
[58] Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World* [1932] (London: Granada, 1984), p. 176, 183.

1.4.1 'Novum' or novelty? Uses of utopian desire

Bloch's analysis of the potentially revolutionary character of hope and its central role in the shaping of human affairs builds not only on Marxist theory, Enlightenment optimism and faith in progress, but also on what he calls the 'anticipatory' content of Western religious and artistic experience, which contain 'Unabgegoltenes' and thus constitute a 'Feld des antizipierenden Bewußtseins' (I:115). (Thus, despite the repressive and culturally conservative effects of religious belief, faith in God is claimed for Bloch's catalogue of utopian imagination because God is understood as the name under which various experiments in unconditional and total hope-content have been undertaken (see III:1416).) The anticipatory attitude refuses to be contained within the given or known. Rejecting stasis and narrowness, this utopian perspective constantly seeks out the 'Front' or 'Novum' of human experience. The ongoing expansion of horizons created by this drive towards the new and unknown refutes the consensus that the given reality is the only possible reality.

> Der Mensch ist dasjenige, was noch vieles vor sich hat. Er wird in seiner Arbeit und durch sie immer wieder umgebildet. Er steht immer wieder vorn an Grenzen, die keine mehr sind, indem er sie wahrnimmt, er überschreitet sie (I:284).

For Bloch, the insatiability of desire is a guarantee of utopian consciousness, but the reality of affluent Western societies suggests that the area in which such insatiability makes itself felt most clearly and most frequently is the realm of commodity fetishism, in the perpetually self-renewing compulsion to consume. The central Blochian category of the 'Novum' is thus problematically susceptible to the 'another year, another revolution' syndrome,[59] that school of consumerism which depends on novelty, and the utopian when defined in terms of process rather than product, dynamism rather than stasis, is potentially complicit with consumerist ideology. As Tom Moylan has pointed out, all utopian desire can be co-opted for ends that serve the dominant interests of the existing social order, and is thus ambivalent in function, as it can potentially be exploited either to reinforce or to attack the given:

[59] The advertising slogan for iMac computers in a 2002 campaign.

> From the promotional broadsheets of [Thomas] More's period to the most recent piece of advertising, utopian dissatisfaction and imagery has been enlisted into the process of the creation of needs subordinated to the demands of production and profit. [60]

The new *per se* is not emancipatory. Utopian imagination expresses a desire to transcend the given; but so too does the desire for self-enhancement through the purchase of commodities. The dreams of 'elsewhere, better, more' which for Bloch typify puberty and adolescence, giving these phases of existence their characteristically forward-looking attitude, return — as Bloch recognises — in the context of a working life dominated by production and consumption, 'nur eben mit Geld versehen statt mit Idealen' (I:34).

The centrality of novelty to post-industrial consumerism can be understood as the degradation, or farcical restaging, of Bloch's 'Novum': potentially utopian dissatisfaction with, and striving beyond, the well-worn and the familiar are co-opted for economic gain through the discourse of 'lifestyle'. Change, newness and variety, when valued merely for their own sake or for the sake of the financial revenue they generate, disempower potentially utopian desire by satisfying it within the realm of the given and silencing its expression of possibilities beyond that given. Bloch indeed confronts this problem when he suggests that the force of the new is lost when reduced to 'sinnlos wechselnde Moden' which provide only 'die Starre einer immer gleichen Überraschung' (I:231). It is for this very reason that Bloch rejects Bergson's vitalism. Bloch reads Bergson's idea of eternal change as pointless, empty variety rather than becoming *qua* overcoming. The Bergsonian emphasis on the flux of life is, from Bloch's perspective, liberal-anarchic without being anticipatory-emancipatory. Its refusal of repetition constitutes, for Bloch, less a true 'Novum' than a perpetual zig-zag, an 'immer gebannte Rückkehr in das Unveränderliche, das hier Veränderlichkeit heißt': 'Bergson wendet sich gegen einen Prozeßgedanken mit Ziel [...] er eliminiert alles und jedes Voran, Wohin und offen betreibbare Ziel überhaupt' (I: 159).

Bloch's critique of Bergson is bound up with a central problem of utopian theory: the problem of the goal of utopian desire. This problem is centrally important to the modernist misgivings with regard to totalist utopian vision which lead firstly to dystopian critique and through this critique to a re-formulation of the utopian concept. Bloch's work is central to this re-formulation, and yet his position on means and ends is clear:

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[60] Tom Moylan, *Demand the impossible. Science fiction and the utopian imagination* (London/N.Y.: Methuen, 1986), p. 5.

utopian striving is at best futile, at worst dangerous, if it focusses more on process than on product, more on journey than destination, if it becomes a 'sogenannte unendliche Annäherung ans Ideal, [...] die es mit der Realisierung gar nicht ernst meint' (I:215). Utopian desire — which, as Bloch demonstrates, is ubiquitous and irrepressible throughout human history and culture — nevertheless requires the guiding light of a goal of social transformation if it is not to 'go astray' or become dissipated into available gratifications. For Bloch, this necessary guiding light is provided by socialism, 'die Praxis der konkreten Utopie' (I:16), 'das letzte Kapitel von der Geschichte der Welt' (I:199). The tenacity of this position leads to the many questionable and at times absurd statements in *Das Prinzip Hoffnung* concerning the reality of life under socialism as practiced in certain socialist states, for instance: 'Die Sowjetunion kennt keine Frauenfrage mehr, weil sie die Arbeiterfrage gelöst hat' (II:694).

However, the specifics of Bloch's proposed goal for utopian striving are less important for the task at hand in this thesis than the emphasis placed in Bloch's work on the *mediation* between movement and destination, process and product. It is this aspect of Bloch's thought that is most relevant to the postmodern reformulations of utopianism, which eschew the clear formulation of concrete goals. Crucial to the dialectic of journey and goal in *Das Prinzip Hoffnung* is the subjective factor of hope, which is required to balance the objectivity of materialist Marxist analysis. Bloch describes these subjective and objective factors as coldness and warmth respectively (or as 'das Unbetrügbare und das Unenttäuschbare', or 'Säure und Glauben'):

> Kälte und Wärme konkreter Antizipation zusammen bewirken, daß weder Weg an sich noch Ziel an sich undialektisch voneinander abgehalten und so verdinglicht-isoliert werden (I:240).

Through the dialectical interaction of these two strains, Bloch seeks to avoid the limitations of either an overly objective 'Ökonomismus' or an overly subjective 'Schwärmerei'. The 'cold', analytical strain is required to differentiate between authentic and inauthentic anticipation. The need to differentiate between these was demonstrated above (p. 27) with reference to the problematic surface similarity of utopian 'Novum' and consumerist novelty. Utopian dissatisfaction may be available to serve the interests of profit-driven production, but is not exhausted by this function:

> the very dream-making activity of the utopian imagination continually resists the limitation of human desire to the economic and bureaucratic demands of the given system.[61]

Similarly, the commercialised 'happy end' of the culture industry co-opts, but does not exhaust, what Bloch calls 'ein unüberhörbarer Trieb [...] in der Richtung des guten Endes':

> Daß Betrüger sich diesen Trieb zunutze machen, widerlegt ihn au fond fast so wenig, wie der 'Sozialist' Hitler den Sozialismus widerlegte' (I:514).

In *Das Prinzip Hoffnung*, Bloch undertakes the task of charting and bringing to light the residual utopian core in a range of human activities. By highlighting the diversity and ubiquity of human striving beyond the given and known, Bloch's work anticipates the pluralistic approaches to the utopian concept developed in postmodern philosophy. It is necessary to review the developments in the history of the utopian concept which necessitated the formulation of these approaches. The next section thus examines dystopian responses to the crisis in modern utopianism which was sketched above.

1.5 From utopian crisis to dystopian response

Disillusionment with the optimistic narrative of progress and the modern, rationalist-scientific worldview that underlay this narrative posed challenges to the inherited concept of utopian writing. Imaginative constructions of alternative social orders reflected the problematisation of modernity and of the trajectory of modernisation by presenting increasingly negative and traumatic visions of society transformed. Butler's *Erewhon* played with anxieties concerning technological progress by presenting a Luddite alternative society in which machines are forbidden. Responding to, and participating in, the modernist critique of rationalism, twentieth-century dystopian fictions express the fear of what may happen if rationalism gains exclusive domination over all aspects of human existence, leaving no room for that which is symbolised in Yevgeny Zamyatin's dystopia *We* by 'the square root of minus one' (see below, p.39).

The common features of utopian and dystopian imagination have already been noted (see p. 7 above). While both focus on the defects of the society from which they are written, utopia does so by imagining their absence, whereas dystopia does so by

[61] Moylan, *Demand the impossible*, p. 5.

extrapolating from these defects a nightmarish future projection of society. (Northrop Frye uses the term utopian satire for this genre,[62] but the satirical attitude is in fact present in different ways not only in dystopian narratives but also in the implicit critique of reality from which utopian alternatives proceed. As Götz Müller notes of More's *Utopia*, 'die satirische Kritik am korrupten Europa bezieht ihre Norm von der Utopie – so wie die Utopie ein postives Gegenbild dieser korrupten Verhältnisse ist'.[63] Inherent in the satirist's ridicule of contemporary society is the disillusioned idealism, the implied utopian standard with which that society compares unfavourably, while dystopian visions satirically deflate the hopes of utopianism by showing their dark side.) Kumar describes dystopia as 'one side of a dialogue of the self within individuals who have been indelibly stamped with the utopian temperament'.[64] Dissatisfaction with the existing order gives rise to a utopian desire for a preferable alternative; the dystopian position fears that the flaws of the real find their way into the ideal. The dystopian *modus operandi* is twofold: functioning as fable, it carries reality's flaws to salutary extremes; in its anti-utopian function, it warns of the inherent oppressiveness of utopianism (see note 2 above).

Many of the major dystopian novels of the twentieth century reveal both aspects of this twofold function. Bernhard Kellermann's *Der Tunnel*, for instance, projects the contemporary rate of technological advancement into the future, portraying a gargantuan building project which is to have social repercussions on a global scale, and demonstrating in the process both a fascination with the potential of industrial-technological modernity and an awareness of its dehumanising aspect.[65] Yevgeny Zamyatin's *We* turns the tables on a utopian vision of solidarity and community by pitting collective interest against individual freedom. The dystopian narratives of George Orwell (*Nineteen Eighty-Four*) and Anthony Burgess (*A Clockwork Orange*) respectively highlight the problems of state control and disaffected youth by imaginatively unfolding their destructive potential. Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* takes issue with existing consumerist, materialist and conformist tendencies in society, while simultaneously

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[62] Northrop Frye, 'Varieties of Literary Utopias', p. 29.
[63] Götz Müller, *Gegenwelten*, p. 18.
[64] Krishan Kumar, *Utopia and Anti-Utopia in Modern Times*, p. 124.
[65] Kellermann's *Der Tunnel* (Berlin: Fischer, 1913) is more accurately described as a futuristic novel or as proto-science-fiction than as utopian or dystopian writing. The key elements of alterity, critique and focus on a collective (see p. 7 above) are present only in attenuated form, and are subordinated to the twin plots of the protagonist's fate and that of his tunnel project. However, Kellermann's novel is worth mentioning in this context as it combines both dystopian and utopian attitudes to the future projection of contemporary social tendencies in its mix of 'Technologiebegeisterung' and a more critical, sceptical response to modernisation.

seeking to debunk the utopian hopes invested in developmental psychology, genetic research and sexual emancipation. The case of *Brave New World* is worth exploring further, as both the novel itself and Theodor Adorno's reception of it serve to elucidate some of the more complex aspects of the critical function of utopian and dystopian imagination. Also, by relocating the primary cultural taboo of Western civilisation from sex to unhappiness, Huxley's novel anticipates certain cultural shifts of the later twentieth century.

Excursus: the dystopian aspects of *Brave New World*

In *Brave New World*, Huxley portrays a state whose citizens enjoy frequent sexual gratification, material comfort and security. The happiness, abundance and stability of this utopia is achieved at what Huxley implies is too high a price: free will is negated. The regulation of individual and social existence in such a way as to minimise material suffering is denounced by Huxley's text as a dehumanising form of social engineering and control. This objection to the utopian goal of minimising suffering must in turn be questioned on the grounds that it relies on a particularly elusive and ideologically manipulable category: 'what it is to be human'. The reception of dystopian texts often draws its critical energy from the need to question the questioners, to expose the presuppositions and agendas of the dystopian critique. In this vein, Theodor Adorno argues that the novel reveals more about Huxley's ideological perspective than it does about any evil supposedly inhering in a sexually permissive, post-scarcity society *per se*.[66]

The society of *Brave New World* has eliminated suffering, pain, illness, hunger, insecurity and material scarcity. The implication is that the process of eliminating adversity has also destroyed desirable or admirable human qualities usually called into being by adversity. For Adorno, this implication represents an easy way out of the problematic task of transforming society in order to minimise suffering. In Bloch's blunt formulation of the problem, 'Der Rat, Glück zu verachten, kommt nicht vom Heldentum, sondern vom Ausbeuter' (III:1101). A reactionary fear of a bland future where adversity is unknown leads to a tolerance, even a fetishisation of adversity now, thus detracting from genuine attempts to change the social conditions which are the cause of much of this adversity:

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[66] 'Ungeschieden sind bei [Huxley] Freigabe und Erniederung des Geschlechts. [...] Seine Empörung über das falsche Glück opfert mit diesem auch die Idee des wahren.' Theodor W. Adorno, 'Aldous Huxley und die Utopie', in Adorno, *Gesammelte Schriften* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1977), X:1, p. 105.

> Voll fiktiver Sorge um das Unheil, das die verwirklichte Utopie der Menschheit antun könnte, schiebt er [Huxley] das weit dringlichere und realere Unheil von sich, das die Utopie hintertreibt.[67]

In its portrayal of the attempted construction of a better society and of the negative outcome of this attempt, Huxley's novel seems to partake of the conservative and pessimistic attitude towards social transformation or revolution, namely that it is in some way inherently dangerous, misguided or undesirable. Resigned to the idea that human nature is fundamentally flawed — resigned, in religious terms, to the doctrine of original sin — this attitude argues against the possibility of utopia, and suggests, in simplified terms, the following equation: utopianism + original sin = totalitarian dystopia.

By imbuing his 'perfect' world with the quality of a nightmare, Huxley recalls the doctrine of original sin, suggesting that a flawed humanity can only achieve a flawed utopia. Adorno identifies the religious residue at the heart of Huxley's dystopia: 'Weil der Mensch erbsündig und auf Erden des Besseren nicht fähig sei, wird die Verbesserung der Welt selber in die Sünde umgebogen'.[68] This criticism of Huxley's position is part of Adorno's more general critique of conservative, pessimistic attitudes in which the negative effects of progress and change are played up in order to legitimise the status quo.

> In der Übersetzung geschichtlicher Verzweiflung in die Norm, die befolgt werden müsse, hallt wider jene abscheuliche Zurüstung der theologischen Lehre von der Erbsünde, die Verderbtheit der Menschennatur legitimiere Herrschaft, das radikal Böse das Böse. [...] was den Menschen mißlang, sei ihnen ontologisch verweigert.[69]

Adorno, like Ernst Bloch, reads Huxley's portrayal of the bland gratifications of the Brave New World as a reactionary rejection of pleasure as such (see Bloch, I:511). Huxley's dystopian rejection of painlessness and plenitude fails to confront the question it implicitly poses, namely: if certain types of pain and adversity are to be accepted, even embraced, for the sake of the human qualities they can engender, then how is it to be decided which types these are? The risks involved in rejecting an adversity-free model of existence are only partially acknowledged in *Brave New World.* Seeking to explain why he

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[67] Adorno, 'Aldous Huxley und die Utopie', p. 121.
[68] ibid., p. 122.
[69] Theodor Adorno, 'Fortschritt', in Adorno, *Gesammelte Schriften* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1977), X:2, p. 629.

objects to the dystopian order, the Savage John is forced into the position of having to find arguments in favour of pain and suffering. He proves incapable of establishing what might constitute constructive, existentially necessary adversity, and of distinguishing between such 'necessary' adversity and the 'unnecessary' hardships which should be eradicated. The following dialogue from the novel illustrates the conundrum:

> 'All right, then,' said the Savage, 'I'm claiming the right to be unhappy.'
>
> 'Not to mention the right to grow old and ugly and impotent; the right to have syphilis and cancer; the right to have too little to eat; the right to be lousy; the right to live in constant apprehension of what may happen tomorrow; the right to catch typhoid; the right to be tortured by unspeakable pains of every kind.'
>
> There was a long silence.
>
> 'I claim them all,' said the Savage at last.
>
> Mustapha Mond shrugged his shoulders. 'You're welcome,' he said.[70]

Huxley's text thus points in the direction of Adorno's criticism, implying the question: at what point does rejection of an infantile or conditioned happiness become a rejection of happiness *tout court*? Not only the unsatisfactory nature of the dialogue's conclusion, but also the fact that John's reaction against the manufactured happiness of the Brave New World is portrayed as an absurd outburst of self-flagellation, indicate a 'meta'-problematisation: the dystopia thus not only problematises a certain type of utopia, but points up the risks and contradictions that inhere in the anti-utopian position.

Adorno's critique of *Brave New World* overlooks the possibility that Huxley's dystopia is extrapolated not from some dogmatic belief in human frailty, but from specific features of contemporary mass society, capitalist models of production and consumption, and their supporting ideologies. Huxley's dystopia does not arise merely out of a puritan or conservative refusal of ease and affluence; the fact that the pleasures of the Brave New World are hand in glove with its dedication to infinite production and consumption is one of the novel's central insights, and brings the novel closer to Adorno's own analysis of the culture industry than the latter is prepared to admit. (Furthermore, the socially stabilising function of Soma in the novel echoes Bloch's insistence that 'die kapitalistischen Geschäfte sind nur noch betreibbar, wenn das Bewußtsein ihrer Opfer in der Freizeit betäubt wird' (I:69).) Arguably, Huxley's dystopia illustrates in a simplified, parable-like form the arguments developed at a higher level of abstraction and sophistication in Adorno and Horkheimer's *Dialektik der Aufklärung*. The main concerns

[70] Huxley, *Brave New World,* p. 192.

of the latter work are also the concerns underlying the scenario of *Brave New World*, namely: the tendency for the 'freedom' promised by scientific and technological progress — 'freedom' from the natural limitations to human activity — to constitute a new form of domination; and the tendency for all human activity not already involved in the production process to be subsumed ultimately under the logic of production and consumption by the commodification of leisure, entertainment and popular culture through a mass-produced, mass-distributed 'culture industry'. The fully rational world of Huxley's novel does indeed 'radiate disaster triumphant',[71] all the more so because no compelling basis for its rejection is explicitly articulated within the text, the narrator relying instead on the incoherent mix of Puritanism and Shakespeare which is all the Savage can muster by way of a refutation of the World Controller's smooth argumentation.

Viewed from today's perspective, from which the ecological imperative to think beyond the traditional economic growth model geared to maximum productivity is increasingly recognised,[72] the consumerist paradise-prison of *Brave New World* represents furthermore an attempt to come to grips critically with the logic of that model. Huxley's later utopian novel *Island* (1962) revisits these questions, inverting the approach: here, sustainability and quality of life issues are incorporated into an alternative, post-growth model of social and economic organisation. The 'ecotopia' of *Island* reflects a reduction in expectations with regard to the modern project of mastering nature, and a loss of faith in the growth- and affluence-based economic models this project implies. 'Ecotopian' texts, of which William Morris's *News from Nowhere* may be considered an early manifestation, but the bulk of which emerge in the latter half of the twentieth century, take issue with the earlier utopian assumption that a better society is to be created on the continuing basis of material affluence, exploitation of the earth's resources and technological advancement. Contraposed to the modern scientific-technological reading of the biblical injunction to 'fill the earth and subdue it' (Genesis 1. 28), the dream of reconciliation with nature, of (re-)attaining a harmonious co-existence with the environment, is an equally important strand within the utopian tradition. The tension between these two approaches — which could be described as progressive and restorative respectively — is amply demonstrated

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[71] See Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Dialektik der Aufklärung. Philosophische Fragmente* in Adorno, *Gesammelte Schriften*, III, p. 19.

[72] See Carl Amery, *Natur als Politik. Die ökologische Chance des Menschen* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1976).

by the contrast between the respective utopian visions of, say, Edward Bellamy and William Morris (hence the latter's hostile reception of *Looking Backward* (see p. 151 below), and his later significance to the emerging Green movement). Where the progressive utopia seeks to perfect civilisation's tendencies towards domination over nature in the form of well-managed urbanisation and technological advancement, the restorative, the arcadian utopia refutes these and idealises instead a return to a pre-industrial Golden Age. The restorative vision of Arcadia is employed in the twentieth century as a way of contesting a negatively figured modernisation, industrialisation and urbanisation process, and as it informs the scenario of Gerhart Hauptmann's utopian novel *Die Insel der grossen Mutter* it will be discussed extensively in chapter three. The bucolic or pastoral idyll has critical potential in the modern context, especially when combined, as in Morris's *News from Nowhere* or Huxley's *Island*, with environmentally and socially sensitive technologies on a human scale. The contrasting models of progressive and restorative utopianism are reciprocally corrective, each supplying what the other lacks.

Read as a reply to the dystopia of *Brave New World*, Huxley's *Island* takes issue more effectively with the problems caused by economic growth than it does with the putative flaws in 'human nature'. The psychic equilibrium propped up by Eastern religions, mystic rites and hallucinogenic drugs promulgated in the later novel is not in fact so far from the social stability achieved by the Soma and orgy-porgies of the earlier. On the other hand, the island's economics of sufficiency, practised on a human scale and grounded in principles of ecological sustainability, does constitute a critical refusal of, and genuine alternative to, the global net of infinite production and consumption that ensnares the inhabitants of Brave New World.

This brief consideration of Huxley's utopian and dystopian writing has highlighted some of the concerns and methods of dystopian fiction. In dystopian writing, generic features and topoi of the classical utopia are used (chiefly, the portrayal of an alternative social order in which existence has a regimented character) as a way of questioning the presuppositions that underlie the utopian concept. The dystopian challenge to modern utopian optimism will now be examined with reference to a greater variety of texts under several interrelated headings: the fallibility of reason; the conflict between individual will and collective welfare; and the problematisation of ease that necessarily arises where

pleasure and pain are understood to be inextricably linked. By portraying as tyrannical the solutions fictional societies propose to the problems that arise in the areas of experience evoked by these headings, dystopian narratives seek to draw attention to the omissions and weaknesses of rationalist utopianism.

Dystopian problems 1: rationality

As discussed above (p. 13), faith in humanity's rational powers was a prerequisite to the formulation of classical utopias, which anticipated Enlightenment rationalism insofar as they suggested the possibility of secular, this-wordly solutions to human and social problems. The utopian hope vested in reason comes into conflict with the increasing recognition around 1900 of the role played by irrational forces in the psychology of individuals and groups. Dystopian fictions explore the potential such irrational forces may have to disrupt any social order that would claim utopian status for itself. In Zamyatin's dystopia *We*, the irrational number, the square root of minus one, represents those aspects of existence and experience — including the erotic drives — which do not conform to the rational world behind the 'Wall'. The irrational takes many forms: mysticism and religious experience, aggression (especially when self-destructive) and instinctual and erotic drives all serve to highlight the fragility of *ratio*, in that they resist the control of rationality and undermine its power. 'Das Andere der Vernunft ist der menschliche Leib, das Begehren, die Affekte und Leidenschaften, die sich der Vernunft nicht unterwerfen lassen'.[73] Chapter four will look at how Wedekind's pornographic utopia *Die grosse Liebe* takes this tension between rational and irrational to extremes by portraying the negation of the rational subject through collective, orgiastic ritual in a scenario which nevertheless retains a deliberate utopian residue. Sexual desire works in Zamyatin's *We* to subvert the dominance of rationality: it is the protagonist's lust for E-330 which undermines his acceptance of the mathematically infallible happiness his society has constructed for its members. In Burgess's *A Clockwork Orange*, the Ludovico technique, with its brutal Machiavellian rationale, is actually less successful in the taming of Alex than is his own instinctual desire for fatherhood. Alfred Kubin's grotesque and absurdist dystopia, *Die andere Seite*, confounds rationalist expectations at every turn, culminating in a Dionysiac orgy. In different ways, then, these fictions show how

[73] Götz Müller, *Gegenwelten*, p. 39.

irrefutable physicality of existence and the unquantifiable force of desire can work against and even overpower any rational human construct.

Dystopian problems 2: collectivity

The 'dehumanising' element identified by dystopian writers as a problematic feature of utopia is intimately connected with the balance between individual and collective and the fear that the power of the collective can annihilate individual subjectivity by prescribing its forms and limits and monopolising its ultimate terms of reference. An aspect of many dystopian fictions which contributes to their nightmare effect is *sameness*, for instance in the portrayal of the Epsilon clones in *Brave New World*, or in Zamyatin's idea of 'mono-millionedly'.[74] The simple one-word title of Zamyatin's novel, *We*, also evokes the tyranny of the collective over the individual. In Arthur Koestler's fictional account of the interrogation of a Soviet dissident, *Darkness at Noon*, it is implied that the collectivist goals of communism reduce the individual subject to the status of a 'grammatical fiction'.[75] (While Koestler's novel does not strictly belong to the genre under consideration, it is relevant to the discussion in that it explores many of the themes and problems given exaggerated form in dystopian fictions.) This negation of individiuality expresses the fear that the 'grand narrative' of utopia may overpower the 'local narrative' of the individual subject.

The potentially inevitable conflict of interest among emancipated individuals, driven by the uncooperative force of individualism, is suppressed by the collective focus, the supra-individual goal of utopia. Utopian narratives suggest that conflicts of interest can be harmonised, that the antagonism between the rights of the individual subject and the social necessity of institutions can be reconciled. Dystopia presents the reconciliation of these opposing forces, the harmonisation of their dissonance, as an oppressive project predicated on the exclusion or suppression of dissenting elements. Wilhelm Voßkamp speaks in this connection of the 'subjektfeindliche Funktionalität der Sozialutopie', citing the characters of Mignon and the harper in Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* as victims of such an 'Ausschließungsmechanismus'.[76] The enlightened agenda of the *Turmgesellschaft*

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[74] Yevgeny Zamyatin, *We* [1920], p. 29., trans. Bernard Gilbert Guerney (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972).
[75] Arthur Koestler, *Darkness at Noon* [1940] (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1964), p. 201.
[76] Wilhelm Voßkamp, 'Utopie und Utopiekritik in Goethes Romanen Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre und Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre' in *Utopieforschung. Interdisziplinäre Studien zur neuzeitlichen Utopie*, ed. by Wilhelm Voßkamp, 3 vols (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1982), III, 227-249 (p. 235).

requires the suppression of those modes of existence which do not conform to its harmonious vision. Where the classical portrayal of the attainment of harmony was predominantly positive,[77] the modernist characterisation of monolithic perfection tends to introduce a note of suspicion with regard to the redemptive utopia and the threat it poses to diversity and individualism.

Dystopian problems 3: ease/idleness

> The human condition is such that pain and effort are not just symptoms which can be removed without changing life itself; they are rather the modes in which life itself, together with the necessity to which it is bound, makes itself felt. For mortals, the 'easy life of the gods' would be a lifeless life.[78]

During the above discussion of Huxley's *Brave New World*, it was noted that the predominant cultural taboo of the dystopian society in the novel was not sex, but unhappiness. Adorno's analysis of the experiential and psychological conformity fostered by the culture industry, and Marcuse's subsequent critique of the 'happy consciousness' it engenders,[79] increased awareness of this taboo shift in advanced industrial societies. Huxley's dystopia implied that the elimination of suffering and conflict endangers meaningfulness by suppressing one side of the duality of experience, by denying the inextricability of pleasure from pain. While this view owes much, as we have seen, to the doctrine of original sin and its secular manifestation, the conservative 'human nature' concept, it is also fed by another strand of thought: the Nietzschean rejection of ease.

'Ich gehe durch dies Volk und halte die Augen offen: sie sind *kleiner* geworden und werden immer kleiner — *das macht aber ihre Lehre von Glück und Tugend*'.[80] Through the vehicle of Zarathustra, Nietzsche criticises those who seek the smooth path of happiness

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[77] This is not to suggest that a counterpoint to the *Weltanschauung* of the *Turmgesellschaft* is absent from the novel. The internal dissonance created by the fate of the 'heilige Familie der Naturpoesie' (Schlegel) has long been one of the themes of *Wilhelm Meister* criticism, whereby the Mignon subplot is read as 'Goethe's underground resistance to the steady progress of prose into the territories of poetry' (Michael Minden, *The German Bildungsroman*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997, p. 53). For a summary of this strand of criticism, see Minden, pp. 48-59; see also Russell A. Berman, 'Modernism and the *Bildungsroman*. Thomas Mann's *Magic Mountain*' in *The Cambridge Companion to the Modern German Novel*, ed. by Graham Bartram (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 77-92 (p. 82).

[78] Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), p. 120.

[79] See Herbert Marcuse, *One Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1964).

[80] Friedrich Nietzsche, *Werke*, ed. by Karl Schlechta, 5 vols (Frankfurt a.M.: Ullstein, 1969), II, p. 418.

and virtue. The 'smallness' of their doctrine results from a failure to embrace the duality of experience, whereby struggle and pain are ineradicable and must be embraced if they are not to generate the compensatory delusions of religion and morality. The crisis of utopian thought is echoed in Nietzsche's rejection of a 'Lehre von Glück und Tugend' in a way that attests to the close connection between fictional dystopias and the historical reality they satirise. Nietzsche's position resounds not only in the questioning of the validity of conditioned, unchallenged ease and happiness in dystopias like Zamyatin's and Huxley's, but also in the critique offered by theorists of the Frankfurt School, which exposes the socially stabilising function served by cultural conformity or 'happy consciousness' in advanced industrial societies, the homogenisation of individual experience through the mass-production and mass-distribution of the products of the culture industry, and the fostering of a passive attitude geared towards their continued consumption.

It was noted above (p. 34) that the argument against a homogenised and totalising happiness, distilled towards the end of *Brave New World*, leaves its proponent implausibly defending 'man's right to be miserable but human'.[81] John rejects the World Controller's rationale because he suspects that pain and suffering are prerequisites to the learning and growth of the individual, that their eradication is thus undesirable, and that joy and pain are in any case mutually constitutive, two inseparable facets of emotional experience. The narcotic is the most blatant symbol of the strategy which, seeking the unadulterated pursuit of pleasure and the avoidance or eradication of pain, results in a shrinking or deadening of experience. Again, Nietzsche's cultural criticism anticipates a later dystopian motif: 'Ein wenig Gift ab und zu: das macht angenehme Träume. Und viel Gift zuletzt, zu einem angenehmen Sterben'.[82] Nietzsche's heroic rejection of cultural panaceas is echoed in Huxley's portrayal of a race reliant on *Soma*, in which heroism or stoic forbearance are unknown.

But such a 'heroics of pain' is problematic to say the least. If the conceptual unity of pleasure and pain, joy and suffering is consistently applied, it ultimately suggests that the presence of pain and suffering should be accepted, that a status quo in which pain and suffering are not only possible but, for many, frequent and unavoidable should continue

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[81] David Lodge, 'Utopia and Criticism: The Radical Longing for Paradise', *Encounter*, 32 (1969), pp. 65-75 (p. 68).
[82] Nietzsche, *Werke*, II, p. 284.

to be tolerated. The linking of pain to dignity, the defence of pain by reference to the 'solidarity of suffering' — these positions risk ideological hijack. The excursus on *Brave New World* above (see especially p. 33) examined Adorno's argument that the rejection of pleasure and ease is ideologically inflected in Huxley's dystopia, indebted to the conservative and religious belief in a corrupt 'human nature' or original sin. Fascist 'Blut- und Bodenliteratur' made much of the difference in climate between Northern Europe and the tropics, arguing that the hardiness and resilience required to face harsh winters were a factor in the evolution of white heroism and racial superiority.[83] This view is a Social Darwinist adaptation of the commonplace that human nature, inherently flawed and weak, must be tried in the fire of adversity and struggle to become heroic and purified of its weakness. Hannah Arendt's recognition of the centrality of the role of pain in human systems of meaning (cited as the epigraph to this section) suggests that life makes itself felt through the experience of adversity, but if the logic behind this suggestion is consistently applied, it ends in an active seeking-out of adversity as a way of enhancing the feeling of being alive (as is in fact the case in the promise of adrenaline which extreme sports offer as a compensation for the dullness of a danger-free existence).

By portraying a society freed from material want, the classical utopia confronted not only the question of affluence, which is the next 'dystopian problem' to be focussed on here, but also its corollary, idleness. Liberation from drudgery in a post-scarcity world entails an increase in leisure time, raising the question of how this time is to be spent. Thomas More's Utopians limit labour to a maximum of six hours per day, and this comparative freedom from the bond to the physical life results in an increased emphasis on recreation.[84] Idleness and leisure have however generally been viewed with distrust in the modern period, particularly in cultures which consider a work ethic as morally desirable for its own sake:

> The Protestant relationship between leisure and vice is that when men have no necessary duties pressing on them, they give way to their natural passions, which are evil. The sloth, the glutton, the seducer, and the libertine are natural man, revealed by his or her

[83] See Jost Hermand, *Der alte Traum vom neuen Reich: Völkische Utopien und Nationalsozialismus* (Frankfurt am Main: Athenäum,1988).
[84] *The Complete Works of St Thomas More*, iv, p. 127.

play. Such was Calvin's idea, and Geneva was organized by him to give man no rest, and therefore no chance to sin.[85]

In *Das Unbehagen in der Kultur*, Freud develops a more nuanced psychological argument than Calvin as to why work may be a good in itself, exploring the possibility that it constitute a source of meaning and satisfaction and provide opportunities for libidinous release.

> Die Möglichkeit, ein starkes Ausmaß libidinöser Komponenten, narzißtische, aggressive und selbst erotische, auf die Berufsarbeit und auf die mit ihr verknüpften menschlichen Beziehungen zu verschieben, leiht [der Arbeit] einen Wert, der hinter ihrer Unerläßlichkeit zur Behauptung und Rechtfertigung der Existenz in der Gesellschaft nicht zurücksteht. [...] Und dennoch wird Arbeit als Weg zum Glück von den Menschen wenig geschätzt. [86]

Freud implies that the potential satisfactions to be gained from one's life's work are as yet untapped by the majority (thus surely overlooking the differences between different kinds of work, from menial to vocational to creative). According to Arendt, the assumption, present in a different form in Marx's theory of work, that labour power, like any other energy, can never be lost, so that 'if it is not spent and exhausted in the drudgery of life it will automatically nourish other, 'higher' activities', is an illusion:

> A hundred years after Marx we know the fallacy of this reasoning; the spare time of the *animal laborans* is never spent in anything but consumption, and the more time left to him, the greedier and more craving his appetites.[87]

Bloch similarly identifies the potential for leisure to become a burden ('Vierzehn Tage frei, das ist schon sehr viel für die meisten, dann zurück in ein Leben, das keiner will', II:524) in a society where the vast proportion of the time of the majority is spent in alienated labour (II:953). Bloch notes the ways in which the experiences of leisure and idleness are socially determined and constituted:

> Allzuviele lustige Dinge werden zuletzt traurig angesehen. Aber die Gründe liegen nicht im Glück, sondern im Menschen, der es empfängt. Im Arbeitstier, das nicht mehr imstande ist, Nichsttun zu genießen, im bürgerlichen Nichtstun selber, das so genau dem bürgerlichen Alltagsgefühl entspricht wie eine Zahnlücke der Form des gewesenen Zahns (III:1102).

Ivan Illich approaches the same problem in *Deschooling Society*, proposing as a solution a model of 'joyful leisure' as an antidote to the 'sad unemployment' of those excluded from

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[85] Richard Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), p. 116.
[86] Sigmund Freud, *Das Unbehagen in der Kultur* [1930], in *Studienausgabe*, 11 vols (Frankfurt a.M.: Fischer, 1974), IX, p. 212.
[87] Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, University of Chicago Press, 1958, p. 133.

the workforce. 'Unemployment is the sad idleness of a man who, contrary to Aristotle, believes that making things, or working, is virtuous and that idleness is bad'.[88] Both Bloch and Illich thus reflect the necessity for post-scarcity societies to think beyond the work ethic and towards an ethics of leisure. Attempts to imagine the recreational activities of an emancipated humanity have often resulted in images of an ongoing, non-institutionalised and non-coercive (self)-education. Two feminist 'post-scarcity' utopias (i.e., utopias portraying societies in which the problem of sufficient material provision has been solved) from either end of the twentieth century illustrate this. The leisurely learning atmosphere of Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *Herland* (1915), described as 'all education but no schooling' ('they never knew they were being educated')[89] is echoed in the freely chosen, exploratory and diverse gathering of skills and knowledge portrayed in Marge Piercy's *Woman on the Edge of Time* (1976). The interrelated problems of work, leisure and idleness are inevitably confronted by any utopian restructuring of society, and the texts to be discussed in subsequent chapters are no exception. The Arcadian island society portrayed in Gerhart Hauptmann's novel *Die Insel der grossen Mutter* simultaneously idealises and problematises idleness through the feminisation of idleness and masculinisation of work which is to be explored more extensively in chapter three. In chapter four, the presence of similar issues in Wedekind's fantasy society will also be discussed; his utopian sketches make explicit the imbrication of sexual and economic relations, and rewrite sexuality as an openly communal concern indissociable from the institutions of both work and entertainment.

Dystopian problems 4: affluence

> [Die] Gleichsetzung von Glück und Emanzipation mit Macht und Produktion hat das Selbstverständnis der Moderne von Anbeginn irritiert – und zweihundert Jahre Kritik der Moderne auf den Plan gerufen.[90]

To embark on an inquiry into the problematics of affluence would go beyond the scope of this study, because the question of affluence is far from being merely an economic question, but has social, ethical, psychological, philosophical and environmental implications. The purpose of the following remarks is to situate the utopian and

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[88] Illich, *Deschooling Society*, p. 63.
[89] Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *Herland* [1915] (London: Women's Press, 1979), pp. 106-108.
[90] Jürgen Habermas, *Der philosophische Diskurs der Moderne. Zwölf Vorlesungen* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1985), p. 424.

dystopian texts that have been mentioned so far, as well as those that are to be more extensively explored in subsequent chapters, in the context of ongoing debates concerning affluence and scarcity, idleness and leisure, both prior to and during the twentieth century.

Descriptions of *Schlaraffenland* or the Land of Cokaygne have traditionally identified liberation from material want as the fundamental condition of utopia.[91] Literary utopias build their models of a transformed world on the assumption that the problem of satisfying material needs can be solved. An effective device of the modernist dystopia is the portrayal of an affluent society which nevertheless falls short of its own utopian claims to perfection. Bloch highlights the insatiability of psychological desire once material needs have been satisfied: 'Hat er das Notwendige, so tauchen mit dem Genuß neue Begierden auf, die anders, doch nicht weniger quälen als vorher nackter Mangel — Kitzel des Ichweißnichtwas' (I: 54). For Bloch, this existential dissatisfaction irreducible to physical needs is a potentially utopian force. But it also informs the problematisation of classical utopias on the post-scarcity model.

The writers whose commentaries on the problematics of idleness were cited above sought variously to come to grips with the challenges posed by a post-scarcity economy. While the term 'post-scarcity economy' is obviously not applicable to the present global situation, the consequences of such an economy — from rising obesity rates and stress levels to environmental degradation — increasingly confront affluent societies. The negative effects of the growth model of continuously increasing production and consumption call into question a long-standing faith in the ability of material progress and 'development' to remedy social ills. Such faith was viewed as questionable even before environmental and quality-of-life issues began to undermine the dominant logic of economic growth: already in *Deschooling Society*, Illich had called the promise of 'development' along capitalist lines 'an epidemic of insatiable this-worldly expectation [...] an earthly paradise of never-ending consumption',[92] and had rejected the notion that the 'trickle-down' effect in an affluent society would ultimately benefit all social strata globally: 'the hope has vanished that the problem of justly distributing goods can be

[91] This vision of sated want has long been shadowed by its problematisation, however, as Brueghel's portrayal of the gluttony and idleness *im Schlaraffenland* (see overleaf) suggests.
[92] Illich, *Deschooling Society*, p. 45.

sidetracked by creating an abundance of them'.[93] Jacob Taubes has likewise noted that the modern narrative of progress, initially conceived as an inherently emancipatory project, i.e. as a means to an end, forfeited its emancipatory dimension and became an end in itself:

> Wenn Fortschritt, einst ein kritischer Begriff der Aufklärung, um den Zwang der Natur, die Repetition des Immergleichen, zu brechen, selbst umschlägt in Routine und in blinden Automatismus, dann ist die kritische Spitze des Begriffs abgestumpft, und Fortschritt wandelt sich selbst zum Organon der Repression.[94]

However, insights into the inadequacy of a purely material conception of well-being, and into the inefficiency of attempts to ensure the material well-being of humanity, must be able to resist arguments in favour abandoning such attempts altogether. This is the substance of Adorno's concern that such critical insights may be used to justify the conservative position whereby 'was den Menschen mißlang, sei ihnen ontologisch verweigert'.[95] To reject the redemptive claims of a primarily material progress narrative complicates, rather than refuting outright, the utopian dream of an emancipated humanity — the first step of emancipation was and is emancipation from scarcity, hence the centrality of hunger for Bloch's utopian philosophy (I:71). Adorno, writing at a time when attempts to achieve material well-being were overshadowed by the threat of a nuclear holocaust which could instantly render all such progress irrelevant, recognises material concerns as only part of a larger problem intimately bound to socio-economic structures and to the dynamics of power and hierarchisation determining social relations:

> Der physische Mangel, der lange [des Fortschritts] zu spotten schien, ist potentiell beseitigt: nach dem Stand der technischen Produktivkräfte brauchte keiner auf der Erde mehr zu darben. Ob weiter Mangel und Unterdrückung sei – beides ist eines – , darüber entscheidet einzig die Vermeidung der Katastrophe durch eine vernünftige Einrichtung der Gesamtgesellschaft als Menschheit.[96]

The conviction that solutions to social problems can be found purely with recourse to the material sphere has often been attacked as fallacious; for example, arguments for a more ecologically responsible approach to production and consumption tend to carry

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[93] ibid., p. 112.
[94] Taubes, 'Kultur und Ideologie' [1969], in Taubes, *Vom Kult zur Kultur. Bausteine zu einer Kritik der historischen Vernunft*, ed. by Aleida Assmann and others (Munich: Fink, 1996), p. 302.
[95] Theodor Adorno, 'Fortschritt', in Adorno, *Gesammelte Schriften*, (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1977), x:2, p. 629.
[96] Adorno, 'Fortschritt', p. 618. The 'Katastrophe' refers to the destruction of humanity through nuclear war.

with them a rejection of consumerism's promises: 'Eine Droge, die noch stärker als Huxley's Soma wirkt ist das Versprechen von noch mehr Konsum und Wirtschaftswachstum'.[97] The endlessly rising escalator of socio-economic expectation is seen from this perspective as a treadmill:

> Instead of satisfying the real human needs of all, the modern consumer industry ceaselessly stimulated new artificial needs which kept humans on the treadmill of increasing income constantly chasing ever new kinds of goods and services.[98]

The fact that affluence and leisure offer only inadequate guarantees of an improved quality of life poses a challenge to utopian imagination, which clings to the 'Schlaraffenland' model of enough for all while incorporating into itself the insight that this itself is not enough. The gratifications of sufficiency, even abundance, are quickly exhausted because *just to live* is an inadequate goal, or, in Hannah Arendt's words, 'life, which for all other animal species is the very essence of their being, becomes a burden to man because of his innate repugnance to futility'.[99] In Bloch's terms, the 'Selbsterhaltungstrieb' cannot be contained, but fuels a 'Selbsterweiterungstrieb' (I:84).

The aim of dystopian writing is to suggest that the utopian dreams of abundance and ease, of a rational world and a harmoniously co-existing collective, are less straightforward and more problematic than at first sight they seem. The regimentation of existence in utopian orders results from the tendency of such orders to be conceived according to certain principles; the utopian order translates an abstract concept into social form, and existence within the order is subordinated to the concept — whether this be rationality, production/consumption or 'mathematically infallible happiness'.

1.6 Totalitarianism and utopia: the dream of decidability

> The business of philosophy is to teach man to live in uncertainty.[100]

It has been noted that the critical function of utopian imagination is to expose (explicitly or implicitly) the 'here and now' as an unsatisfactory state (see p. 10 above). The utopian

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[97] Rolf Jucker: 'Zur Kritik der real existierenden Utopie des Status Quo' in *Zeitgenössische Utopieentwürfe*, Amsterdamer Beiträge zur neueren Germanistik, 1997, pp. 13-78 (p. 13).
[98] Kumar, *Utopia and Anti-Utopia in Modern Times*, p. 398.
[99] Arendt, *The Human Condition*, University of Chicago Press, 1958, p. 119.
[100] Leo [Lev] Shestov, *All things are possible* [original title: *Apofeoz bespochvennosti/Apotheosis of groundlessness*], trans. by S. S. Koteliansky with a foreword by D. H. Lawrence (London: Secker, 1920), p. 24.

concept thus presupposes a differentiation between, on the one hand, elements of this 'here and now' that are to be jettisoned or overcome, and, on the other, elements that could be carried forward into a utopian future and would indeed facilitate its attainment. The task of this section is to examine the methods by which such differentiation is achieved and to look at ways in which these methods have been problematised, as this problematisation has played a crucial role in the postmodern re-formulation of the utopian concept.

The totalitarian dimension of utopianism is visible at its most fatal whenever the utopian project of building an ideal collective resorts to excessive measures in the pursuit of definitive decidability and exclusion. The problem has been formulated as one of means and ends by Karl Popper, who among others has argued that utopianism is inevitably violent as it sacrifices the present to the future.[101] Popper, a self-confessed rationalist, rejects 'Utopianism' as a 'pernicious' form of rationalism. Defining rational action as action which 'makes the best use of the available means in order to achieve a certain end', Popper argues that the subordination of means to ends is problematic in the case of political action as it presupposes the possibility of determining those ends, of formulating a 'blueprint'.[102] It is, as we shall see, precisely the notion of utopia as a definitive blueprint that has been subjected to questioning and undermining in postmodern appropriations of the concept. Before these can be discussed, the potentially violent and totalitarian aspect of modern utopianism must first be more thoroughly dealt with.

Zygmunt Bauman — like Talmon and Popper before him, and like John Gray after him — argues that modern social-engineering utopianism provides the rationale for violent and totalitarian methods. A tendency to sacrifice present 'means' to future 'ends' and a reliance on definitive categorisation and on the elimination of ambivalence lie, in Bauman's view, behind every case of modern genocide. Bauman agrees with Detlev Peukert that National Socialism 'pushed the utopian belief in all-embracing 'scientific' final solutions of social problems to the ultimate logical extreme'.[103] The murderous potential of this utopian dream of order and decidability is violently unleashed when

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[101] Karl Popper, 'Utopia and Violence' in Popper, *Conjectures and Refutations* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1963), pp. 355-363. See also Jacob Talmon, *The Origins of Totalitarian Democracy* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1952) and John Gray, *Al Qaeda and what it means to be modern.*

[102] Popper, 'Utopia and Violence', p. 358.

[103] Bauman, *Modernity and Ambivalence*, p. 30. Bauman paraphrases Detlev Peukert, *Volksgenossen und Gemeinschaftsfremde: Anpassung, Ausmerze und Aufbegehren unter dem Nationalsozialismus* (Cologne: Bund Verlag, 1982).

confronted with undecidable cases. Bauman sees the assimilated Jew in pre-Holocaust Europe as a prototypically undecidable case, and explores questions of identity and difference, of alterity, identity construction and 'strangerhood' in order to expose the problematics and limitations of modern rational utopianism.[104]

The construction of categories and identities such as 'Volksgenosse' and 'Gemeinschaftsfremder' — like the construction of gender identities, which is further discussed in chapter two — relies on the externalisation of elements which do not fit the self-image of the dominant subject. The dream of non-negotiable identity categories such as these arises from the same desire for epistemological certainty that underlies the modern utopian quest to create a predictable, controlled life-world (see above, p. 17). Bauman sees such a world best represented by the 'great American institution of the shopping mall'. The perfectly controlled, sealed and monitored world of the mall represents for Bauman a 'grotesque restaging of the Enlightenment drama'. By purging unpredictability, the mall 'comes closer than any other aspect of contemporary life to the ideal type of triumphant rationality'.[105] The modernist problematisation of modernity undermines faith in this kind of rationality and in the goal of a transparent and predictable life-world suggested by its logic. Dostoevsky's Underground Man rejects the utopia of Cherneshevsky's crystal palace because it enshrines a predictable, transparent rationality, symbolised by the never-changing equation 2 x 2 = 4 with its claim to universal and eternal validity.[106]

As the modern utopia of a consistently rational life-world presupposes a decisive operation whereby it would be possible to evaluate, distinguish, and then choose between that which is to be accepted or to be rejected/excluded, ambivalent and undecidable categories represent a major challenge to this kind of utopia. They resist the decisive operation of either/or, and recede from the grasp of clear distinctions. The paradigmatically undecidable term *pharmakon* has been evoked to demonstrate the limits of decidability.[107] According to Derrida, the *pharmakon* is inherently ambivalent, in that it

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[104] Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and Ambivalence* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), p. 150.
[105] Bauman, *Modernity and Ambivalence*, p. 227. Bauman's description of the 'sell-out' of a core Enlightenment value, rationality, corresponds to Taubes's suggestion that the emancipatory aspect of progress eventually declines (see p. 46 above).
[106] Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground* [1864], trans. by Jesse Coulson (London: Penguin Modern Classics, 1972), p. 41.
[107] Jacques Derrida, 'La pharmacie de Platon', in Derrida, *La Dissémination* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1972), especially pp. 108-133. See also Bauman, *Modernity and Ambivalence*, p. 55, and Karin Littau, 'Refractions of

refers to *both* poison *and* remedy and is fully and exclusively *neither* one *nor* the other in the way that subsequent translations (for example 'Heilmittel') make it appear to be. The logics of 'both/and' and 'neither/nor' are inimical to a project of man-made perfection which relies on definitive differentiation and exclusion, on the operation of 'either/or'. Undecidables 'are all neither/nor; which is to say they militate against the either/or'; [108] ambivalence both provokes and resists the project of a rationalist utopia, it 'spawns the urge to overcome it yet renders impossible the fulfilment of that urge'.[109] Ambivalence and undecidability thus paradoxically (but appropriately) give rise *both* to utopian desire *and* to the necessity for such desire to acknowledge the impossibility of its own fulfilment. In Bauman's words, 'the persistence and constant possibility of hermeneutic problems can be seen as simultaneously the motive and the product of boundary-drawing efforts'.[110]

The postmodern condition is determined by the necessity of living in the absence of the modern faith in rationality and progress while surrounded by the fragmented, residual legacy of this faith. The recognition of this condition has been accompanied by a process of re-negotiation in the area of gender identity. An insistence on the various roles played by construction and performativity, by historical and social contingency in gender identity challenges the essentialist model of a timeless, universal complementarity of masculine and feminine principles. The non-negotiable gender category will be discussed more extensively in chapter two, as it is a particular — and particularly widespread — manifestation of the non-negotiable category as such. The fact that it has of late been subjected to the questioning perspectives of gender theory has given rise to grave concern in certain quarters.[111] The postmodern condition involves a recognition that epistemological certainty cannot be achieved because, even between elements which seem to have been successfully submitted to categorisation, a permeable boundary persists. Judith Butler, analysing the construction of the compulsorily heterosexual gendered subject, describes in bodily terms the impossibility of non-negotiable boundaries:

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the feminine: The monstrous transformations of Lulu', *Modern Language Notes*, 110 (1995), 888-912 (pp. 896-897).

[108] Bauman, *Modernity and Ambivalence*, p. 56.

[109] ibid., p. 52.

[110] ibid., p. 57.

[111] See 'Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Collaboration of Men and Women'. Electronic version, retrieved 7 September 2004 from http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20040731_collaboration_en.html.

> For inner and outer worlds to remain utterly distinct, the entire surface of the body would have to achieve an impossible impermeability. This sealing of its surfaces would constitute the seamless boundary of the subject; but this enclosure would invariably be exploded by precisely that excremental filth that it fears.[112]

Definitive decidability, incontrovertible exclusion can only be reached in the realm of totalitarian fantasy. Only there can absolute categorisation be achieved. This is why literary totalitarian fantasies tend to problematise the binary mechanisms of delimitation and exclusion. The dystopian novels of Orwell, Zamyatin, Huxley, Attwood and others are animated by the struggle between a system that seeks to impose itself comprehensively and the unwanted factors that persist despite it, be they transgressive sexual desire, individuality, imagination, feminist consciousness or dirt. Dystopian writing raises the dissenting voice of individual choice and will against the authoritarian structure of utopian society, and pits models of dynamic change and chaos against a utopian stasis and perfection perceived as tyrannical: in short, it exposes utopia's order as inimical to freedom. The tension between freedom and order now to be examined poses a challenge to the postmodern rethinking of the utopian concept.

1.6.1 Aporia of freedom in utopia and dystopia

In Huxley's dystopia, freedom *from* material scarcity, suffering and adversity was acquired at the cost of freedom *to* question or think outside the fundamental premises, values and methods of the social order. The abundance and social stability of the Brave New World entailed the negation of choice and individuality, and the Enlightenment values of 'liberty, equality, fraternity' were travestied in the conformist agenda of 'community, identity, stability'.[113] Margaret Atwood's dystopia, *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985), also addresses the competing claims of personal liberty/individual self-realisation and social stability/security:

> There is more than one kind of freedom, said Aunt Lydia. Freedom to and freedom from. In the days of anarchy, it was freedom to. Now you are being given freedom from. Don't underrate it.[114]

The modernist dystopia implies that these two types of freedom are mutually exclusive by portraying a world in which the former has been sacrificed to the latter.

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[112] Judith Butler, *Gender trouble: feminism and the subversion of identity* (London: Routledge, 1990), p. 134.
[113] Huxley, *Brave New World*, p. 15.
[114] Margaret Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale* (New York: Ballantine, 1985), p. 33.

Ernst Bloch anatomises the inherent duality in the concept of freedom in similar terms, describing 'Freiheit' as 'ein in seinen Inhalten variierbarer Beziehungsbegriff; sogar das Formale dieser Beziehung ist noch verschieden, je nachdem, ob Befreiung *von* etwas oder *zu* etwas erstrebt wird' (II:615, emphasis added). The tension in utopian vision between freedom and order is demonstrated by the contrast between the two terms in the formulation 'Reich der Freiheit', which can be variously inflected to emphasise *Reich* or *Freiheit* (II:618). Bloch's dialectical approach to the antagonistic forces of freedom and order makes a case for their possible coexistence and interdependence. For Bloch, the framework for a coexistence of freedom and order is the Marxist framework of dialectical materialism.

> Freiheit und Ordnung, harte Gegensätze in den abstrakten Utopien, gehen so in der materialistischen Dialektik ineinander über, stehen sich bei. Konkretes Freisein ist Ordnung, als die seines eigenen Felds, konkretes Geordnetsein ist Freiheit, als die seines einzigen Inhalts (II:621).

By seeking to mediate between the competing claims of 'Freiheit und Ordnung', writers on utopia from Bloch onwards take on board dystopian misgivings with regard to the stasis and self-sufficiency — and the potentially tyrannical character — of an achieved utopian order. Theories of utopia since Mannheim and Bloch have sought to respond to dystopian criticism by reformulating the utopian concept so as to divest it of its traditional associations of insularity, stasis and self-perpetuation in favour of an emphasis on open-endedness, dynamic change and desire. Underlying this rethinking of the utopian concept is a recognition that the end of desire is its annihilation. Bloch notes the salutary final wish of the Buddhist, which is to cease wishing, ('keinen Wunsch mehr zu haben' (III:1584)), implying that what is ultimately desired in desire is that it be extinguished. Rather than focussing on the implied *end* of desire, the open-ended utopianism of postmodernity has as its main theme the *process* of desire or, in Miguel Abendsour's formulation, the *education* of desire.[115] Late twentieth-century formulations of critical utopianism respond to dystopian critique by rehabilitating the Heraclitean moment within the utopian, turning the tables on the accusation that utopia is static by insisting that the most static society is the one that admits of no utopian version or vision of itself. Jost Hermand points out that wholesale dystopian rejection of utopian formulations on the grounds of their static quality ignores the dynamising, transformative potential of imagined alternatives: 'eine utopielose Welt reproduziert nur noch sich

[115] See Krishan Kumar's introduction to William Morris, *News from Nowhere, or an epoch of rest: being some chapters from a Utopian Romance* [1891] (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. xx.

selber'.[116] This shift in the conceptualisation of the utopian reflects and partakes of a more general philosophical and theoretical shift towards the processual, fragmented, and disrupted, away from static, monolithic or clearly boundaried categories and concepts. From Bergson's focus on flux, change and dynamism to Derrida's statement that 'it is to Heraclitus that I refer myself in the final analysis', the literature and philosophy of modernism — and their self-reflexive reiteration in postmodernism — bring to the fore modes of thinking and narrating that attest to the partial nature of experience, in both senses of partial: incomplete and non-objective.

The postmodern reformulation of the utopian as quest or direction results from the productive confrontation between utopian dream and dystopian nightmare. Reflecting the condition of postmodernity as a 'modernity that has admitted the non-feasibility of its original project',[117] the utopian concept is salvaged for postmodernity through the acknowledgement that it is impossible to offer a concrete vision of the destination of utopian striving and through a consequent shift of emphasis from product to process, from destination to direction. The awareness of the provisional, fallible and processual character of all utopian formulations is kept alive in the hope that this will minimise the risk of totalitarianism. As Bernhard Spies remarks, the collapse of socialist systems in the final decade of the twentieth century is a crucial factor in this shift:

> Auf Mängel der Erfahrungswirklichkeit mit der Konzeption einer fundamental anderen Welt zu reagieren, gilt nunmehr als ein von vornherein verfehltes, ja gefährliches Unterfangen. Befürworter des utopischen Denkens, die sich noch zu Wort melden, verteidigen zwar dessen prinzipielle Legitimität, hüten sich aber, sich auf eine bestimmte Utopie festzulegen.[118]

Before specific instances of postmodern approaches to the concept utopia can be explored, there is one more aspect of utopian writing to consider: the fact that it is not just *utopian* writing, but utopian *writing*. The political or social message communicated by dystopian and utopian texts alike reaches the reader through a filter of narrative — even where the pace and method of narration are adapted to the task of describing an alternative social order. The task of the next section is to explicate the relationship between specifially utopian/dystopian literature and the broader literary and aesthetic categories of which such texts form a subset. The utopian or dystopian text takes its

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[116] Jost Hermand, *Orte, irgendwo. Formen utopischen Denkens*, p. 17.
[117] Bauman, *Modernity and Ambivalence*, p. 98.
[118] Bernhard Spies, preface to *Ideologie und Utopie in der deutschen Literatur der Neuzeit*, p. 1.

reader imaginatively into another world — but that does not make this kind of writing unique in literature.

1.7 Utopian aesthetics: literature as *alter mundus*

The postulation of an alternative sphere has long been seen as one of the functions of art and literature. This can be characterised negatively (as it is when Plato banishes poets from his republic in protest against the fraudulent basis of literature) or positively (as it is in the Romantic view of art as a means of transcending and unifying an inadequate, compartmentalised reality and of uncovering truths veiled in everyday existence). A work of art or literature provides an alternative perspective or experience, from which reality can be criticised, subverted or escaped. Poststructuralist feminists, for instance, see in poetic language possibilities for the subversion of 'phallogocentrism'; Herbert Marcuse propounds a view of art as a realm — even a bastion — of non-instrumental, non-commodified human activity.[119] The Romantic understanding of art was that aesthetic experience could be a gateway to the sublime, offering a restoration of the lost harmony between man and nature and providing the possibility of enchantment in a disenchanted world.

In a variety of ways, then, the work of art — a product of the intersection of imagination and form — and the aesthetic experience are invested with an oppositional or compensatory quality. The artwork stands as evidence that the imaginative processes can result in the bringing forth of previously non-existent forms. In this way, it seems to resist or contest a reality perceived as inadequate or unsatisfactory. It is however important to distinguish clearly between the compensatory and oppositional functions of aesthetic experience. Freud's inclusion of artistic creativity and aesthetic experience as 'coping mechanisms' alongside intoxication, social isolation and religious delusion[120] raises the question of whether art can provide a truly alternative sphere of experience or merely acts as a compensatory outlet. Bloch characterises Freud's view of the function of art as a 'Naturschutzpark' theory of aesthetic imagination, suggesting that, by pushing art into an enclave, this theory denies the possibility that reality could ever be otherwise: 'bei Freud erscheint die Realität allemal als unveränderliche' (I:109). It is the potentially transformative function of the aesthetic which is of most relevance to the discussion of utopia, and it is this function which is central to Marcuse's aesthetics, in which the

[119] Herbert Marcuse, *Die Permanenz der Kunst. Wider eine bestimmte marxistische Ästhetik* (Munich: Hanser, 1977).
[120] Sigmund Freud, *Das Unbehagen in der Kultur,* p. 210-216.

political role of art is foregrounded. The 'purposeful purposelessness' of aesthetic experience — a phrase Marcuse borrows from Kant — constitutes a 'new experience of existence beyond the performance principle'.[121] 'Durch die Organisation des Lust-Ich in ein Realitäts-Ich wird die Phantasie als abgetrennter seelischer Vorgang geboren'.[122] In Marcuse's aesthetics, the role of imagination, particularly where it enjoys free rein in the 'Spielraum' of fantasy, is to contest the dominant logic of the reality principle by operating along completely different lines. Marcuse argues that art is committed to a perception of the world that would alienate individuals from their functional existence in society. He maintains that the encounter with the fictitious world gives sensual representation to a counter-societal experience.[123] 'In sinnlicher Konkretion steht die Kunst gegen die Gesellschaft. Ihre Autonomie enthält den kategorischen Imperativ: es muß anders werden'.[124]

> Die Welt ist nicht für den Menschen gemacht, und sie ist nicht menschlicher geworden. Indem die Kunst diese Wahrheit festhält, indem sie mit dem Versprechen des Glücks auch diese Erinnerung bewahrt, kann sie als 'regulative Idee' in den verzweifelten Kampf für die Veränderung der Welt eingehen. Die Kunst würde dann dem Fetischismus der Produktivkräfte, der schlechten Technokratie und dem schlechten Materialismus entgegentreten — im Namen des Glücksanspruchs der Subjektivität, des freien Individuums.[125]

According to this argument, the emancipatory function of art resides in the fact that it is a sphere of experience that does not conform to the reality and performance principles which usually dominate existence in advanced industrial societies. The implication of this argument is that even the most bleak or nihilistic work of literature can be understood to transcend the negativity of its own content simply by virtue of the fact that it is a product of individual creative imagination. Working from the premise that giving aesthetic form to horrific subject matter counteracts its horror, Marcuse reads the devastating end of Wedekind's *Die Büchse der Pandora* in a redemptive light.

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[121] Stephen Eric Bronner, 'Between Art and Utopia: Reconsidering the Aesthetic Theory of Herbert Marcuse', in *Marcuse: Critical Theory and the Promise of Utopia*, ed. by Robert Pippin, Andrew Feenberg and Charles P. Webel (Hampshire/London: Macmillan, 1988), pp. 107-140 (p. 118).
[122] Herbert Marcuse, 'Phantasie und Utopie' in *Utopie. Begriff und Phänomen des Utopischen*, ed. by Arnhelm Neusüss (Berlin/Neuwied: Luchterhand, 1968), pp. 219-234 (p. 220).
[123] Marcuse, *Die Permanenz der Kunst*, p. 50.
[124] ibid., p. 22-3.
[125] ibid., p. 74.

Turning now to Bloch's view of the utopian aspect of art, we find a twofold approach. Firstly, Bloch suggests that a work of art is utopian insofar as it holds out the possibility of thoroughly consistent form, shaped through human will and imagination:

> Schönheit, gar Erhabenheit, sind stellvertretend für ein noch nicht gewordenes Dasein der Gegenstände, *für durchformte Welt ohne äußerlichen Zufall*, ohne Unwesentlichkeit, Unausgetragenheit. (I:248, emphasis added).

Here, Bloch maps the desire to eliminate contingency — a desire that underlies both the classical utopia and its modernist dystopian problematisation (see p. 69 below) — onto aesthetic production. Elsewhere, Bloch's aesthetics centre on a more open-ended concept: the inexhaustibility of art, the survival of artistic masterpieces beyond the demise of the ideology from within which they are produced. Bloch sees this as evidence of a utopian core inhering within artistic creativity and argues that the endurance of great artistic masterpieces is evidence of their anticipatory dimension. They are not exhausted by their time, by the historical conditions and contingencies that oversee their creation:

> Die Akropolis gehört zwar zur Sklavenhaltergesellschaft, das Straßburger Münster zur Feudalgesellschaft, dennoch sind sie mit dieser ihrer Basis bekanntlich nicht vergangen [...] Alle bisherige große Kultur ist Vor-Schein eines Gelungenen, sofern er immerhin in Bildern und Gedanken auf der fernsichtreichen Höhe der Zeit, also nicht nur in und für seine Zeit, angebaut werden konnte (I:176-8).

The utopian function of art lies for Bloch in its anticipatory content. 'Vom Schönen wird gesagt, daß es erfreue, ja sogar genossen werde. Doch hat es seinen Lohn damit noch nicht dahin, Kunst ist keine Speise' (I:242). The contrast between 'Kunst' and 'Speise' is telling: whereas the function of food is exhausted in the *reproduction* of an already existing body, guaranteeing its future existence, art works to suggest that the exact reproduction of social structures into the future is not inevitable, but that such structures can be transformed through the forces of imagination and will. Ingeborg Bachmann reflects in strikingly similar terms on the utopian function of literature:

> So ist die Literatur, obwohl und sogar weil sie immer ein Sammelsurium von Vergangenem und Vorgefundenem ist, immer das Erhoffte, das Erwünschte, das wir ausstatten aus dem Vorrat nach unserem Verlangen — so ist sie ein nach vorn geöffnetes Reich von unbekannten Grenzen [...] die Literatur ist ungeschlossen, die alte so gut wie die neue, sie ist ungeschlossener als jeder andere Bereich [...].[126]

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[126] Ingeborg Bachmann, 'Literatur als Utopie', in Bachmann, *Werke*, 4 vols (Munich: Piper, 1978), IV, p. 258-259.

Like that of Marcuse, the thrust of Bloch's aesthetic theory is to suggest that aesthetic experience contests the inevitability of reality, that the provision of an 'alternative sphere' is an effect of the artwork *per se*. What then constitutes the prerogative of utopian/dystopian texts, with their explicit intention of envisioning an alternative order? Manfred Pfister and Monika Lindner address this question in their discussion of utopian/dystopian writing:

> Das übergreifende Kriterium unseres typologischen Überblicks [...] war der Entwurf einer zur aktuellen Wirklichkeit alternativen Welt, die Konstruktion von möglichen, denkbaren und unmöglichen Gegenwelten zum jeweils historisch akzeptierten Wirklichkeitsmodell. Doch löst dieses Kriterium nicht jedes literarische Werk ein, das als ästhetische Fiktion ja immer einen *alter mundus* erstellt, der in wesentlichen Eigenschaften von den empirisch gegebenen Bedingungen der Wirklichkeit abweicht?[127]

Lindner and Pfister overcome this difficulty by differentiating between the *alterity* of the literary work and the more specific *alternativity* of utopian/dystopian texts, which require the suspension of the mimetic relationship to empirical reality. Karl Heinz Bohrer similarly differentiates between an 'Utopie des Ästhetischen' and the more specific 'ästhetische Utopie', the latter being a literary text which conforms to a particular genre.[128] For Silvio Vietta, however, it is through its mode of alterity that modernist literature can provide a critical counterpoint to the monophony of rationalistic-technological-economic modernity.[129] Because this alternative voice is for Vietta a function of literature as such, he suggests that explicitly utopian texts — which describe an alternative social order for extraliterary political or didactic purposes — misunderstand the utopian potential of the autonomous work of art, betraying this potential and overtly overloading the literary work with the burden of a political programme.[130] This debate is not new: in *Über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen in einer Reihe von Briefen*, Schiller maintained that an artwork that explicitly aims to teach and improve can be said to forfeit its artistic quality, and yet the treatise as a whole envisions a harmonising, synthesising aesthetic sensibility that is able, through the redemptive encounter with 'die schöne Kunst', to render whole again that which has been compartmentalised, and to create a balanced co-existence of the sensual and the

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[127] Manfred Pfister and Monika Lindner, 'Alternative Welten: Ein typologischer Versuch zur englischen Literatur', in *Alternative Welten*, ed. by Manfred Pfister (Munich: Fink, 1982), p. 34.
[128] Cited in Verweyen and Witting, 'Zum deskriptiven Gehalt des Utopiebegriffs', p. 8.
[129] Vietta, *Die literarische Moderne*, p. 28.
[130] ibid., p. 14.

intellectual.[131] Where aesthetic experience is endowed with a utopian function, explicitly utopian texts are deemed unliterary or insufficiently aesthetic. Explication of the utopian function of art tends to rely on two problematic ideas — the 'autonomous' work of art and the 'redemptive' component of aesthetic experience. For the current task of clarifying the relationship between the utopian and the aesthetic, it seems reasonable to accept that many aesthetic theories postulate a utopian dimension in art, but necessary to engage briefly with an opposed position. A case of critical resistance to the term 'utopian' will illuminate the counter-arguments.

In their discussion of utopian elements of both Grimmelshausen's *Simplicissimus* and Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* novels, Theodor Verweyen and Gunther Witting concur with, and re-assert, a dictum of Robert von Mohl, whose 1845 essay 'Die Staats-Romane. Ein Beitrag zur Literatur-Geschichte der Staats-Wissenschaft' they see as a founding document of 'wissenschaftliche Utopieforschung'. The dictum is as follows: 'Poesie und Gesetzbuch sind unvereinbare Dinge'.[132] Because they are chiefly concerned with generic taxonomy (as mentioned above, p. 11), Verweyen and Witting see fit to discount the broader question of the utopian dimension of literature: 'Denn daß Literatur Utopie sei, wie schon Adorno meinte [...] ist als Aussage im Hinblick auf die Gattungszugehörigkeit des einzelnen Textes ohne jeden operativen Sinn'.[133] Verweyen and Witting criticise what they see as the 'Zwang zur Utopie',[134] whereby a sort of aesthetic reductionism harnesses literary production *per se* to the yoke of the utopian desire for a 'better world', resulting in the equation 'Literatur ist Utopie'.[135] They argue that this position is incompatible with the aversion and distrust aroused by poetry and the arts in many 'alternative society' texts since Plato. Verweyen and Witting invest with a disproportionate significance for the subsequent utopian tradition the detail that poets are banned in Plato's republic, and their insistence on the incompatibility of 'Poesie' and 'Gesetzbuch' overlooks the complex interface between utopian imagination and literary imagination which was explored above.

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[131] Friedrich Schiller, *Über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen in einer Reihe von Briefen*, in Schiller, *Sämtliche Werke*, 5 vols (Munich: Hanser, 1980-1981), V, pp. 570-669 (p. 640).
[132] Verweyen and Witting, 'Zum deskriptiven Gehalt des Utopiebegriffs', p. 18.
[133] ibid., p. 7.
[134] ibid., p. 14
[135] See Gert Ueding, *Literatur ist Utopie* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1978).

It has already been observed that a *collective* focus is generally accepted as a criterion of utopian writing; utopian and dystopian texts, while they may feature individual protagonists, do so primarily as a means of illustrating the features of an imagined society as a whole. Verweyen and Witting uphold this criterion of collectivity and see it as further proof of the contention that 'Poesie und Gesetzbuch sind unvereinbare Dinge'. The subjective realm of aesthetic experience is, they argue, incompatible with utopianism due to the critical attitude and social and political dimension of the latter. They thus reject the concept of a 'Subjektutopie' — a concept that has been advanced in critical literature on *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* — on the grounds that 'Ausdrücke wie 'Subjektutopie' etc. kaschieren, ja kassieren [...] wichtige Differenzqualitäten zwischen Kunst und Utopie'.[136] Verweyen and Witting seek in this way to dissociate the utopian concept from notions concerning the perfectibility of the individual subject. The utopian strand within the ideal of 'Bildung' has been noted by Wilhelm Voßkamp, among others:

> Projiziert die politische Zeitutopie eine als ideal antizipierte Gesellschaft in die Zukunft, so entwirft der Bildungsroman eine individualpsychologische Vervollkommnungsutopie allseitiger Bildung.[137]

Verweyen and Witting oppose the analogy suggested here between narratives of societal and individual perfectibility, arguing that the trajectory of self-realisation and self-knowledge that constitutes Wilhelm Meister's 'Bildung' has little to do with the utopian concept, which for their purposes is defined as 'Entwürfe der praktischen Vernunft' that try to show 'wie man gemeinsam besser leben kann' (see above, p. 12). The domain of practical rationality is represented in *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* by the enlightened world-view of the 'Turmgesellschaft', but its values are contested by the anti-rational elements in the novel, as embodied not only in Mignon and the subplot surrounding her but also in the chaotic and illicit affairs of the theatrical world, which demonstrate the limitations of the rational and ordered. According to Verweyen and Witting, the contrast between the 'Turmgesellschaft' and the doomed 'heilige Familie der Naturpoesie' (Schlegel) to which Mignon belongs demonstrates precisely the incompatibility of the utopian and the poetic. Verweyen and Witting also refer in this connection to the role played by theatrical experience in Goethe's novel: Wilhelm's journey to self-knowledge is facilitated by his encounter with the theatre, 'das in der Geschichte der Platonischen Dichterkritik besonders verdächtig war'.[138] The dubious status of theatre in Plato *vis-à-vis* its undoubted

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[136] Verweyen and Witting, p. 18
[137] Wilhelm Voßkamp, 'Utopie und Utopiekritik in Goethes Romanen', p. 230.
[138] Verweyen and Witting, p. 17.

significance for Wilhelm Meister leads Verweyen and Witting to discount the possibility that the discourses of individual perfectibility and social transformation might be analogous or mutually relevant.

The reason the Verweyen/Witting article has been discussed at some length here is because the telos of its argumentation is to drive a wedge between the utopian and the aesthetic. Relying on a specific definition of utopia ('Entwürfe der praktischen Vernunft, in denen anzugeben versucht wird, 'wie man gemeinsam besser leben kann', von denen sich aber zum Zeitpunkt ihrer Formulierung nicht sagen läßt, ob sie sich überhaupt, und wenn ja, wann sie sich realisieren lassen'),[139] Verweyen and Witting suggest that the ongoing debate concerning the utopian qualities of literature as such is fundamentally misconceived. Continued preoccupation with these questions is undoubtedly an important task for aesthetic theory, but does not exhaust the specific issues raised by utopian and dystopian writing. These forms of writing are necessarily hybrid and strive, with varying levels of success, to achieve an effective balance between the literary desiderata of plot, characterisation and narrative tension on the one hand, and, on the other, the specific concerns of political and socio-cultural criticism and experiment which inform the utopian alternative and dictate its collective focus. The distinction between literary and philosophical writing, understood as a clear-cut boundary between different types of written expression, was in any case short-lived, and its usefulness limited when confronted with a range of texts from Nietzsche's *Also sprach Zarathustra* to Derrida's *The Post Card*. The literary texts to be discussed in subsequent chapters are by turns fantastical and discursive, experimental and implicitly critical. It would be far-fetched to suggest that these texts, or any of the dystopian novels mentioned thus far, hold out the promise of a better world, but by portraying differently constructed social orders, they draw attention to the constructedness of social orders generally, thus countering claims that current structures are inevitable.

1.8 Postmodern utopianism

In the postmodern context, utopia functions most effectively when imagined as a motivating factor in the ongoing task of socio-cultural criticism and change rather than as

[139] Verweyen and Witting, pp. 10-11.

an achievable goal.[140] This emphasis on process and direction rather than on result is reflected in the language used to discuss the utopian concept. The related verb and adjective are increasingly preferred to the substantive utopia. Inge Münz-Koenen's analysis of forms of the utopian in the thought of Bloch, Adorno and Habermas, for example, repeatedly uses the verb 'utopisieren' as opposed to the noun: 'Das Fixum 'Utopie' ist [...] in die Operation 'utopische Methode', das Denkresultat in den Prozeß seiner Formierung zurückzuübersetzen'.[141] The postmodern approach to the utopian concept — examined now primarily with reference to Richard Rorty — is characterised by a wariness of authority and definitive claims, an attitude that reveals its indebtedness to deconstructive philosophy. Deconstruction admits the impossibility of any final or definitive account while recognising the continuing need to offer a provisional account. Contemporary attempts to rethink the utopian concept, rejecting concrete proposals for the attainment and maintenance of institutionalised perfection, embrace instead ideals of 'ethical self-determination and intersubjective dialogue', [142] focussing on the creation of the conditions required for the realisation of these ideals. Richard Rorty, outlining what his 'liberal utopia' would look like, proposes a continual revision of the 'final vocabularies', the interpretive frameworks used by individuals and groups to describe and understand their experience.[143] Agnes Heller and Ferenc Fehér, in a similar bid to safeguard pluralism within a utopian framework, suggest that 'utopia is the social condition under which all kinds of Utopias can be realised'.[144] The attainment of such a condition would involve the enshrining of 'meta-norms', such as freedom (Rorty's primary 'meta-norm', informed by the 'bottom line' of pain, is the imperative to diminish cruelty). 'Meta-norms' have been described as 'enabling rather than substantive norms', insofar as they do not imply a particular content.[145] The 'particular content' facilitated by the enshrining of 'meta-norms' can be flexible, aware of its own fallibility and open to revision in a way that a more concretely formulated normativity would preclude.

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[140] Krishan Kumar suggests that this postmodern reformulation of utopianism is analogous to the attempts that have been made to mediate between belief systems and the difficulties involved in their practical application: 'It became plausible [for twentieth-century socialists faced with the reality of Stalinism] to argue that socialism – like Christianity? – was an inspiring and creative force only so long as it remained in the imagination, as an apparently practicable but actually unrealisable goal'. Kumar, *Utopia and Anti-Utopia in Modern Times*, p. 382.

[141] Inge Münz-Koenen, *Konstruktionen des Nirgendwo*, p. 15.

[142] Michael Gardiner, 'A Postmodern Utopia? Heller and Fehér's Critique of Messianic Marxism', p. 118.

[143] Richard Rorty, *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

[144] Agnes Heller and Ferenc Fehér, *The Postmodern Political Condition* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), p. 30.

[145] Michael Gardiner, 'A Postmodern Utopia? Heller and Fehér's Critique of Messianic Marxism', p. 107.

This kind of 'meta-utopia' offers an alternative to the problematic notion of institutional or systematic societal perfection. Moving beyond the modernist dystopian preoccupations with the tyrannical aspect of utopian social orders — their stasis, oppressive security and homogeneity — postmodern reformulations envisage a utopia which would still include diversity, adversity and freedom of choice. Dystopian misgivings are thus recognised and integrated into a new, wider concept of the utopian which demands that the two types of freedom mentioned above coexist, that freedom *from* material want and distress be indissociable from the freedom *to* 'develop without restraint the manifold inclinations, capabilities and potentialities in humanity'.[146] Rorty's 'liberal ironist' thus insists on the equal importance of two fundamental questions: 'what shall I become'? (which holds out the possibility of self-re-invention) and 'how can I notice suffering?' (which is grounded in liberal solidarity).

Rorty's 'liberal utopia' is motivated by the desire to do justice to the complexities that inhere in the concept of freedom. It recognises the tension between the competing claims of self-realisation and avoidance of suffering. His postmodern utopia represents an attempt to salvage the utopian concept from the distrust of freedom and of unpredictability that has underlain utopian imagination since More (see above, p. 18). Projects for emancipation have long been determined, limited and ultimately belied by the fear of freedom, a fear most effectively exposed in the late nineteenth century by Nietzsche's critique of liberalism. Nietzsche maintained that talk of 'freedom' was meaningless unless it acknowledged the solitude and existential uncertaintly that resulted from being 'free'. Freedom, for Nietzsche, meant 'not only throwing off a yoke but taking on a new and heavier one in its place'.[147] Emancipation from traditional roles and hierarchies entailed the discovery that the 'newly won infinite freedom is too great a burden'.[148] In *Also sprach Zarathustra*, Nietzsche had formulated the conundrum of freedom in precisely the terms noted above: freedom from and freedom to. 'Frei wovon? Was schiert das Zarathustra? Hell aber soll mir dein Auge künden: frei *wozu*?'[149] Rising to the challenge implied in Nietzsche's formulation, postmodern utopianism seeks to imagine a coexistence of freedom *from* suffering (in Rorty's formulation, this is the

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[146] Ze'ev Levy, 'Utopia and Reality in the Philosophy of Ernst Bloch', in *Utopian Studies* 1:2 (1990), 3-12.
[147] Irving Zeitlin, *Nietzsche. A re-examination* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994), p. 2.
[148] See Keith Ansell-Pearson, *An Introduction to Nietzsche as Political Thinker. The Perfect Nihilist* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 77.
[149] Nietzsche, *Werke*, II, p. 326.

domain of liberalism) and freedom *to* self-re-invent (this, for Rorty, is guaranteed by the ironic perspective).

1.8.1 Bloch's anticipation of postmodern utopianism

> In *Arkadien* würden wir nach *Utopien* schmachten.[150]

As has been demonstrated with reference to the aporia of freedom, Ernst Bloch's work both contributes to and exemplifies the transition from the modern to the postmodern utopian concept. For Bloch, as for Karl Mannheim, the utopian is a dynamic, restless attitude divested of associations of insularity, stasis, and self-sufficiency, an attitude which is driven beyond the known and and strives to transcend or 'burst the bounds' of existing conditions. Encounters with the unknown and the sense of being drawn to new experiences are crucial to Bloch's understanding of utopian desire (see p. 27 above). He identifies the crucial role played by the imaginary landscapes of 'die gewünschte Ferne' (I:22) and 'die schöne Fremde' (I:435) in exposing the inadequacy of existing conditions. For Bloch, the utopian attitude is one that strives 'übers Gegebene hinaus' (I:26): far from being static, it disrupts the stasis engendered by an absence of utopian vision, as Jost Hermand was later to observe (see p. 53 above). This striving continually revises its goal to take account of new perspectives and possibilities: 'Ein neuer Gipfel erscheint hinter dem bisher erreichten' (I:216).

While Bloch's theory of hope reflects the re-definition of the utopian as open, non-definitive and self-revising, this aspect of his work is admittedly indissociable from his belief in the infallibility of the Marxist analysis of history and society and their inexorable trajectory towards revolution. This leads him to distrust the emphasis on the processual and open-ended dimension of utopian striving which his own work suggests. His criticism of what he calls 'sogenannte unendliche Annäherung ans Ideal, [...] die es mit der Realisierung gar nicht ernst meint' (I:215) has already been mentioned (p. 29). On the one hand, Bloch seems to acknowledge the fallibility of ideals and the need to mediate between the imagined goal of social change and the flesh-and-blood social reality that approximates to this goal. He warns against the 'Verdinglichung des Zieltraums' (I:213), against the denigration of reality because of its failure to measure up to ideal or dream:

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[150] Jean Paul, *Titan* in Jean Paul, *Werke*, 6 vols, (Darmstadt :Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1961), III, p. 222. See Bloch, *Das Prinzip Hoffnung*, I, p. 365.

'Der Traum als solcher verwirklicht sich nicht, das ist ein Minus, aber Fleisch und Bein kommen hinzu, das ist ein ersetzendes Plus' (I:214). On the other hand, Bloch also cautions against the inverse of this problem: the denigration or disregarding of ideal or dream because of their distance from reality. In the latter case, overemphasis on the fallible and ever-receding nature of ideals that inform social change effectively cancels out the transformative power of such ideals, and recognition of the infinity of the *process* causes the imagined *product* to forfeit its critical and motivational claims: 'der Prozeß bleibt leer und produziert immer wieder nichts als den Prozeß' (I:231). By foregrounding the need to mediate constantly between process and product so that one will not become statically isolated from the other ('ein stehenbleibendes Anhalten auf dem Unterwegs ist so schlimm und noch schlimmer als verabsolutiertes Unterwegs selbst' (I:367)), Bloch preserves the critical core of the classical utopia — expressed in its alterity — while breaking with its authoritarianism and stasis.

Despite Bloch's insistence on the non-negotiable status of Marxist revolutionary theory in his work, his omnivorous account of the ubiquity of the utopian moment, with its emphasis on the subjective factor of hope, itself seems to resist subsumption into a unitary perspective and to work against his own insistence that there could be a definitive path to, and a non-negotiable definition of, the utopian 'Heimat' 'worin noch niemand war'. Key Blochian terms such as anticipation, 'Noch-nicht-Bewußtes', 'Dämmerung nach Vorwärts' (I:131), 'Tendenz des Heraufkommenden/des Unabgegoltenen' (I:160), 'Erwartungsaffekte' (I:83) and 'Vorgefühl' (216) demonstrate the importance of the processual and temporal dimension of utopianism: it is a future-oriented striving which seeks to attain the unknown by unfolding the possibilities latent within the known. Even where Bloch posits the possibility of definitive arrival at a utopian goal, a tension remains between the goal as visualised and the goal as achieved:

> Es ist gerade das Kriterium des höchsten Guts wie der Mittelzwecke auf seinem genauen Weg, daß der Zauber der trojanischen Helena und der auf sie gerichteten Utopie nur vernichtet wird, indem er bei Erreichung, ja Annäherung überboten wird (III:1582).

The reference to 'die trojanische Helena' will be more fully explicated below when the gendered language in *Das Prinzip Hoffnung* is examined. Briefly, the Homeric figure of 'die doppelte Helena' illustrates the imperative to recognise the dialectic of real and imagined. In Homer's *Odyssey*, battle is waged for twenty years over the Trojan Helen who is transformed through this process into a phantom goal, an ideal whose name is invoked to justify bloodshed. The Trojan Helen is, in this way, an emblem of the risks involved in

positing a goal: the goal petrifies, becomes static, loses its connection to the reality which strives towards it, and the dialectical mediation between them breaks down.

1.8.2 Intransitive utopianism

> Bringen wir die Zweckvorstellung aus dem Prozesse weg und bejahen wir *trotzdem* den Prozeß?[151]

Like Zygmunt Bauman, Silvio Vietta argues that the self-reflexive moment in modernity which criticises the claims, aims and methods of modern technological rationalism creates a paradoxical situation whereby utopian goals continue to be pursued in the knowledge that they will never be reached: 'Utopie [wird] als Zielsetzung verfolgt, dabei aber [wird] die letztendliche Unerreichbarkeit des Ziels mitreflektiert'.[152] Vietta's formulation suggests an affinity between the literary motif of deferred arrival and the postmodern rethinking of utopia in terms of open-ended endeavour, motivation, and process.[153] Vietta's image of utopia as an unreachable and yet pursued goal revisits a motif that haunts the writing of Franz Kafka: the beginning that is denied an ending, the movement that is cheated of and yet continues to suggest its destination.

Although Kafka's literary texts resist categorisation as dystopias, many of the hallmarks of his work resonate with later dystopian themes in their sounding of a disaffected, disempowered note within modernity. Institutions supposedly created by and for humanity — such as knowledge, progress, the machines of state and law — slip in Kafka's work from the grip of understanding and become indecipherable, arbitrary and hostile. While the Kafkaesque world of sinister atmospheres and disorienting scenarios re-emerges in subsequent dystopian narratives from Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* to Terry Gilliam's film *Brazil* (1985), it concerns us less here than the motif that persistently resurfaces in Kafka's work of a horizon which, although it either remains out of sight or constantly recedes from view, is nonetheless pursued. This motif is present in Kafka's work at several levels, from the structure of sentences to the fate of quester

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[151] Nietzsche, *Werke*, IV, p. 853.
[152] Vietta, pp. 198-199. Compare Bauman, *Modernity and Ambivalence*, p. 244.
[153] See Manfred Frank's discussion of the deferred arrival motif, *Die unendliche Fahrt. Ein Motiv und sein Text* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1979).

protagonists.[154] One of the most succinct statements of the motif can be found in the fragment *Der Aufbruch*:

> 'Wohin reitest Du, Herr?' 'Ich weiß es nicht', sagte ich, 'nur weg von hier, nur weg von hier. Immerfort weg von hier, nur so kann ich mein Ziel erreichen.' 'Du kennst also Dein Ziel?' fragte er. 'Ja', antwortete ich, 'ich sagte es doch, 'Weg-von-hier', das ist mein Ziel.'[155]

Kafka's 'Weg von hier' is echoed in the postmodern reinvention of the utopian concept. What is here termed the 'intransitivity' of such reinvented utopianism lies in its insistence that, while a definitive account of the destination is admitted to be impossible, the necessity of continuing the journey cannot be refuted. The term 'intransitivity' derives from the grammatical status of verbs which do not take a direct object, but as used here is borrowed from Rilke, as we shall see. The analogy is clear: the 'object' of utopian striving may recede from view or resist formulation, but action and direction remain.

The movement that is cheated of and yet continues to suggest its destination also underlies Rainer Maria Rilke's concept of intransitive love as unfolded in the final sections of *Die Aufzeichnungen des Malte Laurids Brigge*. The two understandings of utopia, modern and postmodern — one, the static, potentially totalitarian vision of the 'end' which demands the sacrifices of present 'means', the other, the motivational force for and direction towards change — are analogous to the two contrasting ways of experiencing god suggested in Rilke's novel. In the reflections on the nature of love, of loving and being loved, Rilke develops the idea of a god who can be loved but who does not love in return, a god whose presence makes itself felt only in the human striving to approach it. This god is understood as the 'Richtung der Liebe [...], kein Liebesgegenstand', as a force or quantity that provides the direction and motivation for love but withholds the promise of fulfilment, of reciprocity or of being seen 'face to face'.

> Manchmal früher fragte ich mich, warum Abelone die Kalorien ihres großartigen Gefühls nicht an Gott wandte. Ich weiß, *sie sehnte sich, ihrer Liebe alles Transitive zu nehmen*, aber konnte ihr wahrhaftiges Herz sich darüber täuschen, daß Gott nur eine Richtung

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[154] 'Jamais on n'a fait oeuvre si complète avec des mouvements, tous avortés, mais tous communicants.' Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Kafka. Pour une littérature mineure* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1975), p. 74.
[155] Franz Kafka, *Die Erzählungen und andere ausgewählte Prosa*, ed. by Roger Hermes, 5th edn (Frankfurt a.M.: Fischer, 2000), p. 384.

> der Liebe ist, kein Liebesgegenstand? Wußte sie nicht, daß keine Gegenliebe von ihm zu fürchten war?[156]

In contrast to this idea of loving god without incurring the risk of being loved in return, another image of divine love is set forth in which the force of reciprocity — the overwhelming experience of being met 'half way' and loved by god — consumes the loving subject:

> Ach, der für die Schwachen ein Helfer war, ist diesen Starken ein Unrecht [this refers to the historical women mystics, Mechthild of Magdeburg, Teresa of Avila and Rose of Lima]; wo sie schon nichts mehr erwarteten, *als den unendlichen Weg*, da tritt sie noch einmal im spannenden Vorhimmel ein Gestalteter an und verwöhnt sie mit Unterkunft und verwirrt sie mit Mannheit.[157]

By analogy with Rilke's idea of intransitive love, which is described as 'die stille, ziellose Arbeit' (199), the term 'intransitive utopianism' captures the defining feature of the utopian concept in its postmodern incarnation, which avoids definitive 'Gestaltung' of aims, emphasising instead the need to revise these continuously. Rilke's concept even engages with the problem of mediating between means and ends which was discussed above: 'Er [the prodigal son] vergaß Gott beinah über der harten Arbeit, sich ihm zu nähern' (200).

Returning to Popper's rejection of modern rationalist utopianism, it becomes clear that the central problem identified by Popper, the violence unleashed by a political blueprint which demands the sacrifice of the present to the future, has called for a radical rethinking of the relationship of means to ends. The models outlined here, which emphasise by turns the mediation of ends and means, the continual revision of aims, and the processual, ongoing nature of utopian striving, facilitate a conceptual dissocation of utopia from violence and totalitarianism. Popper formulates a concise objection to the notion of a self-revising, fallibilist utopianism: 'if we change our ultimate political aims while attempting to move towards them we may soon discover that we are moving in circles'.[158] The alternative model he proposes — which reformulates the basis for political action in negative rather than positive terms, in terms of elimination rather than construction — nevertheless retains a utopian residue:

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[156] Rainer Maria Rilke, *Die Aufzeichnungen des Malte Laurids Brigge* [1910] (Frankfurt a.M.: Insel, 1984), p. 194, emphasis added.
[157] ibid., emphasis added.
[158] Popper, 'Utopia and Violence', p. 360.

> Do not aim at establishing happiness by political means. Rather aim at the elimination of concrete miseries. [...] do not try to realise these aims indirectly by designing and working for a distant ideal of a society which is wholly good. However you may feel indebted to its inspiring vision, do not think that you are obliged to work for its realisation.[159]

The utopian concept retains inspirational force, continuing as a motivation for political action even where modern rationalist utopianism has been repudiated as a 'pernicious' fallacy.

1.8.3 Metaphors of home and 'Heimat' in utopian discourse

If postmodern utopianism is characterised by a shift towards openness, fallibilism and intransitivity, this poses a challenge to Bloch's central utopian metaphor in *Das Prinzip Hoffnung*, the metaphor of 'Heimat'. What sort of homecoming is subject to endless deferral and revision? Bloch's privileging of this metaphor calls for a more thorough exploration of how metaphors of home, homelessness and homesickness function in utopian thought.

Inherent in classical-autarkic and radical-messianic versions of utopianism was a refusal of contingency, compromise and negotiation. This kind of utopian desire can be conceived of as a homesick response to the 'homeless' condition of modernity. The utopian desire for stability is at once called forth and denied by the epistemological instability and metaphysical uncertainty of modernity in its self-critical, self-reflexive phase. In his reading of the Russian philosopher Lev Shestov, Zygmunt Bauman develops the analogy between home and utopia. For Bauman, Shestov's writing unfolds the contention that

> the philosophers' search for the ultimate system, for complete order, for the extirpation of everything unknown and unruly [...] stems from the worship of firm soil *and a secure home*, and results in trimming down the infinite human potential.[160]

The concerns voiced in dystopian writing regarding modern utopianism — concerns over its stasis, its elimination of contingency, and its presupposition or imposition of clear boundaries and exclusive categories — echo Shestov's critique of the philosophical desire for an 'ultimate system'. Czeslaw Milosz notes that 'in his [Shestov's] rebellion against

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[159] ibid., p. 361.
[160] Bauman, *Modernity and Ambivalence*, p. 81, emphasis added.

philosophy we may sense an implied rejection of the terror exerted by a whole purely quantitative, scientific Weltanschauung'.[161] Shestov's emphasis on the 'extirpation of everything unknown and unruly' suggests the potentially totalitarian character of utopianism: the 'no place' of utopia thus represents the 'home' of complete security, the stasis of total order. Shestov's parable of the homeless man further develops this telling analogy between homesickness and utopian desire.

> The comfortable settled man says to himself: 'How could one live without being sure of the morrow; how could one sleep without a roof over one's head!' But misfortune turns him out of house and home. He must perforce sleep under a hedge. He cannot rest, he is full of terrors. There may be wild beasts, fellow-tramps. But in the long run he gets used to it. He will trust himself to chance, live like a tramp, and sleep his sleep in a ditch.[162]

Shestov suggests the gains to be made through relinquishing the hope that contingency could be eliminated, or that the ambivalent categories of the wild and vagrant could be brought under control. His parable points to an acceptance of homelessness as a sort of home from home, a recognition of homecoming as an infinite, indefinite process. In arguing for the acceptance of contingency, Shestov anticipates the postmodern reformulation of utopianism discussed above. Popper's repudiation of modern rationalist utopianism on the basis of its inevitable trajectory towards violence culminates in a similar embrace of the contingent: 'We must not argue that a certain social situation is a mere means to an end on the grounds that it is merely a transient historical situation. For all situations are transient'.[163]

While Bloch describes the attainment of the utopian goal of an emancipated humanity as a sort of homecoming, the 'Heimat' metaphor as used by Bloch resists being reduced to the 'secure home' of existential certainty criticised by Shestov. This is because the familiarity of home coexists in Bloch's work with the radical alterity of utopia. When Bloch speaks of the longed-for home, it is a 'Heimat' 'worin noch niemand war'. The utopian striving Bloch is concerned to document throughout *Das Prinzip Hoffnung* is conceptualised at the conclusion in terms of 'Heimweh', as a desire for the home that would at last be fit for human habitation. And yet Bloch has also persistently noted the correlation between utopian striving and 'Fernweh', the desire for the remote, the not-yet-known. 'Wanderlust' is read as utopian desire; its focus on the longed-for far-away,

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[161] Czeslaw Milosz, 'Shestov, or the Purity of Despair', in *Emperor of the Earth: modes of eccentric thinking* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), pp. 99-119 (p. 119).
[162] Lev Shestov, *All things are possible*, p. 17. See Bauman, *Modernity and Ambivalence*, p. 81.
[163] Popper, 'Utopia and Violence', p. 362.

'die gewünschte Ferne' (I:22), indicts an inadequate reality. The conflation of 'Heimweh' and 'Fernweh' is rendered possible by Bloch's Marxist reading of existing conditions, whereby current reality, in its alienated form, provides no fit 'Heimat' for humanity. The 'Heimat' of which Bloch writes is thus divested of connotations of narrow horizons or entrapment in the known. The homecoming for humanity he imagines is a homecoming into radical freedom: it is the end of alienation, the achievement of 'jene Freiheit, jene Heimat der Identität, worin sich weder der Mensch zur Welt noch die Welt zum Menschen verhalten als zu einem Fremden' (I:241). Such a 'Heimat' is foreshadowed by the desire for it, and is to be brought about through the productive interaction of desire, imagination and action.

> Die Wurzel der Geschichte aber ist der arbeitende, schaffende, die Gegebenheiten umbildende und überholende Mensch. Hat er sich erfaßt und das Seine ohne Entäußerung und Entfremdung in realer Demokratie begründet, so entsteht in der Welt etwas, das allen in die Kindheit scheint und worin noch niemand war: Heimat (III:1628).

Bloch's 'Heimat' is a deterritorialised metaphor, envisaged as a product of human effort, a condition that is actively brought about, and not the passive result of contingencies such as birthplace.[164] And yet the role played by memory, by the evocation of childhood dreams and fantasies — 'etwas, das allen in die Kindheit scheint' — complicates somewhat the forward-looking, progressive orientation of 'der arbeitende, schaffende, die Gegebenheiten umbildende und überholende Mensch'. Without the subjective dimension of fantasy and memory, the 'arbeitender Mensch' would only relate to 'die Gegebenheiten' as objects that are to be changed and overcome. Elsewhere in *Das Prinzip Hoffnung*, Bloch states categorically that 'es ist unmöglich, ohne subjektiven Faktor auszukommen' (I:168). Childhood fantasies of adventure merit attention according to Bloch as they contest a one-dimensional relationship between 'der arbeitende Mensch' and 'die Gegebenheiten': 'Jede Abenteuergeschichte bricht die Moral des 'Bete und Arbeite' (I:427). Imagination and memory play a crucial role in bridging the gap between subject and object, reminding the subject that his subjectivity is produced by, and enmeshed in, the 'Gegebenheiten', for instance those of childhood. The active, creative

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[164] In this focus on potential input of the creative, active subject into the creation of a suitable 'Heimat', Bloch foreshadows some more recent attempts that have been made to free the idea of 'Heimat' from its originally territorial basis and render it compatible with the changing setting of increased mobility, migration and the diversification of the ethnic base of especially urban societies. See Peter Sloterdijk, 'Der gesprengte Behälter. Notiz über die Krise des Heimatbegriffs in der globalisierten Welt' in *Spiegel-Spezial*, 6, June 1999, pp. 24-29.

subject whose transformative labour and intervention in the given conditions shapes history is also shaped himself by memory and childhood experiences.

That Bloch is far from simply reproducing the modern progress narrative is clear from his paradoxical conclusion, his yoking of the familiarity of 'Heimat' to an unfamiliar otherness conceived in spatial/experiential terms ('worin noch niemand war'). Bloch's 'Heimat' metaphor suggests a complementarity of the known and the unknown, and provides further evidence of a pervasive polarity which, as the next chapter will show, he does not always resist formulating in gendered terms. The feminine element of 'Heimat' — place of first nurturing, motherland, source of the mother tongue — is configured anew so that homecoming, arrival in this 'Heimat' will not be a return or regression. But despite the fact that this 'Heimat' is currently uninhabited and can only be achieved through the utopian striving of the creative subject, it is a future with intimate links and affinities with the past: 'etwas, das allen in die Kindheit scheint'.[165] These links complicate the earlier confident, exclusively forward-looking assertion that 'die Humanisierung der Natur hat kein Elternhaus am Anfang, dem sie entlaufen ist, zu dem sie [...] wieder zurückkehrt' (I:234). While Bloch rejects a cyclical view of history, which would deny progress in favour of a 'vom Novum gänzlich freier Kreislauf der Restitutio in integrum' (ibid), his concept of forward-looking utopianism is inextricable from fantasy, memory and the past.

It has been noted that Bloch's anatomy of utopian imagination relies on fundamental polarities which are at times formulated in terms of gender opposites. The next chapter will examine more closely the presence in Bloch's writing of gendered images and binaries. In order to identify the kinds of gendered oppositions at work not only in Bloch's text but also in the utopian fictions to be explored subsequently, it will first be necessary to take a step back and survey the terrain of gender discourse, starting around 1900. The survey offered here builds on existing understandings of gender and of the construction of feminine/masculine polarities in order to gain insights into the more than tangential or coincidental connection between utopian imagination and gender discourse. The task of the next and subsequent chapters will be to demonstrate the feminisation of utopian space and its converse, the utopisation of the feminine, not only

[165] See Vincent Geoghegan, 'Remembering the Future', in *Not Yet. Reconsidering Ernst Bloch*, ed. by Jamie Owen Daniel and Tom Moylan (London: Verso, 1997), pp. 15-32.

in Bloch's writing, but also in the texts to be discussed at greater length in chapters three and four. [166]

[166] The term 'utopisation' is not to be found in any dictionary I have consulted, but I have found it necessary in my inquiry into the relationship between utopian projects and concepts of gender to reflect verbally the active and processual aspects of imagining and constructing utopian spaces. I have translated 'utopisation' from the German term 'Utopisierung', used, for instance, by Johannes G. Pankau in his article 'Prostitution, Tochtererziehung und männlicher Blick in Wedekinds Tagebüchern', in *Frank Wedekind. Freiburger Literaturpsychologische Gespräche*, ed. by Ortrud Gutjahr (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2001), pp. 19-54 (p. 28).

CHAPTER TWO: GENDER IN DISCOURSE, GENDER AS DISCOURSE

> Zwischen Judentum und Christentum, zwischen Geschäft und Kultur, zwischen Weib und Mann, zwischen Gattung und Persönlichkeit, zwischen Unwert und Wert, zwischen irdischem und höherem Leben, zwischen dem Nichts und der Gottheit hat abermals die Menschheit die Wahl. Das sind die beiden Pole: es gibt kein drittes Reich.[1]

The literary texts to be examined in chapters three and four combine elements of utopian writing with a focus on questions of sex and gender. The task of the current chapter is thus to provide an overview of the gender discourse of the period, so that the salient issues and problematic aspects of this discourse can be borne in mind when it comes to closer analysis of particular texts. The *fin de siècle* understanding of sex and sexuality, of masculinity and femininity will be discussed here with reference to the broader social and cultural context. An assessment of the extent to which the contemporary problematisation of modernity affects — even produces — certain aspects of gender discourse will also be attempted. The survey of available gender concepts — and of the ways in which these are present in language and represented in literature — will illuminate the intersections of gender discourse and utopian imagination.

Gender discourse around 1900 reflects a general fascination with organic models, which arises in reaction to an increasingly mechanised, technologised and rapidly changing life-world. 'Das Organische verheißt Ordnung im Chaos, Homogenität statt maßloser Pluralität, Zentrierung statt Auflösung an der Peripherie'.[2] The reliance on organic models and metaphors to make the unfamiliar seem familiar, to render comprehensible what is new or unstable, is evident in a variety of spheres: the nation or state is read as a body, the city as a heart, with traffic and transport systems pumping its life-blood in an unceasing circulation; Samuel Morse had earlier explained his telegraph network as a 'national nervous system'.[3] In these cases, conceptual, geographical or technological entities are figured in organic terms; such terms can also be used with reference to social and cultural phenomena, but then their metaphorical status is partially occluded, given

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[1] Otto Weininger, *Geschlecht und Charakter*, p. 441.
[2] Klaus R. Scherpe, 'Zur Faszination des Organischen. Eine Vorbemerkung' in *Faszination des Organischen. Konjunkturen einer Kategorie der Moderne*, ed. by Hartmut Eggert and others (Munich: Iudicium, 1995), pp. 7-11 (p. 11).
[3] *Literature and Science in the Nineteenth Century: an Anthology*, ed. by Laura Otis, p. 13.

that the social *body*, the cultural *life* are made up of, and practised through, living bodies. The privileging of the organic expresses a desire for authenticity, harmony, consensus: the organism, as a self-regulating, self-reproducing unit of life, offers conceptual relief from the chaotic uncertainty and fragmented experience of modernity. Biological 'givens' are translated into cultural desirables,[4] for instance in the case of Social Darwinist appropriation of elements of Darwinian evolutionary biology.

This privileging of the organic in social and cultural criticism affects contemporary approaches to questions of sex and gender. The certainties offered by the seemingly timeless universality of male and female are evoked to compensate for the confusing and disorienting rapidity of modernisation, urbanisation and social change. As sexual dimorphism seems to be a fundamental feature of a multiplicity of organic life-forms (see above, p. 22), it is comforting to note its irrefutable presence even amidst the chaos of the 'civilised' world. It has already been noted that the self-problematisation of modernity has entered a particularly acute phase in this period, frequently described as a 'crisis' in utopian vision (see p. 18 above) which generates critical and questioning perspectives on such key modern concepts as progress and rationality and casts doubt on the validity of scientific-technological optimism. Such epistemological uncertainty is countered by a radicalisation of the masculine/feminine opposition, a hardening of the essentialist polarity in gender discourse and an expansion of its application. The following section examines representations of femininity around 1900 — and the masculine opposites they imply — unravelling *why* and demonstrating *how* gender is made to function as a sphere of non-negotiable categories in these representations.

2.1 The fin-de-siècle *Frauenfrage*

> Das Verhältnis Mann-Weib erweist sich [...] als etwas, worüber nicht hinauszukommen ist.[5]

At the heart of the question of sex and gender at the *fin de siècle* lies, for many reasons, the question of woman, the *Frauenfrage*. Not least because in the patriarchal terms that frame discussions of sex at this time, woman is the marked category, inherently sexual, not as

[4] Walter Gebhard, 'Die Erblast des 19. Jahrhunderts. Organismusdiskurs zwischen Goethes Morphologie und Nietzsches Lebensbegriff', in *Faszination des Organischen*, pp. 13-36 (p. 13).
[5] Otto Weininger, *Geschlecht und Charakter. Eine prinzipielle Untersuchung* [first published Vienna, 1903] (Munich: Mathes & Seitz, 1980), p. 98.

free as man is to move between the sexual and the intellectual, the animal and the spiritual, the body and the mind; she is bound economically, biologically, psychologically to the sexual and reproductive functions; she is surrounded and determined by representations that define her according to these functions. In the patriarchal economy of late nineteenth-century Europe, to speak of woman is to speak of sex, and *vice versa* (see p. 78 below).

There are many different approaches to the *Frauenfrage* — which refers to an agglomeration of related discourses concerning femininity, women's rights and women's education — in this period.[6] These approaches cover a range of positions, so that it is not possible to speak in this context of a straightforward opposition between misogyny and emancipatory outlooks; often one text, writer or even utterance will display a complex co-existence of seemingly incompatible views or implications, will deal, say, in misogynist stereotype while simultaneously decrying the limitations of the patriarchal/bourgeois status quo. Chandak Sengoopta notes of the discursive complexity of approaches to the *Frauenfrage*, that, 'as far as gender and sexuality were concerned, *fin-de-siècle* debates were far too complex to be reified with anachronistic labels such as 'modern' or 'reactionary'.[7] Ubiquitous throughout this discursive field, however, is the idea that it is both possible and desirable to *define* femaleness and femininity, to lay down — by setting forth — what 'das Weib' is. This imperative to define is generated by 'the masculine dream [...] of attempting to decipher the feminine'.[8] The dualistic model on which it so often relies — whereby the qualities embodied by the female constitute the conceptual opposite and natural complement of qualities embodied by the male — holds out the promise of categorical certainty and clarity.

This dualistic model pervades much of the writing that purports to illuminate the *Frauenfrage*, and informs both the formulation of and the response to a large range of issues — from the education of girls to their innate intellectual capacity, from the role of

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[6] On the historical context of this discourse in Germany, see Ute Frevert, *Frauen-Geschichte. Zwischen bürgerlicher Verbesserung und neuer Weiblichkeit* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1986). For a survey of the Viennese context, see Harriet Anderson, *Utopian feminism. Women's movements in fin-de-siècle Vienna* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992).

[7] Chandak Sengoopta, *Otto Weininger: Sex, Science and Self in Imperial Vienna* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2000), p. 102.

[8] Karin Littau, 'Refractions of the feminine: The monstrous transformations of Lulu', *Modern Language Notes*, 110 (1995), 888-912 (p. 889).

the mother and housewife in her children's — and servants'[9] — moral formation to the suitability of women for various occupations or indeed any. The woman question, then, was actually a variety of questions, and the practical and political issues of educational, economic and political rights were indissociable from the more elusive, yet no less ideologically charged question of what might constitute woman's 'essence' or 'nature'. Were women, because of their biological fate as mothers, more sensuous, more physical than men? or were they more chaste, less lustful, as a result either of their sheltered upbringing and existence or of a biological tendency manifested most clearly in their passive position in the sexual act?[10] Did the experiences of menstruation, pregnancy, child-birth and lactation mean that women were closer to nature than men, that they had maintained a connection to nature that men had lost through their alienated, over-intellectual, technological culture? The positive evaluation of definitions of femininity which embraced the natural, biological aspects of female experience was expressed in maternalist feminism, which claimed that the wholesome, nurturing values of motherhood had the potential to counteract the cultural degeneracy of patriarchy.[11] (The next chapter discusses Gerhart Hauptmann's imaginative exploration of this claim in his matriarchal utopia *Die Insel der grossen Mutter.*) But the seeming affinity between the female and the natural, positively valorised by maternalist feminists, could also be read misogynistically: if understood to imply that women were at an earlier stage of development than men, that they occupied a lower position in a perceived hierarchy between man and animal, the notion of woman's 'naturalness' could be used to privilege conceptually the other term in the gender binary, and to justify the actual privileges men enjoyed. The notion of woman's animality seemed to contradict, and yet existed alongside, the tradition of idealising women's greater moral qualities, their purity and modesty. This opposition of animal and virginal crystallised in the emblematic figures of Eve and Mary,[12] spinning off into the numerous cultural representations of *femme fatale* and *femme enfant/fragile*, which are further discussed below (p. 84 ff). The opposed figures of virgin and temptress were mirrored in still further questions: had women a greater inherent tendency to remain faithful to their spouses than men did, or were they naturally

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[9] See Anderson, *Utopian Feminism*, p. 77.

[10] Mary Ellmann in *Thinking about Women* [1968] (London: Virago, 1979) describes as 'sexual analogy' the codification of the female which derives characteristics and social roles from the mechanics of sex and impregnation (pp. 2-26). See also Elizabeth Boa, *The Sexual Circus. Wedekind's Theatre of Subversion* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987), p. 139.

[11] See Sengoopta, *Otto Weininger*, p. 32, and Anderson, *Utopian Feminism*, pp. 10-15.

[12] For a discussion of the less than clear-cut opposition between the Eve and Mary figures, see Elisabeth Bronfen, *Over her dead body. Death, femininity and the aesthetic* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992), p. 66 ff, 218 ff.

promiscuous, held in check only by their economic dependency? (The theory of a natural female promiscuity was popularised by Otto Weininger's widely-read book of 1903, *Geschlecht und Charakter*, which describes the essence of femininity in terms of two types, the mother and the whore, and seeks to explain all aspects of femaleness as an expression of one of these two basic attitudes.[13]) These and other questions preoccupied the commentators on the so-called 'woman question' in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and the model of gender difference implicitly present in many of the questions and available to shape the formulation of the answers can be described as both dichotomous and essentialist.

The essentialist-dichotomous view relied on a fundamental premise of male and female 'principles'. Following the Romantic view that fundamental male and female principles underlie the biological and social reality of men and women,[14] commentators sought to identify more precisely what constituted the female principle. Simone de Beauvoir subsequently formulated this traditional mythic opposition in terms of immanence versus transcendence, and traced the ways in which women's lives were shaped by the fundamental cultural assumption that woman's essence is emotional, natural, material, corporeal, unlike intellectual, apollonian man with his transcendent yearnings and capacity for artifice. The apposition pronounced by Stephen Dedalus at the end of Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* — 'old *father*, old *artificer*' — aligns the paternal with the creative principle, and Stephen's next appearance in Joyce's work, in the opening scene of *Ulysses*, is far from the 'forging furnace' of a 'creative soul', but rather immersed in contemplation of the female element of the sea, the 'snot-green mother', with its evocation of the green bile of his mother's deathbed, a scene of troubled corporeality. (The association — even equation — of femininity with death will be discussed in more detail below, see p. 93 ff). Joyce does not evoke this opposition of female immanence and male transcendence without later realising its potential for irony, parody and relativisation — not least in the effeminate, corporeal Bloom — but the initial evocation nonetheless reflects and responds to a prevalent cultural trope.

One of the most remarkably thoroughgoing applications of the essentialist dichotomy is attempted in this period by Otto Weininger in *Geschlecht und Charakter*, and it is thus

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[13] Otto Weininger, *Geschlecht und Charakter*. See Sengoopta, *Otto Weininger*, p. 7.
[14] See Erich Fromm, 'Die sozialpsychologische Bedeutung der Mutterrechtstheorie', *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*, 3 (1934) 196-226 (p. 202).

worth dwelling briefly on this work. The male and female 'principles' — denoted as 'M' and 'W' — are, according to Weininger, 'ideal types', not present in unadulterated form in individual representatives of either sex, as each individual contains elements of both. His theory of universal bisexuality does not however preclude the formulation of a predominantly misogynist criticism, aimed not always at abstract 'ideal types', but taking its examples from social practices and individual behaviours. There may be no undiluted incarnation of 'W', the female principle, but specific women approximate to 'W' insofar as they engage in activities associated with the female sphere. This sphere is, for Weininger, the sexual-animal-reproductive, and the 'Gesamtdasein des W[eibes]' is 'immer und durchaus sexuell'.[15] (*W* is the cipher that denotes the feminine principle, the ideal type 'Weib' in Weininger's work). Chandak Sengoopta notes that 'woman, in Weininger's analysis, was reduced to sexuality alone'. In Weininger's words,

> W geht im Geschlechtsleben, in der Sphäre der Begattung und Fortpflanzung, d.i. im Verhältnisse zum Manne und zum Kinde, vollständig auf.

Although the virulence of his formulations — and their translation into mathematical equations — may set Weininger apart, his insistence on the alignment of the feminine with the animal-sexual is shared with other writers, and not only contemporaries. Jean-Jacques Rousseau had written in *Émile ou de l'éducation* (1762):

> The male is only a male now and again, the female is always a female, or at least all her youth; everything reminds her of her sex; the performance of her functions requires a special constitution.[16]

This is strikingly similar to Weininger's assertion that 'W ist nichts als Sexualität, M ist sexuell und noch etwas darüber', and while the conclusions drawn may differ, the prevalent view of woman as the 'marked', always sexual category is common to both.[17] Kraus formulated the same idea aphoristically as follows: 'Mann: funktionelle, Frau: habituelle Geschlechtlichkeit', noting that 'der Arzt des Mannes heißt 'Spezialist', nicht Männerarzt'.[18] Georg Simmel interprets woman's immanence, her embeddedness in the sexual, as a function of the power imbalance between the sexes:

> Weder im subjektiven Bewusstsein, noch in der objektiven Art, sich zu geben, sind die Männer so sehr unter allen Umständen Männer, wie die Frauen unter allen Umständen Frauen sind. [...] Historisch hängt dies sicher mit der jahrtausendelangen Dienstbarkeit

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[15] Weininger, *Geschlecht und Charaketer*, p. 112.

[16] Jean Jacques Rousseau, *Émile*, trans by Barbara Foxley (London: Dent [Everyman's Library], 1911), p. 324. See also Silvia Bovenschen, *Die imaginierte Weiblichkeit. Exemplarische Untersuchungen zu kulturgeschichtlichen und literarischen Präsentationsformen des Weiblichen* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1979), p. 27.

[17] Weininger, *Geschlecht und Charakter*, p. 113.

[18] Karl Kraus, *Werke*, 13 vols (Munich: Kösel, 1952-67), III, p. 13.

der Frauen zusammen: der Sklave muss eben immer daran denken, dass er Sklave ist - dafür sorgt seine Situation. Zu den Privilegien des Herrn dagegen gehört es, nicht immer daran denken zu brauchen, dass er Herr ist.[19]

2.1.1 The evaluation of difference

Although it operated within a social context in which men enjoyed incomparably greater legal and democratic rights and social and economic position than did women, the essentialist-dichotomous model of gender difference did not automatically imply a *conceptual* hierarchisation mirroring the social situation. A compensatory valorisation of supposedly feminine qualities was in fact often employed to counterbalance the undoubted privileges enjoyed by men. The 'male' and 'female' qualities delineated by the dualistic scheme are evaluated in different ways, by Bachofen, by Weininger or maternalist feminists like Ellen Key and Auguste Fickert.[20] As Edward Timms points out in his monograph on Karl Kraus, even a much later feminist voice, that of Germaine Greer, rearticulates aspects of Weininger's dualisms not in order to refute them, but to celebrate them by inverting Weininger's evaluation.[21] (A similar inversion of essentialist dualisms is perceived by Hélène Wenzel to inhere in Hélène Cixous's concept of *écriture feminine*: Wenzel argues that Cixous's reliance on maternal metaphors such as mother's milk and the uterus traps the self-styled subversive gesture of *écriture feminine* in the patriarchal binaries of male/culture and female/nature, thus 'perpetuat[ing] and recreat[ing] long-held stereotypes and myths about woman as natural, sexual, biological, and corporal by celebrating essences'.[22]) Timms suggests that Kraus, in his recognition of the potential for re-evaluation that inheres in the discourse of difference, anticipates a central feature of late twentieth-century debates on gender — this despite Kraus's clear scepticism and at times downright hostility towards the women's movement. The acknowledgment of the importance of difference and otherness in descriptive and

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[19] Georg Simmel, 'Philosophie der Geschlechter: Fragmente', *Die Zeit* 1265, 3 April 1906 (Morgenblatt: Feuilleton-Teil), pp. 1-3, Wien. Electronic version, retrieved 8 September 2004, http://socio.ch/sim/phi06.htm.

[20] For an account of *fin de siècle* debates concerning maternalism and the role of motherhood, and of the positions taken on these issues by notable feminists and women writers from Helene Lange and Hedwig Dohm to Lou Andreas-Salomé, see Marlies Janz, "Die Frau' und 'das Leben'. Weiblichkeitskonzepte in der Literatur und Theorie um 1900' in *Faszination des Organischen*, pp. 36-52. See also Anderson, *Utopian Feminism*, pp. 10-15.

[21] Edward Timms, *Karl Kraus: Apocalyptic Satirist. Culture and Catastrophe in Habsburg Vienna* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1986), p. 89.

[22] Hélène Vivienne Wenzel, 'The Text as Body/Politics: An Appreciation of Monique Wittig's Writings in Context,' *Feminist Studies* 7 (1981), p. 272.

analytical approaches to gender has in the latter half of the twentieth century yielded fresh perspectives and challenged a facile universalist equality discourse that would negate the irreducibly different experience of a particular group; but too often enquiries into gender in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were prejudiced from the outset by assumptions and convictions concerning *inherent* difference, combined with the desire on the part of enquirer or reader to draw prescriptive conclusions. It is one thing to acknowledge difference, quite another to interpret it, and *fin de siècle* gender discourse is pervaded by interpretations of difference that serve a particular ideological need. The case of Johann Jakob Bachofen is exemplary: hailed by reactionary and radical alike, the differing — yet sometimes overlapping — appropriation of his writings on prehistoric matriarchy by the right and the left showed how approaches to the *Frauenfrage* were coloured by a range of ideological positions.[23] The reception of Bachofen's ideas and their contribution to gender concepts of the period are discussed more extensively in chapter three with reference to Gerhart Hauptmann's utopian novel *Die Insel der grossen Mutter* (see below, p. 134 ff).

Unlike late twentieth-century approaches to the subject of gender, which have often tended to focus on gender construction,[24] *fin-de-siècle* inquiries tended to see their main task as the analysis of gender difference. Differences could be accounted for socially, biologically, even metaphysically; 'femininity' could be evaluated positively or negatively, depending on the approach and allegiances of each writer (as shown by the case of Bachofen reception); and the attempt to ascertain which were feminine, which masculine qualities could proceed along descriptive or prescriptive lines. The prescriptive approach to gender difference can be summarised schematically as follows: 'True female nature is X, therefore a) women are X and should not/cannot be otherwise, b) women who are not X have deviated/been forced (usually by a corrupt civilisation) to deviate from their true nature, c) such deviation can be held responsible for Y and Z evils, which cannot be eliminated unless women are restored to their original state of X.' This sort of perspective on gender difference emerges in the work of Karl Kraus and Frank Wedekind: substituting *polygamous* for X, Y and Z would represent the *repression* and *hypocrisy* in bourgeois society which both writers decried. Various texts by Kraus and Wedekind suggest that polygamy, as it survives in prostitution, subverts bourgeois

[23] As noted by Fromm in 'Die sozialpsychologische Bedeutung der Mutterrechtstheorie'.
[24] See, for instance, Judith Butler, *Gender trouble* and Marjorie Garber, *Vested interests: cross-dressing & cultural anxiety* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992).

morality, and laud the prostitute's role in exposing bourgeois hypocrisy, seeing, to use Kraus's formulation, 'Hurentum' as 'das letzte Heroentum einer ausgelaugten Kultur'.[25] Such arguments are framed within the broader context of these writers' critique of social norms and assumptions concerning the economy of sex and their attempt, through this critique, to think beyond a normative mentality.[26] A similar approach to gender difference, relying on a prescriptive essentialism, can be identified in *Jenseits von Gut und Böse* where Nietzsche aligns true femininity with fear, instinct and a certain kind of animal enchantment, and condemns the levelling and disenchanting effects of democratisation, emancipation and education:

> Das Weib verliert an Scham [...] Es verlernt den Mann zu *fürchten*: aber das Weib, das 'das Fürchten verlernt', gibt seine weiblichsten Instinkte preis [...] das Weib entartet. [...] Was, bei aller Furcht, für diese gefährliche und schöne Katze 'Weib' Mitleiden macht, ist, daß es leidender, verletzbarer, liebebedürftiger und zur Enttäuschung verurteilter erscheint als irgendein Tier. Furcht und Mitleiden: mit diesen Gefühlen stand bisher der Mann vor dem Weibe, immer mit einem Fuße schon in der Tragödie, welche zerreißt, indem sie entzückt. — Wie? Und damit soll es nun zu Ende sein? Und die *Entzauberung* des Weibes ist im Werke? Die Verlangweiligung des Weibes kommt langsam herauf? O Europa! Europa![27]

What is proposed here is that the dualistic-essentialist and prescriptive nature of many of the various schemata developed at the turn of the century in the attempt to understand gender difference reveal a desire for control and stasis, a fear of change and uncertainty, even in writers and thinkers who criticise other aspects of the status quo. In her tellurian character, incapable of transcendence, woman represents a fixed and reliable quality which offsets and supports the male world of striving and change. This model of essentialist complementarity is expressed in Kraus's remark that 'des Weibes Sinnlichkeit ist der Urquell, an dem sich des Mannes Geistigkeit Erneuerung holt'.[28] The bewildering array of questions and issues known collectively as the *Frauenfrage* is rendered less disorienting if it is approached from certain given, immutable categories of male and female. Recourse to generalisations, archetypes and essentials, often justified as analytical constants that facilitate interpretive stability, work to occlude the actual contingencies of

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[25] Wedekind's views on prostitution will be discussed in more detail in chapter four; for a review of Kraus's position, see Timms, *Karl Kraus: Apocalyptic Satirist*, pp. 83-88.
[26] See Christiane Schönfeld, *Dialektik und Utopie. Die Prostituierte im Deutschen Expressionismus* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 1996).
[27] Friedrich Nietzsche, *Werke*, III, pp. 701-703.
[28] Karl Kraus, *Werke*, 13 vols (Munich: Kösel, 1952-67), III, p. 13.

interactions between real men and women in their social, economic and historical contexts. These generalising strategies were felt to be all the more justified and all the more necessary because the *Frauenfrage* did not simply concern what rights and education women should have, but reflected, and lay at the heart of, the sense of cultural crisis that characterised this period. As Sengoopta notes, for Weininger, Kraus, and others — Wedekind among them — sexuality 'became a 'symbolic territory' for debates on identity, reason, and irrationalism'.[29]

2.1.2 Taxonomy: knowing the other

> Als Repräsentantin der Natur ist die Frau in der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft zum Rätselbild von Unwiderstehlichkeit und Ohnmacht geworden.[30]

Representations of women in literary texts of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in many cases reflect an attempt to comprehend 'the female' by means of a typological approach. Typology of the female, like racial typology, posited a 'neutral' knower whose taxonomic efforts, while aspiring to or at least assuming a supposedly objective, scientific stance, in fact demonstrated the importance of the strategies of categorisation and naming in the subordination of an unknown or feared other. Adopted from the natural sciences of botany and zoology, the taxonomic practice was brought to bear on the 'other species' within humanity: the non-white races, the sexually deviant, the criminal, the insane and the female. The conclusions drawn from the study of particular groups or types reflected and shored up the ideological positions and priorities of the authors of such studies. The positions that underlie the examples noted here range from white supremacism and patriarchal masculinism to self-proclaimed scientific objectivity and pleas for a tolerant approach to difference; despite the divergences between them in terms of sympathies and priorities, the taxonomic approach is common to all. Paolo Mantegazza's *Die Physiologie der Liebe* (1873), a founding text in the history of sexology, sought among other aims to prescribe appropriately gendered behaviour on the basis of codified sex characteristics, for example in the idea that 'Die Natur hat den Mann polygam gemacht, es ist die erhabene Mission des Weibes, ihn monogam zu machen'.[31]

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[29] Sengoopta, *Otto Weininger*, p. 16.

[30] Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Dialektik der Aufklärung. Philosophische Fragmente* in Adorno, *Gesammelte Schriften* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1981), III, p. 91.

[31] Quoted in Thomas Medicus, *'Die große Liebe'. Ökonomie und Konstruktion der Körper im Werk von Frank Wedekind* (Marburg: Guttandin und Hoppe, 1982), p. 9.

Richard Krafft-Ebing in *Psychopathia sexualis* (1886) and Havelock Ellis in the seven-volume *Studies in the Psychology of Sex* (1897-1928) catalogued vast ranges of sexual behviour and neurosis. The study of sex was one branch of the increasingly vigorous interest in the biological foundations of existence, which, when framed in Social Darwinist or proto-Social Darwinist terms, laid the responsibility for social ills at the door of reproductive practices. Count Arthur de Gobineau explained world history as a perennial battle between inferior and superior races, whose types and characteristics he described in *Introduction à l'Essai sur l'inégalité des Races Humaines* (1853-55), in which the aim of 'knowing' gave rise not only to naming and description but also to evaluation and hierarchisation. Opinion on, and research into, 'feeble-mindedness', 'cretinism' and 'degeneracy' voiced anxieties regarding the proliferation of what Karl Pearson, among others, called 'bad stock',[32] and these typologies and their biological-essentialist diagnosis of social problems caught the popular imagination through famous cases like the Jukes and the so-called 'Kallikaks'. Viewed from the perspective of a progressive 'upward evolution' of society and humanity generally, taxonomies of 'degeneracy' were viewed as the necessary first step in the formulation of a utopian solution in the form of eugenics, traces of which discourse will be identified in the literary texts to be discussed in subsequent chapters. The taxonomies of otherness that flourish in this period express an optimistic, scientistic approach to the task of naming and knowing. This task is a classically utopian enterprise; its telos, as demonstrated already in the case of Francis Bacon (see p. 15 above), is the comprehensive 'penetration and interpretation' of phenomena both natural and cultural. At the same time, however, it is driven by, and expresses, the anxiety in the face of otherness that both calls forth the task and undermines the hope that it can ever be definitively achieved.

In similar typological vein as the studies mentioned above, but more relevant to the question of gender and the representation of the female, is the construction in Weininger's *Geschlecht und Charakter* of a typology of femininity based on only two types, the mother and the whore — unlike some other writers, Weininger did not allow for the possibility of the virgin as type.[33] (It is entirely consistent with such an enterprise that it is interwoven with a polemical discourse on another Other, the Jew.[34]) Weininger's two key

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[32] Karl Pearson, *National life from the standpoint of science* (London: Black, 1905).

[33] Weininger, *Geschlecht und Charakter*, p. 444.

[34] Sengoopta emphasises the need to contextualise Weininger's problematic but by no means unique position as Jewish anti-Semite within 'specific trends in Viennese cultural criticism, in which Jews served as a symbol of Mammon and modernity'. See Sengoopta, *Otto Weininger*, p. 6, p. 42.

terms of 'Mutter' and 'Dirne' preserve a popular schematic division but transform its interpretation. As Sengoopta notes:

> Traditionally, the asexual, loving Mother served as the polar opposite of the sensual Prostitute, but for Weininger both were completely sexual beings differing in the expression and aims of their sexuality.[35]

Weininger's sexualisation of mother-love was a means of removing it from the cultural pedestal on which it was placed and which, according to Weininger, it did not deserve, as it was not a freely chosen, individual, Kantian love but rather the atavistic expression of an indiscriminate instinct. According to Weininger, maternal love, like the sexual love of 'Dirnentum', reduced its object by viewing it merely as a means to an end — in the latter case, the end was pleasure, in the former, the perpetuation of the species.

2.1.3 Typology of the female in literary modernism

Taxonomy and typology were widespread practices, then, in popular-scientific and socio-critical discourses; but how did this impact on the literary practice of the period? The task now is to review the particular forms taken by the essentialist model of gender difference in literary texts around 1900 and beyond. In this way, it will be possible to measure the representations of femininity and masculinity found in the utopian writings to be discussed in subsequent chapters against contemporary representational practices. This will clarify the important question of whether the 'alternative world' brief of utopian writing effects an alternative approach to the question of gender difference in the texts in question.

Throughout the literature of this period, female types from *femme enfant* to *femme fragile* to *femme fatale* occupied different positions along a spectrum of possibilities from innocence to sensuality, often embodying an uneasy but compelling co-existence of these two poles. The *femme fatale* figure, in her dual role of seductress and murderess, is called into being by a male ambivalence towards female sexuality that encompasses both desire and anxiety. She is thus determined by, and reinforces, what has been variously described as 'the duplicitous semantic encoding of the feminine' and 'the popular epistemology of the doubleness of women'.[36] A sexually active woman could either represent the

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[35] Sengoopta, *Otto Weininger*, p. 118.

[36] Of the frequent late nineteenth-century diagnosis of 'dual personality' for female mental patients, Sengoopta observes that 'the notion that a good woman contained within her a bad woman [...] permitted

prolongation of male power or its destruction: the virginal bride who became mother and housewife provided the men of patriarchal society with a guarantee of its continuation as long as she abided by its rules. When transformed through their infraction into adultress or whore she became a distressing — for the Expressionists, fascinating[37] — reminder of its precariousness, or an exemplary victim of its punitive morality. Wendy Steiner attributes the proliferation of *femme fatale* figures in late nineteenth/early twentieth-century literary texts to the 'violent break of misogynist modernism from an aesthetics of passive allure, comfort, and charm'.[38] The *femme fatale* may have been a figure of male anxiety, but she also compensated for the limitations of the passive and domestic forms into which femininity was moulded by the needs of a patriarchal sexual economy. The various emblematic female figures, then, expressed both male anxiety concerning the potential fragility of patriarchal power-relations and male desire to reconfigure the fossilised or static forms those power-relations had taken. The *femme fatale* figure is, as Ortrud Gutjahr points out, less a representation of femininity than an expression of those aspects of male experience that constitute her.

> Was in diesen extremen, jedoch weit verbreiteten und äußerst populären Weiblichkeitsbildern deutlich lesbar wird, sind männliche Versagensängste vor der als sexuell übermächtig ausphantasierten Frau.[39]

Annemarie Taeger suggests that even this projection of male fear served the male gaze as a titillating re-articulation of male power, the ultimate triumph of which was demonstrated by its ability to represent that which threatened it: 'Der Clou der Dressur besteht ja darin, das gezähmte Tier wieder als ein gefährliches vorzuführen'.[40] Marianne Schuller, drawing on the example of Wedekind's *Erdgeist* and *Die Büchse der Pandora*, argues in her account of the male practice of envisioning woman as myth that

> Die Thematisierung der mythischen Präsenz der Frau im Mythos der Weiblichkeit als 'femme fatale' heisst zugleich, dass die Frau ausgelöscht, als Person vernichtet ist[...] Die

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physicians to see women as simultaneously innocent and guilty, pitiable but meriting severe correction'. Sengoopta, p. 208. See also Bronfen, *Over her dead body*, p. 215.

[37] See Christiane Schönfeld, *Dialektik und Utopie. Die Prostituierte im Deutschen Expressionismus.*

[38] Wendy Steiner, *The Trouble with Beauty* (London: Heinemann, 2001), p. xvii.

[39] Ortrud Gutjahr: 'Lulu als Prinzip. Verführte und Verführerin in der Literatur um 1900' in *Lulu, Lilith, Mona Lisa...Frauenbilder der Jahrhundertwende*, ed. by Irmgard Roebling (Pfaffenweiler: Centaurus, 1988), pp. 45-76, (p. 57).

[40] Annemarie Taeger, *Die Kunst, Medusa zu töten. Zum Bild der Frau in der Literatur der Jahrhundertwende* (Bielefeld: Aisthesis, 1987), p. 23.

> *Lulu*-Dramen mit ihrem exzessiven Bildrepertoire sind, so könnte man sagen, die Tragödie vom Fehlen der Frau.[41]

The patriarchal/masculinist construction of the feminine category proceeds through the externalisation of elements considered incompatible with a particular definition of masculine subjectivity. Hence, the familiar litany of 'feminine' characteristics — closer to nature, emotional, irrational, passive, sensual, to name a few — functions as a check-list of otherness that contributes *ex negativo* to the task of defining masculinity. The two polarised principles are thus mutually constitutive. The 'feminine' qualities, externalised in this way, are objectified and rendered controllable, as they now puportedly remain within the domain of the other, no longer posing an inner threat to the masculine subjectivity thus constructed. The *femme fatale* figure is constituted through the eroticisation of those qualities that have been externalised. The language of gender difference at the *fin de siècle* is thus illuminated by the theories of gender construction that come to the fore many decades later. Drawing on Michel Foucault's analysis of the power relations that are constitutive of sexuality, Judith Butler has argued that gender dimorphism is produced by, and performed through, social and linguistic practices; it is these that call such a category as 'femininity' into being.[42] The association of femininity with notions of the 'natural' within the cultural structures of compulsory heterosexuality and gender binarism are, for Butler, an *effect* of those structures and their discourses, rather than the structures reflecting some prelinguistic or precultural natural reality, which is in any case inaccessible.

Wherever 'feminine' is aligned with the 'natural' in gender discourse around 1900, the inherent ambivalence in concepts of 'nature' is mapped on to the concept of the 'female'. Different emphases within conceptualisations of the 'natural' focussed alternatively on innocence or bestiality, authenticity or soullessness; Elizabeth Boa, commenting on the Lulu plays, points out that it is necessary, wherever 'woman' is associated with 'nature', to ask whether this association refers to 'nature' in its innocent, integrated prelapsarian guise, or to unthinking bestiality and soulless instinct. A co-existence in one figure of both sides of this conceptual opposition is also possible and is demonstrated by the

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[41] Schuller, Marianne: 'Die Nachtseite der Humanwissenschaften. Einige Aspekte zum Verhältnis von Frauen und Literaturwissenschaft' in *Die Überwindung der Sprachlosigkeit. Texte aus der Frauenbewegung*, ed. by Gabriele Dietze (Frankfurt a.M.: Luchterhand, 1979), pp. 31-50.

[42] Thus, following Foucault, the 'repressive' is for Butler also 'generative'. See her *Gender Trouble*, pp. 65, 93, 135.

figure of Lulu, who encompasses the 'Kindweib', 'Urweib' *and* 'Hetäre' types in a paradigmatic indeterminacy presaged by the reference to Pandora in the title of the second play.[43] The mythic Pandora 'represents beauty, nature, purity and goodness on the one hand; evil, seduction, corruption and death on the other'.[44] This duality is also present in the Melusine and Undine myths, in which the 'naturally good but soulless spirit of nature clashes with the human forces of reason and morality'.[45] Nietzsche's lament over the 'civilisation' of woman relies primarily on the bestial, instinctual strand of the nature concept, which is nonetheless valorised more positively than the 'shallow' culture of a newspaper-reading, 'educated', emancipated womanhood:

> Das, was am Weibe Respekt und oft genug Furcht einflößt, ist seine *Natur*, die 'natürlicher' ist als die des Mannes, seine echte raubtierhafte listige Geschmeidigkeit, seine Tigerkralle unter dem Handschuh, seine Naivität im Egoismus, seine Unerziehbarkeit und innerliche Wildheit, das Unfaßliche, Weite, Schweifende seiner Begierden und Tugenden...[46]

While 'the female' is often mapped onto 'the natural' in the literary codification of femininity, this does not preclude the possibility that individual female *characters* might embody qualities not comprehended by the equation of femininity with nature. The androgynous figures of *femme enfant*, *garçonne* and lesbian serve as problematic counterfoils to a normative, 'natural' female sexuality. While Goethe's Mignon, given her unearthly androgyny and incestuous lineage, embodied, in a sense, a sacralisation of the natural — 'die heilige Familie der Naturpoesie'[47] — other androgynous figures in literature embody the possibility of a departure from, or failure of, the natural order. This is illustrated by the portrayal of the countess Geschwitz in the Lulu plays. In a dialogue between these two figures, lesbian and 'Urweib', Lulu gives voice to the idea that manifestations of femaleness which do not conform to the dominant cultural paradigm of femininity represent a deviation from the natural. She also re-articulates the alignment of masculinity with intellect and of femininity with lack:

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[43] See Nike Wagner, *Geist und Geschlecht. Karl Kraus und die Erotik der Wiener Moderne* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1982), p. 139.
[44] Littau, 'Refractions of the Feminine', p. 891.
[45] Boa, *The Sexual Circus*, p. 64.
[46] Nietzsche, *Werke*, III, p. 703.
[47] Friedrich Schlegel, Über Goethes Meister [1798] in Schlegel, *Werke*, 10 vols (Munich: Schöningh, 1967), II, p. 146.

> LULU: Du bist im Leib deiner Mutter nicht fertig geworden, weder als Weib noch als Mann. Du bist kein Menschenkind wie wir andern. Für einen Mann war der Stoff nicht ausreichend und zum Weib hast du zu viel Hirn in deinen Schädel bekommen (I:684).

Lulu's very naturalness is in itself problematic, however, in that it renders her both dangerous and vulnerable. She embodies both the dream of the coincidence of desire and opportunity and its nightmare corollary, the indiscriminacy of polyandrous desire. Karl Kraus had already observed this aporetic quality of the desirable prostitute in his introductory remarks to the first performance of *Die Büchse der Pandora* in 1905: 'So will auch jeder, der die polyandrische Frau will, diese für sich'.[48] (The fantasy state sketched by Wedekind in *Die grosse Liebe* confronts more systematically both polyandry and polygyny by depicting their ritualisation and institutionalisation, as the fourth chapter of this thesis will reveal by tracing the presence in *Die grosse Liebe* of a fundamental utopian problematic: the relationship between freedom and order and its implications for the idea of 'freie Liebe').

2.2 The gaze

Central to the problem of the representation of women as ciphers of male anxiety and/or male desire at the *fin-de-siècle* is the question of the gaze. The gaze is an important motif in theories of subjectivity and their literary reworking. It is through looking at the world that we orient ourselves in it, through exposing ourselves to the gaze of others that we facilitate their evaluation of us, which is in turn formative of our own self-image. In feminist theory, concern with the gaze, or 'looking relations', has tended to focus particularly on the male gaze, the look of appraisal which evaluates women both as projections of male anxiety and objects of male desire. Obviously, this gaze is not one way, and sexual appraisal is at the very least a two-way traffic;[49] but the male gaze is in a privileged position in an economy such as that of late nineteenth-century European patriarchy, in which relations with men are, for women, not just a matter of sex and companionship but bound up with economic security and social status. Laura Mulvey's

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[48] Karl Kraus, 'Die Büchse der Pandora' [1905] in Kraus, *Werke* (Munich, 1958), VI (*Literatur und Lüge*), p. 11.

[49] Claiming the pleasure of the gaze for the female looking subject was thus the central task of Teresa de Lauretis's response to Laura Mulvey. See de Lauretis, *Alice Doesn't: Feminism, Semiotics, Cinema* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1987) and 'Fellini's 9½' in de Lauretis, *Technologies of Gender: Essays on Theory, Film and Fiction* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1989), pp. 95-106, p. 100.

inquiry into the operations of the male gaze,[50] while it focusses particularly on traditional narrative fiction film, is nonetheless relevant to the problem of the representation of women in the literary works under review in this study, in which women so often play an entertaining, exhibitionist role to an actual or implied male voyeur whose perspective coincides with that of the reader/viewer. Mulvey exposes the gendering of the split between narrative and spectacle, such that the visual presence of the female star 'tends to work against the development of a story-line, to freeze the flow of action in moments of erotic contemplation', whereas the active role of 'advancing the story' tends to be male. The devices of the show-girl and the musical number make a place within the narrative for scopophilic gratification.[51]

In a more general sense, even outside the context of late nineteenth-century patriarchy, the notion of the male gaze goes some way towards explaining certain aspects of the female sexual self-image. The relative importance of finery to the male and female for attracting a mate is — when compared with other species — inverted in humans, such that the question of adornment and physical appearance seems to have an inflated significance for women. Wendy Steiner, in her inquiry into the politics of female beauty, concludes that the aesthetics of beauty are inherently gendered, that within the practices of viewing women — in art as in life — there is a problematic, mutually affirming relation between 'the pleasure a heterosexual man has in looking at a woman', and 'the pleasure a heterosexual woman has in being seen by a man as beautiful'.[52] For Steiner, these looking relations are not limited to the sexual gaze within a patriarchal heterosexual economy, but are fundamental to an aesthetic experience in which the 'perceiver (the self) is active and 'hence' male, and the artwork or woman (the other) is passive (to-be-seen) and 'therefore' female'.[53] This is not to say that women cannot be aesthetic consumers; the point is, however, that in the patriarchal context — which is the context of the literary texts dealt with in this study — the female gaze, unlike the male, tends not to be a direct gaze at the man but rather to be refracted through the male gaze back on to the self. As Naomi Wolf puts it, 'women come to confuse sexual looking with being looked at sexually'.[54] Steiner's analysis acknowledges the complexity of these gendered

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[50] Laura Mulvey, 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema' [1975] in Mulvey, *Visual and Other Pleasures* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1989), pp. 14-26.
[51] Mulvey, 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema', pp. 19-20.
[52] Steiner, *The Trouble with Beauty*, p. 34.
[53] ibid., p. xix.
[54] Naomi Wolf, *The Beauty Myth* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1990), p. 126.

looking relations; it is not a clear-cut question of an 'empowered' looking male subject versus a 'powerless' female object of the gaze. Since Foucault it is generally accepted that the play of power is rather more fluid and unstable than that. The object of the gaze exercises power through the use of beauty, in a paradoxical gesture whereby power over another is exerted through the fulfilment of the other's desire or through the promise of such fulfilment. However, even where female beauty exerts a kind of power within patriarchal looking relations by 'casting a spell' — Lulu embodies precisely this ambivalent power — this fascination relies on the gazer's desire, and 'cannot exist outside of exchange, as Kantian beauty must' (Steiner). Female beauty, in a patriarchal economy, is caught in the 'politics of ornament' and 'entrapped in the ideology of charm': 'always dependent on something to adorn, it is always ancillary, contingent, split'.[55] The beautiful woman refers ultimately to the male gaze that beholds and appraises her.

> Die weibliche Eitelkeit [ist] Bedürfnis, den Körper bewundert oder vielmehr begehrt, vom sexuell erregten Manne begehrt zu fühlen [...] [und] erklärt sich aus dem Fehlen eines Eigenwertes.[56]

For Weininger, female sexual looking tends to consist in the pleasure of being looked at, to circle back on itself rather than coming to rest on an external object. Even where such an external object is acknowledged by the female gaze, Weininger understands the trajectory of this acknowledgement as the ultimate absorption of the object into the fundamental 'feminine' concerns of sex as biology, as the case of the 'telegony' theory, which was grounded in woman's supposed impressionability, demonstrates; woman's receptiveness towards all she encounters could, so the argument somewhat absurdly went, affect the manner of conception in all sorts of ways.[57] Weininger's view of sexual looking relations is explicable through the narcissism and immanence of 'das Weib', and is ultimately a function of the nullity of her selfhood, her utter lack of an internal sense of worth or dignity. This theory of female narcissism is advanced from a male perspective — like the literary articulations of female narcissism to be found, say, in Wedekind or Joyce. 'Als ich mich im Spiegel sah, hätte ich ein Mann sein wollen...mein Mann!', (I:627)

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[55] Steiner, *The Trouble with Beauty*, p. 68 ff.

[56] Weininger, *Geschlecht und Charakter*, p. 260. The idea of femininity as nullity is the lynchpin of Weininger's work; as Sengoopta remarks: 'infinitely porous, infinitely malleable, and infinitely open to external influences, 'Woman', concluded Weininger, 'is nothing'.' Sengoopta, *Otto Weininger*, p. 11.

[57] See Weininger, *Geschlecht und Charakter*, p. 286 ff. for his version of the telegony theory, which he dubs 'eine Theorie des Versehens'; Sengoopta notes that the telegony theory, despite its 'dubious status in science', is useful for Weininger's 'ideological project of negating female subjectivity'. See Sengoopta, *Otto Weininger*, p. 123-130.

says Lulu, and Molly Bloom of *Ulysses* also fantasises about being a man in order to enjoy the female body:

> its well for men all the amount of pleasure they get off a womans body were so round and white for them always I wished I was one myself for a change just to try[58]

Even Wedekind's female clown Gislind in *Franziska* is not unaware of the aesthetic thrill her suicide provides: 'Wer bedauert mich? Gibt es ein höheres Glück — als auf offener Bühne — vor versammeltem Volk — nackt zu sterben!' (II:711). These words reflect, albeit in a comically exaggerated way, the operation of looking relations and the potential for female death to become a sexual spectacle from the perspective of the male gaze. It is not women's relation to men's consumption of women that is articulated in these examples, but rather men's perception of women's relation to men's consumption of women; still caught within this consumption, these male portrayals of female musing on male desire constitute a self-reflexive moment within patriarchal looking relations. Karin Littau, in her analysis of the Lulu figure, draws attention to the blind spot in the gaze and to the ultimate irreducibility and indeterminability to which it bears witness through simultaneous revelation and concealment.[59] The idea that feminine identity is refracted through the male gaze and back on to the self has provided a starting point for a broader discussion about the gaze and refracted identity generally. Particularly acute for women in the context of a patriarchal sexual economy, it is nonetheless more generally relevant to ideas of selfhood and self-image as sites of intersubjective negotiation and performance rather than of stability or unity.[60]

In the typology of the female that pervades literary texts of Wedekind's time, however, the various *femmes* (*fatale, fragile* etc.) tend not so much to invite performative or subversive play on gender identity — that will come later in the history of gender theory — as to express the desire and anxiety that inhere in patriarchal power. The defining qualities of the *femme fatale*—she is threatening yet irresistibly seductive—seem antithetical to the passive, helpless *femme fragile* and innocent, child-like *femme enfant.* It has been argued that the various qualities embodied by these types express different reactions to the women's emancipation movement and to the project of female self-determination,

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[58] James Joyce, *Ulysses* [1924] (London: Bodley Head, 1967), p. 924.

[59] '[Lulu], in a double movement, both reveals (is the object of the gaze, the spectacle), but also conceals (she can never be captured by that gaze as a whole)'. Littau, 'Refractions of the feminine', p. 896.

[60] A founding text in this discussion of identity in terms of construction and performance is Joan Riviere's essay 'Womanliness as a masquerade' [1929], reprinted in *Formations of Fantasy*, ed. by Victor Burgin and others (London & N.Y: Methuen), 1986, pp. 35-44.

reactions that ranged from anxiety to refusal.[61] Under this reading, portrayals of women as weak and helpless (*fragile*) or innocent and ignorant (*enfant*) worked to allay fears that women might compete with men on male professional or political territory, fears expressed in the figure of the man-eater (*fatale*). The shared fate of the various types, however, undermines this apparent antithesis. All are destined alike for death. In the following section, connections are examined between these codifications of femininity — *femme fatale, femme fragile* — and the broader cultural problem of the intertwining of sex with death.

2.3 Sex and death

> The urge towards love, pushed to its limit, is an urge toward death.[62]

The *femme fatale*'s ambivalent mix of threat and allure reveals the masochistic *and* sadistic desires of which she is the fantasy projection.[63] The sadistic trajectory culminates in her death. Elizabeth Boa observes of the motif — the death of the female sadist (Lulu, Judith, Salome) — 'fresh from the kill, she is ripe for subjection herself'.[64] The *femme fragile* is in any case moribund, but her invalid condition in no way distances her from sensuality, serving rather to heighten it. Gabriele Klöterjahn in Thomas Mann's story 'Tristan' and the wife of Paul's dream in Richard Beer-Hofmann's novel *Der Tod Georgs* embody the helpless, supine qualities of the *femme fragile*, but their moribundity renders them to a certain extent more sensual or at least more bodily. As Barbara Ehrenreich and Deirdre English observe, 'the female consumptive did not lose her feminine identity, she embodied it: the bright eyes, translucent skin, and red lips were only an extreme of traditional female beauty'.[65] 'Wer hätte nicht schon eine Jungfrau oder einen Jüngling auf dem Sterbebette gesehen,' exclaimed aesthetician Karl Rosenkranz in his 1853 treatise *Aesthetik des Häßlichen*, 'die als Opfer der Schwindsucht einen wahrhaft verklärten Anblick darboten!'[66] Crucial here is the *Anblick*, the scopophilic gratification obtained by the

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[61] Livia Z. Wittmann, 'Zwischen 'femme fatale' und 'femme fragile'—die Neue Frau? Kritische Bemerkungen zum Frauenbild des literarischen Jugendstils', *Jahrbuch für internationale Germanistik* 17:2 (1985), pp. 74-110 (p. 87). See also Wagner, *Geist und Geschlecht*, p. 149.
[62] Bataille, *Erotism*, p. 42.
[63] See Taeger, Die *Kunst, Medusa zu töten*, p. 29.
[64] Boa, *The Sexual Circus*, p. 109.
[65] Barbara Ehrenreich and Deirdre English, *Complaints and Disorders. The Sexual Politics of Sickness* (London: Writers and Readers Publishing Cooperative, 1973), p. 27.
[66] Karl Rosenkranz, *Aesthetik des Häßlichen* [Königsberg, 1853] (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1973), p. 33.

healthy through looking at the sick. A related literary/cultural and medical/psychoanalytic practice involved the voyeuristic element in the treatment and representation of female mental patients which Susan Rubin Suleiman has described as 'the madwoman observed, theatricalised, photographed, eroticised'.[67] Even where disease does not serve to heighten beauty, it nevertheless heightens the consciousness of the body, foregrounds the corporeal; as Thomas Mann's Hans Castorp observes in *Der Zauberberg*: 'Krankheit macht den Menschen körperlicher, sie macht ihn gänzlich zum Körper.'[68] Mann's portrait of Clawdia Chauchat in *Der Zauberberg* also draws attention to the possibility that different female types, ranging from the fragile invalid to the sensual seductress, can overlap. The character of Clawdia draws on aspects of the *femme fatale* tradition, particularly with regard to her sensual appearance, gestures and walk, often described in feline terms; but the fact that she is resident in a sanatorium, suffering from some unspecified complaint, connects her also to the *femme fragile*. In the *femme fragile*, several discursive axes intersect: that of the foregrounding of the body through illness, the increased corporeality, even animality, of the diseased individual; and that of the greater immanence of the female, her entrapment in the biological, and supposedly resultant affinity with or closeness to nature, as discussed above (p. 86 ff). As Ehrenreich and English remark, 'not only were women seen as sickly — sickness was seen as feminine'.[69] Furthermore, the moribund *femme fragile* incorporates, to some extent, the traditional tension between the ideal and the real. Through her death, the space inhabited by her living body and its demands is freed up and can become a realm of pure projection:

> die kranken oder kränkelnden, esoterischen und ätherischen Frauengestalten [müssen] frühzeitig sterben, damit der jeweilige Liebende die spirituelle Vollkommenheit oder Vollendung seiner Liebe erfahren kann.[70]

As Elisabeth Bronfen observes, 'the dead beloved does not grow older, does not alter or become different, is no longer unfaithful'.[71] It has already been noted that representations of different female types, and the dichotomous gender-concept that underlay them, answered a need for reliable categories and fixed polarities that would render a changing or chaotic world more legible. Such a project of representation and deciphering, of

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[67] Susan Rubin Suleiman, *Subversive Intent. Gender, Politics, and the Avant-Garde* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 1990), p. 106
[68] Thomas Mann, *Der Zauberberg* [1924] (Berlin: Fischer, 1935), p. 251.
[69] Ehrenreich and English, *Compaints and Disorders*, p. 27.
[70] Wittmann, 'Zwischen 'femme fatale' und 'femme fragile',' p. 83.
[71] Bronfen, *Over her dead body*, p. 189.

naming and knowing, reaches its limit in the dead female body, as death is both the ultimate non-negotiable category and that which can never be legible.

The affinity of sex and death is a huge theme, with many cultural sources and expressions. These include myths of origin concerning the Fall as fall into awareness of nakedness and sexual dimorphism; the confrontation of one's own mortality as a central moment in sexual reproduction; the presence of death in birth as the inexorable fate marked out for all new life; the sense of the dissolution of the individual's boundaries in the moment of sexual ecstasy; and the coincidence of orgasm and a helpless unconsciousness akin to death and attested to in the description of the post-orgasmic state as 'the little death'.[72] Georges Bataille, developing his theory of eroticism, proceeds from the premise that erotic experience assents to life 'to the point of death'.[73] Whatever the details of specific theories, the general theme of the interrelatedness of sex and death manifests itself in many ways, for instance in the topos of the *Liebestod* and in the tradition of 'schwarze Romantik'.[74] Freud's theory of the death drive, Thanatos, seeks to formulate an analysis of its interconnectedness with the libido. Ernst Bloch recapitulates Freud's analysis as follows:

> Der Lärm des Lebens, der von der Liebe ausgeht, werde von der gleichen Libido auch wieder stumm gemacht oder zerstört. Der Wunsch zur Zerstörung äußere sich dem eigenen Leib gegenüber in der Freude an karger Zucht, in den mannigfachen asketischen Neigungen. Fremden Leibern und Gegenständen gegenüber äußere sich der Todestrieb als Grausamkeit, als unleugbarer Rausch der nun auf andere schlagenden Vernichtung. Daß aber auch der Todestrieb libidinös ist, darauf soll die durchgängige Verbindung von Grausamkeit mit sexueller Lust, vor allem auch das Gefühl des Liebestods hinweisen (I:56).

Bloch, summarising Freud, touches here on an aspect of the death drive which is to be discussed further in chapter four, as it is crucial to the analysis of violent pornography: its dual direction, inwards in the negation of the self, and outwards in the annihilation of the other. Freud's writing on Thanatos teases out the problem of the interrelatedness of sex

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[72] See Georges Bataille, *Erotism. Death and Sensuality* [1957], trans. by Mary Dalwood (San Francisco: City Lights, 1986), p. 100.

[73] Bataille, *Erotism*, p. 11. Bronfen summarises one of the main concerns of Bataille's *L'Erotisme* as follows: 'the fascination of eroticism lies in its promise of suspending the discontinuity of each individual existence in an experience of profound continuity, which in fact foreshadows death'. Bronfen, *Over her dead body*, p. 186.

[74] See Mario Praz, *Liebe, Tod und Teufel. Die schwarze Romantik* (Munich:dtv, 1970). Also Wagner, *Geist und Geschlecht*, p. 146.

and death, although awareness of their mutual imbrication long predates his attempt, as Michel Foucault's exploration of ancient Greek views of sex makes clear. Foucault writes of the long and varied tradition of seeing sex as a prefiguration of the death of individual; through its task of 'providing oneself with descendants', through concern at 'expending, perhaps excessively, life-force', and through the acknowledgment that 'sex is necessary because the individual is fated to die', the sexual act and the urges and sensations associated with it have in various cultural and historical contexts been seen to serve as a *memento mori*.[75] Foucault explains the dietetics of sex he describes, the cultural concern with strategies for the management of sex, as having grown out of a sense that sex was 'a violence that confounded the will', 'an expenditure that wasted the body's resources', and 'a procreation that was linked to the future death of the individual'.[76] The view of sex as a life-affirming experience of vital intensity is never far from — and can indeed co-exist with — its other aspect, whereby sex is seen as a threatening, overwhelming experience that ultimately tends towards the negation of the subject and is as such closely connected to death. The interaction between these two views of sex, and their representation, will be further explored in chapter four with reference to Wedekind's *Die grosse Liebe*.

2.4 Gender discourse in utopian imagination

In the texts that form the focus of chapters three and four, gender discourse intersects with the problematics of utopian and dystopian imagination explored in chapter one. It will be helpful before engaging closely with the text corpus to set forth other instances of such intersection in utopian writing, and to look at the kinds of issues that surface wherever questions of gender are approached in texts that portray alternative social orders. Where on the utopian spectrum from 'better than this' to 'unreal' are the details of masculinity and femininity, sexual politics and reproductive norms worked out in literary practice? In texts which appropriate aspects of the utopian tradition as a framework for the exploration of sexual questions, does the re-imagining of social structures and collective practices entail a corresponding re-invention of gender identities, or does the alterity of the utopian society call forth a compensatory intensification of the received wisdom on gender binaries?

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[75] Michel Foucault, *The Use of Pleasure* [*History of Sexuality*, Volume II] (Harmondsworth: Viking 1986), p. 125.

[76] Michel Foucault, *The Use of Pleasure*, p. 136.

Giovanna Silvani, in an essay which surveys the representation of women and their position in the imagined societies in a range of utopian/dystopian texts, identifies a limited or narcisstic perspective as a determining factor in this representation, concluding as follows:

> [...] under Utopia is always concealed an egocentric and limiting desire to give voice to the wishes, aspirations or worries (in the case of Distopia [*sic*]) of the narrator and/or his social class. [...] The fall of Utopia, its incapacity to project any valid message, is finally caused by the fact that the ego is unable to establish an authentic relationship with the others, face them squarely and accept their problematical otherness.[77]

In this essay, Silvani examines More, William Morris and Huxley, mentioning Bacon, Orwell and H.G. Wells in passing. Given that Silvani's stated aim is to examine the role and position of 'woman in utopia', and that the other texts discussed are drawn from English-language literature, it is perhaps surprising that Charlotte Perkins Gilman's maternalist utopia *Herland* is not mentioned; neither is there reference to the move towards critical utopian writing since the 1960s, in which feminist and ecologist perspectives engage with the literary tradition of imagining other, better ways of living and being in society and the world.[78]

The strength of Silvani's essay, however, is that it brings together the psychological and the social, narcissism and class interest, in an attempt to explain the masculinist bias of the utopian texts under review. In a feminist reading of these utopian classics, what disappoints is that for all their alterity, their novel or salutary regulation of the social order, the subordination of women remains intact. Morris's pastoral idyll *News from Nowhere* comes under particular scrutiny; as the scenes in which the situation of women is discussed often coincide with the portrayal of housework, Silvani concludes that 'what the Paradise of Nowhere offers woman is this — she is free to do joyfully what she has always done with sweat and sacrifice'.[79]

Here Silvani recognises a central feature of dystopian repudiations of utopia: that a successful — and successfully totalitarian — society is one in which people want to do what they have to do. However, she fails to acknowledge the ecologist strand within

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[77] Giovanna Silvani, 'Woman in utopia from More to Huxley', in *Requiem pour l'utopie? Tendances autodestructives du paradigme utopique*, ed. by Carmelina Imbroscio (Pisa: Libreria Goliardica, 1986), pp. 135-152 (p. 152).

[78] For a review of key texts in this later phase of utopian writing, see Tom Moylan, *Demand the impossible.*

[79] Silvani, 'Woman in utopia', p. 146.

Morris that makes his work so relevant to the feminist and environmentalist refigurings of the utopian tradition in the late twentieth century. Morris's emphasis on housework and menial tasks, while it may be conventionally gendered, is nonetheless part of his rethinking of work within what can be retrospectively termed an ecological agenda. Morris's awareness of the continuum between the domestic and the political, and his emphasis on the important two-way relationship between humans and their natural and built environments, anticipates the later framing of the environmental debate in terms of global housekeeping. Putting domestic and menial activities into history, into economics, into discourse, recognising their political import and undoing their occlusion has been and continues to be an important task not just for socialist but also for feminist and green theory.[80]

This objection apart, Silvani's central argument raises an important question: the extent to which utopian imagination tends to efface or exclude elements that do not fit its picture of social transformation. It has been noted that dystopian narratives often dramatise the 'return of the repressed' in the form of the disruption of a utopian order by the elements excluded from it (see above, p. 51). Silvani's remark that 'the ego [by which is meant either the representative or constructor of the utopian order] is unable to establish an authentic relationship with the others, face them squarely and accept their problematical otherness' confronts the exclusive move that underlies utopian imagination. The 'otherness' is problematical not only because it exposes the limits of what can be known (accepting 'otherness' implies an acceptance that this 'other' cannot be fully comprehended in the self's terms), but also because it points to the ego's own non-identity. It will be necessary to investigate how the narrators of the utopian texts to be discussed here approach the task of representing 'otherness'.

Central to the interpretation of both Wedekind's utopian project and Hauptmann's utopian novel in this study is the contention that the fantasy societies presented in these works are produced from within a framework of gendered looking relations; they both express and gratify the male gaze. This may at first sight seem an inevitable yet (for the purposes of an inquiry into the utopian aspect of these texts) incidental consequence of

[80] For an account of classical socialism's failure to recognise the economic role of domestic labour performed by women, see Gayle Rubin, 'The Traffic in Women. Notes on the 'Political Economy' of Sex' in *Toward an anthropology of women*, ed. by Rayna R. Reiter (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1975), pp. 157-210.

male-authored narratives which are cultural products of a patriarchal economy and in which the female body is thematically foregrounded. As *Die Insel der grossen Mutter* is a story about a group of shipwrecked women on a tropical island and *Mine-Haha* is a fantasy concerning the physical education of young girls, it is hardly surprising that representations of the female body should abound in either text. Both the story about shipwrecked women and the fantasy of girls' education are called into being by the desire of the narrative gaze to dwell on the female body; heterosexual male scopophilia is in a sense both the producer and consumer of these texts.

Identifying the looking relations that shape the representation of the female body in these texts is easily done; a more challenging task is that of establishing what connections and interrelationships there might be between the texts' patriarchal looking relations and their utopian facet, that is the relationship each text has both to the tradition of utopian writing and to the concept of utopia. Should the question of the gendered gaze and its objects be considered separately from the question of the utopian elements of these texts? Utopian narratives necessarily involve construction, the construction of an alternative world or order that differs from historical reality as a way of commenting on it. Masculinist or patriarchal representations of femininity also traditionally involve construction, the construction of that other which will serve as a locus for whatever is externalised from the masculine subject. The creation of another world and the representation of the other sex alike depend on a constructive move, which seeks to go beyond what is experienced or known but often ends by revealing more about the source than the product, more about here than elsewhere, more, in the case of masculinist representations of femininity, about man than woman. Even allowing for this analogy of construction, it remains to be seen how the utopian tradition interacts with the representation of the female body or whether they interact at all, whether it is not rather merely a question of the coincidence of two tropes, dream woman and dream world.

As somewhat peremptorily phrased here — dream woman and dream world — the first point of connection between gender discourse and utopian imagination begins to emerge. Ernst Bloch, in his inquiry into the revolutionary potential of the daydream, in his regalvanising of the utopian moment in terms of militant optimism and in his exhaustive search for traces of hope among the everyday and for expressions of dissatisfaction with the given reality, at times figures the dynamic, forwards-striving

movement of utopian desire as a male force, acting upon the world and creating from it a home fit for human habitation. The opposition to be harmonised in Bloch's utopian concept is between the human and the natural: he emphasises the complementary double movement of 'die Humanisierung der Natur' and 'die Naturalisierung des Menschen' (I:149, 234). Utopian anticipation of this movement is described in many different ways, including in erotic terms — specifically, in the terms of heterosexual male desire, whereby 'das Weib' is figured as a space of anticipation, 'als erwartende Landschaft selber' (II:934) Metaphors of this kind deserve attention, as they illustrate the ways in which the polarities of gender discourse can be inscribed in utopian discourse.

Before enumerating further instances of similarly gendered language in Bloch's anatomy of hope, it is important to note that Bloch's attitude to the political question of women's emancipation is neither equatable with nor reducible to the gendered metaphors that appear in his writing. Like many socialists, Bloch saw socialism as the solution to the 'woman question', stating for instance that 'die Sowjetunion kennt keine Frauenfrage mehr, weil sie die Arbeiterfrage gelöst hat' (II:694). His view of the bourgeois women's movement is coloured by a combination of distrust and sexual stereotype, notably where regret is expressed that feminism effects in its champions a 'Verharmlosung zur grauen Reformschwester' (II:692). Here, Bloch re-iterates the *fin-de-siècle* stereotype of the sexless, repressed or unattractive feminist (whom we shall encounter below in Wedekind's writings), who fails to live up to the exotic hetaerism seemingly promised by the idea of women's emancipation in its initial phase:

> Der Hintergrund erträumter Frauenzukunft war mit festlich-dionysischen Revolutionsbildern erfüllt, von denen ein Menschenalter später wenig mehr als die Befreiung vom Korsett und das Recht zu rauchen, zu wählen und zu studieren übrigblieb (II:689).

Bloch's aim is to expose the limitations of the 'bürgerliche Frauenbewegung', which, in his view, is doomed to failure because it merely demands a larger slice of the same cake for women 'bei unveränderter Bäckerei' (I:36); it serves this aim to repeat the familiar denigration of concrete gains in women's rights, for example in the syntactic alignment of 'rauchen' with 'wählen und studieren'. From Bloch's perspective, such rights merely provide women with greater social flexibility in what remains a rigidly inflexible social structure, and do nothing to unfold what Bloch calls 'der weibliche Inhalt' (II: 695), the potential of femininity that has been blocked by the patriarchal order of civilisation.

While the specifics of 'der weibliche Inhalt' are not spelled out, it seems reasonable to infer from the concept an underlying binary of masculine and feminine 'essences'.

The inference is further borne out elsewhere in *Das Prinzip Hoffnung*. Among the many figures Bloch uses in his exhaustive study of utopian desire, those concerning women and 'das Weibliche' indicate that the understanding of desire that underlies his approach is gendered, that is to say shaped by the available conventions which govern gender discourse, by the binary of active, desiring, possessing male and passive, desired, possessed female. The opposition is most clearly formulated in gendered terms where Bloch, appraising the utopian dimension of music, opposes the 'männliche Willenswelt' to the chthonic, elemental, regressive world of Wagner's music-dramas (III:1275). The binary pairs of cosmic and tellurian, transcendent and immanent identified above as key 'carriers' for essentialist-dichtomous gender concepts appear in Bloch's work under the same sign. 'Erhabenheit' is aligned with the male, 'Friedenscharakter' with the female principle: 'Der bestirnte Himmel gibt letzthin die männliche Komponente zum Muttergefühl in der Natur' (II:1077). Goethe's formulation speaks through Bloch's text: 'Man liebt an dem Mädchen, was es ist, und an dem Jüngling, was er ankündigt' (III:1172). The active subject of history — 'der arbeitende, schaffende, die Gegebenheiten umbildende und überholende Mensch' — is masculinised in this gendered discourse, the object of utopian desire correspondingly feminised. It is entirely consistent with such a 'feminisation' of the utopian *object* and masculinisation of the *subject* of utopian striving that Bloch's crowning metaphor for the goal of such striving should be 'Heimat', a problematic category steeped in the organic and maternal imagery and associations of motherland (see p. 71 above). These associations are not completely dispelled by Bloch's figuring of 'Heimat' as the product of human imagination and action, a goal to be striven towards rather than a womb-like origin.

The gendering of utopian discourse also proceeds in Bloch's *Das Prinzip Hoffnung* through the figure of the 'doubled Helen' — Trojan Helen versus Egyptian Helen — which functions as a demonstration of the importance of mediating between reality and dream (see p. 64-5 above). Drawing on a drama of Euripides and a commentary on this drama by Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Bloch explores 'die Sage der ägyptischen Helena' as an illustration of the potentially dangerous power of hope. Menelaos has won back Helen after ten years of battle at Troy, and is returning via Egypt; he comes ashore, leaving his

wife on the anchored ship, and encounters Helen, 'nicht die schöne, allzu berühmte, die er im Schiff zurückgelassen hat, sondern eine andere und doch die gleiche'. The Trojan Helen for whom the battles were fought turns out to have been an illusion, a phantom, and Menelaos's real wife has been sequestered in Egypt all the while. Menelaos's reaction is not one of unmixed joy: 'Zehn Jahre Fixierung an die trojanische Helena stehen der ägyptischen im Wege' (I:211). By intensifying the imaginary presence of the hoped-for object in the phase of hope, the act of hoping — especially where it is accompanied by experiences of privation and suffering, as in the case of the Trojan war — renders the phase of fulfilment aporetic. The hoping subject must come to terms with the inevitable discrepancy between intense, internalised imaginary presence and actual, flesh-and-blood presence of the hoped-for object.

> Denn das Objekt der realen Erfüllung war bei den Abenteuern selber nicht anwesend, zum Unterschied vom Traumobjekt [...] Nur die trojanische, nicht die ägyptische Helena zog mit den Fahnen, hat die Sehnsucht der zehn utopischen Jahre in sich aufgenommen (I:212).

Bloch's remarks do not extend to explicit consideration of the *alterity* of this object. In the phase of hope, the subject experiences the object's presence internally, through a combination of memory and imagination, faculties which are crucially constitutive of utopian striving, as noted in the discussion of the 'Heimat' figure (see p. 70 above). This interiorisation of the object is however disrupted once she is there as an actual presence, recalling Silvani's argument cited above, 'the ego [the hoping, desiring subject] is unable to establish an authentic relationship with the others, face them squarely and accept their problematical otherness' (see p. 96).

The disappointment of hope and the 'melancholy of satisfaction' ('die Melancholie der Erfüllung', I:216, 221) are likewise framed in terms of the possession of a feminised object by a masculinised subject. Discussing the utopian residue that remains even where hope is fulfilled (the 'utopischer Bildrest in der Verwirklichung'), Bloch uses the following example:

> Ein Mann erwartet ein Mädchen, das Zimmer ist voll zärtlicher Unruhe; letztes Licht vom Abend ist darin, erhöht die Spannung. Tritt jedoch die Erhoffte über die Schwelle und ist alles gut, so ist das Hoffen selber nicht mehr da, dieses ist verschwunden. Es hat nichts mehr zu sagen und trug doch noch etwas mit sich, was in der seienden Freude nicht laut wird. Völlige Deckung ist selten, wahrscheinlich noch nie eingetreten (I:204).

Exploring the problem of disappointment, Bloch has recourse to the explanatory figure of 'fiasco'. Bloch adopts the fiasco concept from Stendhal, broadening its scope. For Stendhal, the fiasco was the experience — i.e. male experience — of desiring a woman ardently, dreaming of her, idealising her from afar and then, at the moment of 'possession', realising that one was not attracted to her after all, or perhaps after the event of possession, losing interest or even experiencing feelings of aversion (I:205). Stendhal's scenario is imagined from a male perspective which renders the role of female desire in the sexual encounter negligible and figures sex in terms of possession. His gendered definition of fiasco is not de-gendered by Bloch's appropriation of it for his utopian theory. Bloch also notes the aporia of fulfilment in Kierkegaard's renunciation of Regine Olsen: 'Diese Art Liebe hat die feierliche Eitelkeit, in sich selbst verliebt zu sein; sie ist ein Fest, das keinen Montag erleben kann' (I:208). Kierkegaard's act of renunciation saves him from the danger of fiasco, understood as the anticlimax of a desire that remains unfulfilled by the attainment of what it had thought was its goal.

The fiasco is an important figure for utopian thought, and particularly for the postmodern understanding of utopian imagination as an ongoing process subject to continual revision. Recalling the manifold problematisation of utopian optimism essayed in dystopian writing, as discussed in chapter one, it can be said that the task of dystopia is to expose the realisation of the modern utopia as a 'fiasco' in Stendhal's sense: that which is desired until it is attained. Hence the epigraph from Nikolai Berdyaev which Huxley chooses to place at the head of his dystopia:

> La vie marche vers les utopies. Et peut-être un siècle nouveau commence-t-il, un siècle où les intellectuels et la classe cultivée rêveront aux moyens d'éviter les utopies et de retourner à une société non utopique, moins 'parfaite' et plus libre.

It is worth noting that the eloquent figure of fiasco emerges in Bloch's writing through a gendered analogy in which the desiring subject is male, the initially desired and subsequently rejected object female.

A further instance of the presence of gender discourse in *Das Prinzip Hoffnung* can be noted where Bloch condemns the bourgeois-democratic visions of a future society which claim to provide a genuine alternative to fascism. It is to be expected that he would do so; what is notable in this context is the language he uses for the purpose. The hypocrisy of talking about human rights while leaving the economic order of capitalism unchanged is decried as follows:

> Sie [die bürgerlich-demokratische Zukunft] trägt gewiß keine so martialische Totenmaske wie der Faschismus. Dafür trägt sie moralische Schminke, heuchelt Menschenrechte, als könne die kapitalistische Hure nochmals eine Jungfrau werden. (II:682)

It is necessary to ask why Bloch uses this particular metaphor, why he relies on the vivid contrast between a valorised, acceptable female sexuality and its reviled promiscuous other to bring more abstract political oppositions to life. His framing of the polarities of just and unjust, ethical and unethical, authentic and inauthentic in precisely these terms suggests an imaginative feminisation of utopian space and of its negative other. The whore, faithful to nothing but the highest price, represents the material conditions of existence under capitalism.[81] The alignment of the virgin with an ethical discourse of human emancipation and fulfilment is even more intriguing, especially when the desire that drives crucially utopian activities, transcendence of the known and anticipation of the not-yet-known, is subsequently described as being driven towards the 'Jungfräulichkeit eines noch nicht Ergriffenen' (II:883). Bloch's language configures the utopian desire to know the not-yet-known as a specific erotic encounter: the deflowering of the virgin.

It could be objected that these are mere figures of speech, that Bloch's quasi-poetic use of language draws on a wide metaphoric range which inevitably includes the pervasive polarities of gender. But the greater significance of these tropes in *Das Prinzip Hoffnung* becomes more apparent when Bloch's central category of the active, striving subject — who is to *achieve* the utopian 'Reich der Freiheit' which, even before it is achieved, is implicitly present in all such striving — is understood as a masculinised subject. The subject of history must seize — come into possession of — its 'Heimat', which exists latently in the form of the tabula rasa of a 'Natur' that is to be 'humanisiert' ('der noch gar nicht geräumte Bauplatz, das noch gar nicht adäquat vorhandene Bauzeug für das noch gar nicht adäquat vorhandene menschliche Haus' (II:807)). It was noted above (p. 17) that the discourses of discovery and conquest inform modern utopian imagination in its early phase. Anne McClintock has suggested that these discourses were gendered, and that the conventional binary of active subject and passive object, correlating to male and female terms, was imaginatively transposed onto the activities of geographical

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[81] 'So empfindet man [...] am Wesen des Geldes selbst etwas vom Wesen der Prostitution. Die Indifferenz, in der es sich jeder Verwendung darbietet, die Treulosigkeit, mit der es sich von jedem Subjekt löst, weil es mit keinem eigentlich verbunden war, die jede Herzensbeziehung ausschließende Sachlichkeit, die ihm als reinem Mittel eignet — alles dies stiftet eine verhängnisvolle Analogie zwischen ihm und der Prostitution'. Georg Simmel, *Philosophie des Geldes* [1900] (Berlin: Dunkcer & Humblot, 1977), p. 414.

exploration and political colonisation, for instance in the notions of an incursion into, and conquest of, 'virgin lands'.[82] John Donne's poem 'To His Mistress on Going to Bed', written *c.* 1595, punningly reflects the contemporary imbrication of the languages of sexual and geo-political conquest, further complicating it in that the already gendered language of discovery in turn becomes a metaphor for the erotic encounter:

> O my America! my new found land,
> My kingdom, safeliest when with one man manned,
> My mine of precious stones, my empery,
> How blessed am I in this discovering thee![83]

John Carey comments that the poem, in imagining the female body as a land to be discovered, explored and exploited, enacts an 'exuberant celebration of woman as utopia'.[84] Seamus Heaney's poem 'Act of Union' takes up the same figure almost four centuries after Donne, revealing its inherent violence.[85] Celebration and exploitation, even violation are indeed not mutually exclusive, as the chapter on Wedekind's sexual utopia will reveal; in fact, their co-existence contributes to the utopisation of the female body in Donne's poem, in that this body is portrayed as the tabula rasa on which the adventure of male sexual subjectivity can be acted, or written, out. Recalling the threefold approach to nature that typifies the modern utopian project as set forth by Bacon and is problematised by the twentieth-century dystopias — namely penetration, interpretation and use; recalling also the alignment of the feminine and the natural in gender discourse, and the intensification of this discourse around 1900; and bearing in mind the gendering of desire that underlies Bloch's rethinking of utopianism in terms of an active process driven by a creative, imaginative subject, it is possible, bringing these three figures of thought together, to speak not only of a feminisation of utopia, but of a utopisation of the feminine.

In fact, even where the modern scientific or colonial objectification of nature is rejected in favour of a qualitatively different concept and experience of the natural, expressed in the Romantic dream of reconciliation, even mystical union, with nature, the gendering of utopian discourse persists. Wolfgang Riedel, contextualising Schiller's poem 'Würde der Frauen' (1796), notes the pervasive temptation to transplant the dual anthropology of

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[82] Anne McClintock, *Imperial leather: race, gender, and sexuality in the colonial contest* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995).
[83] John Donne, *Selected Poems* (London and Toronto: Dover, 1993), p. 38.
[84] John Carey, ed., *The Faber Book of Utopias* (London: Faber, 1999), p. 57.
[85] Seamus Heaney, *New Selected Poems 1966-1987* (London: Faber, 1990), pp. 74-75.

nature and reason, necessity and freedom, matter and form, passivity and activity onto the two sexes, and demonstrates the presence of utopian motifs in the figuring of the feminine as 'natural'.

> Der 'sentimentalische' Blick einer sich selbst als defizitär und destruktiv erlebenden männlichen Subjektivität 'erfindet' in diesem Gedicht die Frauen als Verkörperung der im Naturbegriff gefaßten Negation dieser unglücklichen Subjektivität und *insofern als das utopische Geschlecht* [...] Vergegenwärtigung der verlorenen Naivität und Vorschein der künftigen Vollkommenheit zugleich, transfiguriert sich Weiblichkeit zum Real-Ideal geglückter Humanität, zum Inbild eines mit sich versöhnten Menschseins – selbst im Zeitalter der Entzweiung.[86]

There are key differences between these two utopising visions of femininity. These differences revolve around the question of how the subject imagines and relates to the feminine other, whether as object of the desiring subject or source of the emerging subject, a difference which translates into the contrasting figures of lover and mother.

The following chapters will trace the presence in imaginatively constructed utopian spaces of the various features of gender discourse that have been explored here:

- the essentialist polarities of feminine and masculine and the desire for categorical certainty these reveal;
- the qualities associated with the feminine side of the binary, and the processes of projection and externalisation involved in the formation of these associations;
- the figures and types employed in the representation of femininity, and
- the utopian dream of complementarity or equilibrium that accompanies like a shadow the more antagonistic formulations of gender opposition.

[86] Riedel, *'Homo Natura': literarische Anthropologie um 1900*, p. 180, emphasis added.

CHAPTER THREE: HAUPTMANN'S MATRIARCHAL ROBINSONADE

In this chapter, Gerhart Hauptmann's novel *Die Insel der grossen Mutter oder Das Wunder von Île des Dames. Eine Geschichte aus dem utopischen Archipelagus,* written between 1916 and 1924,[1] is examined with reference to its relationship to the utopian tradition and the contemporary problematisation of utopianism. The novel's subtitle *Eine Geschichte aus dem utopischen Archipelagus* has invited commentators to classify it generically as a literary utopia.[2] Specific aspects of the novel are emphasised in support of this classification; these include the island motif, the harmonious co-existence of humans with their natural environment, the task of building a society along new principles, the contrast between the new/imagined society and the old/real and the critical potential that inheres in that contrast. The analysis of *Die Insel der grossen Mutter* advanced in this chapter traces the presence in the novel not only of utopian topoi, but also of many of the issues that were identified in the previous chapter as constitutive of the modernist problematisation of utopian vision.

Critical literature on the novel has tended to view the matriarchal state described in the novel as incidental to its utopian dimension. The authorial decision to depict an exclusively female society is for most commentators an expedient of the plot, inspired as much by the naturism practised on Hiddensee and by the voyeuristic gratification derived from representations of female beauty as by J.J. Bachofen's theories of prehistoric matriarchy.[3] The reading proposed here seeks to move beyond this tendency to see the matriarchy idea and the utopian dimension as two discrete strands within *Die Insel der grossen Mutter.* A closer focus on the

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[1] Gerhart Hauptmann, *Die Insel der grossen Mutter oder Das Wunder von Île des Dames* in *Gerhart Hauptmann: Sämtliche Werke*, ed. by Hans-Egon Hass, 11 vols (Frankfurt a. M.: Propyläen, 1962-74). Henceforth page numbers in the main text, which refer to the fifth volume in this edition unless preceded by a different volume number.

[2] Roy Cowen, for example, agrees with Philip Mellen's assertion that the novel belongs 'zur Gattung der Utopie im Sinne solcher 'klassischen' Utopien wie Platons Republik' (Cowen, *Gerhart Hauptmann. Kommentar zum nicht-dramatischen Werk* (Munich: Winkler, 1981), p. 113). Mellen reads the utopian content of *Die Insel der grossen Mutter* as a reaction to the devastation of the First World War, and contextualises the novel within a tradition of 'reactive' utopian thought which he dates from the Old Testament prophets, whereby alternative visions such as Plato's Republic and even the Christian Kingdom of God are called forth by unstable, violent or oppressive political and social circumstances (Mellen, *Gerhart Hauptmann and Utopia* (Stuttgart: Heinz, 1976)). For a more differentiated approach to generic classification, see Joanna Jablkowska, 'Die Insel der grossen Mutter. Utopie oder Satire auf die Utopie?' in *Gerhart Hauptmann. Autor des 20. Jahrhunderts*, ed. by Krzysztof Kuczynski and Peter Sprengel (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 1991).

[3] Typical of this view is Warren Maurer's comment that 'when taken out of its artistic and ideational context, the plot could be dismissed as little more than the product of an overheated adolescent male fantasy'. Maurer, *Understanding Gerhart Hauptmann* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1992), p. 155.

gender concept that underlies the novel reveals a more integrated relationship between these strands. The gender concept that prevails in the text, and which for the purposes of this study is termed 'essentialist complementarity', is itself inherently utopian, as it envisions an idealised equilibrium of the feminine and the masculine.[4] The matriarchal experiment thus serves two functions: it imaginatively creates conditions within which the feminine can be more fully enfolded; it then demonstrates the limitations and instability of a society in which the relationship between the feminine and the masculine is one of disequilibrium. A crucial dimension of utopian writing, the dimension of socio-cultural criticism, inheres in the scenario of *Die Insel der grossen Mutter*, as the accusation of disequilibrium that applies to the fantasy matriarchy extends also to contemporary patriarchal civilisation. The interpretive approach developed in this chapter questions the extent to which this critical potential is realised.

3.1 Overview of plot, structure and main themes

The opening of the novel describes the landing of over a hundred shipwrecked women and girls, mostly of European origin, on an uninhabited island in the Pacific Ocean. The only male among them is Phaon, twelve-year-old son of Rita Stradmann, whose husband Erasmus, along with the other male passengers and crew of the ocean liner *Kormoran*, drowned when the ship went down. The action of the novel spans the following two decades. The women, under the leadership of the Berlin painter Anni Prächtel, make themselves at home on the island, which, with its luxurious vegetation and friendly climate, leaves them wanting for nothing. There are obvious parallels not only with the motifs of *Schlaraffenland* or the Land of Cokaygne (early folk formulations of utopia which emphasised the idleness and affluence facilitated by a fantastically augmented natural bounty), but also with the thrice-yearly harvest of the classical Island of the Blessed.[5] The women build a village of huts and even a 'Rathaus' from bamboo and other materials, and the primitive conditions as well as the beauty of the landscape contribute to the general arcadian character

[4] Hauptmann adopts this binary pairing from contemporary gender discourse without problematising the definitions on which it is based. The polarisation that inheres within the gender concept in use throughout the novel emerges most clearly in the contrast between Mütterland and Mannland, the male and female provinces of the island, and is more extensively discussed below.

of island life, which is contrasted positively with the corruption and artificiality of the civilisation they have left behind.

However, the arcadian idyll is not without its problems, chiefly in the form of homesickness, which mounts at times to an hysterical or defeatist sense of abandonment. The island's inhabitants cope poorly with the first death among them, that of Phaon's mother. Asylum from the corruption of civilisation is double-edged, as it involves exile from the positive aspects of the life the women have left behind and isolation from their loved ones and from male company in general. This first death on the island brings home to the women the fact that, due to the absence of men, their community cannot renew itself.

Purpose and optimism are restored when, after a year on the island, the women mysteriously begin to conceive. The sense of despair they experience prior to the conceptions highlights the fact that the possibility of self-perpetuation is a prerequisite to the establishment of any social order. Before the pregnancies, their spatial isolation on the island is compounded by a sense of temporal isolation; cut off from their families and communities and unable to procreate, their society is deprived of both past and future. The character Laurence comments on this problem:

> [...] ohne eine wahre, gleichsam unendliche menschliche Zukunft gibt es auch keine runde und volle menschliche Gegenwart. Eine soziale Gemeinschaft aber, die sich nicht fortpflanzen kann, ist wie ein Segelschiff, das etwa in einer windlosen Zone des Stillen Ozeans unbeweglich festliegt und so zerfällt. (722).

The first pregnancy is that of Babette Lindemann, who is portrayed as an incoherent woman with a history of dabbling in oriental mysticism and the occult. She names Mukalinda, a snake-like divinity, as father of her child. This myth takes firm root, supported for reasons of expediency even by the sceptical rationalists among the colony's leadership, and without reference to the obvious prime suspect, Phaon, the island's only male inhabitant. Before long, the new generation numbers over two hundred, among them many males.

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[5] See Erwin Rohde, *Psyche. Seelencult und Unsterblichkeitsglaube der Griechen* [1893] (Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 1925), p. 103.

The advent of significant numbers of male islanders poses a problem to the status quo. The understanding of matriarchy promulgated on the island is considerably more extreme than the kind of society described by J.J. Bachofen (the influence of whose theories on the novel will be discussed in more detail below). Matriarchy on Île des Dames is not just a question of females enjoying a higher status or greater authority than males, or of reckoning inheritance and kinship along a matrilinear axis. Rather, it is an exclusionist model, which goes so far as to banish male members altogether for fear that the future of the matriarchy may be threatened by the presence of male progeny. An Amazonian slaughter of the male innocents is initially mooted by the more hardline members. Eventually a compromise is reached in the form of a policy of segregation, and boys over five are expelled to a remote area of the island, dubbed 'Mannland', under the care of Phaon. Meanwhile, the matriarchal society of what is now called 'Mütterland' develops in a cultic direction, with ritualised worship of the male principle, Mukalinda, and the female, Bona Dea. Conceptions now occur in a temple, under circumstances which the narrator coyly fails to make explicit but which do involve male torch-bearers, twelve chosen boys from the island's male province. Alongside this organised religion, new emphasis is placed on the recording for future island generations of the heritage of knowledge, skills and culture the women brought with them from Europe. Underlying the efforts of the colony is a vaguely articulated 'welterneuernderer Gedanke' (807), a desire to change and renew the world outside the island, but concrete plans to this effect never materialise.

Trouble brews between Mütterland and Mannland over the privileged position of the twelve torch-bearers and the planned exclusion of the other males from the forthcoming bridal festival. Optimism is demolished when, presumably due to an 'industrial action' of some kind, the mystery conceptions cease to occur and the birth rate plummets. A delegation of senior women visits Mannland to discuss the problem, and they are amazed to discover technological innovation and skill far beyond that found in Mütterland. The encounter with the achievements of Mannland is accorded greater significance in this study than has hitherto been the case in the secondary literature on this text. The culture clash between Mütterland and Mannland is informed by a specific gender discourse, essentialist complementarity. In terms of the plot, however, the innovations of Mannland fail to win over the hardline matriarchs, and the males continue to be excluded from the bridal festival. It is the young

women of Mütterland, in despair at their barren future, who propel the situation to a crisis by sucumbing to a general psychosis, setting the temple on fire and running amok throughout the island, joined then in a Dionysian orgy by the young males of Mannland who rebel against Phaon's pacifist stance. Phaon, after several days of silently observing the chaos, flees in a small boat with Dagmar-Diodata, his chosen partner.

The fate of the couple is revealed in a 'Rahmenerzählung' published separately in 1925, and this separate but related text, or paralipomenon, throws further light on the story as a whole and on the fate of the matriarchy. The narrator of the epilogue, on a cruise in the Pacific Ocean, drops anchor near a small island, described as 'ein kleines Paradies' (XI, 358). A German couple come aboard the ship and are introduced as Herr Stradmann and his wife. The narrator and the ship's captain go ashore with the Stradmanns, and over the course of a few pages we learn of Phaon's fate. After fleeing Île des Dames, he and Dagmar spent time in Europe before retiring to this other island to live out their days in seclusion. As their island life presents marriage as a refuge and as an embodiment of gender complementarity, it is discussed more extensively below (p. 168 ff). When the 'Rahmenerzählung' was published in *Die neue Rundschau* in 1925, it was accompanied by an editorial disclaimer: 'Dieser Epilog wurde vom Verfasser unterdrückt. Er wird hier auf Wunsch der *Neuen Rundschau* abgedruckt, ohne Anspruch, als Teil des Werkes, für das er ursprünglich gedacht war, zu gelten' (XI, 346). Although this disclaimer refers to the 'Rahmenerzählung' as an epilogue, it in fact reads as an introduction, using a familiar conceit in that it presents the novel as the third-person memoir of the elderly Phaon.

A second, alternative 'Rahmenerzählung' introduces the main text in a more satirical way. In this paralipomenon, another first-person narrator tells in the first 'Rahmenerzählung' of his experiences as a member of an Italian society of story-tellers, 'die Lichtstümpfe', whose aim is to meet and tell stories, the veracity of which must not be questioned.[6] The members of this group have in common the fact that each one has his own personal scheme for the

[6] As Eberhard Hilscher reveals, this was to be part of a broader project, a sort of expanding Decameron of stories framed by the conceit of the 'Lichtstümpfe'. See Hilscher: *Gerhart Hauptmann: Leben und Werk* (Frankfurt a.M.: Athenäum Verlag, 1988), pp. 381-2.

salvation of humanity, his own individual utopian design. The narrator claims that this makes them representative of thinking people everywhere:

> In diesem Kreise wurde mir klar: wie der halbwegs wohlgebildete Mensch seine fünf Sinne hat, so hat er auch seine Utopie. Thomas Moore [sic] und die anderen sind hierin keine Ausnahme. Nur darin, wie sie ihre Schlaraffenländer ausbauten und von ihnen schriftlich Bericht erstatteten (XI, 352).

Utopian imagination, it is implied, is as varied and multiple as humanity itself. One of the 'Lichtstümpfe', Marmista, is a committed feminist, attributing humanity's ills to male influence, and advocating matriarchy as a solution. The understanding of gender difference and femininity which emerges in the novel is anticipated in Marmista's description of gender-specific characteristics: 'Das Weib sei es, welches den Menschen gebäre, die erste, welche in Betracht der Kinder selbstlosen Gemeinsinn gezeigt habe, während der Mann streitsüchtig, also gehässig und gewalttätig sei.' (XI, 351). (The implications of the idealisation of maternity are more extensively explored within the novel itself, and are therefore discussed below under the rubric 'maternalism' — understood as the extrapolation of political and social ideals from the qualities associated with the mother-child bond.) To enliven the debate about the relative virtues of matriarchy and patriarchy, Renzo, the leader of the 'Lichtstümpfe', produces a document which he asserts is the original manuscript of *Das Wunder von Île des Dames*, described as: 'ein altes Schiffsjournal, das durch sein vergilbtes Papier den Eindruck der Echtheit machte, obgleich es ganz gewiß zum mindesten in den Teilen, die von einer Fraueninsel handelten, seine Fälschung war' (XI, 353). This frame narrative, then, introduces the story of Île des Dames with an invitation to suspend disbelief, as is the practice among these Italian story-tellers: 'kein Hörer [durfte] Zweifel in die Wahrheit einer Erzählung oder in die Wahrhaftigkeit des Erzählers setzen' (XI, 357).

3.2 The ironic perspective

The tendency within the secondary literature to prioritise the utopian aspects of *Die Insel der grossen Mutter* stems from the reference in the subtitle to the 'utopian archipelago', from the utopian topoi mentioned above (island motif, harmony with nature, new social foundation, critical contrast between new and old/real and imagined) and from the many images of Paradise and the Garden of Eden which abound in the novel. As a result, the significant role

played in the text by the modern problematisation of utopianism and by the concomitant development of dystopian positions has been insufficiently foregrounded. While both the perfect world of paradise and the perfect world of utopia are evoked in the novel — the one a reversion to a state of prelapsarian bliss, the other the human accomplishment of a better constructed world — the alternative society or *Gegenwelt* is portrayed in an ambivalent way.

This ambivalence is at least partly achieved by means of irony. As most commentators who have written on *Die Insel der grossen Mutter* have observed, the narrative tone is frequently ironic. Hilscher, for example, in his brief comparison of *Die Insel der grossen Mutter* with Thomas Mann's *Der Zauberberg*, notes the 'ironische Grundhaltung der beiden Erzähler' in the two novels, their 'humoristische Gestimmtheit'.[7] This feature of the novel is perceived as atypical for Hauptmann's work. Ironising narration serves to distance narrator and reader from the narrated events, to relativise the utterances and perspectives of the characters. The irony of *Der Zauberberg* has been described as a duplicity of attitude, a predisposition to play the part of devil's advocate:[8]

> For the ironic temper the concrete situation never has the character of finality: it is but the meeting ground, so to speak, of relations that extend forward and backward, into space and into time, into the self and into the cosmos.[9]

The ironic refusal of monoperspectivalism is thus a prerequisite to the progressively relational and expansive nature of Hans Castorp's thinking. Castorp hears the ideological battle rage between liberal humanism (Settembrini) and reactionary Romanticism coupled with messianic Marxism (Naphta), finds it all, to use his own word, 'hörenswert' (e.g. *ZB* 117 and throughout) but does not come down definitively on either side. He thus embodies irony in that he resists confinement to a single viewpoint, and is in turn affectionately ironised by the narrator. Turning again to Hauptmann's Robinsonade, we find misgivings about the alternative society under construction on Île des Dames voiced in the novel through the utterances of individual characters and from the narrative perspective. These textual strategies encourage the reader to respond from a position of ironic distance both to the putative natural paradise and to the new state the women seek to build. The ideological

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[7] Hilscher, *Gerhart Hauptmann: Leben und Werk*, p. 380.
[8] Hermann J. Weigand, *The Magic Mountain* [1933] (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1965), p. 62.
[9] Weigand, *The Magic Mountain*, p. 63.

basis of the matriarchy rests on a lie, and the narrative pleasure derived from this delusion is clear from the following passage:

> was den Stolz der Weiber am meisten kitzelte, ja zum Triumph steigerte, das war [...] die unumstößlich erwiesene Tatsache, daß man ohne Mann Mutter zu werden fähig war. Und in der Tat, mit diesem Erweise war der Mann entthront, und es hatte die Frau die alleinige Herrschaft der Welt angetreten (757).

The ironic tone is set from the opening, as the women's landing on the island is described. 'Das ganze sah einer Lustfahrt nicht unähnlich'(683). The comparison with a pleasure-cruise goes beyond the visual, encompassing the ludic transience of the matriarchal thought-experiment. It will become clear through the discussion of the looking relations and representation of the female body that Hauptmann's narrative is driven more by the intoxicating indulgence in the spectacle of female beauty than by utopian speculation on a potentially viable alternative social order. Nevertheless, ironising strategies are not consistently applied throughout the novel; while there is much gentle mockery of the misplaced pride in the matriarchal state, there is also room, as we shall see, for the idealisation of maternal qualities, enhanced spiritual awareness and Edenic naturalness.

Several factors combine to establish the ironic narrative tone of *Die Insel der grossen Mutter.* The first of these is the emphasis on incongruity. The opening passage, with its image of European ladies in evening dress landing on an uninhabited Pacific island, contains a number of observations concerning the incongruities inherent in the scenario being described. By using the formal 'Damen', not 'Frauen', and by drawing attention to the fact that the women approaching the shore of the desert island are 'europäisch gekleidet', not the 'dunkle Männer' one would expect to see in this 'von uns so entfernten Weltteil', the narrator not only points up the comical disjunction between these figures and their surroundings, but invites the reader into a relationship of complicity and mutual identification, signalled by the pronoun 'uns'. The ironic tone is also clear in the narrator's coy indications of how the 'mystery' pregnancies occur. It is as if the narrator has chosen, like Anni Prächtel and Rodberte Kalb, to submit to the orthodox explanation of mystical conception without believing in it. Prächtel and Kalb 'protest too much' their support of the orthodox version, demonstrating through overstatement their rejection of the theories of supernatural fertility:

> 'Sie werden mich nicht dazu verleiten, eine andre Auffassung von den Geschehnissen auf unsrer molligen Gewürzinsel zu haben oder merken zu lassen als die offiziell aufgestellte und gebilligte.' — 'Auch ich', rief die Prächtel eifrig, 'bin weit entfernt davon. Wenn die Trüffeln ihren Ursprung vom Donner haben, die Löwin vom Gebrüll eines Löwen empfängt [a myth referred to also in the first paralipomenon, (XI, 355)] weshalb sollen wir dann auch nur noch jenen törichten Rest von Zweifel an der übernatürlichen Entstehung unsrer fröhlichen Nachkommen hegen [...]?' (793)

The ironic tone facilitates an internal self-satirisation, as for instance when the strained effect produced by the constant evocations of divinity and mysticism is pointed up: 'Mit Sprüngen — natürlich mit göttlichen Sprüngen — kam dieser selige Knabe einen ihm ohne Zweifel bekannten Weg gegen die blaue Fischbucht herunter.' (799). The placement of the overused adjective 'göttlich' in parenthesis signals an ironic step back from the prevailing paradisal atmosphere, a distancing strategy which is however by no means consistently employed. Rodberte Kalb and Anni Prächtel function as the mouthpieces of such irony, and the above quote is taken from the speech in which the former narrates to the latter the story of an encounter she has witnessed between Phaon and Laurence. The narration is couched in the kind of mystical language favoured by the island orthodoxy and veiling the protagonists' identities in classical references. The overblown rhetoric is thrown into relief not only by the occasional asides of the conversing sceptics but also by the jarring note introduced by the incongruous and deliberately vulgar name of the waterfall beside which the encounter took place: 'Pisse-Vache du Ciel'.

Anni Prächtel and Rodberte Kalb, then, stand apart from the irrational core of mysticism and are portrayed as the voices of reason and humorous, intelligent irony. In dystopian narratives, a questioning or searching figure may expose through his or her questions the lie at the heart of the dystopian orthodoxy. Prächtel and Kalb assume this sceptical, questioning role, but do not assume the responsibility that goes with it. Their insights are restricted to sarcastic observations *unter vier Augen*; they are marginalised and powerless by the time the colony succumbs to origastic dissolution; and their inquiry into the true paternity of the island children is prevented by the indignant reaction of Phaon's governess to any implication that the origin of the mystery pregnancies may be other than supernatural. As

Joanna Jablkowska observes, the construction of the mythology neatly obviates the necessity to confront the problems of incest and polygamy.

> Wenn sich die Vaterschaft Phaons bestätigte, müßte sich gezwungenermaßen erweisen, daß alle Kinder auf der Insel Geschwister und Halbgeschwister sind, und daß eine weitere Vermehrung unmöglich wäre.[10]

This pragmatic acceptance of a constructive lie is a stance often found among leadership figures in dystopian narratives. 'Solche Täuschungen brauchen wir wie das tägliche Brot' (742).[11] The acceptance of the matriarchal orthodoxy is an infringement of their freedom of thought to which Prächtel and Kalb submit voluntarily — their leadership requires of them that they implement self-censorship for the sake of the greater good. As discussed in the first chapter (see p. 27 above), dystopian critique often exposes the ways in which the status quo is maintained by means of a curtailment or veiling of the truth. By exposing the lie at the heart of an imagined order, the dystopian perspective points to the idea that the supression of truth and maintenance of illusion may serve a socially or existentially useful purpose, not only in fantasy regimes but in the reality from which they are extrapolated. The ironic voices of Prächtel and Kalb, often joined by the narrator in their humorous appraisal of the events on Île des Dames, remind the reader that tacit acceptance of illusions is not unique to Île des Dames: '[...] auf öffentlich anerkannte Lügen stützt sich ja auch die sogenannte europäische Zivilisation' (762).

It should be noted that Kalb and Prächtel are alone among the novel's characters in their jocular scepticism, and the narrator does not unremittingly share their outlook. Nevertheless, irony fulfils an important function in the novel, complicating its relationship to the utopian tradition. The ironic tone signals to the reader that an awareness of the contrived nature of the novel's premise and of the intertextual burden of its genre is inscribed within the text. Utopian topoi are exploited in the absence of any stable perspective, and the ironic tone enables the narrator to explore the contrasting categories of nature and civilisation, old and new, given and imagined without having to commit to a definitive position on their current or ideal interaction.

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[10] Jablkowska, 'Die Insel der grossen Mutter. Utopie oder Satire auf die Utopie?', p. 93.

[11] In Götz Müller's words: 'Es wird [...] beschlossen, die 'unschätzbaren Illusionen' zahlreicher Inselbewohnerinnen zu erhalten, denn sie sind — wie bei Nietzsche — dem Leben dienlich'. Müller, *Gegenwelten*, p. 187.

3.3 Nature and civilisation in Robinsonade and utopia

The genres of literary utopia and Robinsonade, by imaginatively abolishing or re-inventing the conditions of civilisation, provoke reflection on those very conditions; the premise 'what if it were otherwise?' leads back to the question 'why is it thus?' One of the most problematic issues confronted by the imaginative exercise of utopia or Robinsonade is the relationship between nature and civilisation. This is perhaps most obviously the case in the desert island Robinsonade, in which the props of culture are perforce dispensed with. But it is more generally an issue for any text which takes social re-structuring for its theme. Once the inevitability and immutability of the current structure of society is rejected — even if this rejection is merely ludic or fanciful — the question of how humans, as social beings, experience, and intervene in, their natural environment, and the related question of the extent to which the human is perceived as natural, soon follow. In the following, the role these questions play in *Die Insel der grossen Mutter* will be examined in more detail.

> Es waren insofern merkwürdige Boote, als sie nicht von dunklen Männern dieses von uns so entfernten Weltteiles, sondern von europäisch gekleideten Damen dicht besetzt waren und gerudert wurden (683).

The initial association of 'europäisch' and 'gekleidet' signals the polarity of culture and nature that will play such an important part in the novel as a whole. The incongruous location of a desert island for a group of ladies in evening dress is further impressed on the reader through the vision of Anni Prächtel standing on a block of solidified lava adorned in a 'kostbare Robe' of silk and lace (684). References to the 'Diner' 'im Speisesaal des Ostindienfahrers' highlight further the discontinuity in the women's experience. The erstwhile ocean liner represents spatially the order of civilisation as inhabited by the women before its rupture through shipwreck. The comical disjunction is relativised in practice, as the details of the new social order and questions of what to preserve and what to jettison are worked out. The novel revolves around the impossibility of a definitive separation between the spheres of nature and civilisation; the women's utterances and actions testify repeatedly to the interpenetration of their past and their present, of the symbolically opposed spaces of Europe/the ocean liner and the island.

In the face of their transplantation from civilisation to a previously uninhabited natural environment, the women develop several conflicting responses. These differing positions tend to be presented paratactically; the narrator rarely seeks to mediate between them or to weigh up systematically the respective arguments for and against. This kind of non-systematic, non-analytical exploration of a variety of perspectives and interpretations is typical of Hauptmann's style. The words of one biographer capture well this aspect of Hauptmann's thinking which is clearly reflected in *Die Insel der grossen Mutter*: 'Gefühlsmäßig und spontan reagierte er auf verschiedene Eindrücke, bezog bald diese, bald jene Position, da er viele Möglichkeiten in sich trug'.[12] The various positions expressed and explored by the shipwrecked women with regard to their fate are briefly outlined below. The differing perspectives are grouped here according to whether they represent an embrace or a refusal of the new situation and are aligned where possible with the relevant generic approach to writing about alternative societies:

Embracing their isolated reality, the women variously conclude that

a) the challenge on Île des Dames will be to salvage and re-establish as much as possible of the culture and civilisation from which the women have been severed (Robinsonade)
b) the island is a natural paradise, and life on the island allows the women to re-connect both physically and spiritually with nature in a way that would be impossible in the civilisation they have left (arcadia)
c) the shipwreck affords the women a welcome opportunity for cultural renewal, separating them from a corrupt and corrupting culture (utopia)
d) the overwhelmingly female constitution of the island's inhabitants is a potential boon, granting them the opportunity to develop a new social order based on feminine and maternal principles. (matriarchy/gynocracy)

Rejection or dissatisfaction with life on Île des Dames is expressed in the following opinions:

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[12] Hilscher, *Gerhart Hauptmann: Leben und Werk*, p. 321.

e) the desert island is a prison, isolating the women from the cultural life they hold dear

f) the absence of men causes a fundamental imbalance in the island society which will culminate in its downfall.

The following section traces these various responses as unfolded in the text.

Rebuilding civilisation

The first utterance in the text, Anni's speech from the rock, primarily concerns the need for the women to attempt to repeat or mirror in the new situation the structures of the civilisation they have left behind. This repetition or mirroring of contemporary Western political structures will of necessity be inexact given the exclusively female constitution of the group.[13]

> 'Meine Damen, wir müssen beratschlagen', sagte sie. 'Und das darf nicht so wie bisher geschehen, wo alles wie in einer Judenschule durcheinandergeplappert hat, sondern mit Ordnung und System, wie es in Parlamenten üblich ist. Deshalb schreiten wir zuvörderst zur Präsidentenwahl.' (684)

The choice of the colloquial expression 'wie in einer Judenschule' is motivated by Prächtel's desire to re-establish, or maintain, the social institutions and identity from which the shipwreck has isolated the women. The fossilised anti-Semitism of the simile is intensified and re-vitalised by the context of its use. The 'Judenschule' stands as a negative other of the political system — parliamentary democracy as it functions in Western patriarchal society — which Prächtel seeks to characterise positively in the hope that this will facilitate its rapid establishment and acceptance on the island. A reciprocal association of the feminine and the Jewish is achieved through the negatively-charged 'durcheinandergeplappert' and through the evocation of the 'Judenschule' to describe the behaviour of the shipwrecked women. The qualities shared by the 'Judenschule' of the simile and the distressed women are the qualities of chaos, unintelligibility, an uncontrolled use of language that fails to serve a clearly defined

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[13] As the novel's action covers approximately twenty years, it can be assumed that women do not have democratic rights at the time the story begins, hence Rodberte Kalb's reference to the question: 'Was ist besser, [...] Frauenemanzipation, aktives und passives Wahlrecht oder Knechtung der Frau?' (690) The novel's time-

purpose.[14] It is precisely this productive but potentially dangerous tension between the forces of 'durcheinander' and 'Ordnung und System' that motivates the story as it unfolds. Prächtel's opening speech to the colony thus evokes the oppositional configurations that will dominate the text: not only of chaos and order, but of the rational (symbolised by the political institutions of parliamentary democracy) versus the irrational (religiosity, symbolised by the 'Judenschule' or synagogue) and of the conventional and established ('wie es in Parlamenten üblich ist') versus the foreign and unintelligible ('wie in einer Judenschule durcheinandergeplappert').

The desire to impose order upon a perceived chaos also associates this island enterprise with the broader discourse of colonialism, of the white man's (here woman's) 'burden' of bringing Western institutions, practices beliefs to places where they are unknown.[15]

> Man hörte, wie sich das Wort 'Präsidentenwahl', 'Präsidentenwahl' von Mund zu Mund längs des Strandes fortpflanzte, ein Wort, das wohl seit Erschaffung der Welt an diesem Ufer zum erstenmal vernommen ward (684).

The island society is often referred to as a 'Kolonie', its inhabitants as 'Kolonistinnen' (700) or 'Eroberer' (688). The early achievements of the colonists are motivated by the desire to replicate or at least approximate to European civilisation, from the institutions of presidency and 'Rathaus' to the details of ornament and luxury. The official opening of the 'Versammlungshaus' provides a good example of this. Here, Prächtel seeks to raise morale not only by praising the individual achievements of the women involved in the construction of the assembly hall, but, more importantly, by relativising the perceived opposition between desert island and civilisation. Referring to Rita Stradmann's recent death, she asks: '[...] stirbt man etwa nur hier, und leben die Leute in New York, Paris und Berlin vielleicht ewig? [...] Also hier ist der Tod, und dort ist der Tod.' (712). The celebrations achieve the desired effect:

> Und als nach Schluß des feierlichen Teils in einem besonderen länglichen Raum an einer richtigen Tafel von mehr als hundert Gedecken festlich gespeist wurde, fühlte man auf eine

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frame is, however, a little confused: the Russo-Japanese war is mentioned as a recent event (715), but the frame narrative places Phaon's old age before World War I (XI, 366).

[14] This reflects the Gentile derivation of the expression, as the language used in the 'Judenschule' would only be unintelligible to the uninitiated outsider.

[15] On the connection between island utopias/Robinsonades and colonialism, see Horst Glaser, *Utopische Inseln. Beiträge zu ihrer Geschichte und Theorie*, p. 31 ff, p. 97.

höchst wohltätige Weise den Zusammenhang mit der großen Menschheitskultur wiederhergestellt und den Schmerz der Verbannung merklich gelindert. (713)

Desert island as social laboratory

The desert island motif has not always been employed to signify a radical departure from civilisation, in the negative sense of exile or the positive sense of escape. The group Robinsonade provides the opportunity to study social forms in miniature, demonstrating their consistent features even in remote, isolated environments. For example, the parallel between the war-paint of the schoolboys and the military uniform of the officer who arrives at the end of William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* (1954) implies the universality of belligerence regardless of location or cultural specifics. Writers of group Robinsonades may extrapolate from the assumption that human problems are the same everywhere the possibility of formulating universally valid solutions to these problems. This approach is favoured by Johann Gottfried Schnabel in *Die Insel Felsenburg* (1732), in which the norms and structures of European Christian patriarchy are imported intact into the new setting, presenting 'ein gereinigtes und auf eine ferne Insel verpflanztes besseres Deutschland'.[16] In *Die Insel der grossen Mutter*, the opposition between the island situation and the 'Kulturwelt' is not consistently upheld, but often relativised. With a nod in the direction of Darwin-inspired theories concerning the biological struggle for life that supposedly underlies social and cultural forms, Anni Prächtel notes that 'die Furcht, die Angst, Trennung, Verrat, Krankheit, Hunger, Tod lauern auch in der Zivilisation. Auch da muß sich jeder sein Leben erobern. Wir haben hier ganz denselben Fall' (688). Despite this rhetoric concerning the universality of the struggle to exist, the actual details of survival on Île des Dames are, as we have seen, remarkably free of any trace of struggle or adversity, indeed of sickness and hunger. The feature of the lost civilisation that is most notably replicated on the desert island is in fact a culturally specific (but self-universalising) view of gender difference, a particular characterisation of masculinity and femininity. These are discussed more extensively below.

[16] Glaser, *Utopische Inseln*, p. 107.

Escape from civilisation

The women's attempt to replicate certain aspects of Western civilisation in a new environment is accompanied by an awareness that this is only partially possible, indeed only partially, if at all, desirable. They have been 'mit einem plötzlichen Ruck aus der Kulturwelt herausgeschleudert' (685), an isolation that is perceived in equal measure as catastrophe and opportunity. The chance to establish 'unser Leben auf einer völlig neuen Basis' (688) is welcomed by some as a liberation from the problems and tiresome dilemmas of civilisation, the 'Kulturprobleme' satirically listed by Rodberte as follows:

> Was ist besser, Republik oder Monarchie, Freihandel oder Zollschranken, Frauenemanzipation, aktives und passives Wahlrecht oder Knechtung der Frau? Ob man die Jesuiten nach Deutschland hereinlassen soll, ob der Militarismus eine fluch- oder segenbringende Sache ist? Ob Marées ein Maler und Böcklin keiner ist, oder Böcklin einer und Marées keiner? Und dahinter der ganze Schwanz von Kunstfragen. Oder die quälenden Fragen: Geh' ich im Sommer nach Berchtesgaden, nach Biarritz, oder mache ich eine Nordlandfahrt? Wo verbring' ich den Winter: Berlin, Paris, Florenz oder Rom? Oder reise ich an die Riviera? Oder welches ist die beste Sektmarke: Heidsieck oder Ayala? (690)

The contrast between their new situation and the 'Kulturwelt' the women have left behind is often described in terms of an opposition between artifice and naturalness, falsity and authenticity, as for example in the metaphor of being now 'ohne Kulturschminke' (691) or of having abandoned the 'Puppenkleider' of their previous existence (765).

Hauptmann thus brings to bear on the fantasy gynocracy a broader range of questions concerning the relationship of nature to culture, questions that have motivated a long tradition of utopian and Robinsonade thought-experiments and related discourses. The island topos has, for writers ranging from Thomas More to Aldous Huxley and William Golding, facilitated the imaginative exploration of the possible effects it might have on human beings if the cultural and social conditions — and conditioning — to which they are currently subject were to cease or be re-configured. The island, as site of experimentation, can witness an attempt to re-build the cultural conditions lost through banishment, as for instance in Daniel Defoe's *The Life and Strange Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* (1719).

On the other hand, this very banishment may be welcomed as an opportunity to be rid of the corrupting influences of civilisation and to return to the state of the 'noble savage'. Thus Rousseau's interpretation of *Robinson Crusoe*, embedded as it is within his critique of contemporary cultural and pedagogical practices, emphasises those aspects of Crusoe's fate that call for reflection on the possible qualities of a natural, pre-civilised state of being, on a condition which is 'not that of a social being'.[17] Rousseau's reading, in order to serve specific culturally critical ends, occludes the central motor of Defoe's story — namely, the fact that Robinson Crusoe is engaged in a permanent struggle to re-create the civilisation that he has lost.[18] A similar insistence on the conflation of the 'good' and the 'natural' can be found in Denis Diderot's rejection of the idea of natural or innate human brutality in his *Supplément au voyage de Bougainville* (1771), in which civilisation is viewed critically as the 'syphilisation' of the 'noble savage'.

Hauptmann's novel evokes these questions by employing the desert island motif and focussing on the central theme of the Robinsonade, namely the attempt to rebuild civilisation from scratch. The utterances of some of the island women foreground the fact that their position belatedly recapitulates or recycles aspects of a specific tradition of writing. For instance, Henry Thoreau's *Walden* is specifically referred to in relation to Laurence Hobbema's preference for a hermit-like existence (749), and in fact her periods of isolation from the island community constitute a Robinsonade within a Robinsonade. Rodberte Kalb calls the whole scenario 'diese neue und sonderbare Robinsonade' (714) and 'dieses insulare Schlaraffenland' (720), while Anni Prächtel refers to it as 'diese kitschige Damenkolonie' (714) (anticipating in her use of the term 'kitschig' a criticism that has been levelled at the text as a whole[19]). Inscribed within the text, then, is an awareness that the desert island, despite being literally uninhabited, is symbolically an oft-traversed terrain when it comes to the complex of questions surrounding the relationship between nature and civilisation. Île des Dames steers a mid-way course between the Robinsonian attempt to recreate the lost conditions of civilisation and the Rousseauian embrace of the state of nature, washed clean of the pollution of a civilisation viewed as corrupt.

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[17] Rousseau, *Émile*, trans by Barbara Foxley, p. 147.
[18] See Glaser, *Utopische Inseln*, p. 94 ff.
[19] Jablkowska, 'Die Insel der grossen Mutter. Utopie oder Satire auf die Utopie?', p.96.

The embrace of nature

This Robinsonian-Rousseauian ambivalence results at least in part from the way in which nature is conceptualised. Nature is mostly figured in maternal terms, and the inherent duality of the mother figure, its positive and negative evaluation as nurturing or castrating/suffocating translates into an ambivalent characterisation of the island.[20] On the one hand Île des Dames is portrayed as a bountiful paradise, a cornucopia in which the women can enjoy a harmonious existence of ease, health and plenty. On the other hand it is suggested that this very ease and harmony is inimical to cultural development and achievement; the state of nature is something that must be overcome, and civilisation is premised on conflict with nature. Rodberte Kalb observes that

> das Leben [wird uns] durch dieses insulare Schlaraffenland allzu leicht gemacht, um moralische Eigenschaften in uns großzuzüchten. Eine straffe Organisation hält sich nicht oder erweist sich als unnötig. Die Damen gedeihen und schwellen wie Früchte, trotzdem ihr Gemüt belastet ist. Sie brauchen nur nach Laune etwas zu arbeiten, denn wenn sie selbst das Händchen nicht ausstrecken wollen, die Paradiesäpfel hängen ihnen ja in den Mund. Was fühlt aber ein Arzt, ein Erretter, Erhalter, Gesetzgeber, ein Moses, Vater und Mutter, ein Erlöser, wo niemand krank ist, niemand errettet und erhalten zu werden braucht, alle so zahm, üppig, faul und friedlich sind, daß ein Gesetzgeber oder gar ein Moses mit irgendwelcher Übertretung, einem Ungehorsam, einer Gewalttat gar nicht zu rechnen hat? Was fühlt ein Vater, eine Mutter, wo die Natur Vater und Mutter ist? (720)

Human intervention in the environment, the human attempt to shape one's own destiny or the destiny of one's group, Promethean assertion of will and, more specifically, the cultural achievements of the medical and juridical spheres are rendered redundant in the Garden of Eden. An overly harmonious relationship between humans and their natural environment, it would seem, results in cultural stasis and paralysis of will and initiative.

Here Hauptmann touches on a sensitive question for utopian imagination as a whole: the question of the extent to which adversity is necessary, or even desirable. As discussed in chapter one, dystopian problematisations of utopianism often repudiate the idea of a

perfected social order on the grounds that it precludes conflict and dynamism, tending instead towards a stasis which is ultimately death-like. Utopianism seeks to limit, minimise, ultimately to eliminate adversity and suffering, but the ultimate escape from adversity comes only with death. Hence the equation of perfection and death:

> Scharfe Intellekte, wie Rodberte, wie die Präsidentin, fühlten schließlich [den] schummrigen Rausch [der Insel] im Blut und wußten mitunter nicht, ob sie nicht etwa schon gestorben seien, körperlos mit Paradiesesräumen und –düften vereint (822)

The notion of an idle and adversity-free existence is problematised by dystopian texts in a way that suggests that adversity may be necessary in order for desirable or admirable qualities to emerge. This suggestion is in itself highly problematic, as we have seen with regard to Huxley's *Brave New World* and Adorno's critique of the way in which the problems of suffering and adversity are handled in that novel (see chapter one). The question as to what may result if adversity is eliminated is explored to some extent on Hauptmann's island. The most basic kind of adversity — and the first to be addressed in most utopian schemes — is material scarcity, the struggle to find the means of subsistence. In *Die Insel der grossen Mutter*, the need to solve the problem of how to provide for material welfare is obviated by the bountiful natural environment — there is, in material terms, no struggle for existence: 'wenn sie selbst das Händchen nicht ausstrecken wollen, die Paradiesäpfel hängen ihnen ja in den Mund' (720).

Joanna Jablkowska reads the novel's arcadian idyll against the background of the modern problematisation of utopian vision, arguing that this context renders descriptions of utopia so unconvincing as to be inherently self-satirising:

> In unserem [d.h. im zwanzigsten] Jahrhundert muß nämlich die Beschreibung der absoluten Aussöhnung des Menschen mit der Natur, in deren himmlischer Schönheit man dem göttlichen Müßiggang nachgehen kann, in Kitsch ausarten. Der Kitsch bei Hauptmann ist die natürliche Folge der unnatürlichen Verpflanzung der utopischen Gattung ins 20. Jahrhundert.[21]

This argument relies on a notion of the 'natural' which sits uneasily with the concept of utopia, a concept anchored in artifice, fantasy, construction and imaginative projection. The

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[20] Mary Ellmann notes that the uterus is subject to a similarly double coding as nutritive or claustrophobic. See Ellmann, *Thinking about Women*, p. 13.

[21] Jablkowska, 'Die Insel der grossen Mutter. Utopie oder Satire auf die Utopie?', p. 96.

claim that the deployment of the utopian genre in the twentieth century is 'unnatural' implies that at another, earlier period, utopian fantasies were in some sense 'natural', whereas utopian imagination, in its negation of the given and construction of the not-yet, relies on artifice, on the imaginative capacity for the invention of the absent and the re-structuring of the given. Furthermore, Jablkowska implicitly equates 'die utopische Gattung' with 'die Beschreibung der absoluten Aussöhnung des Menschen mit der Natur, in deren himmlischer Schönheit man dem göttlichen Müßiggang nachgehen kann'. While the dream of reversion to a prelapsarian unity with nature and the idealisation of idleness are undoubtedly significant strands within the utopian tradition, there are other, equally crucial strands occluded by this equation. The relationship between humans and their natural environment is not always one of 'absolute Aussöhnung' in utopian texts; it was noted above (p. 15) that the dream of absolute mastery, of the subordination of the natural environment to human needs, has been since Francis Bacon's *New Atlantis* (1627) at least as prevalent in utopian writing as the counter-notion of a reconciliation with nature, a (re-)atttainment of harmonious co-existence with the environment.

More important for our understanding of Hauptmann's utopian novel is the recognition of the genderised treatment of these two contrasting relationships to nature. The unmediated arcadian being-in-nature is the province of the women; Mannland is characterised by the manipulation and exploitation of natural resources for the sake of technological advancement An implied utopian equilibrium exists within this gendered dichotomy: the innovation of Mannland supplies what was lacking in the stultified idyll of Mütterland, which in turn provides a corrective not only to the alienation and artificiality of patriarchal, urban civilisation, but also to the potentially aggressive outlook of the males of Mannland.[22]

3.4 Utopian complementarity

For Jablkowska, the kitsch problem in *Die Insel der grossen Mutter* is symptomatic of a structural flaw at the heart of the utopian concept. Utopia admits exclusively positive experience, suppressing the negative; the dystopian position implies that this is done at the

[22] 'Denn Gewalt, die dem Manne so nahe liegt, ist sein schlechtestes Teil' (891).

expense of meaningfulness and credibility, that utopia's very efforts to eliminate the undesirable (or indeed to determine definitively what might be labelled as such) are what render it undesirable. Narrative needs conflict, the positive is only actualised in the presence of a negative other, the presence of beauty only effective in the contrasting presence of the unbeautiful. 'Es fehlt ihr [der Utopie] ein feindliches Prinzip, mit dem sie sich ständig konfrontieren könnte, und das sie vor Erstarrung retten würde.'[23] Utopia, according to this reading, is inherently static and one-dimensional, rendered imbalanced through its exclusion of opposite or hostile principles. But reflections on the necessity or desirability of adversity are by no means absent from the novel, as the following statement of Phaon's demonstrates:

> Statt Freude und Lust will ich lieber Schmerz und Lust in jener verschieden dosierten, aber untrennbaren Mischung setzen, welche sich zu allen höchsten und erhabensten Genüssen des Gefühls zu steigern vermag.

The meaning of pleasure can only be sustained with reference to its opposite, pain. The complementarity principle touched on here by Phaon is in fact fundamental not only to the gender concept that underlies the novel but to the utopian implications of this gender concept.

Jablkowska's comments concerning utopia as genre could be applied just as effectively, however, to the fate of the separatist matriarchy as viewed from the perspective of the 'essentialist complementarity' theory of gender. The 'principles' of feminine and masculine are, from this perspective, as reciprocally dependent as the binary oppositions of positive and negative, beauty and ugliness. Jablkowska maintains that Hauptmann's utopia is inevitably self-satirising because the utopian project is incompatible with the complexities of modernity. But Hauptmann's ironic, self-consciously derivative text does not, satirically or otherwise, pit traditional utopianism — the quest for the perfect social order — against complex modern reality. It recycles topoi of the utopian genre, but its focus is in fact elsewhere: the utopian conceit facilitates an extensive exploration of gender, of masculine and feminine 'principles' and of the various possible social applications of these principles. Through the external trappings of a utopian Robinsonade, the gender question is unfolded to reveal the novel's utopian core, an ideal of complementarity extrapolated from the dichotomy of gender.

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[23] Jablkowska, 'Die Insel der grossen Mutter. Utopie oder Satire auf die Utopie?', p. 94.

The details of the scenario, however, resonate with the modernist repudiation of utopianism as an impossible totalitarian dream, in that both rely on the notion of social disequilibrium. The dystopian society is ordered in such a way that something is lacking, occluded or suppressed. The absence of pain and adversity in, for instance, Zamyatin's Glass City and Huxley's Brave New World entail the absence of individuality, irrationalism and fantasy as well. *Die Insel der grossen Mutter* thus exploits a distinctly dystopian trope by constructing an alternative order that suffers from an imbalance, a structural inadequacy that will lead to its demise. As so often the case in dystopian texts, the social order in question is propped up by a duplicitous ideology or by the infringement of its citizens' rights: the safeguarding of the matriarchal state on Île des Dames calls for measures which infringe the liberty of the male islanders. An expedient lie is accepted and promoted as the official ideology. The lack or imbalance at the heart of the society of Mütterland is simple: 'Es fehlt ihnen absolut die Korrektur durch das Männliche' (762); male authority, described as 'das letzte und beste Machtmittel' (745), is absent. Given the essentialist model of gender difference that underlies the concept of 'femininity' in the novel, it is unsurprising that a society based solely on feminine, maternalist principles should turn out to be unbalanced.

By the end of the novel, Anni Prächtel's hopes of establishing a communist-feminist alternative to European society and to the 'platte Alltäglichkeit einer überlebten Zivilisation' (765) are confounded. After just a year on the island, she confesses to Rodberte her boredom with the 'kitschige Damenkolonie' (714), and while appreciative of the women's achievement given their circumstances, after two decades she would choose Europe over this experiment; as with Friedrich von Kammacher of the 1912 novel *Atlantis* (to be further discussed below, p. 146 ff), the experience of the foreign shore reverses the effects of 'Europamüdigkeit'. Anni Prächtel succumbs to an outburst of homesickness on visiting Mannland, and this is reviled as heresy against the orthodoxy (861-2). The negative features of Mütterland which induce boredom and claustrophobia in Anni are its stasis, its narrow horizons, the oppressive nature of its orthodoxy, and the general barrenness of its intellectual and cultural life. Excluded from motherhood, Anni is in a way excluded from the whole raison d'être of life on Île des Dames. Yet her nostalgic outburst, which meets with the disapproval of the orthodox matriarchs, idealises not patriarchy itself, but the principle of

complementarity. Her seemingly confused speech in fact voices key aspects of the gender theory that underlies the novel as a whole:

> Matriarchat, Patriarchat: ist das Matriarchat der Himmel, so werde ich ganz gewiß am Tor sitzen, um gelegentlich, wenn es geöffnet wird, einen Blick auf das Patriarchat zu tun. Läßt mich Petrus dereinst in das allerheiligste Patriarchat des himmlischen Paradieses eintreten, so werde ich den erhabenen apostolischen Türschließer bitten, mich irgendwie bei sich anzustellen, damit ich manchmal durch eine Türritze oder durchs Schlüsselloch auf das höllische Matriarchat blicken kann. Und vielleicht, wenn er schläft...wir heiligen Mütter wissen ja, wie man nachts gelegentlich, ich denke an Finstermannland, zum freien und glücklichen Gebrauch eines Hausschlüssels kommen kann (861).

The inherent disequilibrium of both matriarchy and patriarchy mean that, regardless of which is positively or negatively characterised as 'hellish' or 'heavenly', the inhabitant of either would — given an ironic temperament such as Anni Prächtel's — desire the other. Behind this desire to be elsewhere lies the implicit possibility of a utopian equilibrium, a state of complementarity in which the respective lacks of both patriarchy and matriarchy would be made good.

3.4.1 A plurality of alternatives

A further problem confronted by the novel, and the aspect of it indebted to utopian thought and the tradition of utopian writing, is the problem of competing cultural orders and value-systems. The alternative societies presented by utopian texts are societies in which things are done differently. Hauptmann's approach to the 'alternativity' brief of utopian writing is irreducibly pluralistic, presenting a sequence of alternatives. The province of Mütterland on Île des Dames differs in certain key respects from contemporary Western civilisation. An alternative to this alternative is in turn provided by the province of Mannland, and these opposed alternatives reflect gendered categories. Within Île des Dames itself, various individual spiritual journeys are set apart from the orthodoxy of the matriarchy — notably Laurence Hobbema's hermit-like existence and Phaon's discovery of a magical oasis or 'Lufteiland' which becomes the locus of spiritual revelation. A further alternative is presented in the frame narrative, in the form of the Stradmanns' voluntary isolation. All of these spaces contrast not only with each other but with contemporary Western civilisation, which is itself portrayed alternately in a positive and negative way. Its jaded banality is

criticised, as is the masculinist bias of its institutions and values, and yet homesickness for Western culture is never fully dispelled.

The pluralistic approach taken by Hauptmann with regard to utopian alternativity is also evident within the portrayal of the Île des Dames matriarchy itself: the narrated phenomena of island life are subjected to a variety of interpretations from a number of different perspectives within the text. For example, the centrality of mysticism and the heightened spiritual receptivity he describes in the island colony reflect an inherited gender discourse and continue the tradition of attributing to women an enhanced spirituality, an access to the mystical which men have lost or been denied by virtue of their greater rationality. The religiosity on Île des Dames is a function of the matriarchy, and reflects the values J.J. Bachofen emphasised in his characterisation of prehistoric matriarchy. For Bachofen, the hieratic character of gynocratic societies reflects an essential feminine religiosity; 'die innere Anlage der weiblichen Natur' is described by Bachofen as

> jenes tiefe ahnungsreiche Gottesbewusstsein, das, mit dem Gefühl der Liebe sich verschmelzend, zumal der Frau eine in den wildesten Zeiten am mächtigsten wirkende religiöse Weihe leiht.[24]

The centrality of myth and religion in the island colony thus draws on an established convention of associating religious feeling with femininity; this convention is a particular manifestation of a more general association of the feminine with the irrational. The religious life on the island, most fully unfolded in the portrayal of its chief exponent, Laurence Hobbema, is multifacted, incorporating pantheistic mysticism, theosophy, spiritualism and Western reception of Eastern religions.[25] A number of perspectives are brought to bear on the subject of religion, not least a sceptical rationalism that sees the orthodoxy as an attempt to draw a veil over uncomfortable truths. Neither is the religious theme exhausted by the matriarchal orthodoxy. Juxtaposed against the official theology of the island society we find an 'island within the island', a locus of individual spiritual revelation that is set apart from public ritual. Twice Phaon, straying into remoter parts of the island, experiences a sort of spiritual epiphany in a fantastical oasis of beauty and calm, described as 'eine im Raume schwebende andere Insel' or 'Lufteiland' (829). It is this emphasis on the personal spiritual

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[24] Johann Jakob Bachofen, *Der Mythus von Orient und Okzident* (Munich: 1926), p. 20.
[25] See Philip Mellen, *Gerhart Hauptmann. Religious syncretism and Eastern religions* (New York: P. Lang, 1984).

odyssey which is foremost in Mellen's discussion of Hauptmann's utopia; without the possibility for spiritual enrichment and fulfillment, he argues, there is no utopia.[26] Mellen's insistence on the alignment of the utopian with the possibility for individual spiritual growth is curious, given that other works by Hauptmann which portray a spiritual journey or apotheosis — such as *Der Ketzer von Soana* and *Hanneles Himmelfahrt* — do so independently of any reference to the utopian tradition.

The centrality of myth, religion and spiritual regeneration on the island owes much not only to Bachofen and contemporary gender discourse, but also to the trope of 'Europamüdigkeit' and to the practice of criticising contemporary culture by pointing to its spiritual bankruptcy and blandness. As discussed in the first chapter, a prerequisite of any utopian/dystopian thought experiment is a critical engagement with the given social-historical conditions. The depiction of an alternative society is motivated by the insight into the failings of society as actually experienced, and provides the opportunity and means for further critical reflection on the existing order.

The critical dimension is unfolded in a number of ways. The shipwrecked women, while keen to preserve the heritage of skills and culture which links them to Western civilisation, welcome the opportunity to start afresh on the island, untainted by the 'platte Alltäglichkeit einer überlebten Zivilisation' (765). Anni Prächtel remarks: 'Schien uns wohl diese aufgeblähte, grob genußsüchtige, profitwütige, hirnlos zynische Kaufmannskultur einen Pfifferling wert? Gut, wir haben sie überwunden' (691). The banality, inauthenticity and materialism of Western civilisation is frequently criticised by the characters in the novel. Prächtel, echoing Oswald Spengler's views on urbanisation, speaks of the curse of triviality

> dessen verderblicher Wirkung schließlich und endlich kein Großstadtmensch entgeht. Und ich finde, daß England, daß Europa, Amerika und so weiter nur noch gleichsam ausgelaufene Großstadt sind.[27] Meine Flügel werden steif, ihre Gelenke trocknen ein. (719)

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[26] Spiritual epiphany is even more central to Felix Voigt's discussion of the novel; the existence of the 'Lufteiland' or 'rätselhafte Hochfläche' justifies his inclusion of *Die Insel der grossen Mutter* in an analysis of the 'Island of the Blessed' topos. As cited in Mellen, *Gerhart Hauptmann and Utopia*, p. 48.

[27] Compare Spengler, *Der Untergang des Abendlandes*, 2 vols (München: Beck, 1922), II, p. 120-121: 'Nun saugt die Riesenstadt das Land aus, unersättlich, immer neue Ströme von Menschen fordernd und verschlingend [...] Heimat ist für [den geistigen Nomaden] jede dieser Städte'.

The women's banishment contains an element of liberation which for the most part they attempt to embrace.

> der leise Spleen, den [Laurence] bis dahin noch immer in sich wachsen fühlte, [war] mit einem Schlage vernichtet worden und mit den internationalen Festsälen des 'Kormoran' ins Meer gesunken. Die folternde Langeweile, die sich inmitten des notdürftig lackierten, entweder seichten oder brutalen Genießertums und seiner blöden Einförmigkeit ihrer bemächtigt hatte, war mit einemmal dahin, so daß ihr der Schiffbruch selbst während eigener höchster Lebensgefahr eine Notwendigkeit, eine Erlösung bedeutete (749).

The island community prides itself on having improved upon the alienated urbanism of Western civilisation in several ways. The women's oppression by a patriarchal order is replaced by their *de facto* empowerment in the absence of men. The jaded secularism of Europe is countered by the renewed spirituality of the island community, the contrast captured in the simile of a 'lauliche Pfütze' versus the 'kristallreines Wasser aus einem Gebirgsquell' (750). And, living amidst the natural bounty of Île des Dames, the women have the opportunity to overcome the alienation from nature that ensues from modern civilisation: 'Wir sind an den Busen der Natur und, wenn Sie wollen, ins Paradies zurückgekehrt' (691). The idea of overcoming, or escaping from, civilisation through a return to nature co-exists, paradoxically it would seem, with the idea of rebuilding civilisation along new lines: '[...] sie waren sich durchaus bewußt, unter den rätselhaften Umständen eine Welt *wie ein Werk* von Grund aus neu zu erbauen.' (808, emphasis added). The *cultural* facilitation of a more *natural* existence is, however paradoxical it may seen, a significant trope of the period, as we shall see in the discussion of 'Lebensreform' and eugenics (p. 150 ff). Before turning to the question of how the 'nature' concept can be ideologically deployed, the related question of the gender concept that underlies the novel will be explored more extensively.

3.5 Concepts of matriarchy and femininity: Hauptmann and Bachofen

The matriarchal concept that informs the novel is indebted to that of cultural historian Johann Jakob Bachofen, whose work on the subject of prehistoric matriarchal societies, *Das Mutterrecht und die Urreligion*, published in 1861, was an important source for Hauptmann, as the latter noted himself in 1942: 'Ohne ihn hätte ich wohl nie *Die Insel der grossen Mutter*

geschrieben'.[28] *Das Mutterrecht*, which cites mainly mythological evidence to argue the case that patriarchy arose out of an earlier matriarchal-matrilinear system, inspired Hauptmann's emphasis on mythology and mysticism, major features of life on Île des Dames. Bachofen, following the gender discourse of Romanticism, identifies an affinity between the feminine and the spiritual and irrational. Traces of this supposed affinity are later apparent in the vocabulary of psychology.[29] *Das Mutterrecht* is of interest furthermore as a source for Friedrich Engels in his investigation of the bourgeois ideology of family and of the interrelation between the rise of patriarchy and the rise of private property.[30] The reception of Bachofen's theories both on the left and on the right of the political spectrum is analysed by Erich Fromm in his essay of 1934, 'Die sozialpsychologische Bedeutung der Mutterrechtstheorie'.[31] Thinkers on the right, dubbed 'neo-Romantics' by Fromm, drew support from Bachofen's writings for an essentialist model of gender difference. Thinkers on the left welcomed the implications of Bachofen's theory, using it to refute an unhistoricised or universalising understanding of gender and of the inevitability or 'rightness' of patriarchy. This mixed reception of Bachofen demonstrates that the task of understanding the phenomenon of gender difference is highly politically charged. Interpretative approaches to the categories 'feminine' and 'masculine' reflect the political and ideological preconceptions of the interpreter.

We have already seen instances of Hauptmann's pluralism, his reluctance to treat of any one theme from a single perspective. The same approach applies to the theme of matriarchy and to the valorisation of characteristics viewed as feminine. The positive portrayal of the matriarchal order proceeds from a favourable comparison with patriarchy and its shortcomings. This view is mainly put forward in the narrated thoughts and conversations of the island leadership. The island's status as an alternative to patriarchy is cherished by its

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[28] Roy Cowen, *Gerhart Hauptmann. Kommentar zum nicht-dramatischen Werk*, p. 110.

[29] An example: 'While the matriarchal-maternal element in the human psyche belongs symbolically to the Feminine and the unconscious, the ego in both sexes – in its heroically active developmental and aggressive character that presses toward becoming conscious – is symbolically masculine.' Erich Neumann, *The Fear of the Feminine and other essays on feminine psychology* trans. by Boris Matthews and others (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), p. 240.

[30] Friedrich Engels, *Der Ursprung der Familie, des Privateigentums und des Staats. Im Anschluß an Lewis H. Morgans Forschungen* (Zürich: 1884).

[31] See chapter two, note 14 (p. 77 above).

inhabitants, and hopes are expressed even by the sceptical rationalist, Rodberte Kalb, that the experience of this alternative may become a positive force for social, even global change:

> Dieser Ozean von Leben, Liebe, Selbstlosigkeit und Schöpferkraft, der im heut unterdrückten Weltreich der Frauen herrscht, müßte einmal von Grund aus bewegt werden. Und dann würden [...] Massen von Schutt und Unrat aus der Welt geräumt werden (824).

The at times rhapsodic assertion of women's superior capacity for selflessness, love, sacrifice and social and religious feeling co-exists with a masculinist position which comes most clearly to the fore during the narration of the expedition to Mannland. The limitations of 'feminine' characteristics and values lend Hauptmann's arcadia a dystopian quality.

Bachofen's theories, despite their idealisation of a specific understanding of femininity and their nostalgia for a mythical past, firmly situated the discussion of prehistoric matriarchy within the discourse of progress, inscribing the demise of matriarchy and ascendancy of patriarchy within a narrative of 'upward evolution', of the gradual improvement of humanity through the process of civilisation. Hauptmann adopts from Bachofen not only the idealisation of matriarchy but the patriarchal narrative framework within which it is embedded. The separatist policy on Île des Dames implies that, in the absence of separatist measures, patriarchy would naturally re-assert itself once the male islanders came of age. Prehistoric matriarchy, according to Bachofen, ultimately gave way to patriarchy, and if the chance matriarchy of Île des Dames is to survive, it must be protected by gender segregation. No such restriction applies to patriarchy. Despite the contention advanced in the 'Rahmenerzählung' that the experiences on Île des Dames provide no definitive answer to the question 'ob Matriarchat oder Patriarchat das wahrhaft kulturbildende sei', (XI, 369) it is clear, as Warren R. Maurer concludes, that it is the patriarchal principle which re-establishes itself with force at the end of the novel and indeed underlies the development of the narrative throughout.[32] The importance both of the chaotic demise of the island society at the end of the novel and of the positive characterisation of the achievements of Mannland must be fully grasped if the relationship between patriarchy and matriarchy in the novel is to be understood. This has not always been the case in critical literature on this text. Phillip

[32] 'That the balance between matriarchy and patriarchy has shifted [by the end of the novel] once more to the latter is beyond dispute.' Maurer, *Understanding Gerhart Hauptmann*, p. 159.

Mellen, for instance, has argued that the matriarchy/patriarchy relationship can be described as a triadic movement:

> The element of the past is the idea of the matriarchate. Modern civilisation, represented by a corrupt, masculine culture, constitutes the second step of the process, and the third component, the future of mankind, is seen in the reconstruction of a purely matriarchal system.[33]

But Mellen's outline overlooks the reversion to patriarchy at the novel's conclusion, both in the orgiastic overthrow of the matriarchal order and in the idealised marriage of the Stradmanns as narrated by the introductory frame. Eberhard Hilscher's analysis demonstrates a similar blind spot with regard to the novel's chaotic ending and role of the paralipomenon. Hilscher's comparison of *Die Insel der grossen Mutter* and Thomas Mann's *Der Zauberberg* points to the many similarities between the two texts. These include the ship of fools and pedagogical province topoi and the ironic narrative tone. His concluding remarks reveal an over-emphasis of the idyllic and arcadian aspects of the text at the expense of an adequate assessment of the matriarchy's Dionysian-orgiastic dissolution:

> natürlich kann nicht übersehen werden, wie auf dem Zauberberg letztlich alles in ein großes Sterben mündet, während auf der Mütter-Insel ein prächtiges Lebendigwerden anhebt und der ordnende Kronos die Zügel in der Hand behält.[34]

The final orgiastic chaos from which Phaon and Dagmar flee at the end of the novel represents an outbreak of irrationality, of instinctual erotic forces which overthrow the social order that has been achieved. This dramatic return of the repressed — through the unfettered couplings of the final scenes — is a clear indictment of the matriarchy's delusory orthodoxy and disequilibrium.

Other critics have argued that the novel's conclusion is open-ended, [35] i.e. that no definitive decision is reached either for or against patriarchy or matriarchy. A more detailed consideration of a number of elements of the novel casts doubt on this argument. Firstly, the women feel the need to impose gender segregation to ensure the perpetuation of the matriarchy. This implies that reversion to patriarchy is inevitable unless circumvented by the

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[33] Mellen, *Gerhart Hauptmann and Utopia*, p. 60.
[34] Hilscher, *Gerhart Hauptmann: Leben und Werk*, p. 380.
[35] For example Götz Müller: 'Der Roman endet freilich nicht mit der Errichtung des Patriarchats, der Schluß ist ein offener Schluß.' Müller, *Gegenwelten*, p. 193.

imposition of this drastic policy. Secondly, the fact that the island society plunges into chaos and the cultivated order collapses implies a reversion to the cultural 'default setting' of patriarchy. Thirdly, the industry and innovation of Mannland is praised even by the leaders of Mütterland and it is implied that the difference between the two provinces of the island reflect the inherent characteristics of their respective male and female populations. Fourthly, the idealised marriage of Phaon and Dagmar Stradmann, as described in the frame narrative, reinstates the gender roles of patriarchy. In the re-assertion of the patriarchal principle at the novel's conclusion, the direction of the narrative follows the direction of Bachofen's theory of prehistoric matriarchy, in which matriarchal societies ultimately ceded to patriarchy.

This teleology co-exists with a contrasting strand of ideas in the novel, concerning the philosophical and political insights that are to be gained from the new situation. The characteristically pluralist perspective of Hauptmann's text means that the re-assertion of patriarchy does not preclude a positive portrayal, even idealisation, of the maternalist matriarchy and the concept of femininity on which it is based.

The novel, through its foregrounding of biological values and mothering, reveals its indebtedness to Bachofen's understanding of matriarchy. The primacy of these values — 'Tradition, Generation, lebendiger Zusammenhang durch Blut und Zeugung'[36] — is what renders Bachofen's theories attractive to a conservative gender discourse. Erich Fromm's analysis emphasised the ambivalent quality of Bachofen's theories in an attempt to account for their appeal to both the right and the left. Peter Sprengel notes with reference to *Die Insel der grossen Mutter* that Bachofen reception of both ends of the political spectrum leaves its imprint on Hauptmann's concept of matriarchy:

> Der Faschismus, dem Ideologen wie [Alfred] Bäumler den Boden bereiteten, praktizierte freilich eine sehr andere Verklärung der Mutter, als sie Bachofens Konzept der demetrischen Gynaikokratie zugrunde lag [...] Hauptmann [...] ist in der Hinwendung zu Bachofen sowohl durch die erste sozialistische als durch die zweite idealistische Phase seiner Rezeption, und zwar in durchaus unterschiedlicher Weise, bestimmt. [37]

[36] Fromm, 'Die sozialpsychologische Bedeutung der Mutterrechtstheorie', p. 201.

But Hauptmann's Bachofen reception is by no means a straightforward transposition of the Bachofenian matriarchy model onto a fantasy tropical island. The gender segregation renders the matriarchy of Île des Dames a travesty of the stable matrilinear system idealised by Bachofen. In banishing their sons, the island women forfeit their own motherhood, and as motherhood is what defines and justifies their existence, as it is through maternity that they are 'mit dem Sinn ihres Daseins eins geworden', (810) this act of expulsion and neglect guarantees the downfall of their society. Götz Müller observes that the separatism on Île des Dames makes it not a matriarchy in the Bachofenian sense, but rather an Amazon state: 'Hauptmanns Vorbild ist vielmehr die extreme Form der Gynaikokratie, das Amazonentum'.[38] The transgression of the maternal bond, tacitly accepted by the women as a necessary dictate of matriarchy, is exposed by Bianor, the youth who later leads the males in the vengeful rebellion which culminates in the final Dionysian orgy. Bianor delivers a diatribe to the female delegation who visit Mannland:

> Er überhäufte die Mütter mit Vorwürfen, sagte, daß ihnen der geheiligte Name Mutter nicht zustehe, da sie sich seiner durch ihr Verhalten gegen ihre männlichen Kinder verlustig gemacht hätten (878).

It is asserted that it is only the misandrist doctor, Amanda Egli, who wants to enforce the separatism: 'In Wirklichkeit war die Ärztin die einzige, die mit dem Gedanken des Mutterstaats ganz ernst machte' (869).

It must not be forgotten, however, that the women are torn between homesickness for civilisation and the fear of losing what they have gained through their release from patriarchal civilisation. This latter fear is what prompts the women to expel their sons. The separatist policy, then, needs to be viewed in the light of the advances the women feel they have made in the absence of men. Laurence Hobbema, as the island's spiritual leader, is aware that the consciousness of their independence, when it comes into conflict with the expectations and norms of the patriarchal society they have left, produces the reaction of shame. This sense of shame accounts for the women's ambivalent response to the sighting of a ship on the horizon and its promise of a return to patriarchal Europe:

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[37] Peter Sprengel, *Die Wirklichkeit der Mythen. Untersuchungen zum Werk Gerhart Hauptmanns aufgrund des handschriftlichen Nachlasses* (Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 1982), p. 312.
[38] Götz Müller, *Gegenwelten*, p. 190.

> Ihr schämt euch schon jetzt eures mutig-stolzen Willens, eurer mutig-stolzen Gedankenwelt, eurer freien und eigenmächtigen Tat. Gewiß, eure Puppenkleider warten schon, und ihr werdet sie mit Genuß wieder anlegen. (765).

The reference to 'Puppenkleider', to the inauthenticity of female identity within patriarchal civilisation, reveals a key distinction between natural and artificial femininity, between 'das kulturell verdorbene' and 'das naturhaft unverdorbene, mütterliche Weib' (777). The 'Gedankenwelt' that develops on Île des Dames revolves around the idealisation of a *natural* femininity that is both sensual and maternal.

Even the minor detail of the names given to the two provinces of the island — 'Mütterland' versus 'Mannland' — reveals the centrality of maternity, which is, on Île des Dames, an experience of existential, metaphysical and political significance.

> Man kann nicht das Leben auf Verachtung des Lebens gründen wollen, nicht die menschliche Seligkeit auf Verachtung des Menschlichen, nicht die Menschengesellschaft auf Verachtung des Weibes, der Menschheitsgebärerin. [...] in welche Paradiese wir immer auch künftig einzugehen hoffen, immer wird es durch das Tor des Lebens gewesen sein. (776-7)

The maternalist values promulgated by the religious cult on Île des Dames, particularly as expressed by Laurence Hobbema, suggest that Hauptmann was at the very least aware of, the paradigm shift that had been occurring since around 1900 with regard to the understanding of the role and significance of the body. The importance of physicality and bodily experience was increasingly affirmed at this time, in a move away from the traditional relegation of the body to the status of subordinate term in the culturally pervasive mind-body dualism. Nietzsche's thought and the emerging 'Lebensphilosophie' contested metaphysical interpretations of existence and prioritised instead an enhanced awareness of the radical *physicality* of life, in attempt both to confront the limitations and embrace the possibilities this entailed.[39] The 'Lebenspathos' and 'Lebensmystik' characteristic of this period tends to contest the idea of a compensatory, consolatory world of meaning behind the mundane world of being. The sanctity of life inheres within life itself; an other-worldly or divine sanction or guarantee is not necessary. Christianity, in particular, was criticised for investing the pleasures of the flesh with the quality of sinfulness. The Christian devaluation of the here and now in the name of the hereafter lead to a denial and denigration of the

man's nature. 'Lebensphilosophie' provided a corrective by affirming life itself and man's creatureliness, the fact that man is not just *in* nature, but *is* nature:

> das Wesen des Menschen [wird] nicht in den Geist als das Andere der Natur [ge]setzt, sondern in den 'Willen', mit welchem der Mensch in diese Natur hineingenommen und kategorisch, von seinem Wesen her, als *Natur*wesen verstanden wird.[40]

The emerging discourse of the body reflected devlopments in the biological sciences which foregrounded reproduction as the primary characteristic of life. In Wolfgang Riedel's formulation: 'Wer um 1900 von Natur reden will, muß von der Sexualität reden';[41] the new primacy of the biological entailed a re-evaluation of the existential significance of sex. This required sexual dimorphism to be divested of its negative associations of sin, shame and the legacy of the Fall and affirmed instead as fundamentally human and archetypally creative. Anni Prächtel echoes these ideas, somewhat tongue in cheek, in *Die Insel der grossen Mutter*:

> Adam habe sich im Paradies allein nicht wohlgefühlt. [...] Um sein Unglück zu heben, mußte eine Eva geschaffen sein. Tatsächlich war er vorher nichts als ein steriler Golem, unfruchtbarer bewegter Ton [...] Aber Adam wurde Gott ähnlich, geriet in Besitz des Schöpfergeheimnisses, freilich cum grano salis, als er Eva bekam. (721)

The affinity between productivity and reproductivity, between creation and procreation, is further explored with reference to the eugenics question below (p. 154 ff). It is an affinity, not an identity, as the later discussion of the gendered categories of creative hand and reproductive womb will reveal.

The increased focus on the physical and biological aspects of existence, and particularly on sexual reproduction, relied on and further fostered a gender concept in which the feminine /masculine polarity was understood in relation to the respective roles of male and female in the reproductive process. The foregrounding of the biological was unlikely to undermine the idea that 'biology is destiny', an idea that underlay conventional gender roles. The body and the pleasures of the flesh were affirmed in a post-metaphysical, emancipatory discourse which nonetheless continued to rely on the gendered binaries that had upheld the power-relations of patriarchy and the circumscription of the female sphere. These binaries and their

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[39] See Helmut Pfotenhauer, *Die Kunst als Physiologie. Nietzsches ästhetische Theorie und literarische Produktion* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1985).
[40] Riedel, *'Homo Natura'. Literarische Anthropologie um 1900*, p. 31.
[41] Riedel, *'Homo Natura'*, p. xiii.

political implications will now be examined in more detail before their presence in *Die Insel der grossen Mutter* is traced.

Erich Fromm's 1934 essay on Bachofen's theory of prehistoric matriarchy identified an essentialist gender concept inherited from Romanticism, and emphasised the historical contingency and political expediency of this theory. Bachofen adopted the Romantic distinction between the masculine and the feminine not only in the organic, but also in the psychic, spiritual and intellectual realms.[42] This distinction represented a break from the earlier Enlightenment theories which underlay demands for women's emancipation prior to and following the French Revolution. The earlier emancipation discourse prioritised equality at the expense of difference:

> Emanzipation bedeutete in erster Linie nicht Befreiung der Frau zur Entfaltung ihrer als solcher noch gar nicht bekannten spezifischen Anlagen und Möglichkeiten, sondern ihre Emanzipation zum bürgerlichen Mann.[43]

The role played by upbringing, education and social expectations in the formation of gender difference was perceived by Enlightenment emancipation discourse, an insight later sacrificed to preoccupations with theories of fundamental, natural gender difference. It was hoped that changes in educational and social practice with regard to girls and women would eliminate many of the artificially constructed differences:

> Liberty is the mother of virtue, and if women be, by their very constitution, slaves, and not allowed to breathe the sharp invigorating air of freedom, they must ever languish like exotics, and be reckoned beautiful flaws in nature.[44]

(The problematic racialist resonance of Wollstonecraft's simile reveals the presence of residual essentialism even where the social construction of identity comes under scrutiny.) The theoretical shift away from this earlier belief in the possibility of equal rights for men and women towards the prioritising of alleged 'natural differences' — as practised by Bachofen — is analysed by Erich Fromm in terms of the changing needs of a patriarchal bourgeois society. Fromm welcomes Bachofen's contribution to what he [Fromm] sees as a

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[42] Fromm, 'Die sozialpsychologische Bedeutung der Mutterrechtstheorie', p. 202.
[43] ibid., p. 203.
[44] Mary Wollstonecraft, 'A Vindication of the Rights of Woman' [1792] in Wollstonecraft, *Political Writings* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 103.

more profound understanding of the feminine, but perceives that Bachofen's theories can be used to support a conservative position with regard to women's place in society:

> Die bürgerliche Konsolidierung bedurfte der Idee der Gleichheit der Geschlechter nicht mehr. In dieser Periode musste eine Theorie von der natürlichen Verschiedenartigkeit der Geschlechter entstehen und aus dieser Verschiedenartigkeit des Wesens auf eine Verschiedenheit der gesellschaftlichen Funktionen von Mann und Frau geschlossen werden. Wenn dabei auch psychologisch ungleich tiefere und in vielem richtigere Auffassungen als die der 'flachen' Aufklärung zutage gefördert wurden, so dienten diese Theorien, mögen sie noch so erhabene Worte über die Würde der Frau gefunden haben, doch dazu, die Frau in ihrer unselbständigen Position als Dienerin des Mannes zu erhalten.[45]

Ironically, Rousseau's *Emile ou de l'éducation*, which formulated and further inspired earlier ideas about the beneficial, egalitarian effect of a reformed educational method, also provided support for those theories which legitimated social gender inequality by reference to natural gender difference. Rousseau's polemic sought to counteract problems in the treatment and upbringing of children, such as the inadequate levels of physical education and the use of wet-nurses; however, his eulogy to the breastfeeding mother actually contributes to the idealisation of woman's perceived closeness to nature, an idealisation that would later shore up the theoretical basis for social inequality and prescribed roles.

> But when mothers deign to nurse their own children, then will be a reform in morals; *natural* feeling will revive in every heart; there will be no lack of citizens for the state; this first step by itself will restore mutual affection. The charms of home are the best antidote to vice [...] Thus the cure of this one evil would work a wide-spread reformation; *nature* would regain her rights. When women become good mothers, men will be good husbands and fathers.[46]

The polemical deployment of the concepts 'nature' and 'natural' for a critique of civilisation contributes to an emphasis on natural gender difference that has the potential to draw attention away from the social and cultural construction of both identity and inequality.

The concept of gender that informs both the rhetoric and the plot of *Die Insel der grossen Mutter* is founded in the fetishised polarity of masculine and feminine 'principles'. This polarised essentialism is invoked to justify a continued discrepancy in the relative status of men and women. Even where this gender concept forms the basis of positive evaluations of

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[45] Fromm, 'Die sozialpsychologische Bedeutung der Mutterrechtstheorie', p. 203-204.
[46] Rousseau, *Émile*, trans by Barbara Foxley, p. 13-14, emphasis added.

feminine characteristics — as in the case of the praise heaped upon maternalist values or of the repeated descriptions of female beauty — such positive appraisals of the 'feminine' uphold rather than challenging the broader framework of gender inequality. The following passage, which reports Phaon's placation of the matriarchs on their visit to Mannland, exaggerates the patriarchal enjoyment of 'erhabene Worte über die Würde der Frau'[47] and idolatry of the feminine to the point of irony:

> Unter allen Geschöpfen sei überhaupt die Frau das vollkommenste. Was sei die Unruhe, der Erkenntnisdrang, der Trieb des Suchens, Findens und Erfindens beim Manne denn anders als das Eingeständnis seiner peinlich empfundenen Unvollkommenheit. Der Umstand, daß die Frau meist auf einem Punkt der Entwicklung stillstehe, wo ihre Stimme noch die knabenhafte Höhe besitze, daß überhaupt ihr ganzer Habitus nie in die Sphäre der Roheit, Rauheit und Brutalität des Mannes aufsteige, spreche für sie. (875)

Mütterland, which has access to the same resources as Mannland, lags behind in innovation, because woman, as Phaon's speech makes clear, is a case of arrested development. The irony is given a particular edge by the timing of this speech: it follows the tour of the boys' colony in which the matriarchs are continually amazed by the achievements of Mannland. The female province is a playground, a Garden of Eden, the male province a workshop and training ground.

3.5.1 Looking relations

While the prevalent admiration of positively valued feminine characteristics — by the narrator as well as by individual characters — is grounded in an essentialist view of gender difference compatible with patriarchal power relations, the representation of the female body is determined by the prevailing patriarchal looking relations. The visual details of female physicality are a source of pleasure for the narrative voice and presented as such for the reader.

> und wirklich würde der Kulturmensch, der etwa zur Stunde des Bades von ungefähr einen Blick in das Vallée des Dames getan hätte, geglaubt haben, ins Paradies geraten zu sein (704).

Almost every time a female character is introduced or even mentioned, her name is prefixed by 'die schöne' or 'die wunderschöne', and descriptions of the women's appearances abound

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[47] Fromm, 'Die sozialpsychologische Bedeutung der Mutterrechtstheorie', p. 204.

('die schöne Miß Page, eine große und schlanke Amerikanerin' (687); 'Lolo und Mucci Smith, hübsche Kinder' (688); '[Rodbertes] Schmuck war das reiche, blonde Haar' (689); 'Miß Laurence, eine breit und kraftvoll gebaute, edel gewachsene Anglo-Holländerin' (695); 'Rukminî [...] die sich zur herrlichsten Mädchenblume entwickelt hatte' (818); 'Wenn dann etwa die junge Iphis [...] den Speer in der Hand, durch die Herde ritt, mußte man meinen, unter die Himmlischen selbst geraten zu sein' (819), to list a few examples.) The issue of physical beauty is foregrounded from the very opening: the election of Anni Prächtel as president is an inverted beauty contest. Anni gains the women's support simply because 'es gab nicht eine unter den Damen, die sich durch die Schönheit der Malerin in den Schatten gestellt fühlen konnte.' (686). (This imputes to the women not only jealousy and vanity, but superficial judgement.) Prächtel highlights the pervasiveness of the visual spectacle of beautiful female bodies when she speaks of the 'imaginierte Schönheitskonkurrenz, die ich mitunter veranstalte' (717). Maurer's emphasis on the text's sensuality has already been noted: 'when taken out of its artistic and ideational context, the plot could be dismissed as little more than the product of an overheated adolescent male fantasy'.[48]

The narrator prioritises the visual aspect of the scenario as a way of obtaining and providing a voyeuristic gratification which is at least once if not twice mediated: the imagined scene is translated into a textual description of the visual delights on offer, and this description is often in turn mediated through references to visual art. The references to the art of great masters that occur in scene-setting descriptions of Île des Dames aestheticise the pleasure derived from the narrator's imaginative observation of the women, who are scantily-clad for reasons of climate and necessity. The voyeuristic titillation that obtains from the scenario is ekphrastically mediated by reference to real or imagined artworks: 'Ihr Körper glich einer bewegten Statue, während der Stoff, aus dem sie gemacht schien, fleischgewordene bewegliche Bronze war' (715). By evoking the canon of visual art, the narrator can allow his gaze to linger with impunity on the naked female form, dwelling as follows on the vision of the women bathing in the Vallée des Dames:

[48] Maurer, *Understanding Gerhart Hauptmann*, p. 155. See note 3 above.

> Dem Auge [...] boten sich Bilder von unvergleichlichem Reize dar. Der große Stil eines Gaspard Poussin und Claude Lorrain[49] schien hier in der Welt der Tropen lebendig geworden (705).

The recourse to visual art allows the narrator to side-step the taboo on nudity, but this taboo is confronted within the narrative with reference to the presence of Phaon. The question 'ob Phaon sich beim allgemeinen Bade beteiligen sollte' (706) gives rise to a heated exchange between his governess and Laurence Hobbema. The governess insists on the cultural values of modesty and propriety; Laurence rejects these on the basis that they disturb the natural unselfconsciousness that may be fostered in the new environment, and points out that they are counter-productive in any case ('Sie können damit nur das Gegenteil von dem erreichen, was Sie bezwecken', 706). The prudishness of the governess is out of place in the environment of Île des Dames, where the alienating rift of consciousness has given way to a sensuous and harmonious co-existence with nature.

It has already been noted that this dream of naturalness which informed many early twentieth-century reform movements grew out of a critical attitude towards the modern processes of industrialisation and urbanisation (see p. 36 above).[50] The naturism and 'Körperkultur' that provided the model for *Die Insel der grossen Mutter* was part of a broader trend of idealising and fostering health, strength and natural physicality.[51] 'Ich hätte sie wohl nie geschrieben', Hauptmann recalled in 1942, 'hätte ich nicht Jahrelang auf Hiddensee die vielen schönen, oft ganz nackten Frauenkörper gesehen und das Treiben dort beobachtet'. This observation of Hauptmann's is cited in almost every commentary on the novel;[52] commentators seize upon it, no doubt, in an attempt to explain the prolific descriptions of

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[49] Margaretha Lagerlöf writes that, for the seventeenth-century school of landscape painting with which Poussin and Lorrain were associated, paintings functioned largely as 'vehicles of pleasure', offering 'rest, variation, dreams, excitement and delight'. Nature, in this tradition of painting, was 'constantly associated with the reproductive function', representing 'a kind of erogenous zone'. Lagerlöf, *Ideal Landscape. Annibale Carracci, Nicolas Poussin and Claude Lorrain* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1990), pp. 4, 7. See Lorrain's *Landscape with Dancing Figures* (1648) and *Landscape with Narcissus and Echo* (1644), overleaf.

[50] See Thomas Rohkrämer, 'Lebensreform als Reaktion auf den technisch-zivilisatorischen Prozeß', in *Die Lebensreform. Entwürfe zur Neugestaltung von Leben und Kunst um 1900*, ed. by Kai Buchholz and others, 2 vols (Darmstadt: Institut Mathildenhöhe, 2001), I, pp. 71-73.

[51] Bernd Wedemeyer, 'Der Verein für Körperkultur', in *Die Lebensreform*, I, pp. 441-442.

[52] See, for example, Maurer, *Understanding Gerhart Hauptmann*, p. 155; Cowen, *Gerhart Hauptmann. Kommentar zum nicht-dramatischen Werk*, p. 110; Jablkowska, 'Die Insel der grossen Mutter. Utopie oder Satire auf die Utopie?', p. 97; Krysmanski, *Die utopische Methode*, p. 41; and Eberhard Hilscher, *Gerhart Hauptmann. Leben und Werk*, p. 383.



the women's physical beauty, which are so frequent and repetitive, as Joanna Jablkowska argues, that they descend into kitsch.[53]

3.5.2 Île des Dames and *Atlantis*: biography and fantasy

The exotic setting and implausible premise of *Die Insel der grossen Mutter* ought not to eclipse the fact that this novel revisits and recycles ideas and situations found elsewhere in Hauptmann's work and indeed in the details of his biography. One critic has suggested parallels between the central characters of the utopian story and some of the key figures in Hauptmann's life: Laurence Hobbema supposedly shares traits with Hauptmann's first wife, Marie Thienemann; Dagmar-Diodata would then correspond to his second wife, Margarete Marschalk; and the young girl Iphis reveals similarities with Ida Orloff, with whom the author was briefly infatuated.[54] At the centre of this triangle of female desire which then proliferates through the many minor characters, Phaon occupies a fantastically augmented version of the position in which Hauptmann found himself during the period of the breakdown of his first marriage and the beginning of his relationship with Margarete Marschalk, when the dream of polygamy briefly seemed an attractive solution to a complicated situation.[55]

These speculative parallels deserve consideration if only because it is known that Hauptmann *did* use biographical material and scenarios as a basis for literary works: the Ida Orloff episode, for example, finds artistic expression in the late story *Siri* (1939), while the novel *Atlantis* (1912) draws on Hauptmann's experiences during his voyage to, and brief sojourn in, the United States of America, as well as on the emotional complications engendered by a failing marriage and an encounter with a 'bewitching' and much younger woman (the

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[53] 'Die Anhäufung von Schönheit: Naturschönheit, Körperschönheit, Schönheit der von den Damen hergestellten Dinge, Schönheit der Charaktere, verursacht, daß man gezwungenermaßen Assoziationen mit schlimmer Landschaftsmalerei hat'. Jablkowska, 'Die Insel der grossen Mutter. Utopie oder Satire auf die Utopie?', p. 96.

[54] Ulrich Lauterbach, Nachworte zu *Gerhart Hauptmann: Das erzählerische Werk*, 10 vols (Frankfurt a. M.: Ullstein, 1981-1983), V, p. 418 ff.

[55] Hilscher relates: '[Hauptmann] meinte, nur polygame Verhältnisse erlaubten eine wahrhaft menschenwürdige Entfaltung der Persönlichkeiten und seien durch die Respektierung der Freiheitsidee hochmoralisch, ja höher gearteten Wesen einzig gemäß. Die beiden Frauen könnten sich doch gegenseitig ergänzen'. Hilscher, *Gerhart Hauptmann. Leben und Werk*, p. 185.

character Ingigerd is to some extent modelled on Ida Orloff). The triangular constellation that mainly constitutes the plot of *Atlantis* — that of the older wife, the artistic companion and the younger enchantress, revolving around the central male figure who ultimately decides in favour of the companion — echoes (while conflating) aspects of Hauptmann's biography, and is in turn echoed and expanded in *Die Insel der grossen Mutter.* (Similar triangular constellations can also be found elsewhere in Hauptmann's work, for example in *Einsame Menschen*).

The parallels between *Atlantis* and *Die Insel der grossen Mutter* are worth considering more closely. The voyage and encounter with the New World serve mainly in *Atlantis* as a backdrop to the emotional and vocational confusion of the protagonist, Friedrich von Kammacher. The dream of a polygamous resolution also finds its way into *Atlantis* when Friedrich has a vision of walking hand in hand with his first wife, Angele, and the girl with whom he is infatuated, Ingigerd (529). The polygamous dream clashes with the nightmare reality of polyandry, however, as Friedrich discovers that the young and charming Ingigerd is by no means as innocent as he had wished to believe. It could be argued that the plot of *Die Insel der grossen Mutter* is, at least on one level, motivated by the longing for a situation in which it would be possible for the male protagonist to sample the delights of polygyny without having to be subjected to the necessity of its (for him) more threatening corollary, polyandry. The expedient of a shipwreck in which all males save one are drowned facilitates the imaginative experiment, dispensing from the outset with any possible rivals to Phaon. Hauptmann claimed a different, if related motive for the scenario, namely that it facilitated exploration of the fact 'daß nämlich ein Mann und tausend Frauen die Welt weiter fortpflanzen könnten, niemals aber eine Frau und tausend Männer'.[56]

The comparative interest of *Atlantis* for a study of *Die Insel der grossen Mutter* is not exhausted by the biographical parallel and the polygamy theme. In both novels, the companionship of a supportive wife (Eva Burns, Dagmar-Diodata) provides the male protagonist with a source of refuge from disillusionment and chaos. Both texts contain discursive reflections on the

[56] Cited in Cowen, *Gerhart Hauptmann. Kommentar zum nicht-dramatischen Werk*, p. 110. The fantasy of polygyny on a grand scale is revealed in the novel to have a threatening obverse: 'in euren Augen', Bianor accuses the matriarchs, '[sind] von neunhundert Männern mindestens achthundertneunzig überflüssig!' (878).

subjects of artistic creation and human procreation and on the relationship between the two. And, like the later novel, *Atlantis* features the wreck of an ocean-going ship with loss of life and focusses on the subsequent fate of the survivors. The 'ship of fools' topos is used in both novels to demonstrate the shallowness and triviality of contemporary culture ('Friedrich fühlte sich angeekelt inmitten dieser Orgie der Banalität' (449); 'Ist uns nicht beiden noch zuletzt im Speisesaal des 'Kormoran' inmitten der befrackten und dekolletierten internationalen Banalität, keineswegs aus Seekrankheit, sondern einfach wegen der Gespräche und der unsäglich gemeinen Varietémusik, speiübel geworden?' (691)).

'Europamüdigkeit' and New World

Yet in both cases, *Europamüdigkeit* is relativised by expressions of nostalgia and longing for home and for European culture, and the new beginning promised by the attainment of the foreign shore is problematic. Friedrich von Kammacher's 'Europamüdigkeit', memorably expressed before he boards the 'Roland', ('Beinahe die ganze Welt, jedenfalls aber Europa ist für mich eine stehengebliebene kalte Schüssel auf einem Bahnhofsbüfett, die mich nicht mehr reizt', 421) ultimately fades in the face of his disappointment, even distaste at what he finds in the New World and his nostalgia for the old. *Atlantis* dwells particularly critically on the prevalent materialism in American society:

> [Friedrich] pries sich glücklich, daß er von Grund aus unpraktisch war und den grauenvollen Jahrmarkt, die ewigen Kriech-, Tanz- und Springprozessionen nach dem sakrosankten Dollar nicht mitzumachen brauchte. (622)

American society is described as 'diese riesige Handelskompanie, wo Kunst, Wissenschaft und wahre Kultur einstweilen noch eine gänzlich deplacierte Sache sind.' (677) The initial enthusiasm and ultimate disillusionment and homesickness with which Friedrich responds to his emigration anticipates Anni Prächtel's reaction to her exile, while at the same time echoing a prevalent trope in the contemporary European image of America whereby the New World functions as a 'Projektionsfläche für alle Begleiterscheinungen der zivilisatorischen Moderne, für technologischen Fortschritt, Kapitalismus, Industrialisierung,

Urbanisierung und moderne Massenmedien — kurz: für die sozialen und kulturellen Umwälzungen, die sich vor der eigenen Haustür ereigneten'.[57]

The multi-perspectival, pluralistic character of the approach Hauptmann often adopts towards a particular theme or set of ideas has already been discussed. This aspect of his thinking and writing is evident too in the characterisation of the New World. The America/Europe opposition is not exhausted by the theme of materialism or high art, but is further complicated by the clash between American puritanism and the greater liberalism of the Europeans.[58] While Friedrich von Kammacher forms a negative opinion of what he perceives as American values and culture, a more positive response to the 'land of opportunity' is evident in the character of Peter Schmidt, Friedrich's friend, for whom the New World represents both 'eine Wildnis' and 'eine darüber schwebende Utopie' (676) and who sees Americanisation as a prerequisite to the possible renewal of mankind (677). The American way of life, then, is not unilaterally condemned. This paratactic alignment of competing claims and views is, as we have seen, typical of Hauptmann's omnivorous, pluralistic *Gedankenwelt*. He models Friedrich von Kammacher after himself in this regard:

> In mir steckt der Papst und Luther, Wilhelm der Zweite und Robespierre, Bismarck und Bebel, der Geist eines amerikanischen Multimillionärs und die Armutsschwärmerei, die der Ruhm des heiligen Franz von Assisi ist. Ich bin der wildeste Fortschrittler meiner Zeit und der allerwildeste Reaktionär und Rückschrittler. Der Amerikanismus ist mir verhaßt, und ich sehe in der großen amerikanischen Weltüberschwemmung und Ausbeuterherrschaft doch wieder etwas, was einer der berühmtesten Arbeiten des Herkules im Stall des Augias ähnlich ist. (493)

This 'Zerrissenheit' captures in a series of striking oppositions the cultural confusion of the period, which Robert Musil sketched satirically under the headings 'Vorwärts zu...!' and 'Zurück zu...!' in his novel *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften* (see p. 19 above). The problems engendered by modernity call forth two conflicting responses; one is to resist modernity as a way of protesting its shortcomings; the other is to embrace modernity and to see these shortcomings as evidence that the conditions of existence are as yet insufficiently modern.

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[57] Dieter Heimböckel, '„Amerika im Kopf". Franz Kafkas Roman *Der Verschollene* und der Amerika-Diskurs seiner Zeit', *DVjS* 77:1 (2003), 130-147 (p. 132).

[58] The confrontation is played out over the question of Ingigerd's right to perform, contested by the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children on the grounds that she is a minor and the content of the dance in question — 'Mara oder das Opfer der Spinne' — (636 ff) considered unsuitable.

'Denn wir leben in einer Welt', proclaims Friedrich in *Atlantis*, 'die sich fortgesetzt ungeheuer imponiert und sich dabei mehr und mehr ungeheuer langweilt'. (491)

Two further themes that are touched on discursively in *Atlantis* merit our attention as they are unfolded more thoroughly in *Die Insel der grossen Mutter*: namely, the eugenics question, and the promulgation of maternalist values as a possible source of social and cultural renewal. The two themes are not only related to each other but to the broader practice of cultural criticism. As eugenic discourse is not only utopian in intention and method, but finds its way into utopian texts of the period, it is of particular relevance to the broader question of how utopian imagination and gender discourse intersect and interact. A brief excursus is thus necessary to outline the main issues of the eugenics question before proceeding to explore its impact on texts by Hauptmann and especially on *Die Insel der grossen Mutter*.

Utopian eugenics — eugenic aesthetics

The prevalence of organic models of society and culture at this time — whereby the organic functions as an idealised corrective to the mechanised, technologised and fragmented life-world of modernity[59] — is part of the diagnostic discourse of socio-cultural criticism, the task of which is to formulate therapeutic suggestions as to how sickly, degenerate or moribund strains in culture and the social body can be combatted and its healthfulness, vibrancy and vitality restored and maximised. Numerous reform movements of the early twentieth century — not least the naturism which, as practised on Hiddensee, partly inspired the scenario of *Die Insel der grossen Mutter* — emphasised the necessity of counteracting the ill effects of civilisation by means of a 'return to nature'. 'Natural' methods and materials and the 'natural' cultivation of the body to an ideal state of healthfulness were promoted in a variety of spheres, ranging from posture, clothing and diet to housing, physical exercise and general exposure to the natural world. Such idealised naturalness is a cultural construct called

[59] See Klaus R. Scherpe, 'Zur Faszination des Organischen. Eine Vorbemerkung' in *Faszination des Organischen. Konjunkturen einer Kategorie der Moderne*, ed. by Hartmut Eggert and others (Munich: Iudicium, 1995), pp. 7-11, and the discussion at p. 73 ff above.

into being by the civilisation against which it is defined and capable of being polemically deployed for a variety of ideological objectives.

Nowhere more clearly than in eugenic discourse does the idealisation of naturalness and health emerge as a cultural construct. The dream of a maximised healthfulness was extended in eugenics and 'Rassenhygiene' from the individual body to the 'Volkskörper'.[60] The vision of a eugenically purified society, in which the debilitating effects of the reproduction of 'weaker stock' (a fundamental concept in eugenicist discourse) would be eliminated, found expression in utopian texts of the period — most clearly, perhaps, in Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward* (1888).[61] While William Morris decried the materialism, mechanism and 'unmixed modernity' of Bellamy's vision,[62] his own utopia, *News from Nowhere* (1891), echoes Bellamy's preoccupation with the improvement of the physical characteristics of the population, although in Morris's account this improvement is as attributable to improved diet and lifestyle as it is to the unfettered workings of sexual selection. (In this he anticipates Ernst Bloch's contention that eugenic theories for social improvement serve to distract from the more basic prerequisites to collective health: 'die beste Eugenik [besteht] vermutlich in guter Kost und Wohnung, in ungetrübter Kindheit' II:532). Eugenic practices, where decoupled from an agenda of social transformation, represent for Bloch a 'kapitalistische Lust, rein medizinisch in den sozialen Knoten zu schneiden' (II:542). Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *Herland* (1915) presents a synthesis of maternalist feminism and eugenicist discourse: the 'improvement of the race' is fostered in *Herland* through a system that rewards those fittest to breed, the 'Over-mothers', while Samuel Butler's *Erewhon* (1872), which takes a distinctly satirical approach to the task of constructing a fantasy society, nevertheless persistently notes the admirable physical attributes of the Erewhonian race.[63]

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[60] See Ursula Ferdinand and Christoph Wichtmann, 'Vom Züchtungsgedanken und der Eugenik zur aktuellen Debatte um die Reproduktionstechnologie', in *Die Lebensreform*, I, pp. 575-579.

[61] Edward Bellamy, *Looking Backward. 2000-1887* [1888] (Cleveland: World Publishing Company, 1945), particularly pp. 256-8.

[62] See Krishan Kumar's introduction to the Morris, *News from Nowhere* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. xiv, xxi.

[63] '[...] the people were of a physical beauty which was simply amazing [...] I felt simply abashed in the presence of such a splendid type'. Samuel Butler, *Erewhon* [revised edition, 1901] (Dover: New York, 2002), p. 31.

The fact that fictional explorations of alternative or improved societies incorporate eugenic improvement into their models during this period merely reflects the contemporary popularity of eugenic ideas. The real effects of eugenicism were to be felt in the fields in which it would ultimately lead to its most murderous application. Medical and sociological research into 'cretinism', 'feeble-mindedness' and 'congenital criminality' was firmly embedded in a eugenic framework.[64] Eugenics, while primarily a medical issue — the improvement of individual and sexual health viewed within the broader framework of the problem of 'racial' health — also drew on a number of other disciplines and discourses including social reform, evolutionary biology, Social Darwinism and the new science of sexology. While relying on the opposed concepts of degenerate civilisation and idealised naturalness, eugenics was far from anti-modern, but was imbued with the spirit of a 'Fortschrittsoptimismus' that would yoke science to nature to 'give nature back her rights': it idealised a model of 'Fortschritt durch Vervollkommnung mittels Steuerung der menschlichen Fortpflanzung nach den Gesetzen der Evolutionstheorie'.[65] Furthermore, it occupied a position in contemporary feminism that cannot be overlooked.

The position of women was seen as a key factor in the problem of 'racial degeneracy'. When, for example, early feminists such as Grete Meisel-Hess, Ruth Bré und Helene Stöcker strove to promote a revitalised conception of marriage, they focussed not only on the increased possibilities for erotic and emotional compatibility and satisfaction, but also on the fact that, in reproductive terms, such unions would be naturally — that is, eugenically — preferable: 'Außerdem seien Kinder, die von jungen liebenden Menschen gezeugt werden, nicht nur gesünder, sondern auch von der Natur her gewollter'.[66] Eugenicist arguments were mobilised in support of campaigns for the improvement of women's conditions and the expansion of women's rights, and were also used to criticise contemporary marital and reproductive practices. For early twentieth-century American birth-control activist Margaret Sanger, the central motivation for making contraception freely available to women was a eugenic one:

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[64] See, for example, Henry Herbert Goddard, The Kallikak Family: A Study in the Heredity of Feeble-Mindedness (1913). Electronic version, retrieved July 13 2003 from http://psychclassics.asu.edu/Goddard.
[65] Ferdinand and Wichtmann, 'Vom Züchtungsgedanken und der Eugenik zur aktuellen Debatte um die Reproduktionstechnologie', p. 575.
[66] Cited in Annegret Stopczyk, 'Ehe und freie Liebe. Zur Frauenbewegung um 1900', in *Die Lebensreform*, I, pp. 127-130 (p. 128). On the eugenicist aspect of Meisel-Hess's feminism, see Anderson, *Utopian feminism. Women's movements in fin-de-siècle Vienna*, pp. 185, 191.

'More children from the fit, less [*sic*] from the unfit — that is the chief issue of birth control',[67] and British family-planning pioneer Marie Stopes held similar views. Capitalist marriage and the dowry system were denounced by these and other writers for many reasons, but not least because of the suspicion that financially-motivated unions facilitated negative selection: if women were free to choose their partners on the basis of physical attributes alone, sexual selection would be socially rehabilitated and would counteract 'degeneracy'. Otto Weininger similarly justifies the love-match from a eugenic perspective:

> [...] an der körperlichen Degeneration des modernen Judentums [mag] nicht zum wenigsten der Umstand beteiligt sein, daß bei den Juden viel häufiger als irgend sonstwo auf der Welt die Ehen der Heiratsvermittler und nicht die Liebe zustande bringt [...]Sicherlich bilden einen großen Teil der unfruchtbaren Ehen die Ehen ohne Liebe.[68]

Anxieties over social and human reproduction are recognised by August Bebel as a crucial factor in the situation of women: 'Auf der normalen Verbindung der Geschlechter beruht die gesunde Entwicklung des Menschengeschlechtes'.[69]

Gerhart Hauptmann's œuvre has been described as 'eine Art Enzyklopädie der spätbürgerlichen Epoche',[70] and hence it is unsurprising to find that several of his texts engage with the contemporary popular-scientific discourse of eugenics in a variety of ways. Thus far, the comparison between the 1912 novel *Atlantis* and *Die Insel der grossen Mutter* has revealed the presence of a number of common themes: 'Europamüdigkeit', the 'innere Zerrissenheit' of the modern condition, the competing visions of polygamous gratification or monogamous marriage as refuge, and the ship of fools topos have already been mentioned. The diagnostic-utopian dimension of eugenics is tangentially discursivised in *Atlantis* as the characters try to find their bearings between Old and New Worlds and contemplate their own vocations within this larger context, musing more generally also on the present and future conditions of mankind. The social hope invested in the eugenic improvement of humanity is implicit in Friedrich von Kammacher's dissatisfaction with contemporary

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[67] Quoted in Ehrenreich and English, *Complaints and Disorders. The Sexual Politics of Sickness*, p. 72.
[68] Weininger, *Geschlecht und Charakter*, pp. 51-2.
[69] August Bebel, *Die Frau und der Sozialismus* [1879], ed. and annotated by Monika Seifert (Hanover: Fackelträger, 1974), p. 136. Bebel does not develop an explicitly eugenicist argument from the contention that the capitalist marriage market prevents the 'healthy' and 'normal' operation of reproduction, but the connection between money-marriages and 'degeneracy' is developed from the same contention by Meisel-Hess, Bellamy and others. See also Georg Simmel, *Philosophie des Geldes*, p. 420.
[70] Hiscber, *Gerhart Hauptmann. Leben und Werk*, p. 13.

medical practice. He had embarked on medical studies with the conviction that 'er könne dadurch der Menschheit nützlich sein', but he is soon disillsioned, 'denn [...] der wirkliche Gärtner sorgt für einen Garten voll gesunder Bäume, aber unsere Arbeit ist einer aus kranken Keimen stammenden, kränklich vermickerten Vegetation gewidmet!' (492). One of the discussions of eugenics — 'die Fortpflanzung des Menschengeschlechts zu höheren Typen' (591) — is embedded within a broader discourse on human creativity and on the role and meaning of art. Claus-Michael Ort has shown the close affinity between aesthetic and eugenic discourse in Hauptmann's dramatic works.[71] While Ort does not discuss *Atlantis* or *Die Insel der grossen Mutter*, his conclusions are nonetheless illuminating for these works. The connection he identifies between aesthetics and eugenics seems an unlikely connection until we consider the biblical and creation-myth resonances of Friedrich von Kammacher's chosen artistic discipline: sculpture, the shaping of form out of clay.

'Ich wünschte sehr, mir wäre gegeben, mit Göttersinn und Menschenhand, wie Goethe sagt, das zu tun, was ein Mann bei einem Weibe animalisch kann und muß.' (590) Friedrich's rhapsody on the theme of artistic creativity explicitly equates the creative with the procreative act. Both are a process of bringing forth that which did not previously exist, whereby the assertion/expression of the self — sexual or artistic — produces an entity separate from the self. (It will be important to note, as we turn to the role these themes play in *Die Insel der grossen Mutter*, that this interpretation of reproduction invests the male and female roles in the reproductive process with the conventionally gendered qualities of activity and passivity respectively. Even the brief quotation above reveals through the use of active verbs — 'tun, kann, muß' — an alignment of the creative with the masculine principle. As the preposition 'bei' indicates, woman plays a facilitative, ancillary role in this process of self-actualisation.)

Given the conceptualisation of both artistic production and sexual reproduction within a broader evolutionary narrative of human self-actualisation, eugenics can be understood as a sort of aesthetics of reproduction, whereby the categories of health, fitness and race perform

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[71] Claus-Michael Ort, 'Zwischen Degeneration und eugenischer Utopie. Die Funktion der 'Kunst' in Gerhart Hauptmanns Dramen', in *Norm — Grenze — Abweichung. Kultursemiotische Studien zur Literatur*, ed. by Gustav Frank and Wolfgang Lukas (Passau: Stutz, 2004), pp. 147-184.

the sort of regulative, normative function for human procreation that is performed by the categories of form and beauty in art. Other aesthetic categories such as fragmentariness/incompleteness or horror/disgust are implicitly present also in a eugenic aesthetics, namely as those human types and conditions which are to be 'bred out' and which function as the Other of the eugenically desirable body or 'Volkskörper'. The expression 'racial hygiene'[72] makes the relationship between these categories explicit. It is a question of purging the social/racial body of this Other and of guarding it from further contamination. 'Die Fortpflanzung des Menschengeschlechts zu höheren Typen' is, argues Peter Schmidt in *Atlantis*, 'das endliche Ziel der ärtzlichen Wissenschaft'. (591). The significance of the opinion of a fictional character — in this case, a minor character — should not, of course, be over-emphasised. Peter Schmidt is a doctor, but also an idealist and a believer in the American dream: in short, his enthusiasm for a number of causes and ideas is relativised by their more critical treatment at the hands of other characters in the novel. His contention 'es wird ein Tag kommen, wo die künstliche Zuchtwahl unter den Menschen obligatorisch ist', produces the following response: 'Die Künstler brachen in Lachen aus' (591).

Eugenics, then, is by no means a central theme of *Atlantis* (although the related theme of degeneracy — the obverse of racial health, ever present in eugenics as its self-justification — casts a shadow over Friedrich's first marriage: his wife has succumbed to an hereditary illness, and it transpires that his father had warned him against the union on these grounds: 'ich sagte Dir gleich, Angele stammt aus einer ungesunden Familie', 459). Neither should it be forgotten that Hauptmann's first major literary engagement with this question portrayed a eugenics fanatic in an unsympathetic light: the character Alfred Loth in the play *Vor Sonnenaufgang* (1889) is a dogmatist, prepared to allow his eugenicist theories to stand in the way of Helene's happiness — and his own. But the exploration of a variety of competing or contradictory positions is, as we have seen, a hallmark of Hauptmann's style and *Gedankenwelt*. The rejection of a dogmatic eugenics is part and parcel of the pathos of *Vor Sonnenaufgang*, but does not entail a systematic refusal by Hauptmann to portray eugenicist ideas positively in other works.

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[72] The term 'Rassenhygiene' gained currency through the efforts of Alfred Ploetz, a friend of Hauptmann's. See Ferdnand and Wichtmann, 'Vom Züchtungsgedanken und der Eugenik zur aktuellen Debatte um die

The conceptualisation of artistic production and sexual reproduction is, as we have seen, closely related. Eugenics deals with sexual reproduction writ large, with the social and racial implications of procreation and with the normative standards to which it would seek to subject procreative activity. The contiguity of '*künst*liche Zuchtwahl' and '*Künst*ler' in the scene from *Atlantis* quoted above inadvertently draws attention to another dimension of the connection between utopian eugenics and artistic creativity: both involve *intervention in nature* as a means of realising — bodying forth — an idea. The natural materials on which the artist works — the 'Lindenholz' and 'Elfenbein' (590/1) of which Friedrich speaks in this scene — are subordinated to the vision he has of beautiful form, a vision itself shaped by pre-existing texts and cultural icons (Goethe's *Faust*, Lady Godiva, representations of the Virgin Mary). The eugenicist seeks to work in a similar way on humanity itself. The 'raw material' of the human body has already, in a sense, been 'worked upon' by the processes of socialisation, by the influences of a civilisation not always portrayed as benign. The degeneracy eugenics seeks to combat is the product of social and cultural forces seen to threaten healthfulness. The healthful, strong and natural body idealised by this discourse is to be achieved through an *undoing* of civilisation's ill effects (which range, in this context, from the cramped conditions and poor diet of the urban proletariat through alcoholism and money-marriages to aristocratic inbreeding and the physical inactivity of the idle rich). Reading Darwin via Nietzsche, this version of eugenics also rejects any form of cultural intervention that might sustain or foster the 'weak' or 'unfit' elements in society, be it through secular welfare provision or Christian charity.

The eugenic *un*doing of negative intervention in nature is, however, itself a *doing*, a positive intervention shaped and motivated by contemporary discourses concerning health, race and beauty. The following conundrum results: the [eugenic] work of culture [education, medicine] on nature [human reproduction] seeks to produce a [culturally validated] version of nature [the human body] which culture [malign civilisation] currently prevents unassisted nature [human reproduction under current conditions] from producing. We have seen how Friedrich suffers from an 'innere Zerrissenheit' which (like the ambivalent response of the

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Reproduktionstechnologie', p. 575. Both Alfred Loth of *Vor Sonnenaufgang* and Peter Schmidt of *Atlantis* are modelled on Ploetz.

shipwrecked women of Île des Dames to their banishment from civilisation) reflects a more general modern dilemma: are the negative effects of civilisation to be counteracted by more — that is, higher — civilisation, or by a 'return to nature'? Utopian eugenics combines both the 'back to nature' and the 'forward to a higher humanity' responses to this contemporary dilemma, assisting the evolutionary process as anchored within a teleological framework of fall (degeneracy) and redemption (evolution read along a vertical axis).[73]

In a novel that foregrounds the question of human reproduction as persistently as *Die Insel der grossen Mutter*, it would be surprising to find no trace of this signifcant contemporary discourse. The utopian novel's scenario takes literally the popular idea of 'returning to nature', while its plot focusses on procreation in a natural environment. The natural, healthful physicality of the women on Île des Dames is juxtaposed against the debilitation and degeneration that characterise civilisation:

> Die Schönheit einer jeden von Ihnen, die jetzt schon, nach den sechs Monaten, so augenfällig zugenommen hat, würde dann [after four years on the island] höchstens für die schlaffen Schlingel von europäischen Gecken und Gigerln vollkommen niederschmetternd geworden sein (712).

The women's physical rejuvenation leads to the suggestion that the colony may witness a sort of eugenic revolution through future generations:

> Man werde sagen, und mit dem allergrößten Recht, an diesem Tage [the birth of the first child on Île des Dames] sei der Grund- und Eckstein für eine neues, zukunftreiches Staatswesen gesetzt worden. Und hoffentlich für ein neues, mächtiges Volkstum, das aus der Blüte und Elite der Hauptweltvölker die Essenz bilde (739).

Irony, which, as has already been noted, plays an important role in the novel, affects the thematisation of eugenics: the racial distillation that supposedly constitutes the new generation on Île des Dames, despite its portrayal as a healthful and natural antidote to degeneration, owes its existence to one father. The fact that the couplings at the novel's conclusion are thus incestuous exposes as fallacious the eugenically positive self-image of the island community.

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[73] See Ort, 'Zwischen Degeneration und eugenischer Utopie', p. 184.

Maternalism and cultural renewal

Several characters, notably Laurence and Phaon, express utopian hopes of establishing a preferable alternative to contemporary civilisation, a 'Neuorientierung der gesamten Menschenwelt' (760); it is hoped that the insular society will ultimately be 'der ganzen großen Menschenwelt nutzbringend': 'Daß wir in jeder Beziehung nicht nur für unsere eigene Glückseligkeit, sondern für die der Menschheit arbeiten, gibt unserm Handeln die freudige Idealität'(775). The planned social and cultural renewal derives from maternal values and feminine principles (the 'naturverbundene und fruchtbare mütterliche Denkungsart', 777).

The conviction that the values associated with motherhood offer potential for social renewal can be termed maternalism, and is a distinctive strand of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century feminism.[74] The idealisation of motherhood and of the values it is seen to incorporate proceeds from a theory of gender in which the principle of a polarised complementarity of male and female is enshrined. The mother-child bond, and the maternal activities and qualities of nurture, care and love are invoked as a corrective to the anonymity and brutality of a negatively experienced modernity. Insofar as it claims an essentially *biological* experience — that of motherhood, along with its affective correlates — for an agenda of socio-cultural criticism and reform, maternalism contributes to, and reflects, the broader trend of idealising organic models and mobilising their corrective potential (see p. 73 above). In *Atlantis*, Friedrich von Kammacher's critical appraisal of the contemporary women's movement argues that maternal experience and consciousness must constitute the core of any reform in women's status.

> 'Den lebendigen Keimpunkt jeder Reform des Frauenrechts [...] muß das Mutterbewußtsein bilden. Die Zelle des künftigen Zellenstaats, der einen gesunderen sozialen Körper darstellen wird, ist das Weib mit Mutterbewußtsein. Die großen Reformatorinnen der Frauenwelt sind nicht diejenigen, deren Absicht es ist, es den Männern in jeder Beziehung gleichzutun, sondern jene, die sich bewußt werden, daß jeder, auch der größte Mann, durch ein Weib geboren ist: die bewußten Gebärerinnen der Geschlechter der Menschen und Götter. [...] Bildet eine Liga der Mütter, würde ich den Frauen raten', fuhr Friedrich fort, 'und jedes Mitglied bekenne sich, ohne auf Sanktion des Mannes, das heißt auf die Ehe, Rücksicht zu

> nehmen, praktisch und faktisch, durch lebendige Kinder, zur Mutterschaft. [...] Erobert euch das natürliche, vollberechtigte, stolze Bewußtsein der Menschheitsgebärerinnen zurück, und ihr werdet im Augenblicke, wo ihr's habt, unüberwindlich sein.' (445-6)

The scenario of *Die Insel der grossen Mutter* facilitates a more thorough exploration of maternalism and of what a society based on the bond between mother and child might look like. Contributing to the positive characterisation of the feminine principle, this bond is described as the origin of 'caritas', the foundation of altruism as such, from which a sense of community, social responsibility and ultimately the idea of a common humanity then evolves:

> [die christliche] Lehre der Nächstenliebe würde in einem Weltreich der Mütter längst restlos verwirklicht sein. Auch die Liebe ist ja vom Weibe geboren [...] weil es den werdeneden Menschen während neun Monaten in sich trägt und hegt und weil erst während dieser Zeit und in diesem Verhältnis die wahre Menschenliebe wirksam ist. [...] Mutter und Kinder pflegten die Urgeselligkeit. In der Beziehung der säugenden, leitenden und schützenden Mutter liegt der erste soziale Zug [...] Die aus unseren Seelen hervorgegangene Caritas ist also allein das soziale Bindungsmoment der Menschheit geworden (777-8).[75]

The emphasis on the biological sphere — on the natural, quasi-vegetative organic processes of growth and reproduction — is, despite the idealising rhetoric concerning the origins of 'Nächstenliebe' in 'Mutterliebe', problematised by the stasis, the narrow horizons, the religious orthodoxy, the lack of technological innovation and the passive relationship to the environment that characterise Mütterland. Hauptmann's Bachofenian characterisation of matriarchy as regressive is most evident in the contrast between the Spartan, hard-working, creative Mannland and the luxurious, organic Mütterland, a contrast which alerts the reader to an implicit privileging of the symbolic sphere of masculinity over that of femininity. The ostensible reversal of the feminine/masculine hierarchy in the fantasy world through the denigration and banishment of the males is a temporary inversion; the carnevalesque overturning of prevailing power-relations, here as elsewhere, in fact serves to re-affirm the

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[74] See Anderson, *Utopian feminism*, pp. 10-15, and Janz, 'Die Frau' und 'das Leben'. Weiblichkeitskonzepte in der Literatur und Theorie um 1900' in *Faszination des Organischen*, pp. 36-52.

[75] For a quite different evaluation of the same idea, see Weininger *Geschlecht und Charakter*, p. 351: 'die Frau ist die Trägerin des Gemeinschaftsgedankens überhaupt'. For Weininger, all ethical action proceeds from an inviolable sense of self, and the 'Grenzüberschreitung' of 'Mutterliebe' is, as a violation of the individuation principle, 'Unsittlich' (p. 296).

latter through the ludic unreality of the experimental alternative.[76] The elderly Phaon of the afterword proclaims: 'In meiner Seele lebt dieses Eiland wie hunderttausend Jahre trunkner Seligkeit' (XI, 365). The word *trunken* is significant here, as it underscores the unreality of Île des Dames. The achievements of 'Mannland' compensate for the temporary denigration of the outcast 'other' of the matriarchal society The contrast and tension created in the novel between these spheres is examined now with reference to the symbols that embody their respective qualities: the hand and the womb.

3.5.3 Gendered polarities: the hand and the womb

Hauptmann's indebtedness to Bachofen's theories is evident in the contrast between the values of Mannland and Mütterland, discussed here as the spheres of hand and womb. Bachofen had accentuated the cyclical, material and corporeal character of matriarchy, its rootedness in nature.

> Der passiven Hingegebenheit an Mutter, Natur, Erde und ihrer zentralen Rolle entspricht das Wertsystem der mutterrechtlichen Kultur. Das Naturale, Biologische allein ist wertvoll, das Geistige, Kulturelle, Rationale wertlos.[77]

Bachofen concluded that the upward evolution of humanity required these qualities to be transcended in a shift from body and nature towards mind and patriarchal civilisation.

The primacy of natural and biological values is revealed in *Die Insel der grossen Mutter* through the society's response to motherhood. To be a mother is a good in itself in this society, and is culturally privileged at the expense of intellectual values: the ramblings of the incoherent Babette, who, as the first to conceive, enjoys a special status, become the foundation of the community's religious life. It is only when the women begin to propagate like the flora and fauna around them that they feel they are 'mit dem Sinn ihres Daseins eins geworden' (810). The women are proud of their cultural heritage and learning, which they record in an archive, but it is primarily in the interest of passing on the knowledge from European civilisation to the next generation of island-dwellers, that is, in the interest of self-preservation and regeneration, that they do this. The following passage reveals the extent to

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[76] The Victorian fashion of dressing aristocratic children in sailor-suits underscored precisely the dissimilarity between these children's lives and the lives of sailors.

which the intellectual activity of the archive is motivated by motherly concerns rather than by the value of knowledge itself:

> Es war eine Lust, zu sehen, mit welcher vorsehenden, vorsorgenden, echt mütterlichen Freude und Geschäftigkeit die fast durchweg fruchthaft warmen und schönen Inselmütter geistige Nahrung für ihre Kinder zutrugen [...]Hatten sie immer wieder geduldig geboren und mit inbrünstiger Schaffensfreude und Lebensliebe Kinder an die gesegneten Milchquellen ihrer Brüste gelegt, so brachten sie jetzt, *von ebendemselben Triebe bewegt*, gleichsam das Blut ihrer Seelen dabei, damit es in Zukunft die vor geistigem Tode behüte, die sie einst unterm Herzen getragen. (808, emphasis added)

This passage demonstrates the high priority given in the text to the maternal instinct and to the women's biological function as mothers. Motherliness is affirmed as the symbolic and affective counterpart to masculinised principles which are in turn affirmed in the portrait of Mannland; this affirmation of opposites occurs within an essentialist framework which seeks to subsume gender antagonism into a utopia of complementarity without unravelling the conceptual oppositions fundamental to this antagonism. The antagonistic approach to gender difference is however present in the novel through the misandrist measure of banishing the boys, a measure which is at odds with the idealised maternalism and brings about the colony's eventual downfall. Hauptmann thus sketches two alternative models that can be drawn from the postulate of masculine and feminine 'essences': antagonism, which leads inevitably to social and psychological disequilibrium; or complementarity, which is implicitly idealised but only portrayed in the matrimonial, not the broader social context. Both models — antagonism and complementarity — leave the essentialist understanding of difference unquestioned.

Returning to the passage cited above, it is clear that the mothers' cultural activity is framed by, and to be understood as part of, their motherly role. The portrayal of Mütterland is dominated by organic imagery from both the animal and plant kingdoms; for example, the accumulation and exchange of knowledge is described as a kind of intellectual metabolism in a 'geistiger Bienenstock': 'Wie von geistigen Bienen wurde dem Stocke der Akademie das Geistige unermüdlich zugetragen, um Andersgeistes ausgetauscht, das man dafür forttragen und, mehr noch, fortpflanzen durfte.' (807) The act of recording and storing their intellectual

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[77] Fromm, 'Die sozialpsychologische Bedeutung der Mutterrechtstheorie', p. 201.

knowledge is for the mothers not creative but procreative, an act of maintenance. Hauptmann's concept of gender difference crystallises in the opposition between the opposition of the female concerns of maintenance, stability and regeneration on the one hand, and, on the other, the concerns characterised as male and associated with masculinity: creativity, innovation, technological progress and development, values symbolised by 'die denkende Hand'. The 'thinking Hand' icon is monumentalised on the agora of Mannland (857) and incorporated into the gestures and greetings of its inhabitants (863).

The gendered polarities sketched above correspond to the epistemology of sex and gender analysed over two decades later by Simone de Beauvoir.[78] The thinking hand is the emblem of transcendence, of the Promethean endeavour of wresting the means of survival, indeed the very conditions of existence out of the hand of blind chance or fate, of seeking greater control over nature and greater subjugation of it to human needs. The synecdoche of the hand points to the human ability to *mani*pulate — act on — the environment, creatively or destructively shaping it. The hand further symbolises an active, rather than passive, attitude to given conditions, as underscored by its presence in the verb 'handeln': 'Der Begriff des Handelns [ist] von der Hand [hergenommen]' (865). This power of manipulation is set against the power of procreation in *Die Insel der grossen Mutter*, through their spatial juxtaposition in Mannland and Mütterland respectively and their alignment with the polarised principles of masculine and feminine. No symbol for the latter principle or power is explicitly named in the novel, but the implicit ubiquity of the fecund womb, veiled in the generalised organic imagery of blossoming and fruiting, and ideologically invested with the ideal of motherly love, is symbolically opposed to the thinking hand and to the sphere th latter symbolises, the arts and contrivances it brings forth. The binary of immanence and transcendence so central to Beauvoir's analysis of gender discourse inheres in the symbolic polarity of creative hand and fecund womb.

The fecund womb as symbolic other of the thinking hand has a further resonance in the use of the term 'hysteria' and its derivatives. The diminution or capitulation of the rational, self-aware faculty of cognition is frequently portrayed in the novel under the sign of hysteria,

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[78] Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* [1949], trans. by H.M. Parshley (London: Everyman, 1993).

sometimes as mass-hysteria, in which not only the cognitive faculty but the individuation principle seem temporarily suspended. It is in the more general meaning of hysteria as an outbreak of wild emotionalism rather than in the more specific medical sense of psychoneurosis that Hauptmann employs the term. Its relevance to the discussion of the masculine and feminine principles and their symbolic deployment in the text lies in the etymological derivation of hysteria from *hysterā*, Greek for womb. The term is first used in the novel in connection with the community's response to Rita Stradmann's death:

> Beim Begräbnis brach eine förmliche Raserei des Jammers aus, bei der sich die Europäerinnen, wie Klageweiber schreiend, die Brust schlugen. Die Präsidentin nannte es eine Massenhysterie, der sie überdies noch die Eigenschaftsworte 'ekelhaft' und 'verlogen' anheftete (709).

The community's leaders seek to dismiss the news of the first pregnancy because, if Phaon's sexual innocence is to be upheld, it is rationally impossible; the breakdown of reason they perceive in Babette is described by Laurence as 'ihre hysterische Illusion' (724) and Anni Prächtel's diagnosis, on hearing Babette relate the story of her impregnation, confirms the association of *womb* and *unreason*: 'Wir haben hier einen Fall von Hysterie, wo sich ein unbefriedigter Organismus das einbildet, an dessen Mangel er gerade krankt.' (731) The irrational defence of Babette put forward by Thorgerd Grimm, in which the claim is made that this may have been an immaculate conception, is itself described as 'etwas hysterisch' (738).

The symbolic opposites of hand and womb are a gender-specific embodiment of the opposition of chaos and order, the significance of which has already been noted. The womb, through its association with hysteria but also through the spontaneous abundant growth and life of which it is the locus, is the sign of chaos just as the thinking, creative hand that can act on and subdue its environment is the sign of order, of the dominion of reason.

> Unser spezieller Mannland-Gott aber, erschreckt nur nicht zu sehr, hohe Frauen, ist die Hand [...] Die Hand ersetzt alle Instrumente, und durch ihre Übereinstimmung mit dem Intellekt verleiht sie diesem universelle Herrschaft (864-5).

The expression 'die denkende Hand' as a symbol of man's power to manipulate and control his environment was used elsewhere by Hauptmann during the period in which *Die Insel der*

grossen Mutter was completed: his 1922 address to the Deutscher Werkbund in Munich, entitled 'Die denkende Hand', (VI, 742-751) eulogised the achievements of tradesmen and skilled workers, called for recognition of their importance, asserted faith in mankind's progress, particularly the progress of the German nation, and warned against the dehumanising effects of mechanised labour in a materialist, secularised world.[79] In the novel, the banished sons of the shipwrecked women work together under the thinking hand icon, refining their athletic capabilities and perfecting their skills in carpentry and other trades, even the making of musical instruments and boats. A similar work ethic is not to be found in the female colony, where 'selbst die Arbeit war spielerisch, da man um Nahrung und Notdurft sich wenig sorgen zu machen und nur die Früchte zu pflücken hatte, welche Bäume und Sträucher reichlich hervorbrachten'(885). By contrast, the female delegation to the male part of the island is struck by the industry, the ability, the 'Verve und Freiheit', as Rodberte Kalb puts it, of the boys, which seems to overcome the effects of the islanders' 'Gefangenschaft' (859).

> Was die Mütter im Verlaufe von drei, vier Stunden weiteres, im einzelnen und im allgemeinen, erfahren hatten, lockte Anni Prächtel das Geständnis ab, der Horizont von Mannland sei weiter als der auf der Gegenseite (871).

The boys' efforts seem directed by some unspoken yet palpable ambition. 'Es kam ihnen vor, als sei dieses alles zu einem bestimmten, in der Zukunft liegenden Zweck angestellt' (858). In the 1922 'Die denkende Hand' speech, Hauptmann painted a Promethean picture of human skill and technology as expressive of utopian striving:

> In den Flugtraum wie in die Träume von alledem, was heute zum Erstaunen technisch verwirklicht ist, mischt sich der Erlösergedanke [...] im Sinne einer Humanität, die, durch die Wunder der Technik verlockt, von dem Glauben nicht läßt, eines Tages den Himmel auf Erden zu verwirklichen. (VI, p. 749)

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[79] The 'denkende Hand' speech begins with words which are also spoken by Phaon in his address to the matriarchs (865): 'Der Gedanke des Fortschritts ist vom menschlichen Fuß abgeleitet, der Gedanke des Handelns von der menschlichen Hand' (VI, p. 742). The close overlap between Phaon's speech in the novel and Hauptmann's actual speech lends further support to Lauterbach's suggestion that Phaon is at least in part a self-portrait. His lengthy discourses and 'patriarchalisch-gebieterische Art' while entertaining the matriarchs (855) are reminiscent also of Hauptmann's personal style, as it has been described by those who knew him. See Hilscher, *Gerhart Hauptmann. Leben und Werk*, p. 12.

The speech consists for the most part of a eulogy to work, to skill and to technology, as embodied in the 'thinking hand' symbol.[80] Hauptmann's speech represents a more simplistic attitude to human technological innovation and progress than that expressed by Freud in a strikingly similar passage of *Das Unbehagen in der Kultur* (1930). Hauptmann and Freud describe the same Promethean striving, the technological subordination of nature to human needs, and both recognise its shortcomings, but from different standpoints:

> [...] jene titanischen Werke [...] die sich in unseren Eisenbahnen, Maschinen, Tunnels, Strombrücken, Schienenwegen durch steile Bergklüfte, in schnellsten Transporten über alle Weltgewässer hinweg kennzeichnen. Sie tragen den Menschen in die Luft und stürzen ihn blitzschnell hinab in das Innere der Erde. Sie schaffen ihm Mittel, daß er sonst Unsichtbares im Allerkleinsten sowohl als im Allerfernsten zu sehen vermag [...] Genug, [das Ausmaß seines Werks] hat den Menschen bisher an sich nicht bereichert, sondern in vielen Beziehungen ärmer gemacht. (VI, p. 745, 747)

> Mit all seinen Werkzeugen vervollkommnet der Mensch seine Organe – die motorischen wie die sensorischen — oder räumt die Schranken für ihre Leistungen weg [...] Es klingt nicht nur wie ein Märchen, es ist direkt die Erfüllung aller — nein, der meisten — Märchenwünsche, was der Mensch durch seine Wissenschaft und Technik auf dieser Erde hergestellt hat [...] Im Interesse unserer Untersuchung wollen wir aber auch nicht daran vergessen, daß der heutige Mensch sich in seiner Gottähnlichkeit nicht glücklich fühlt.[81]

In both cases, 'Fortschrittsoptimismus' is problematised, but where Freud's analysis proceeds from an anthropological pessimism, Hauptmann's enthusiasm for the perceived upward evolution of humanity survives his insight into the human cost of progress. For Hauptmann, the utopian narrative of progress can be sustained if it is counterbalanced by an indispensable spiritual dimension — 'eine göttliche Weltinspiration' — and by sympathy, transplanted from the intimate to the social sphere: '[...] wir werden das fernste, schönste Ziel ins Auge fassen. Und was wäre denn solch ein Ziel? Das elementar-soziale Gefühl der Sympathie zur sozialen Liebe entwickeln...' (VI, 750) Thus the Promethean (masculine)

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[80] The positive re-assessment of the social and cultural importance of manual labour lends the speech a quasi-socialist pathos, but the emphasis on the 'heroics of labour' is arguably a proto-fascist feature, anticipating the National Socialist militarisation of 'Arbeit des Faustes', as captured by Leni Riefenstahl in *Triumph des Willens* (1935).

values symbolised by 'thinking hand' must be balanced by other (feminine) qualities. This recalls the 'Ozean von Leben, Liebe, Selbstlosigkeit und Schöpferkraft, der im heut unterdrückten Weltreich der Frauen herrscht' (824), which the women of Île des Dames hope will become not only the basis of their community, but a positive force for global change: 'Das Gegründete war der Mütterstaat von Île des Dames, das zu Gründende das Weltreich der Mutter' (818). Freud and Hauptmann both recognise the fallacy and disequilibrium of attempts to improve the human condition by relying solely on the domination of nature through technologial progress; Hauptmann has recourse to the idea of a harmonious co-operation of complementary masculine and feminine principles, based on a theory of natural gender difference, in his attempt to recover the balance. It is this theory of 'essentialist complementarity' that constitutes the effective utopian core of *Die Insel der grossen Mutter*. However, whereas Hauptmann's speech on the thinking hand pleads for a relationship of complementarity between the two principles of creative manipulation and sympathetic love (the latter derived from the motherly bond), the novel portrays the interaction between these forces as more conflictual than harmonious.

One further aspect of the symbolic polarity of creative hand and fecund womb must be noted. Humans' ability to manipulate their environment (both creatively and destructively) has been seen to surpass that of other species to the extent that it seems to represent a definitive break with the environmental symbiosis enjoyed by all other species, a qualitatively different way of being in the world. The technological and mechanical innovations that spring from what Hauptmann dubs the 'thinking hand' are, it seems, uniquely human or at least unrivalled by other animals. Human reproduction, on the other hand, is by and large seen as an irreducibly natural, organic facet of existence, despite recent advances in medical care and reproductive technologies. It is in the experiences of copulation, gestation, parturition and lactation that the mammalian, animal quality of human existence is most difficult to occlude, and the 'manifest subjection of woman to the biological processes' fosters the imaginative link between woman and nature, femininity and naturalness.[82] (Mortality poses a similar problem to any anthropocentric insistence on a qualitative

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[81] Sigmund Freud, *Das Unbehagen in der Kultur*, in Freud, *Studienausgabe*, 11 vols (Frankfurt a. M.: Fischer, 1974), IX, p. 221-222.

difference between humans and other species, but as *Die Insel der grossen Mutter* is more specifically concerned with reproduction than with mortality in its unfolding of the problematic of human as animal and/or more-than-animal, I omit the question of death from my discussion of this problematic. Cultural representations of mortality and death, and the enmeshment of gender discourse in such representations, have been discussed in chapter two and will be revisited below with reference to Frank Wedekind's works).

The question of the extent to which the human is merely animal or more than animal (and, if the latter, the question of what this 'more than' might consist in) thus underpins the opposition of creativity and procreation, symbolised by thinking hand and fecund womb. The text often verges on a rhetorical conflation of the human and animal, or of the human and organic life as such, as for example whenever the women of Île des Dames are described in animal terms, or whenever the organic imagery used to describe their surroundings infects the language used to portray them. As evening falls on the women's first day on the island, Rodberte Kalb muses on the shared experience of humans and animals:

> Es taucht in uns allen etwas auf, was unter dem ganzen Gerümpel aus den Speichern der Zivilisation verschüttet gewesen ist. Vielleicht die Urangst der Kreatur, die im düsteren Lichte der Furcht die Schönheit und Macht der Schöpfung empfindet. Hören Sie doch, was oben am Rande des Steilufers ebenfalls für ein Lärm entstanden ist. Das Geschrei und Gekreisch der Vögel scheint dem der Damen unten sehr verwandt und könnte wohl ähnlichen Ursprungs sein. (692)

The attribute 'denkend' further confirms the place of the symbolic hand in a broader constellation of issues surrounding the relationship of humanity and animality. Thought, cognition and intellection are foremost amongst the attributes and capabilities seen to set humans apart from other species. Where such mental activity is absent, as in a state of unconsciousness, the perceived gulf between human and animal narrows, and the condition of self-awareness temporarily gives way to an unconscious being-in-nature. This is how the shipwrecked women are described as they succumb to sleep on their first night on the island:

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[82] See Karl Guthke, *The Gender of Death. A cultural history in art and literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 200 ff.

> Die Schlafenden waren von alledem [their surroundings] losgelöst und lagen doch darin wie im Mutterschoß, nur durch die Atmung damit verbunden wie gleichsam durch eine Nabelschnur (698).

The description, even personification of natural surroundings in maternal terms is a further important strand in the gender discourse present in the novel. Nature as the source of life that enfolds and encompasses the individual life-forms it brings forth inspires an analogy between itself and the human mother. The macrocosm of the natural environment seems to mirror the microcosmic bond between mother and child, both born and unborn, through envelopment and nourishment and the dependency these entail. Hauptmann echoes a long tradition — one that still persists — of figuring nature as female and maternal. But the mother who envelops and nourishes can also stifle and control, stunting growth by the very means that originally fostered it. Promethean technological endeavours, as symbolised by the thinking hand, are an attempt to emerge from a passive dependency into an active — 'handelnd' — position of intervention in, and control of, the resources nature provides. Bearing in mind the alignment of the thinking hand with the masculine principle, we can see the conventional epistemology of gender shaping the text at several levels. Mannland does not just represent a workshop of innovation and technological activity by way of contrast with the lush garden of Mütterland; the gendered opposition of passive and active is inscribed in the engagement of the inhabitants of Mannland with a maternally configured natural environment. Their activity gains them freedom from dependency on, and subjection to, nature. This again anticipates the gendered dichotomy of immanence and transcendence identified by Beauvoir. Mütterland remains a realm of immanence, in which the biological and communal takes precedence over any individual narrative of self-realisation.

3.5.4 Marriage as refuge: the significance of the *Rahmenerzählung*

Phaon's departure at the end of the novel gains him several freedoms: 'Da griff er das Steuer mit festerer Hand, und Böen der Freiheit schwellten sein Segel' (902). The very image of him taking the helm symbolises his escape from the imposition of matriarchy and his resumption of control, and this contrast between matriarchal bondage and masculine freedom is further underscored by the phallic language of 'griff', 'fest', 'schwellten'. Having confronted the temptation of incest in his encounters with Iphis and Rukminî, he is now free to form a

monogamous bond with Dagmar-Diodata, Laurence's adopted daughter, the only island-dweller of the younger age-group of whom he is not the father. His freedom thus also represents both the phylogenetic-cultural step taken in the shift from endogamy to exogamy and the ontogenetic subjective significance of quitting the family sphere. He and Dagmar escape together from the chaos, and their subsequent fate, as narrated in the 'Rahmenerzählung', is portrayed as a viable ideal, unlike the doomed alternative of the matriarchy. 'Wie oft im Toben des Weltkriegs', says the narrator of the epilogue, 'sehnte ich mich nach Stradmanns Südseeparadies zwischen den Wendekreisen und beneidete diesen Mann, der sich in Gemeinschaft mit einer stillen, treuen Lebensgefährtin gleichsam im Weltall lebendig begraben hatte' (XI, 367). Thus the ideal we are left with is not an ideal society but rather an ideal outside society, a 'selbstgewählte Robinsonade' (XI, 362); reading the novel in conjunction with the 'Rahmenerzählung', its element of cultural pessimism becomes apparent: 'Außerdem ist ein jeder allein, will ein jeder die eigne selige Insel erreichen' (899). The ideal of Stradmann's South Sea paradise is not without its socially critical edge, for instance in its use of the Robinsonade island motif.

> Die Bewegungen beider Menschen hatten übrigens etwas Großes, Freies, Bequemes an sich. Man merkte, daß der Rhythmus unsrer modernen Zivilisation mit seiner unedlen Jagd und Hast hier einem anderen, höheren Rhythmus gewichen war (XI, 361).

The self-imposed isolation chosen by Phaon and Dagmar Stradmann implies a rejection of society and an attempt to formulate a preferable alternative — an alternative that is admittedly defined by its position outside society, and is thus only available in the household, not to a broader social group, but which points nonetheless to the inadequacies in the world at large that have brought the Stradmanns to abandon it. The idealisation of domesticity has always carried this implication of dissatisfaction with the threatening anonymity and aggressiveness of the public sphere, especially in an era of disenchanted capitalism, but its creation of a compensatory sphere tends to negate the critical potential of the social dissatisfaction that underlies it.[83]

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[83] The double life of Wemmick in Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations* [1860-61] humorously illustrates the gulf between the two spheres and the opposed sets of behaviour and values they can generate. See Dickens, *Great Expectations*, ed. by Charlotte Mitchell (Penguin Classics: London, 1996), p. 291.

Joanna Jablkowska's reading rejects the idea that *Die Insel der grossen Mutter* offers any kind of alternative; the novel, in its failure to negate the real, misses the crucial point of utopian writing, which is the

> Negation der Realität im Namen von nicht-verwirklichten Normen oder einer besseren Zukunft; [...] was für Realität wird in der *Insel der grossen Mutter* negiert? Doch nicht die hausbackene europäische Gesellschaft, deren Prinzipien am Ende doch gesiegt haben.[84]

The homespun values of contemporary domesticity and gender discourse do indeed triumph in the epilogue, Robinsonade or no. The portrayal of the Stradmann's marriage forcefully re-asserts the patriarchal principle:

> Die kluge, stille, versonnen-heitere Hausfrau bewegte sich ab und zu, obgleich im ganzen und einzelnen alles im voraus geordnet war. Während des ausgedehnten Desserts hatte sie eine Handarbeit vorgenommen. Ihre Bemerkungen waren einfach, offen und nicht zurückhaltend. Aber die längere, zusammenfassende Rede schien sie geflissentlich ihrem Mann überlassen zu wollen (XI, p. 361).

Herr Stradmann's reminisces about life on Île des Dames are interrupted by his wife only as follows: 'Hier wurden wir von Frau Stradmann neuerlich zu Tisch geführt.' (XI, p. 366).

The received wisdom on gender difference that informs the novel and its frames allows for the alternatives of antagonism or complementarity. The Stradmann's idealised marriage accords conventional gender roles to the two partners according to the latter principle: Herr and Frau Stradmann complement each other as master and servant, thinker and amanuensis;[85] hers is the traditional role of the helpmeet. Their marriage represents a continuation of the matrimonial values embodied in the marriage of Phaon's parents, as described by Anni Prächtel:

> An dieser späten Ehe Stradmanns war eigentlich alles schön. Das häusliche Glück war mit der häuslichen Enge und der außerhäuslichen Weite zugleich eine Verbindung eingegangen. Sie waren wie die Turteltauben und waren doch ohne Philisterium. [...] Der Mann hatte eine ungeheure Energie und Arbeitskraft und dabei eine so rührend weiche Seele, daß er während seiner fünfzehnjährigen Ehe kaum einen Tag von seiner Frau getrennt gewesen ist [...]

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[84] Jablkowska, 'Die Insel der grossen Mutter. Utopie oder Satire auf die Utopie?', p. 98.

[85] 'Nicht nur Briefe jedoch diktierte, wie ich bald erfuhr, Herr Stradmann seiner Frau, sondern auch mancherlei, was auszusprechen ihm nahelag' (XI, 361). The practice of dictating thoughts, ideas, literary works and correspondence to a scribe constitutes yet another parallel between the character of Phaon Stradmann and Hauptmann himself. See Wolfgang Leppmann, *Gerhart Hauptmann. Die Biographie* (Berlin: Propyläen, 1995), p. 7.

> Einmal weiter von ihm getrennt, war sie [Rita Stradmann] tatsächlich nicht zu gebrauchen. (697)

The values incorporated in this idealised nuptial bond were temporarily dislodged by the matriarchal system on Île des Dames. The re-enshrinement in the 'Rahmenerzählung' of the complementarity principle, as embodied in patriarchal marriage, constitutes not only a tacit critique of the segregation on Île des Dames, but a defusion of the critical potential offered by the thought-experiment of an 'Amazonenstaat'. The island matriarchy institutionalised an antagonistic conception of gender, and the resulting social order was inherently unstable. The critical potential of a fantasy matriarchy lies in its salutary inversion of the excesses and evaluations of the patriarchal reality from within which it is imagined. The make-believe scenario of men as second-class citizens, oppressed by women, draws attention to the real power-relations that are imaginatively inverted in the text. But the model of marriage-as-refuge presented by the 'Rahmenerzählung' constitutes a re-affirmation of the status quo in respect of gender relations. The utopian ideal of a harmonious complementarity of masculine and feminine principles, interrogated in the novel for its potential to inform a more humane and balanced social order and world view, is, so the frame implies, only realisable in the private sphere of an idealised matrimonial co-existence. The utopia of fulfilled complementarity is thus finally bereft of broader social or political implications, and the novel's exploration of a possible intersection between gender discourse and utopian imagination proceeds from, and ultimately re-affirms, a culturally conservative gender essentialism.

CHAPTER FOUR: FRANK WEDEKIND'S SEXUAL UTOPIA

Frank Wedekind's project of imagining an alternative sexual universe in literary form was never completed, but its outlines can be traced from a group of related texts — the published story *Mine-Haha oder über die körperliche Erziehung der jungen Mädchen* (chapters one to three first published 1901, whole text first published 1903), the unpublished *Eden* (which dates from *c.*1890-1892) and the corpus of related sketches and drafts collectively entitled *Die grosse Liebe*, most of which date from 1906-7.[1] The *Die grosse Liebe* texts and *Eden* are currently unpublished and are kept in the Wedekind archive of Munich's municipal library; they are due for publication as part of the *Kritische Studienausgabe* in 2006.[2] *Eden* and the *Die grosse Liebe* material are very similar; in places, *Eden* parallels sections of the later sketches so closely that it is unclear whether we are dealing with two different texts or with earlier and later versions of the same text. In this chapter, wherever referring to aspects common to both, they are designated as *Eden/Die grosse Liebe.*

Wedekind used the word 'Utopie' when referring to the project in a letter of 10.1.1909 to Georg Brandes:

> Im Jahr 1895 wollte ich *meine* Utopie schreiben. Der Roman war auf 18 Kapital berechnet von denen nur die ersten 3 fertig wurden, die ich dann, nur wegen stilistischer Qualitäten, die sie mir zu haben schienen, unter dem Titel 'Mine-Haha' herausgab.[3]

Since then various critics have used this term to designate both *Mine-Haha* and the associated sketches.[4] Their relation to the utopian tradition is, however, complex, manifold and often indirect, with the result that some critics have argued that *Mine-Haha* cannot be considered as a utopian text (see p. 194 below). As outlined in chapter one, the analysis attempted here seeks to avoid a taxonomical approach, and interprets the

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[1] See Robert A. Jones and Leroy R. Shaw, *Frank Wedekind: A bibliographic handbook*, 2 vols (Munich: K.G. Saur, 1996), pp. 61-62.

[2] Frank Wedekind, *Werke. Kritische Studienausgabe*, ed. Elke Austermühl, Rolf Kieser (†) and Hartmut Vinçon, 8 vols (Darmstadt: Häusser, 1996—). Details of the projected publication schedule for further volumes are outlined in 'Projekte der Editions- und Forschungsstelle der Frank Wedekind-Gesellschaft e.V.', electronic version, retrieved 29 September 2004 from http://www.wedekind.fh-darmstadt.de

[3] Klaus Bohnen, 'Frank Wedekind und Georg Brandes. Unveröffentlichte Briefe', *Euphorion*, 72 (1978), 106-119 (p. 114).

[4] See, for example, the chapter heading 'Die Utopie des glücklichen Körpers' in Medicus' 1982 monograph on the sketches, *‚Die große Liebe'*. Jones and Shaw in *Frank Wedekind. A bibliographic handbook* also use the term 'utopian' in entries referring to the *Die grosse Liebe* complex; Pankau refers to both *Eden* and *Die grosse Liebe* under the heading 'Staatsutopie' (Pankau, 'Prostitution, Tochtererziehung und männlicher Blick', p.27). For discussions of *Mine-Haha* under the rubric of 'utopia' see Götz Müller, *Gegenwelten,* pp. 173-7; Vivetta Vivardi, *'Mine-Haha* e l'utopia autoritaria di Frank Wedekind', *Annali Instituto Universitario Orientale. Studi Tedesche*, 24 (1981), 57-83; refutations of this classification are discussed below, p. 194 ff.

text corpus not with a view to showing how these are, or are not, 'utopian texts', but rather with a view to interrogating firstly their interaction with the utopian tradition (which itself is, after all, not made up of writings that fit some pre-existing definition of a 'utopian text' but which is constituted by this writing in its their variety and interpretive possibility and which thus undergoes constant transformation and renewal), secondly the presence of utopian desire and critique within the texts, and thirdly the presence of dystopian features. Both the published and unpublished material of Wedekind's project is interpreted here with reference to the three criteria of utopian imagination outlined in chapter one above: alterity, collective focus, and critical dimension.

The cultural and social alternatives sketched in *Eden/Die grosse Liebe* and *Mine-Haha* pose a number of interpretive problems. By way of introduction to the issues these texts raise, it can be said that the fantasy world they outline reflects the affinity between the utopian and the totalitarian which has already been noted. The portrayal of the imagined society in the *Eden* and *Die grosse Liebe* sketches proceeds through a description of ritual, while in the parkland 'pedagogical province' of *Mine-Haha*, upbringing and pedagogy are subjected to a strict routine; in both scenarios existence has a regimented character. As discussed in the first chapter, the regimentation of existence in utopian orders results from the tendency of such orders to be conceived according to a set of principles or an abstract concept to which all aspects of life in the utopian society are subordinated (see p. 47 ff). The challenge to the reader of Wedekind's sketches is that of determining the principle or concept on which the depicted state is constructed. A key feature of the imaginary society which commands attention and suggests connections to the broader concerns of Wedekind's oeuvre is the dissociation of sex and reproduction from sentimental-romantic and conventional moral discourses. The world of these texts violates taboos of Wedekind's contemporary social world, providing a radically different set of norms and sexual behaviours which are nonetheless indebted to reality. To understand better how the alternative portrayed in these texts has been arrived at and what it may mean, it will be useful to set it in the context of Wedekind's work as a whole, which spans four decades and embraces verse, prose fiction, discursive essay-writing and most notably drama.

The short survey provided here of the major concerns and themes of Wedekind's writing will hardly supplement the existing criticism. The aim is rather to re-examine certain

aspects of Wedekind's work in order to discuss them afresh in the context of the contemporary developments and discourses outlined in chapters one and two. This overview will firstly show how Wedekind's work is embedded in and indebted to a broader context and secondly serve to outline the thematic and ideological continuities between the *Die grosse Liebe* sketches and other texts by Wedekind. The earlier discussions of the totalitarian and gendered aspects of utopia and the utopisation of the feminine will cast light on Wedekind's fantasy project. The *Die grosse Liebe* texts, in presenting a social order that is different from the historical reality of Wedekind's time, present this difference primarily with reference to questions of sex and reproduction and their regulation in the imagined society. It will be important to bear in mind the regulation and discursivisation of sex in the real social context to which *Die grosse Liebe* responds and from within which it is written. Contemporary cultural discourses on sex and gender were explored in the second chapter; the first task in this chapter is to look at ways in which these questions are addressed in Wedekind's work. Problematic aspects of contemporary gender discourse emerge as features of Wedekind's texts, namely: the construction of femininity; the gendering of looking relations; the objectification and consumption of women in prostitution; the potential of the question of prostitution to subvert *or* reaffirm aspects of normative patriarchal gender relations; and the imbrication of sex and death.

There is consensus in the secondary literature on Wedekind that the central preoccupation of his work is the question of sexual relations and relations between the sexes: their mutual attraction, the social constraints to which this attraction is subject, their capacity or lack of capacity for fidelity, and the sadistic or mutually destructive aspect of their relationships. Many of Wedekind's works focus on the oppressive bourgeois morality of his time, which kept young people in enforced ignorance of their awakening drives and reduced female sexuality to an exchange value which was manifested in both the culturally validated figure of wife and mother and in the transgressive figure of the prostitute. The repressions exacted by this morality and the hypocrisies and inconsistencies generated by the gulf between morality and sexual practice are the subject of satirical, critical and sometimes comical treatments by Wedekind. His best known works have been described as 'sex tragedies',[5] reflecting their

[5] This epithet reflects formulations used in two sets of published English translations of Wedekind plays, *The Lulu Plays and Other Sex Tragedies*, trans. by Stephen Spender (London: Calder & Boyers, 1972) and *Tragedies of Sex*, trans. by Samuel A. Eliot Jr. (New York: Boni & Liveright, 1923).

focus on sexual tensions in the lives of their characters, tensions generated by a wealth of causes from cultural taboo to sexual jealousy. Even where another central theme, that of the place and struggle of art and artists in society, pushes the theme of sex to one side, still sexual tensions are never far from centre stage, as in *Der Kammersänger*, *Die Zensur* and *Der Marquis von Keith*. It is frequently the 'other' sex, the 'second' sex, that preoccupies Wedekind, the *Frauenforscher*.[6]

It is important when referring to Wedekind's satirical exposure of hypocritical sexual morality not to create the impression that his work takes a consistently critical position with regard to contemporary conventions and views on sex and particularly on gender difference. Chapter two alluded to the co-existence of seemingly contradictory positions as a hallmark of *fin-de-siècle* gender discourse, and briefly touched on how Wedekind's views on prostitution exemplified the co-existence of a progressive, even subversive attitude with an indebtedness to a received essentialism which could sometimes take misogynistic forms (see p. 80 above). The co-existence of contradictory positions in Wedekind's work has often been remarked on in the criticism and is seen by many critics to derive from a lack: under this view, Wedekind's cultural criticism is inconsistent because it is not supported by any coherent alternative. Theodor Adorno's appraisal of Wedekind identified the latter's iconoclasm as purely destructive, as a position which, through its lack of a constructive alternative, was more rebellious than revolutionary:

> Er erlebte die Liebe als Widersinn: als Verführung und Hurerei. Man kann das als Faktum nehmen oder sich freuen über die schöne Unanständigkeit, mit der er der gottlosen Zeit ihre Götzen zerstampfte, auch wenn er den Weg zum Gott ihr nicht weisen konnte.[7]

Critics since then, remarking on the inner contradictions of Wedekind's work, have pointed to his failure to eschew fully the ideology he seeks to expose, criticise or mock. Peter Russell has attributed these contradictions to Wedekind's lack of a clear vision of any alternative to the problems he describes:

> The songs of social protest, then, [...] resemble the songs dealing with sex, in that they are provocative without being constructive, aggressive without being certain of their grounds, cynical rather than purposeful. What we have here is not so much social satire,

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[6] Pankau, 'Prostitution, Tochtererziehung und männlicher Blick', p. 34.
[7] Adorno, 'Frank Wedekind und sein Sittengemälde 'Musik'', in Adorno, *Gesammelte Schriften* ii p. 622. Adorno, *Gesammelte Schriften* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1984),

> as social impertinence.[...] instead of being based on a coherent political attitude, they reflect an arbitrary and self-contradictory individualism.[8]

Alfons Höger also notes this aspect of Wedekind's work: 'Wedekind ist Bürger, aber auch Nicht-Bürger [...] Er sieht das Heuchlerische und Doppeldeutige im bürgerlichen Verhalten, und verhält sich genauso'.[9] Pankau focusses the awareness of Wedekind's contradictoriness specifically on the problem of the latter's ambivalent response to women's emancipation: 'Bejaht Wedekind das Moment der sexuellen Befreiung vorbehaltlos, so wehrt er sich doch gegen die Totalität der weiblichen Befreiungswünsche (etwa im Sinne beruflicher Selbständigkeit)'.[10] Elizabeth Boa summarises the point as follows:

> Wedekind's attack on middle-class patriarchy, the cult of virginity, and the scapegoating of prostitutes, is progressive and historically interesting. But his contempt for equal rights and his inability to see beyond current economic relations mean that he cannot be accounted an honorary feminist in either the liberal or the socialist camp.[11]

Boa furthermore concurs with Adorno's view of Wedekind as iconoclast, observing that the latter writes 'as a radical critic of tradition, but without a blueprint for the future'.[12] The reciprocal relationship between the radical critique of tradition and the formulation of blueprints for the future — utopias, in other words — was discussed in chapter one. The criticism of contemporary sexual mores advanced in Wedekind's work may imply a utopian alternative, but it would be over-simplifying the case to suggest that the *Eden* and *Die grosse Liebe* texts represent an attempt to formulate such an alternative, despite Wedekind's own insistence that these were conceived of as a 'utopian' project. Their utopian dimension lies not in the provision of a *desirable* alternative or blueprint, but rather in the fact that they experiment with alternative regulation of sex in a way that reflects a critical attitude to contemporary conditions. It has already been noted that utopian/dystopian writing can proceed through negation of existing reality or extrapolation from it; this chapter shows how Wedekind's fantasy texts are shaped by

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[8] Peter Russell, 'Frank Wedekind as a poet of social and political protest', *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, 17:1 (January 1981), 3-17 (pp.11-12).
[9] Alfons Höger, *Hetärismus und bürgerliche Gesellschaft im Frühwerk Frank Wedekinds* (Copenhagen and Munich: Fink, 1981), p. 117
[10] Johannes Pankau, 'Prostitution, Tochtererziehung und männlicher Blick in Wedekinds Tagebüchern', in *Frank Wedekind*, ed. by Ortrud Gutjahr (= *Jahrbuch für Literatur und Psychoanalyse*, 20) (Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 2001), pp. 19-54 (p. 44).
[11] Elizabeth Boa, *The Sexual Circus. Wedekind's Theatre of Subversion* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987), p. 175.
[12] ibid., p. 24.

both of these approaches, first identifying the continuities between Wedekind's dramatic work and the *Mine-Haha/Eden/Die grosse Liebe* text-complex.

4.1 Sex and death in Wedekind's work

In chapter two, the manifold connections between sex and death and their literary representation were noted. This double theme, which is crucial to Wedekind's fantasy world as depicted in *Eden* and *Die grosse Liebe*, is in fact a strand that runs through much of the rest of his work. The intertwined themes of sex and death are often manifested through the artistic representation of dead or dying women: on the one hand, images of dying women are eroticised, and on the other hand, eroticised images of women are linked with death. The centrality of the motif of the dying or dead woman as a cipher of sex as death/sexualised death throughout Wedekind's oeuvre is to be traced here.

Embedded in the artistic and literary representation of women in the late nineteenth-century context is a tradition of eroticising images of the invalid or dying female. Edgar Allan Poe gave famously concise expression to the complex interrelationships of death, femininity and the aesthetic when he described the death of a beautiful woman as 'unquestionably the most poetical topic in the world'.[13] The *femme fragile* type, discussed in chapter two, manifests the eroticisation of the moribund female: her allure is inseparable from her weakness and implied demise. Turning to Wedekind's biography, his own experiences among the often unhealthy and in several cases moribund prostitutes of Paris seem to have engendered an acceptance of, or at least resigned attitude towards, some kind of continuum between sexual 'licence' and the threat of disease and death. This is illustrated by the story of the prostitute Henriette, whom Wedekind encountered in Paris in 1892 and who seems to have succumbed to syphilis by 1894: the distanced tone used to record her fate strikes the reader of his diaries.[14] The awareness among men 'using' prostitutes at this time of the risk of syphilis further reinforces the association of sex and death.[15]

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[13] Edgar Allan Poe, 'The Philosophy of Composition', in *The Complete Poems and Stories of Edgar Allan Poe, with Selections from his Critical Writings*, ed. by A.H. Quinn (New York: Knopf, 1951), 2:982. For a discussion of Poe's proposition, see Bronfen, *Over her dead body*, pp. 61 ff.

[14] Frank Wedekind, *Die Tagebücher: ein erotisches Leben*, ed. by Gerhard Hay (Frankfurt a.M.: Athenäum, 1986), pp. 242-3 and 283.

[15] See Annegret Stopczyk, 'Ehe und freie Liebe. Zur Frauenbewegung um 1900', in *Die Lebensreform. Entwürfe zur Neugestaltung von Leben und Kunst um 1900* ed. by Kai Buchholz and others, 2 vols (Darmstadt: Institut Mathildenhöhe, 2001), I, pp. 127-130 (p.128).

It must be noted that tracing the topos of dying women throughout Wedekind's work is not a way of overlooking the male fatalities he portrays. Attention must be drawn to the accumulating bodies of the male characters of the Lulu plays; the deaths of her male lovers and admirers punctuate the acts of *Erdgeist* and *Die Büchse der Pandora*, giving the plays a sort of 'theme and variations' structure instead of a linear plot,[16] and placing Lulu herself in the *femme fatale* tradition. The male suicides featured in two other plays — *Karl Hetmann, der Zwergriese* and *Tod und Teufel* — occur because the characters in question, Hetmann and Casti Piani, confront failures or errors in what they have believed in or worked for (II:291, 323).[17] Wedekind disposes of his characters as it suits his dramatic and narratorial needs. It is thus not a question female death being portrayed instead of male death, or with greater frequency, or in a more significant or problematic way. A thorough comparative exploration of literary portrayals of male and female fatalities — a project that could tell us much about the cultural gendering of death[18] — lies beyond the scope of this thesis. The current task is rather to investigate the extent to which, and the ways in which, contemporary gender discourse is reflected and enunciated in Wedekind's work, and the topos of women dying is investigated here as the point of intersection of a number of crucial issues in this discourse, namely: passive and active attitudes, and their extremes of victimhood and violation; transgression and its punishment as they relate to sex; the construction of the spectacle by and for a voyeuristic gaze; the presence of sadistic and masochistic urges in desire; the presence of Thanatos in Eros.

It makes sense to focus first on Wedekind's best-known creation as she embodies Eros and is destined for death. The 'meaning' of Lulu's death has generated much discussion.[19] The choice of Jack's grisly cameo for the conclusion of Lulu's drama,

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[16] See Friedrich Rothe, *Frank Wedekinds Dramen. Jugendstil und Lebensphilosophie* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1968), p. 52.

[17] Volume and page numbers given thus in the main text refer to Frank Wedekind, *Werke in zwei Bänden*, ed. by Erhard Weidl (Munich: dtv, 1996).

[18] Such an exploration falls outside the remit of Karl Guthke's study *The Gender of Death. A Cultural History in Art and Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), which is primarily concerned with representations of the figure or event of death as a masculine or feminine figure or force.

[19] In Jones and Shaw's *Frank Wedekind: A Bibliographic Handbook*, the aggregate of titles in the secondary literature referred to as being of directly relevance to *Erdgeist* and/or *Die Büchse der Pandora* is 244, with a further 10 titles on *Lulu* not covered by these, plus 44 titles on *Lulu* as opera; while these include reviews of productions, etc. which do not always have the Lulu figure as their exclusive focus, it is still some measure of the print inches devoted to Lulu when we consider that passing discussions of her in other writings are not mentioned in Jones and Shaw's survey, for example the concluding section of Herbert Marcuse's essay 'Die Permanenz der Kunst' which salvages a redemptive reading from the brutality of the final act of *Die Büchse der Pandora* (see p. 55 above). Also, the idea re-emerges in other, more general studies of literature of

resonant as it must have been for a contemporary audience, effects a strong foregrounding of the theme of the sexual murder of women. The brief scene with Jack is is prefigured throughout both Lulu plays by the ongoing association of the sexual and the fatal, not only in the deaths of Lulu's lovers but also in her own presentiment: 'Mir träumte alle paar Nächte einmal, ich sei einem Lustmörder unter die Hände geraten' (I:669). While Lulu spells death as the embodiment of a regressive principle, her character operates on more than one level, and her death cannot be read exclusively on a mythic plane as the regression to nothingness promised by her chaotic, chthonic being. With their focus on marriage and attraction, fidelity and beauty as problems, there is much in the Lulu plays that is reminiscent of *Konversationsstücke*. The 'Urgestalt des Weibes' is simultaneously a late-nineteenth-century adulteress and escaped convict turned prostitute; as Friedrich Rothe noted, she is not just the 'mythische Verkörperung des Triebes' but also the 'untreue Ehefrau' and 'verheiratete Dirne',[20] whose story resonates with a litany of dead women and women under threat of death in other texts by Wedekind. The numerous other women whose untimely deaths can be linked to their sexual situations in Wedekind's work have perhaps been overshadowed by Lulu; the deaths and suicides of lesser heroines throughout his prose fiction and his dramatic work — and even his poetry, for example as implied by the lyric 'Ilse'[21] — have been interpreted and contextualised far less frequently than have the victims, victimhood and archetypal status of the *femme fatale*.

A key Wedekindean figure in the sex/death problematic is that of the sexually insatiable and promiscuous woman destined for death; Lulu is the best known but not the only such figure. Effie in *Schloss Wetterstein* parallels Lulu in that she has a semi-incestuous bond with a father-figure and perishes while engaging in prostitution; like another prostitute figure, Lisiska in *Tod und Teufel*, Effie suggests the continuity between sex and death through masochistic desire: 'Dir fehlt das Weib, das alles für dich opfert./Mir fehlt der Mann, dem ich mich opfern darf' (II:636), she announces, and poisons herself to prove her 'Opferbereitschaft'; Lisiska's masochism triggers Casti Piani's suicide when he hears her exclaim to a client: 'Ach, daß ich unter deinen Fäusten stürbe!' (II:321). (The

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the period or gender in literature that something central to contemporary gender discourse is captured by the Lulu figure; for instance, Silvia Bovenschen calls her 'paradigmatisch'. See Bovenschen, *Die imaginierte Weiblichkeit. Exemplarische Untersuchungen zu kulturgeschichtlichen und literarischen Präsentationsformen des Weiblichen* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1979).

[20] See Rothe, *Frank Wedekinds Dramen*, pp. 33-34.

question of masochistic desire is discussed in more detail in the context of the 'Todeswollust' that is central to the rituals of *Die grosse Liebe.*) Ilse in *Frühlings Erwachen*, who embodies the life-affirming values of bohemian adventure and sexual freedom, nonetheless points to the potentially fatal nature of this freedom, acknowledging that her libertine way of life will lead to her eventual downfall in a way that resounds with Lulu's later fate:[22] 'Bis es an euch kommt, lieg ich im Kehricht' (I:516). It is telling that no such prophesy of doom applies in *Frühlings Erwachen* to the boys who embrace the erotic: the girls marked out for death in this play are the ones — Ilse and Wendla — who follow the call of desire, whereas the boy who dies — Moritz — does so as a result of turning his back on life and of taking the repressive pedagogical system at its word. This discrepancy suggests that the sexual lives of women are more intimately bound up with death than are those of men.

Ilse is not the only character in *Frühlings Erwachen* to anticipate Lulu's fate; parallels can also be drawn between Wendla and the heroine of *Erdgeist* and *Die Büchse der Pandora*, between *femme enfant* and *femme fatale.* The adolescent Wendla combines child-like innocence with an adventurous, masochistic sensuality which anticipates Lulu's:[23] the motif of the 'Lustmörder' in the Lulu plays recalls in more extreme form Wendla's desire to be beaten,[24] and the two characters are united in the surgical aspect of their respective deaths. Wendla is sacrificed to society's refusal to acknowledge that her pregnancy is its own product; the morality that keeps her in ignorance of the meaning of desire refuses to accept the consequences of this ignorance. Wendla is killed for being a mother, and Lulu is sacrificed to society's stance on the culpability and ultimate dispensibility of that

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[21] 'Seit jenem Tag lieb ich sie alle,/Des Lebens schönster Lenz ist mein;/Und wenn ich keinem mehr Gefalle,/Dann will ich gern begraben sein'.

[22] Elizabeth Boa reads Ilse's fate as a sign of the difficulty of wresting a sexually emancipated existence out of the grip of a repressive culture: 'The sado-masochistic pattern of feeling persists in Ilse's bohemia, where it becomes a conscious game. Individualistic amoralism does not do away with the desires rooted in a punitive morality and an authoritarian social structure.' Boa, *The Sexual Circus*, p. 45.

[23] This co-existence of innocence/ignorance and sexuality/desire characterises the phase of adolescence and accounts for the sexual fascination which pubescent and adolescent boys and girls can hold for adults, including Wedekind. See Wedekind's diary entry of 30 May 1892: 'Nachdem wir zwei Stunden geschwatzt, gehe ich zu Tisch und nachher auf die Suche nach einem zwölfjährigen Kinde. Nach langem Umherirren finde ich eins auf dem Boulevard Rochechouart, das aber leider schon achtzehn zählt'. Frank Wedekind, *Die Tagebücher: ein erotisches Leben*, ed. by Gerhard Hay (Frankfurt a.M.: Athenäum, 1986), p. 182.

[24] The scene in the hayloft where Melchior and Wendla lose their virginity is, at Melchior's instigation ('Handle ich, wie ich will, es bleibt Vergewaltigung' (I:533)), commonly interpreted as a rape scene, but two further scenes problematise this interpretation: their previous meeting in the wood, where Wendla is the instigator of physical contact (I:490-94) and her soliloquy in the garden, in which the after-effects of the hayloft incident are more indicative of rapture than trauma: 'Warum hast du dich aus der Stube geschlichen? – Veilchen suchen! – Weil mich Mutter lächeln sieht. [...] Meine Füße berühren den Boden nicht...Oh, wie ich die Nacht geschlummert habe!' (I:510).

other Weiningerian type, the whore. The knives come out for Wendla's importunately fruitful womb and for Lulu's indiscriminating barren one, and both surgical acts attest not only to the circumscription of female sexuality and the policing of its uses, but also to the threat of fatality that seems to lie in wait for the sexual woman more than it does for the sexual man.

While the promiscuous woman or prostitute who falls prey either to her own masochistic or another's sadistic urges is a key figure in the association between sex and death, it is not Wedekind's only means of representing this broader problematic. The sexually rejected female suicide is also an important motif. Helene Marowa in *Der Kammersänger* (1897), rejected by the protagonist Gerardo, shoots herself; Molly in *Der Marquis von Keith* (1899), similarly rejected by the eponymous hero, throws herself into the Isar and drowns; and Kadidja in the semi-autobiographical one-act play *Die Zensur* (1907) throws herself from the balcony as she believes Buridan no longer loves her: 'Du liebst mich ja doch nicht mehr. Und ich kann ohne dich nicht leben' (II:414).

Sexual dependency of this kind leads to possessiveness and jealousy, emotions which again signal the fatal dimension of eroticism as they are often accompanied by an implicit threat of violence or death. An anecdote recorded in Wedekind's notebooks — autobiographical, insofar as it is possible to tell — makes clear the connection between possessiveness, jealousy and the threat of death. The anecdote, which appears under the heading 'Mysterium der Ehe', is reproduced here in full:

> Montag den 1. Juli 1907.
>
> Ich komme von Prag zurück wo ich drei Abende gespielt habe. Tilly erwartet mich am Bahnhof. Wir fahren zu Eugen Steinert in Charlottenburg und essen dort zu Abend. Tilly erzählt: Ich war um vieles zu früh auf den Bahnhof gekommen. Ich konnte die richtige Zeit nicht erwarten. Als ich nun auf den Bahnsteig auf und abgieng und der Zug nicht kommen wollte, fragte ich mich: Was wäre dir lieber, wenn dir Frank in Prag untreu geworden wäre, oder wenn er bei einem Eisenbahnunglück den Tod gefunden hätte. Ich sagte mir mit aller Bestimmtheit, daß es mir lieber wäre, wenn er bei einem Eisenbahnunglück den Tod gefunden hätte. Ich war etwas befremdet [...] Ich habe drei Tage darüber nachgedacht und bin der Überzeugung, daß Tilly recht hatte. Ich hätte ihr das gleiche entgegnen können, was ich ihr möglichst oft entgegne: Es beruht auf Gegenseitigkeit. Ich bin stolz darauf und freue mich von ganzem Herzen, daß wir Beide

dem Leben, wie es in Wirklichkeit [beschaffen] ist so klar und ruhig in die Augen blicken können.[25]

Wherever sexual possession and fidelity are felt so keenly that death is considered preferable to their loss, the question of mortality inheres at every moment in sexual union. While for Tilly and Frank this radical possession unto death seems to have been fully mutual, such mutuality would not necessarily have been assumed wherever the sexual double standard was in operation.[26] Tellingly, where Wedekind reworks this incident for dramatic purposes in *Schloss Wetterstein* the roles are reversed and the mutuality omitted, rendering the incident a statement of male jealousy and possessiveness rather than a mutual affirmation of fidelity — all the more so as the infraction is reduced from 'untreu werden' to a fleeting, flirtatious contact.

> LEONORE: Rüdiger! Erinnerst du dich noch daran, wie ich im ersten Vierteljahr unserer Ehe von Hamburg zurückkam? Du erwartetest mich in Hannover auf dem Bahnhof. Kaum waren wir allein, da sagtest du mir, du seiest zu dem Zuge eine Stunde zu früh gekommen, seiest auf dem Bahnsteig auf und ab gegangen und habest dir die Frage vorgelegt, was von beiden dir lieber wäre: wenn ich mir in Hamburg von einem Manne unterm Tisch die Fußspitzen hätte berühren lassen, oder wenn ich auf der Rückfahrt durch einen Eisenbahnunfall ums Leben gekommen wäre. Du sagtest damals mit aller Entschiedenheit, daß dir mein Tod lieber gewesen wäre.
>
> RÜDIGER: Wenn du mich heute fragst, sage ich dir genau dasselbe (II: 591).

Furthermore, the subsequent dialogue between Rüdiger and Leonore's daughter Effie, in which the two plan a sexual encounter (II: 596) situates Wedekind's transformative re-telling of the autobiographical incident within the prevailing sexual double standard.

The fate of the three figures referred to above — Helene in *Der Kammersänger*, Molly in *Der Marquis von Keith* and Kadidja in *Die Zensur* — alerts us to the problematic question of dependency in sexual relationships portrayed by Wedekind. The suicidal impulse, and the related masochistic desire for mutilation and death, proceed in these cases from the fact that the woman is dependent on the man; her sense of self is defined in terms of her

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[25] Monacensia Literaturarchiv (Wedekind-Archiv), MS L 3501, notebook 41, p. 6. Further references to the Wedekind archive notebooks are in the main text thus: notebook number is followed by page number of that notebook followed by side of page (recto or verso), e.g. 38:4v refers to Notebook 38, page 4, verso.

[26] As identified by, among others, August Bebel: 'Die Frau allein begeht einen 'Fehltritt' — sei sie Ehefrau, Witwe oder Jungfrau —, der Mann handelt im gleichen Falle höchstens 'inkorrekt'. Es wird also ein und dieselbe Handlung ganz verschieden beurteilt, je nachdem sie ein Mann oder eine Frau begeht.' Bebel, *Die Frau und der Sozialismus*, p. 140. Wedekind formulates this problem in an unpublished aphorism of 1909, 'Die Untreue' (L 3501:51:60r, v): 'Die Untreue der Frau in der Ehe ist Kontraktbruch. Die Untreue des Mannes ist Luxus'. This view is reiterated at an ironic distance which serves to undermine its validity in *Franziska* (see p. 187 below).

relation to the man such that his rejection of her negates her reason for living. The woman's consequent need to captivate and entertain the man, to justify and retain his attentions to her, and her attendant fear that she is insufficiently attractive, entertaining or interesting, dominate the first scene of *Die Zensur* (II:385-396):

> KADIDJA: Dir bin ich längst keine Freude mehr, obschon ich alles tue, wovon ich denken kann, daß es dir angenehm ist [...] je mehr ich mich in allem nach deinen Wünschen ändere, um so weniger bedeute ich für dich. Manchmal siehst du mich schon gar nicht mehr, wenn ich dicht vor dir stehe. (II: 386-7)

The dependent female type is in a sense a *femme fragile*, although her fragility is mental and emotional as opposed to physical and her neediness and investment of her all in the relationship renders her less, not more, attractive:

> V. KEITH: Sie [Molly] verzehrt sich vor Sehnsucht nach ihrer kleinbürgerlichen Welt, in der man, Stirn gegen Stirn geschmiedet, sich duckt und schuftet und sich liebt! Kein freier Blick, kein freier Atemzug! Nichts als Liebe! Möglichst viel und von der gewöhnlichsten Sorte! (II:129)

She thus functions as a counterbalance to the consuming fascination and uncertainty generated by the *femme fatale*. Helene's declaration of love to Gerardo in *Der Kammersänger* is pervaded by her fear that he may tire of her: 'Ich habe die Zähne zusammengebissen, um dich nicht merken zu lassen, *was* du für mich bist, aus Angst, dir langweilig zu werden' (II:35). The problem of dependency as a source of sexual tension is occasionally heightened to an absurd degree, as in the case of the character Gislind in *Franziska* (1911). Gislind, whose character has aspects of the buffoon of slapstick tradition, kills herself because of her lover's, the duke's, contact with the eponymous heroine. As a caricature of dependency who speaks only to lament her own stupidity and inability to retain the duke's affections, her inanity serves as a counterfoil to Franziska's intelligence and independence (which is further discussed below). In Gislind, the dependent female type is presented in such a reductive and extreme way that any pathos this figure has in other incarnations is comically deflated. However, her self-denigration and utter dependency recall the portrayal of similar attributes in other, less clown-like female characters elsewhere in Wedekind's work, such as Helene (*Der Kammersänger*), Molly (*Der Marquis von Keith*) and Leona (*Oaha*, 1908). Leona voices a self-denigration similar to that of Gislind, imbued with an exaggerated masochism:

> Was bin ich gegen dich, Georg! Nichts bin ich! Nichts, ich schwör es! Zwei Kindern habe ich das Leben geschenkt, sonst hätte ich nicht den Mut, deine Frau zu heißen! [...]

> Schlag mir mit deinen Fäusten den Kopf in Stücke! Tritt mir die Augen aus, wenn es dir Erleichterung schafft! Aber bleib hier! (II:456)

Such nullity is a consequence of the self's sole definition with reference to another. An embodiment of female nullity in Wedekind's work whose role is as brief as it is eloquent is to be found in the character — or rather, the absence of character — of the *Klavierlehrerin* in *Der Kammersänger*. While her brief appearance is obviously inserted for comic effect, it is nonetheless bound up in the gendered relations of passivity, dependency, self-denigration and denigration of the other at issue here, while also anticipating the scene in *Erdgeist* in which Lulu's suitors emerge from their hiding places:

> GERARDO (*hat sich schließlich an den Kamin gelehnt und scheint, während er mit der Rechten auf der Marmorplatte trommelt, etwas hinter dem Paravent zu bemerken. Nachdem er sich neugierig orientiert, reckt er plötzlich die Hand aus und zieht eine Klavierlehrerin in grauer Toilette hervor, die er, mit vorgestreckter Faust am Kragen haltend, vor dem Flügel durch zur Mitteltür führt. Nachdem er die Tür hinter ihr geschlossen, zu Dühring*): Bitte, sprechen Sie ruhig weiter! (II:22)

Erhard Weidl, in his editorial afterword to the two-volume edition of Wedekind's works, speculating on an autobiographical source for the negative associations given to *Klavierlehrerinnen* and *Klaviergeklimper*, re-enacts Gerardo's dismissal of the figure:

> Im *Kammersänger* ist dieser Regieeinfall für das Publikum von marginaler Bedeutung. Die Klavierlehrerin ist eben auch nur eine unter den Millionen Frauen, die für den Sänger schwärmen, allerdings ein ganz besonders verächtliches Exemplar der weiblichen Spezies, wie die Farbe ihrer Kleidung und vor allem die Art und Weise ihrer Entfernung von der Bühne, ihre einzige Funktion im Stück, vermuten läßt (II:766).

The assumed despicability of the *Klavierlehrerin* is not, however, an unimportant aside, but articulates a fundamental aspect of Wedekind's *Frauenbild*: a woman is *present*, embodied, in direct proportion to her beauty. Gerardo gave an earlier intruder and fan, Miss Couerne, a fair hearing; she is described as 'sechzehn Jahr, in halblangem Kleid, offenem, blondem Haar' (II:12), as 'hübsch und jugendfrisch' (II:16). In an earlier version of *Die Büchse der Pandora*, the female piano-teacher also appears as an emblematically unattractive figure; the veiled attack on Gerhart Hauptmann in Act I, later omitted, refers to 'ein in Gummiwäsche und Jägerhemden gekleidetes, von Schmutz starrendes Publikum von Klavierlehrerinnen, das an Häßlichkeit jeden Kehrichthaufen überbietet, der sich an den Hinterpforten eines Palastes aufstaut' (I:832). Closely associated with the bluestocking, the *Klavierlehrerin* rates negatively on the scale of sexual appeal and thus functions as the antithesis of Lulu, as the latter's indignant dissatisfaction with her

marriage to Schwarz reveals: 'Er kennt mich gar nicht. Was bin ich ihm. Er nennt mich Schätzchen und kleines Teufelchen. Er würde jeder Klavierlehrerin das gleiche sagen' (I:585). Whereas dance, song and performance play a key role in the entertainment function so often envisaged for women by Wedekind, there are aspects of musical activity — those requiring study, technical mastery and a pedagogical role — which he characterises as less appealing when engaged in by women. It is perhaps no coincidence that the music tutor, Kairula, in *Mine-Haha*, is described as a repellent, unattractive figure, whose appearance contrasts with the beauty of Gertrude and Simba (*MH* 39). A commentary from the *Die grosse Liebe* material also characterises negatively the association of women with musical culture: the rapturous concentration inspired in a female listenership by a recital of Beethoven sonatas is glossed as follows: 'Und all diesem Elend bringt Beethovens gewaltiger Geist Trost und Entschädigung'.[27] The *Klavierlehrerin* in *Der Kammersänger*, through her presence, appearance, and treatment at the hands of Gerardo, represents a particular type:[28] the educated, culturally knowledgeable or intellectual woman who is sexually unattractive or repulsive and whose sensuality is repressed or undeveloped. Elfriede in *Tod und Teufel* is of this ilk, and this is what makes her conversion to masochistic sexuality all the more dramatic. The bluestocking type will be revisited in the discussion of *Mine-Haha*. The presence of this type recalls the broader question of types in general outlined in chapter two, and suggests that Wedekind's approach to questions of sex and gender, and particularly to the representation of femininity, is indebted to the taxonomic and typological approaches to difference prevalent in contemporary gender discourse.

The presence of the taxonomic approach to femininity and the *Frauenfrage* in Wedekind's thinking and writing is further confirmed not only by the humorous poem 'Die Jahreszeiten' (I:6-7), but also by his notes and sketches for an 'Universalbuch der Frauenkunde' in which were outlined the various characteristics of different female

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[27] See Jones and Shaw, *Frank Wedekind. A bibliographic handbook*, I, p. 62. Jones and Shaw annotate this as 'somewhat amusing'; while it is obviously beyond the remit of an annotated bibliography to interrogate the operation of gender stereotypes in the compiled items, their endorsement is nonetheless somewhat surprising.

[28] This is not to discount Weidl's explication of the significant negative associations of piano music, as formulated by Richard Wagner, and their possible influence on Wedekind's frequent references to piano playing, practising and teaching as a cipher of bourgeois mundanity and unattractiveness. The piano represents for Wagner the degeneration of music from natural expression to a mechanical expressionlessness which is merely a remote derivative of 'das ursprüngliche Organ der Musik' (the human voice), relying as it does on 'Hämmer — aber keine Menschen!' (See Weidl's commentary, II:767-8).

types.[29] In the full title of this proposed taxonomy, 'Eva. Parthenon. Ein Universalbuch der Frauenkunde', the name Eva is used to invoke a timeless essence of femininity. 'Eva' is also one of Lulu's many names, and has associations not only with primordial femininity but also with temptation and the Fall. This and the various other names by which Lulu is called contribute to her stylisation, even mythicisation. She seems to embody several types at once, to be simultaneously *femme fatale* and *femme enfant*, as the name 'Mignon' and 'Nelli' suggest by respectively evoking the androgynous girl-child of Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* novels and the mythic beauty over whom blood is shed ('Nelli' is thus a corruption of Helena in more than one sense). The primeval quality of 'Eva' is present in any case in the name 'Lulu', which with its repeated syllable both evokes the doubleness inherent in the 'natural'.[30] (discussed at p. 86 above) In its similarity to other words based on repeated syllables — mama, papa — , 'Lulu' intimates a regress to an infantile state on the verge of the verbal: 'Hier treffen sich Körper und Sprache, infantiler Autoerotismus und infantile Lust am Buchstabenspiel',[31] or, in Lulu's own words, 'Lulu klingt mir ganz vorsintflutlich' (I:581). Effie of *Schloss Wetterstein*, whose similarities with Lulu were mentioned above, is also variously named by the various men in her entourage.

> Alle nennt ihr mich
> Mit Kosenamen. Schigabek nennt mich
> 'Mein Äffchen'. Du, Karl Salzmann, sagst natürlich
> 'Mein Goldkind'. Uhlhorst sagt zu mir 'Mein Pony',
> 'Epiphania' nennt mich Mathieu Taubert,
> Und Scharlach nennt mich 'Mein Versuchskaninchen' (II:614).

The proliferation of names points to the unstable identity of the promiscuous figure in both cases, and works against the epistemological certainty promised by taxonomy and categorisation; Karin Littau has argued that the multiple transformations of the figure of Lulu both within the play and in its subsequent reception history attest to this uncertainty, and that Lulu is 'a paradigm case of indeterminability'.[32] Lulu and Effie exemplify furthermore the tendency for individuation and differentiation to be undone by the forces of sex and death.

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[29] Unpublished fragment, Münchner Stadtbibliothek, Monacensia Literaturarchiv, MS L 3501/5:1r-4r, 64v-69r *passim*. A related sketch entitled 'Frauentypen' (L 3501/5:2r-4v) also attempts to classify female types.
[30] As Karin Littau puts it, 'Lu-lu prior to representation is two'. See Littau, 'Refractions of the feminine: The monstrous transformations of Lulu', *MLN* 110 (1995), 888-912 (p. 902).
[31] Thomas Medicus, *'Die große Liebe'. Ökonomie und Konstruktion der Körper im Werk von Frank Wedekind* (Marburg: Guttandin & Hoppe, 1982), p. 103.
[32] Littau, 'Refractions of the feminine', p. 909.

Lest the impression be created that the female types outlined here — promiscuous hetaera, innocent-yet-sexual *femme enfant*, and dependent wife/mistress — constitute an exhaustive list, it is necessary to note an instance of female characterisation which contrasts with these types: Wedekind's female Faust, a figure equally revealing of contemporary gender discourses. In the play *Franziska*, the intellectual curiosity and independence of the eponymous heroine are expressed by her refusal to marry, her desire for self-determination and her willingness to risk male impersonation. She is aware that marriage, according to patriarchal ideology the ultimate purpose, along with motherhood, of a woman's life,[33] will, in the form in which it is currently practised, deprive her of opportunities for self-knowledge and self-actualisation: 'Aber ich möchte doch gerne erfahren, wer ich denn eigentlich bin. Wenn wir uns heute heiraten, dann erfahre ich in den nächsten zehn Jahren nur, wer du bist.' (648). Franziska's Faustian pact with masculinity is motivated by a realistic assessment of men's advantages in the current culture, their enjoyment of a 'Genußfähigkeit' and 'Bewegungsfreiheit' (652) unavailable to women. It is a telling reflection of contemporary gender relations that the Promethean gesture of a male Faust, the desire to transcend current limitations, becomes, in a woman's case, the chance to act as, and be taken for, a man.

Franziska's male impersonation, which goes so far as to include marriage to a woman, serves to undermine the cultural assumptions against which her character and actions are positioned. In the scenes in which she acts the part of a man, Franziska mouths platitudes which sum up much contemporary thinking on femininity and masculinity and the respective moral attitudes and behaviours appropriate to both. For example, she utters the prevailing sexual double standard: 'Bei uns Männern ist Ehebruch ein Luxuszug,/Bei euch Weibern ist er Verrat und Betrug!' (II:668) and the familiar idea of female biology as destiny:

> FRANZISKA: Das Weib kann nun einmal über die Grenzen
> Der Naturbestimmung sein Glück nicht ergänzen.
> Sein Glück bleibt, wie sich das Weib auch verrenkt,
> Auf seine Naturbestimmung beschränkt. (II:670)

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[33] While some of Wedekind's female characters — Lulu, initially Franziska — refuse the roles of wife and mother, others accept them, or demonstrate the difficulty of determining an independent identity or path in a culture in which these roles are the predominantly validated ones for women. See the story 'Die Fürstin Russalka', a paean to femininity *qua* motherhood, in which the heroine speaks of 'Weiblichkeit' as '[den] hohen Beruf, als Frau einen Mann glücklich zu machen' (I:268).

These stereotyped ideas — common currency elsewhere in Wedekind's work, and operative in Franziska's ultimate fate as wife and mother — are in this instance thrown into question. The ambivalent attitude to gendered role-prescription and stereotype, typical, as we have seen, of Wedekind's view of emancipation, is exemplified here. Received essentialisms are re-iterated and simultaneously relativised by the fact that it is a woman disguised as a man who gives voice to them, a dramatic strategy undoubtedly employed with a view to creating comic effect. Nonetheless, despite her temporary subversion of gendered roles through her parodic occupation of the 'wrong' one, Franziska ultimately restores the order she has upset by renouncing her masculine persona and embracing motherhood and, as the end of the play suggests, matrimony. The assertive, independent woman has the potential to destabilise the norms which dictate the understanding of gender difference, at least temporarily. Another potentially destabilising figure who is encountered with striking frequency in Wedekind's work and who is ambivalently placed with regard to gender norms is the figure of the prostitute, to whom we now turn.

4.2 Wedekind's 'Dirnenbild' in context

Christiane Schönfeld has noted that 'it was specifically between the 1890s and the 1920s that the prostitute became one of the most popular female figures in modernist German literature'.[34] The central position occupied by the question of prostitution, and the figure of the prostitute, in *fin-de-siècle* discourses on love, femininity, feminism and sex, is reflected in Wedekind's work. Recent research has brought the issue of prostitution to the forefront of Wedekind interpretation.[35] As the rituals described in *Eden/Die grosse Liebe* feature institutionalised, officially organised prostitution, it is important to form a clear picture of Wedekind's response and contribution to the ideological battles called forth by the prostitution question if his fantasy project is to be understood.

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[34] Christiane Schönfeld (ed.), *Commodities of desire. The prostitute in modern German literature* (Woodbridge: Camden House, 2001), p. 1. Schönfeld observes (p. 5) that the proliferation of representations of prostitutes corresponds to a sharp increase in numbers of prostitutes across the German empire in the last decades of the nineteenth century.

[35] See Stephanie Libbon, 'Frank Wedekind's prostitutes. A liberating re-creation or male recreation?' in *Commodities of desire. The prostitute in modern German literature*, ed. by Christiane Schönfeld, pp. 46-61; Pankau, 'Prostitution, Tochtererziehung und männlicher Blick', pp. 19-54; also Marianne Ufer, 'Wandlung der Prostitutionsauffassung im Werk Frank Wedekinds', in *Kontinuität — Diskontinuität. Diskurse zu Frank Wedekinds literarischer Produktion (1903-1918)*, ed. by Sigrid Dreiseitel and Hartmut Vinçon (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2001).

In the critique of social norms and cultural values carried out by writers of the *Jahrhundertwende*, including Karl Kraus and Wedekind, the prostitute was an emblematic figure of the ideological battles over sexual morality. Kraus's characterisation of prostitution as heroic reversed the supposed moral opposition of respectable bourgeois wife and fallen woman, lauding the polyandrous 'nature' and supposed liberty of the latter (see p. 81 above). However, this very subordination of the figure of the prostitute to a polemical ideological position had the result of creating a blind spot with regard to the realities of prostitution. The foregrounding of the economics of marriage and consequent recognition of the affinity of marriage and prostitution originates from the socialist analyses of Marx and Engels and August Bebel.[36] As Adorno and Horkheimer observe, 'Dirne und Ehefrau sind die Komplemente der weiblichen Selbstentfremdung in der patriarchalen Welt'.[37] Simone de Beauvoir explored the differences between the situations of prostitutes and married women against the background of their fundamental similarity,[38] which Elizabeth Boa summarises with the question 'who is really a whore or really a wife when both trade sex in exchange for their keep?'.[39] In the patriarchal economy, wife and prostitute alike enter into an economic transaction with men (Gayle Rubin has analysed the ways in which this is often in fact an economic transaction between men in which women occupy the function of an exchangeable or purchaseable commodity).[40] Any attempt to hold prostitution and marriage apart as antithetical is rendered problematic by their shared economic basis, regardless of which side of the supposed antithesis is positively valued. While the ellipses of Schnitzler's *Reigen* collapsed the discursively and socially constructed differences between various types of sexual encounter, pointing to the levelling effect of the orgasmic moment, the financial reality of the marriage markets Bebel described underscored the similarity not just between one sexual *act* and another, but between one sexual *transaction* (prostitution) and another (marriage).[41] The view of the prostitute as libertine hetaera oblivious to, or subversive of, convention fails to engage with the economic relations and real situations faced by actual prostitutes. Christiane Schönfeld's survey of the figure of the prostitute in

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[36] For an account of the context from within which Wedekind formed his views of prositution, see Ufer, 'Wandlung der Prostitutionsauffassung im Werk Frank Wedekinds', p. 164.

[37] See Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Dialektik der Aufklärung. Philosophische Fragmente* in Adorno, *Gesammelte Schriften*, III, p. 93.

[38] Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* [1949], trans. by H.M. Parshley (London: Everyman, 1993), p. 585 ff.

[39] Boa, *The Sexual Circus*, p. 139. The character Casti Piani in Wedekind's one-act play *Tod und Teufel* voices this very view, as does Effie of *Schloss Wetterstein*.

[40] Gayle Rubin, 'The Traffic in Women. Notes on the 'Political Economy' of Sex' in *Toward an anthropology of women*, ed. by Rayna R. Reiter (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1975), pp. 157-210

German Expressionism points to a clear discrepancy between representation and reality; on the one hand, poetic representations of the prostitute by Expressionist poets revelled in a sense of the transgressive or an aesthetics of the gutter, and, on the other hand, the pathos of the semi-autobiographical account of 1920 by Emmy Hennings shows how the prostitute — this time an 'Ich-Erzählerin' rather than a figure of otherness — confronts the full extent of her commodification. 'Ich habe ein Butterbrot bekommen und eine Tasse Kaffee, und dafür lege ich mein irrsinniges Zehnmarkstück auf den Marmortisch. Für dieses Zehnmarkstück wurde ich selbst auf den Tisch gelegt, es wurde mit mir bezahlt'. [42]

Wedekind's characteristically ambivalent and inconsistent attitude to prostitution as revealed throughout his work — part necessary concomitant of essential gender difference, part honest solution to a perennial problem concerning the regulation of sex,[43] part sexual emancipation — has important implications for any interpretive approach to *Eden/Die grosse Liebe* because of the centrality of prostitution in the alternative sexual universe these texts portray. The contradictory statements and changing positions on the prostitution question found in various works by Wedekind reflect the conflicting and ambivalent attitudes to this question in the cultural climate. The story 'Das Opferlamm' (first published 1897) represents an early attempt to characterise the 'Freudenmädchen' positively, and in its conclusion foreshadows the later theme of 'die (Wieder)vereinigung von Kirche und Freudenhaus'.[44] The prostitute is portrayed with sentimental pathos in this story; the tale of her innocence, seduction and abandonment wakes her client from his world-weary cynicism: 'Er hatte an Unschuld glauben gelernt, wo er es am wenigsten gesucht' (I:281). (This story is further discussed below with reference to the figure of the masochistic prostitute). In the play *Das*

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[41] See particularly the chapter 'Die Ehe als Beruf' in Bebel, *Die Frau und der Sozialismus*, pp. 136-9.

[42] Emmy Hennings, *Das Brandmal*, quoted in Christiane Schönfeld, *Dialektik und Utopie. Die Prostituierte im deutschen Expressionismus* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 1996), p. 92. See also Wendy Steiner, *The Trouble with Beauty*, pp. 74, 78, 80.

[43] Another contemporary instances of the association of prostitution with honesty can also be found in George Bernard Shaw's play *Mrs Warren's Profession* DATE, which, according to its author, 'aimed to shew that prostitution is not the prostitute's fault but the fault of a society which pays for a poor & pretty woman's prostitution in solid gold and pays for her honesty with starvation, drudgery & pious twaddle' (Shaw, letter to Arnold Daly of 15.11.1904, in Shaw, *Collected Letters*, ed. Dan H. Laurence, 4 vols (London: Reinhardt, 1965-1988), II, p. 464). My thanks to Dr Gilbert Carr for alerting me to this parallel.

[44] Wedekind's aphorism 'Mit Huren, Pfaffen und Sozialisten möchte ich gern keinen Streit haben, denn ich arbeite an der Vereinigung von Kirche und Bordell im sozialistischen Zukunftsstaat' was noted down *c.* 1905/6 (M, MS L 3501/34:2v), summing up a thread that runs through works before and after this formulation, for instance its association with Buridan in *Die Zensur* (II:407, 797). The significance of the

Sonnenspektrum (1894), set in a brothel, perhaps the closest overlap is achieved between the prostitution question and the scenario of *Mine-Haha*. The narrative fragment is paralleled in the play by an idyllic setting, presaged in the subtitle *Ein Idyll aus dem modernen Leben*, by repeated emphasis on and description of costume, by exhibitionism — 'Nichts als Hemden haben sie an'[45] — and not least by the fact that one of the bordello girls bears the name Mine-Haha. The prominence of costume, dress and adornment is striking: when the *Sonnenspektrum* girls are lined up on display by the madam for the new client Edgar, the latter proclaims the sight 'der schönste Regenbogen, den ich je gesehen habe'.[46] In a related unpublished fragment, 'Bordellmädchen' (L 3501/67), details are given of the costumes a prostitute wears on different days of the week. *Mine-Haha* and *Eden/Die grosse Liebe* similarly focus on the costumes worn, particularly by the girls: the prostitution question is embedded in the question of looking relations.

Turning to the play *Schloss Wetterstein*, whose female protagonist, Effie, is a prostitute, we find two contradictory statements on the prostitution question. Of the dialogues in this three-act play, Wedekind observes: 'Gegenstand dieser Dialoge ist ausschließlich die Familie und *deren Gegensatz*, die Prostitution'.[47] While authorial comment must be treated with caution, as it is equally likely to block as to open interpretive avenues, it is nonetheless clear from this particular remark that here Wedekind regards prostitution as antithetical to the institution of family. This antithesis is dramatically exploited in the dialogue between Effie and her tormentor Tschamper, a dialogue which centres on the difficulty the prostitute has in speaking of her family: 'Wir plauderten in harmlosem Gespräch/Über ihr Elternhaus. Wie kommt es nur,/Daß keine Dirne das verträgt' (II:637). Martha of 'Das Opferlamm' similarly suffers from the incompatibility between the roles of daughter and whore: 'Eher lasse ich mich umbringen, als daß ich hier den Namen meines Vaters ausspreche' (I:271). Johannes Pankau has shown how Wedekind's own erotically-charged pedagogical fantasies sought a reconciliation between the daughter and cocotte figures, a rapprochement of innocence and sensuality that ultimately serves the male gaze and lies at the heart of *Mine-Haha*.[48] In *Schloss Wetterstein*, the idea, asserted by Wedekind as a key theme of the play, that family and prostitution

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idea of a religion of sex, or a unification of the religious and the erotic, and the centrality of prostitution to such a project, will become clearer as we look at *Eden/Die grosse Liebe*.

[45] Wedekind, *Gesammelte Werke*, 9 vols, (Munich: Georg Müller, 1924), IX, p. 148.

[46] ibid., p. 160.

[47] Quoted by Erhard Weidl in his annotations to Wedekind, *Werke in zwei Bänden*, II, p. 809, emphasis added.

are antithetical is relativised through words spoken by the prostitute Effie: her comment 'Der Mann ist immer das Geschäft der Frau./Auch in den schönsten Ehen steht's nicht besser' (II:626), reflects the common economic basis of patriarchal marriage and prostitution discussed above. Marianne Ufer's commentary of Wedekind's unpublished sketch 'Prostitution' (c. 1912/1913) identifies a shift in Wedekind's attitude to the question: whereas the 1908 fragment 'Jungfrau' had described prostitution as 'ein Bestandteil der sittlichen Weltordnung', the 'Prostitution' sketch argues, by means of a comparison of the various pleasures, benefits and duties incurred by the male and female partners in the sex act, that it is immoral for women to trade sexual favours for money: 'Ein Weib das sich für Geld hingiebt begeht also die nämliche Unsittlichkeit wie der Mann der Weib und Kind im Elend sitzen läßt'.[49] The sketches in which the fantasy world of institutional prostitution and public sexual ritual are unfolded belong to the earlier phase, in which prostitution is seen by Wedekind to express an essential and inevitable truth of gender relations. This truth was expressed not just in prostitution, but wherever men paid to see women and girls on display. The discussion of *Mine-Haha* will show in more detail how the dynamics of entertainment and exhibition, of costume, exposure and performance, are gendered: males consume, females are consumed.

In the *fin de siècle demi-monde* frequented by Wedekind in his Paris years, women and girls working as models, dancers, singers and actresses could easily find their livelihoods shading over into prostitution. Women in these professions were inherently disreputable in the imagination of the respectable bourgeois, hence their fascination and frequent appearance in the texts of a 'Bürgerschreck'. The fluid boundary between bohemian sexual liberty and prostitution is reflected in Wedekind's work most significantly in Lulu, but also in figures like Ilse of *Frühlings Erwachen* and Kadidja of *Die Büchse der Pandora.* Even in works which deal ostensibly with sexual relationships that do not fall under the heading of prostitution, the issue is never very far away. For instance, in the one-act drama *Die Zensur*, the character Kadidja re-iterates the familiar notion that true femininity is incompatible with intellectual concerns, and suggests that prostitution is a more appropriate couse of action for a woman than intellectual activity:

> Du beschäftigst dich doch wahrhaftig zur genüge mit geistigen Dingen! Aber soll ich mich nun deshalb auch mit Philosophie und dergleichen abgeben? [...] wenn ich, ohne

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[48] Pankau, 'Prostitution, Tochtererziehung und männlicher Blick in Wedekinds Tagebüchern'.
[49] Wedekind, 'Prostitution'. Reproduced in Marianne Ufer, 'Wandlung der Prostitutionsauffassung im Werk Frank Wedekinds', p. 175.

> die geringste Ahnung davon zu haben, das große Wort über Kunst und Literatur führen wollte, wie das die Frauen zu Hunderten tun, dann wäre ich nüchterne Wirklichkeit für dich! [...] Ehe ich die herrlichsten Gaben, die mir der Himmel verliehen hat, so kindisch entwürdige, biete ich mich lieber so, wie ich nun einmal geschaffen bin, auf offnem Markte aus (II:392).

This dissociation of the female from the intellectual is a key element of *fin de siècle* gender discourse. Wedekind's work reflects the contemporary gender polarity which associates femininity with immanent corporeality, at times relativising this association through parody (Franziska as man) or comic exaggeration (Gislind's idiocy), but more usually affirming it. Wedekind's gender epistemology bears traces of Otto Weininger's categorisation of women and the feminine according to two basic types, mother and whore, with a distinct emphasis of interest on the whore type. The *Eden/Die grosse Liebe* texts, as we shall see, conflate mother and whore by presenting a social order in which reproduction occurs by means of institutionalised prostitution.

The text in which Wedekind concentrates most specifically on the issues raised by the prostitution phenomenon is the one-act drama *Tod und Teufel* (1905), first published in Karl Kraus's *Die Fackel*. The play's epigraph (Matthew 21. 31: 'Amen, das sage ich euch: Zöllner und Dirnen gelangen eher in das Reich Gottes als ihr') hints at the connection between this text and the motif of 'die Wiedervereinigung von Kirche und Freudenhaus' found elsewhere in Wedekind's work. In this play, a brothel-owner, Casti Piani (the Lulu plays also feature a procurer by this name), is confronted by a feminist, Elfriede, who is campaigning against prostitution and feels particularly responsible for the fact that a domestic servant who formerly served in her household has ended up as a prostitute in Casti Piani's establishment. Casti Piani's piquant formulation of the issues overturns the conventional evaluation of the prostitute by arguing that women enjoy, through prostitution, an advantage over men:

> CASTI PIANI: [...] Wenn sich ein Mann in Not befindet, dann bleibt ihm oft keine andere Wahl mehr übrig als zu stehlen oder zu verhungern. Wenn sich dagegen ein Weib in Not befindet, dann bleibt ihm außer dieser Wahl noch die Möglichkeit, seine Liebesgunst zu verkaufen. Dieser Ausweg bleibt dem Weibe nur deshalb noch übrig, weil das Weib bei der Gewährung seiner Liebesgunst nichts zu empfinden braucht. Seit Erschaffung der Welt hat das Weib von diesem Vorzug Gebrauch gemacht. [...] Weil der Freudenmarkt als der gemeinste, schandbarste aller Betrüge gebrandmarkt ist, geben sich die Mädchen und Frauen der guten Gesellschaft einem Manne lieber umsonst hin,

> als daß sie sich ihre Gunst bezahlen lassen! Dadurch entwürdigen diese Mädchen und Frauen ihr eigenes Geschlecht in der gleichen Weise, wie ein Schneider sein Gewerbe entwürdigt, der seinen Kunden die Kleider umsonst liefert! (II:301-3)

The servant-girl turned prostitute, Lisiska, incarnates the masochistic principle, seeking in death the ultimate fusion of pain and pleasure and the end of desire in a way that parallels the central rites of *Die grosse Liebe*. Elfriede, whose views are transformed in the course of the scenes, is initially portrayed as the feminist 'bluestocking' type, bereft of both sensuality and understanding, and the implication is that feminism is inimical to sensuality (a similar assertion is made in *Karl Hetmann, der Zwergriese*, II:224-5). That involvement with feminism had the potential to desexualise or defeminise women was a widely held view, as noted in chapter two; for Weininger, if a woman desired emancipation and was able to profit from its results, this demonstrated her masculinity, as freedom and femininity were by definition incompatible.[50] In *Tod und Teufel*, Elfriede's philanthropic efforts and moralistic tendencies are revealed as, and ultimately admitted by herself to be, sexual sublimation and substitute gratification. Her dramatic conversion to masochistic sensuality strikes a chord with the rituals of the fantasy world: 'Ich will mich auf dem Blutaltar sinnlicher Liebe schlachten lassen!' (II:322). Wedekind's equivocal stance on prostitution (which, as Marianne Ufer has shown, changed over time) is not clarified by *Tod und Teufel*, as the author distances his own position on the issue of prostitution from the views voiced in his work, warning his audience/readership not to impute to him any of the opinions expressed by the characters of the play:

> Die von den beiden Hauptpersonen ausgesprochenen Anschauungen über Frauenemanzipation und käufliche Liebe wollte ich weder als richtig noch als maßgebend hinstellen und ließ sie deshalb im Verlauf der Handlung auf das feierlichste widerrufen. (II:790)

It remains to be seen whether, and to what extent, the ambivalences surrounding the prostitution question are resolved in *Eden/Die grosse Liebe*. In any case, the fact that institutionalised prostitution is fundamental to the organisation of his imagined state confirms the significance of the prostitution question for Wedekind's understanding of sex and gender relations. Before examining the ways in which the details of the imagined state are worked out in the sketches it will be necessary to take a step back from the prostitution question and to look *Mine-Haha oder über die körperliche Erziehung der jungen Mädchen*. This story does not deal explicitly with prostitution but its ambivalent and

[50] See Sengoopta, *Otto Weininger*, p. 48.

problematic centering of the body within relations of performance, spectacle and consumption paves the way to the scenarios of *Die grosse Liebe.*

4.3 *Mine-Haha oder über die körperliche Erziehung der jungen Mädchen* [51]

It must be noted first and foremost that some critics have rejected altogether the link between this text and utopian writing or the idea of utopia. Wolfgang Braungart has questioned Götz Müller's reasons for including *Mine-Haha* in a history of the utopian genre, and has argued that the story fails to meet certain criteria: 'Von Staat, Gesellschaft, utopischen Institutionen, vom Verhältnis zwischen Erfahrungswelt und fiktiver Welt ist nicht die Rede'.[52] Braungart's objections are more difficult to sustain if *Mine-Haha* is read — as Ortrud Gutjahr reads it, and as I read it here — not as a text that stands alone but with reference to the intertext *Frühlings Erwachen* and in conjunction with the related *Eden* and *Die grosse Liebe* material. Most critics have however taken Wedekind's cue and attempted to situate *Mine-Haha* in the utopian tradition, often by focussing on its critical rejection of the perceived imbalances in contemporary education (as satirised in *Frühlings Erwachen*) whereby mind took precedence over body. Wedekind's critical rejection of a repressive and deadening cerebrality leads, under this reading, to a privileging of the physical over the intellectual as part of a utopian quest for an ultimately graceful body, a finally integrated physicality which would undo the rift between body and mind. Even if this reading of Wedekind's 'utopian' texts is accepted unquestioningly — which, in this thesis, it is not — it must be pointed out that investing the body with a utopian-hope content is not a question of a straightforward 'return to nature' or escape from the mind but is itself an idea, a product of the mind, and as such its ideological basis requires analysis.

Given that the narrative's main priority is the description of an imaginary system of upbringing/education, particular emphasis will be placed here on the ways in which discipline, prohibition and the development of sexuality are portrayed. While the pedagogical system described is imaginary, it responds to the historical systems observed and criticised by Wedekind, and thus the critical or satirical aspect of its indirect

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[51] Frank Wedekind, *Mine-Haha oder Über die körperliche Erziehung der jungen Mädchen*, ed. by Walter Schmitz and Uwe Schneider (Frankfurt a.M. and Leipzig: Insel Verlag, 1994). Page numbers in the main text refer to this edition.

[52] Braungart, review of Götz Müller's *Gegenwelten. Die Utopie in der deutschen Literatur* (*Arbitrium* 9:1991, p. 68).

commentary on an unsatisfactory reality and its exploration of a possible alternative is of central importance to any interpretation. The reading advanced here agrees with others in seeing this critical function of the text as a link to the utopian tradition. A note on the events narrated in the story precedes the analytical approach to the text and the issues it raises.

In the frame narrative, the first-person narrator encounters a group of people in the courtyard on his way home; they have just witnessed the suicide of his eighty-four year old neighbour, the retired teacher Helene Engel. The deceased is described as having been recently subject to attacks of fear and mental disturbance. The narrator now recalls how she approached him with a manuscript shortly prior to her death. As she introduced the manuscript to the narrator, she described it as being similar to his book *Frühlings Erwachen*. The frame's narrator is thus revealed as (a fictionalised) Wedekind. This fictive Wedekind goes on to recall his conversation with Helene Engel on the occasion of her giving him the manuscript. In this conversation she reminisces about her life; her memories include various relationships and time spent in Brazil.

The frame thus serves to introduce this 'manuscript', the title of which is *Mine-Haha*, but with a subtitle added (for reasons of clarity, he claims) by the narrator of the frame: *Über die körperliche Erziehung junger Mädchen*.[53] A childhood eden is indicated in the opening of the memoir; the earliest memories are of bliss. The first clear memory the narrator, Hidalla, has is of standing by an open window (12). Hidalla's view through the window is one of flowers, which are named one by one by Naema, one of the many older girls who is mentioned as having responsibility for the narrator. In *Mine-Haha*, upbringing is a communally shared task, as each older child in the park is entrusted with the care of an infant. Responsibility begins early, at the age of five (16). The central theme of physical education shows the younger children trained by older girls, including Gertrud, whose cane indicates the disciplinarian form this education will take. As Medicus observes, the disciplinarianism is already encoded in Gertrud's name through the presence of 'Gerte' and 'Rute', as a 'duplizierte Strafinstanz'.[54] Subsequent remarks on Gertrud's treatment

[53] The subtitle varies slightly: on the title page it appears as 'Über die körperliche Erziehung der jungen Mädchen', whereas within the frame narrative itself, it is given as 'Über die körperliche Erziehung junger Mädchen'. Wolfgang Braungart's review of Götz Müller's *Gegenwelten. Die Utopie in der deutschen Literatur* (*Arbitrium* 9 (1991), pp. 67-72) draws attention to Müller's erroneous citation of the title but fails to point out that the original textual inconsistency is the probable source of this error.
[54] Medicus, *'Die große Liebe'*, p. 140.

of the children indicate a sadistic enjoyment of the power of discipline: 'Gertrud lächelte immer, wenn sie zuschlug' (22). Hidalla's detailed descriptions of Gertrud's beauty are quite clearly underlain by erotic desire:

> Sie war mit ihrem glattanliegenden schwarzen Haar, ihren funkelnden Augen, ihrem schmalen Gesicht und ihrer schlanken Figur für mich, bis ich jenes Haus verließ, der Inbegriff der Schönheit. Noch in meinem letzten Jahr stieg ich ihr oft bis unter den Dachboden hinauf nach, nur um das Vergnügen zu haben, sie die Treppe herunterkommen zu sehen (13/14).

The descriptions of Gertrud bespeak a dual desire: the desire to become *like* her and sexual attraction *to* her. Hidalla's erotic feelings are not exclusively homosexual, however, as her earlier attraction to the older boy Morni reveals: 'Beim Baden sah ich ihn und nur ihn. Er war schon so groß, daß ihm das Wasser nicht bis an den Leib reichte' (17). (Morni subsequently disappears one night along with another boy and a girl, in an incident which reveals the presence of taboos in the fantasy society) (18). Gertrud's cruelty in no way diminishes Hidalla's erotically-charged admiration for her, as the account of chastisement is followed by a long, admiring description of her (22-3). The close association of discipline, cruelty, pleasure and desire anticipates the content of the *Die grosse Liebe* sketches.

In the early years of the childhood described in *Mine-Haha*, the mixed company of boys and girls spends warm summer days bathing in the open air, all of them completely naked. This easy physical coexistence of boys and girls does not continue indefinitely, however; soon the children experience a rite of passage which separates them according to sex. At the end of her time among mixed male and female company, Hidalla finds herself transported by night without explanation to a house of six uniformed girls among whom she takes her place as the seventh and youngest. The house is one of thirty such houses scattered throughout a walled park. Hidalla's arrival is part of a process which is repeated cyclically: each year the eldest girl in the house leaves and a new youngest girl arrives, upon which all inhabitants move up one place in the hierarchy, which is determined by age. After arrival, Hidalla is dressed in the uniform, 'weißes Röckchen bis zum Knie, am Halse nach vorn und nach hinten viereckig ausgeschnitten, mit halblangen Ärmeln, lange weiße Strümpfe und niedrige gelbe Schuhe' (26). The fetishistic attention to costume is intensified in *Eden/Die grosse Liebe*. Once fed and rested, Hidalla goes bathing the following morning in a stream on the banks of which hundreds of girls are undressing for their swim in a scene which is comparable to Gerhart Hauptmann's

utopian idyll Île des Dames in *Die Insel der grossen Mutter* and reveals a similar voyeuristic narrative perspective (see p. 143 above). In Hidalla's third year in the park, a ten-year-old girl drowns while swimming. The others call the drowned girl's name repeatedly and then, as she does not revive, they keep clear of the body, making a wide arc around her and looking the other way. The death is reported at the dancing lesson and the body is removed before the girls return to the bathing area the next day (55). This first encounter with death exposes the artificial isolation in which the girls are kept, and, as we shall see, helps to make sense of the narrator's cryptic remarks in the final frame.

Given that the 'Erziehung' is geared towards preparing the girls to perform, it is unsurprising that it includes dancing lessons and the mastery of musical instruments. The dancing teacher is Simba, who, in Gertrud's absence, becomes the new object of Hidalla's desire: 'Ich war wie betäubt' (32). The account of Simba's beauty includes details of a costume (34), which, like the uniform Hidalla and her housemates wear, is described as much in terms of what it leaves on display as in terms of colour, material and design. Hidalla's erotic attraction to both mentors and peers is made explicit in the text, but lesbian feeling in the all-girl enclave evolves under threat of punishment, as is clear from the story of the two ugly old women who serve in the kitchens of the house. Their story is revealed to Hidalla when she attempts to act on her desire for Wera, her favourite house-mate, 'die ich abgöttisch liebte' (36):

> Mir wurde, ich weiß nicht wie.
>
> ‚Wera', sagte ich leise, ‚aber du darfst nicht böse sein…'
>
> ‚Nun? Was?'
>
> ‚Diese Nacht, wenn Blanka nach Hause gekommen, willst du dann nicht zu mir herüberkommen…' (41)

Wera's shocked reaction leads to an explanation of the old and ugly slave Margareta's fate: 'Die ist zu einem anderen Mädchen gegangen, als sie als Kind hier war. Deshalb ist sie noch hier.'(41) This warning does not prevent Hidalla from falling prey to a similar desire later on in the narrative, however, when she reaches the responsible position of oldest in the house; her youngest protegée, Arabella, attracts her to such an extent that she finds herself standing by her bed one night, thinking 'Komm was will' (80) and drawing back the covers. Arabella awakens, however, and Hidalla acts no further. The onset of menstruation the next day throws her into confusion and discomfort with her body and, trapped in the misery of puberty, she thinks no more in terms of desire for Arabella.

The commodification of the girls as performers in lewd pantomimes before a paying audience will be further discussed below, as it is crucial to the operations of voyeurism and looking relations that determine the scenarios of *Eden/Die grosse Liebe. Mine-Haha* first introduces these themes in the context of the selection, in which a small number of the girls are chosen and brought to the theatre. This process calls on the girls to undress before the adult women who perform the selection; the fact that they experience considerable unease at having to expose themselves calls Gutjahr's reading of the text as an 'Erziehung zur Schamlosigkeit' into question, as we shall see. For the selection process, each girl must play and dance, and is subjected to a rigorous physical examination; 'Sie besahen die Mädchen noch einmal von vorne, von hinten, von beiden Seiten, betasteten die Muskeln, die Weichen, prüften Hände und Füße, untersuchten die Zähne, die Haare, die Augen, die Fingernägel [...].'(57/8)

The chosen girls take part in theatrical performances the content of which they do not understand. The full nature of the theatrical performances is revealed to Hidalla first hand shortly afterwards, when it is her turn to take Filissa's place. The pantomime she takes part in on her first night in the theatre is *Der Mückenprinz*. The isolation of the theatre and the park from the outside world, from which the paying public is drawn, is highlighted by the fact that the audiences are transported to the theatre by underground train. Earlier in the story Hidalla noticed how there was no obvious entrance or exit to the theatre building, and the cast, as they prepare for the show, are also underground. The isolation is further intensified when onstage by the fact that a grille separates the seats from the stage and the lighting blinds those onstage: 'Nie hat eine von uns Mädchen auch nur eine einzige Physiognomie aus dem Publikum erkennen können' (65). The entertainment value that the long years of training and isolation have been destined to provide is evident from the sounds of the crowd:

> Um so deutlicher vernahmen wir bei den entsprechenden Stellen das Beifallsgeheul bis unters Dach hinauf, in den Zwischenakten das Schwadronieren und Schreien, und hin und wieder Gläsergeklirr (65).

But the performing girls, ignorant of most aspects of the performance, are also unaware of the fact that it is the paying audience who support their existence:

> Erst drei Jahre später, als ich mit meinem damaligen Freund und Beschützer Fabian zum erstenmal als Zuschauerin im Theater war, sollte ich erfahren, was es eigentlich für eine Bewandtnis mit den allabendlichen Vorstellungen hatte, daß nämlich aus dem Ertrag

> derselben die Betriebskosten für den ganzen Park bestritten wurden. [...] Der Platz kostete 30 Kronen. (67-8)

The economic relationship between paying public and payed performer attenuates the alterity that has been sustained in the dreamlike description of the isolated, tranquil world of the park, by the cyclicality of existence and the uniformity of experience in that world. Their underground entry into a noisy, brash world of entertainment not unlike the real variety shows of Wedekind's time creates a rupture in the girls' existence and in the text itself. The pantomime is significant not for its content, but for the confrontation it occasions between park-world and external world: here the girls encounter men for the first time, albeit at a distance. Hidalla, dressed in a man's costume, hears a voice from the crowd call one night: 'Dir fehlt das Beste' (75) and is strangely upset by the comment even though she has no idea what it means. The first-person narration precludes explicit commentary on the relationship between the pedagogical methods and the performances: this must be gleaned by the reader. In the following speech (delivered by the mentor Simba) which summarises the official priorities of the upbringing, aspects of this relationship are implied:

> Daß diese Mädchen schön und groß und stark werden, wie ihr es seid, dafür seid ihr mir verantwortlich. Daß diese Mädchen tanzen und ihre Glieder gebrauchen lernen, wie ihr es gelernt habt, dafür seid ihr mir verantwortlich. [...] Daß die sechs Mädchen glücklich unter ihrer Obhut sind, daß sie euch alle gern haben, daß es ihnen wohl ist in eurem Hause und daß sie Sommer und Winter gesund und fröhlich sind, dafür seid ihr mir verantwortlich. (76)

Beautiful, tall, strong, supple, healthy, happy dancers: this is what the system is intended to produce. The recipe reads like a *Lebensreform* manifesto, except that these qualities are not aimed at for their own sake, but destined to be exhibited and consumed. The scarce personal emotions — erotic attraction and maternal feelings — are by-products of the system. Hidalla's memories of the park reach a peak of happiness when the new youngest girl, Arabella, arrives in a casket. Hidalla is filled with motherly responsibility and pride. As Ortrud Gutjahr has pointed out, this aspect of the upbringing in *Mine-Haha* — the sharing of responsibility between the children, such that learning how to educate is part of the education — parallels contemporary pedagogical reform movements.[55] In Hidalla's case, the position of responsibility brings her the greatest happiness she has yet experienced, (78) and is infused with sexual desire.

In the opening of the final section, as Hidalla leaves the sheltered world of the park for a new environment, to the accompaniment of what Adolf Muschg has described as 'der bravobrüllende Mief eines haarsträubenden Oktoberfestes',[56] we encounter the first explicit criticism by the narrator of her upbringing. Her reason for writing the memoir, she asserts, is to point out 'wie man uns durch die gewaltigsten Prüfungen hindurch in eine völlig unbekannte Welt hinaus gelangen läßt, wie man uns in des Wortes grausamster Bedeutung hilflos aussetzt' (85). She berates the sharp contrast between the protected innocence and isolation of the park and the world into which its inhabitants are subsequently thrown.

> Ich möchte den Mitlebenden die bangen Schauer ins Gedächtnis zurückrufen, die wir zur Belustigung einer besinnungslosen, wollusttrunkenen, rohen Menschenwelt allemal durchgekostet. (85)

This critical commentary on the narrated events is peculiar to the final section, the section which, along with the frame and postscript, was omitted in the first publication of *Mine-Haha* in *Die Insel* (see the editorial afterword, 92). Within this final section, the narrator of *Mine-Haha* continues her critical commentary as follows:

> Aber je älter und ruhiger ich werde, um so weniger kann ich mich dem Glauben verschließen, daß die Welt in der Tat weniger brutal eingerichtet sein könnte, als sie es in Wirklichkeit ist. [...] Indessen bin ich vielleicht gerade durch jene unglaublichen Lebenslagen zu der überlegenen Weltanschauung gelangt, von der aus mir heute unsere gesamte menschliche Kultur als eine ziemlich fragwürdige Errungenschaft erscheint (86-7).

The voice of protest here articulates a utopian element: the refusal of the inevitability of the current order of social and human relations, the questioning of its self-validation as the only possible order. This suggests that the world of the park and the girls' upbringing are *not* imagined as an ideal or even as a preferable alternative to reality. If the critical dimension which has been identified as a criterion of utopian/dystopian writing can be said to operate here, it is focussed inwards at the world of the text rather than outwards at the extra-textual world. But, as we shall see, the question of Helene Engel's identity leaves a query over the status of the imagined world (see below p. 208). The hermeneutic challenge this poses in *Mine-Haha* is the difficulty of determining *which* order is being protested against: the world Wedekind saw and experienced in reality, or the world he imagined in *Mine-Haha.* It may also be possible to speak of an elision of the difference

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[55] Gutjahr, 'Erziehung zur Schamlosigkeit', p. 102.

between the two. Either way, the gesture of questioning and refusal rearticulates, at the end of the text, the utopian potential of literature, its provision of an alternative sphere against which the inadequacies of historical reality can be called to account, its implication that 'Geschichte bräuchte nicht so zu sein',[57] that 'die Welt in der Tat weniger brutal eingerichtet sein könnte, als sie es in Wirklichkeit ist'.

4.3.1 *Mine-Haha* as corporeal utopia

Underlying the near-relentless focus on the physical characteristics of the girls in the park is the notion of the body as a figure of aesthetic perfection and perfectibility. The real significance of the narrator's attraction to Gertrud and Simba is that they represent perfected bodies, whereas Hidalla and her peers are still in training. Wedekind's text shows a system which regards the body as insufficient in its natural state, requiring cultural training to attain perfection, rather than suggesting — as does, say, Hauptmann's novel *Die Insel der grossen Mutter* — that the body could be naturally perfect if removed from the corrupting or alienating processes of civilisation. The oppositional complexes of nudity versus clothing, and natural grace versus culturally acquired gracefulness, infiltrate the narrative's representation of the body. Descriptions of costume and clothing are at least as frequent as descriptions of physical appearance and beauty; the body at the centre of this imagined culture is not a pre-cultural body.

For Götz Müller, the narrative's obsession with physical grace and appearance bespeaks a relocation onto the body of utopian desire, which was traditionally expressed in images of regulated social life, beautiful artefacts, well-formed cities and well-behaved citizens. Müller argues that the perfectibility of the body central to *Mine-Haha* feeds into a utopian project of endowing the human body with the characteristics of a perfectly trained animal.[58] It is important to note that such an approximation of human physicality to animal physicality is in this context precisely *not* a 'naturalising' of the human; Wedekind's interest in animals revolved not around their naturalness, but around their cultural encoding through breeding and training in contexts such as the circus, as Artur Kutscher observed in his biography.[59] The utopisation of the body which pertains in

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[56] Adolf Muschg, 'Frank Wedekind: 'Mine-Haha", in Muschg, *Besprechungen. 1961-1979,* (Basel: Birkhäuser, 1980), p. 44-5.
[57] Silvio Vietta, *Die literarische Moderne*, p. 110.
[58] Götz Müller, *Gegenwelten*, p. 174.
[59] Artur Kutscher, *Frank Wedekind: Sein Leben und seine Werke* (Munich: Müller, 1924), II, p. 147.

Mine-Haha and to a greater degree in the related sketches refers not to the natural body as the 'other' of degenerate or artificial culture, but to a culturally inscribed body that is trained, costumed and on display.

The body is subjected to a strict regime intended to develop this codified grace — only certain movements and forms are permitted. The graceful walk to be mastered in the course of the 'körperliche Erziehung' is taught as follows:

> man dürfe beim Gehen keinen Boden mehr unter den Füßen spüren, man dürfe seine Beine überhaupt nicht mehr spüren, man dürfe nur noch fühlen, daß man Hüften habe. Die Hüften, das sei der Mittelpunkt; der müsse unbeweglich und ruhig bleiben. Aber alle anderen Bewegungen im Oberkörper sowohl wie in den Beinen bis in die Zehenspitzen müßten von den Hüften ausgehen und von ihnen aus gewollt und dirigiert werden. (16)

When Gertrud, who has perfected the walk, performs it, one sees only forms subsumed in the beauty of movement(16). The lessons in movement reconfigure the body such that the hips become the gravitational centre, the pivotal point from which all movement, grace and even thought derives:

> Und wenn einige von uns Mädchen so sehr breite Hüften bekamen, so bin ich fest überzeugt, daß das nur daher rührt, daß wir gewissermaßen mit den Hüften denken lernten (16).[60]

To think with the hips is either: not to think, to allow mental processes to atrophy for the sake of the body's grace, or: to have overcome the body/mind dichotomy to such an extent that the whole person is integrated. The latter idea of complete physical and mental integration of the person could be read as a utopian element of the text. The notion of a pivotal point from which graceful movement proceeds recalls the disquisition on gracefulness in Heinrich von Kleist's *Über das Marionettentheater.*[61] Kleist's text could be said to haunt Wedekind's work in several ways: through its definition of grace as the emanation of all movement from a single fulcral point; through the notion that grace lost through cultural self-consciousness might be re-attained by the same means; and through the hope that this re-attainment of grace might heal the rift between mind and body. The narrator's assertion in *Mine-Haha* that 'wenn eine 'Ich' sagte, so

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[60] See also the 1896 story 'Der greise Freier', in which a girl's beauty and physical grace are described by her sister as follows: 'Sie war gelenkiger als ich, und wenn sie ging, dann sah es aus, als ob sich der Boden bei jedem Schritt ihrem Fuß anschmiegte. Das kam vielleicht, weil sie so volle, breite Hüften hatte. Das Schönste an ihr war der Hals. Wenn ich jetzt an sie zurückdenke, sehe ich immer zuerst ihren schönen runden Hals und die runden Schultern darunter' (I:250).

[61] Heinrich von Kleist, 'Über das Marionettentheater' DATE, in *Heinrich von Kleist. Sämtliche Werke und Briefe*, ed. by Helmut Sembdner, 2 vols (Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag), II, pp. 338-345

meinte sie sich immer ganz damit, vom Scheitel bis zur Fußspitze,' (53) suggests the possibility of such an integrative moment. This desire for integration of mind and body underlies many of the contemporary reform movements concerned with physicality, gymnastics, eurhythmics and dance, as suggested by Isadora Duncan's vision of the dancer of the future, 'one whose body and soul have grown so harmoniously together that the natural language of that soul will have become the movement of the body'.[62]

However, *Mine-Haha* is too ambivalent a text to be read solely in terms of the utopian dream of overcoming the mind-body rift, as Alexandra Pontzen has pointed out. Pontzen refers to *Mine-Haha* in support of the argument that the utopisation of the physical in the contemporary discourse of 'Lebensreform' was a problematic, potentially totalitarian moment within movements which styled themselves as emancipatory:

> Dass der Kult des Lebens und des Leibes zwiespältig ist und kein Garant für landläufiges Glück, dafür bietet auch das Werk von Frank Wedekind, das unter dem Aspekt der Lebensreform zu betrachten sehr lohnend ist, instruktive Beispiele. Ein wegen seiner Ambivalenz so befremdlicher Text wie *Mine-Haha oder über die körperliche Erziehung der jungen Mädchen* ist hervorragend geeignet, den Blick für die Inhumanität zu schärfen, die durch die Abdankung des Geistes und die Inthronisation des Körpers droht.[63]

The 'körperliche Erziehung' of *Mine-Haha* continues to leave aspects of personal development neglected in that it effects a reversal, rather than a rethinking, of the polarity satirised in *Frühlings Erwachen* which prioritised mind over body. As Medicus notes, 'in einem System von Gegensätzen affirmiert Wedekind den ausgeschlossenen Term — die Kehrtwendung bleibt aber an den Diskurs gebunden'.[64] The discourse to which *Mine-Haha* is indebted despite the alterity of the world it describes is not only a discourse of mind-body dualism, but a discourse in which all such dualisms or opposites can potentially be mapped onto the fundamental polarity of male and female. The contiguity of '*physical* education' and 'young *girls*' is not coincidental, but rather a product of the prevalent figuring of the feminine in biological-natural, corporeal-immanent terms. It is also necessary to assess the extent to which gendered looking relations, in

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[62] Isadora Duncan: *The Dance*, with an introduction by Mary Fanton Roberts (New York: Forest Press, 1909), p. 20. Ortrud Gutjahr cites this passage in translation as 'Die Tänzerin der Zukunft wird ein Weib sein müssen, deren Körper und Seele so harmonisch entwickelt sind, daß die Bewegung des Körpers die natürliche Sprache des Körpers sein wird'; the error may be due to the translation. Gutjahr, 'Erziehung zur Schamlosigkeit', p. 102.

[63] Alexandra Pontzen, 'Kein Platz für Alte und Kranke. Der Katalog zur Darmstädter Ausstellung *Die Lebensreform — Entwürfe zur Neugestaltung von Leben und Kunst um 1900.*' Electronic version, retrieved 10 September 2004 from http://www.literaturkritik.de/public/rezension.php?rez_id=5198&ausgabe=200208.

which a male gaze presents and consumes images of female beauty, are implicated in this discourse of physical desirability and perfectibility.

4.3.2 Gender discourse in *Mine-Haha*

In the opening of the main narrative, Helene Engel wonders whether her memoir will reach 'einen verständigen Leser oder eine hübsche Leserin' (10). Of her male reader she requires understanding; of her female reader, beauty. Her plea to the male reader to approach the text without prejudice, and her dissociation of the female reader from the stereotype of the unattractive bluestocking, set up an ideal readership by reiterating the the association of *Geist* with the male, physical appeal with the female. The discourses of beauty, gracefulness and physical perfectibility, so central to *Mine-Haha*, are fundamentally gendered throughout Wedekind's work. Beauty plays a significant role in the construction of femininity and is, in Wedekind's *Frauenbild*, a fundamentally desirable quality in woman, even a prerequisite to her existence as a sexual being. In the education scenes of *Mine-Haha*, even in those scenes prior to the gender segregation, it is the girls' mastery of the physical exercises that receives the most attention, despite the presence of the boys: 'Übrigens merkte ich schon damals, daß alle diese Übungen uns Mädchen viel leichter wurden als den Knaben' (16). This focus on the female physique already problematises any attempt to read *Mine-Haha* as a kind of palimpsest to *Frühlings Erwachen* as suggested by the association of the two texts in the frame narrative; in the drama, it is the education of the boys that comes in for the most focussed satirical critique, and this complicates *Mine-Haha*'s relation to the intertext: the shift of focus from the intellectual (mis)education of boys[65] to the physical education of girls means that these texts complement as well as contrast with each other. References to beauty and physical attractiveness throughout Wedekind's work reflect, as we have seen, the patriarchal assumption that appearance is a higher priority for women than for men.[66] This was illustrated by the case of the *Klavierlehrerin* type who functioned as the negative other of sexual appeal. Even in the anti-bourgeois *demi-monde* where marriage, monogamy and respectability count for less (the world of the actresses and prostitutes Wedekind

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[64] Medicus, '*Die große Liebe*', p. 29.

[65] *Frühlings Erwachen* focusses on the upbringing of both girls and boys, but only the latter are portrayed in the context of institutional education.

[66] As Eduard Fuchs observes, 'der Warencharakter der Liebe trat bisher doch nie so rein in Erscheinung wie in der modernen bürgerlichen Gesellschaft [...] Sie [die Frau] tauscht ihr Geld gegen Rang ein, das

knew in Paris), the relative significance of male and female appearance is determined by looking relations within which 'woman is image, man is bearer of the look', to paraphrase Laura Mulvey. While Wedekind criticises many patriarchal practices and their self-justifying ideology, the issue of women's beauty in his work is enmeshed in the looking relations produced by a patriarchal economy and mentality.

Both the frame and the main narrative of *Mine-Haha* re-assert the familiar idea that femininity is incompatible with intellectual concerns: the portrayal in *Mine-Haha* of a non-intellectual method of education for girls is anticipated by the narrator's remark:

> Ich darf wohl sagen, daß mir nichts auf dieser Welt so verhaßt ist wie ein Blaustrumpf. Eine Frau, die ihren Lebensunterhalt durch die Liebe verdient, steht in meiner Achtung immer noch höher da als eine, die sich so weit erniedrigt, Feuilletons oder gar Bücher zu schreiben (10).

The dissociation of femininity from intellectual activity — a position voiced by other Wedekind characters such Kadidja in *Die Zensur* (II:392) and Lulu herself (I:684) — is consistent with the comment of the narrator of the frame that that 'Von irgendwelcher Parteinahme für die Ziele der heutigen Frauenbestrebungen konnte ich aus ihren Worten nichts entnehmen' (9). These caveats concerning Helene Engel's lack of sympathy for intellectual or feminist women may well be intended to render less jarring the contrast between the contemplative old woman who writes, and the physicality of the girlhood of which she writes, between bluestocking and sensuous, performing virgin: in the framework of feminine types employed by Wedekind and his contemporaries, the co-existence of feminism and grace, political consciousness and sensuality, was considered difficult if not impossible. The familiar idea, discussed above, that femininity is somehow incompatible with or inimical to intellectuality is reaffirmed in passing in the frame narrative and systematically in the main narrative, through in the 'alternative' pedagogy of *Mine-Haha* which envisions physically trained girls 'thinking with the hips'. In this partial critique which remains caught in the terms of the criticised phenomenon (in this case, a received concept of gender), *Mine-Haha* echoes a more general problem of utopian writing, in which attempts to reformulate social norms are often bound to repeat the structures they attempt to escape.

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gleiche tut sie mit ihrer Schönheit'. Eduard Fuchs, *Illustrierte Sittengeschichte in sechs Bänden*, selected and introduced by Thomas Huonker (Frankfurt a.M.: Fischer, 1985) VI (*Das bürgerliche Zeitalter Teil II*), p. 12.

The physical education described in *Mine-Haha* is indebted to the educational system portrayed in *Frühlings Erwachen*. An essay by Ortrud Gutjahr is among the first to deal in detail with this intertextual relationship between the prose fragment and the drama.[67] Helene Engel, the 'author' of the 'manuscript' that constitutes the main narrative of *Mine-Haha*, encounters 'Wedekind' at the beginning of the frame narrative:

> Sie sagte, sie habe kürzlich ein Buch von mir "Frühlings Erwachen" gelesen; ob ich ihr erlauben wolle, mir etwas Ähnliches, das sie selber vor langen Jahren einmal niedergeschrieben, zur Einsicht zu geben. (7/8)

A common assumption that lacks textual foundation is that the main narrator of *Mine-Haha*, Hidalla, is in fact the same person as the Helene Engel figure of the frame. For instance, Gutjahr refers to 'die Ich-Erzählerin Helene Engel, deren erzähltes Ich im Erinnerungsbericht Hidalla genannt wird'.[68] The shared identity of Helene and Hidalla is not in fact made explicit by the text itself. All we know with any certainty of Helene's childhood is that 'sie sei als Kind sehr begüterter Eltern geboren' and:

> Mit siebzehn Jahren habe sie sich gegen den Willen ihrer Familie mit einem früheren Offizier, einem Witwer, verheiratet, dem sie schon als Backfisch eine abgöttische Verehrung entgegenbrachte. (8)

Given that the 'Erziehung' described in the main narrative is notable for the absence of family in the traditional sense, it is entirely possible, even probable, that the memoir concerning the park is intended as a fictional creation of this fictional character, who inserts references to her age, her subsequent life and her impending death merely as a means of heightening verisimilitude, much as Wedekind himself provides the conceit of the frame. This identity question has important implications for the fantasy/reality status of the park, and thus for its relation to the utopian tradition. If the Helene Engel who meets the fictional Wedekind and invites him for a glass of wine is the grown-up Hidalla who once lived in the enclave and performed in pantomimes, then the dialogic relation between fantasy and reality is at once simplified and complicated. Simplified, because both frame and main narrative occur in the same fictional reality: the park is then part of a memoir, rather than a fiction within a fiction. Complicated, because *Mine-Haha*'s status as opening chapters to *Die grosse Liebe*, their participation in Wedekind's utopian project, suddenly faces an obstacle: with the frame narrative in place, fewer parallels are supported. *Mine-Haha* then becomes a boarding-school and variety show catering to an

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[67] See Gutjahr, 'Erziehung zur Schamlosigkeit. Frank Wedekinds Mine-Haha oder Über die körperliche Erziehung der jungen Mädchen und der intertextuelle Bezug zu Frühlings Erwachen', in *Frank Wedekind*, ed. by Ortrud Gutjahr, pp. 93-124, at p. 96.

[68] Gutjahr, 'Erziehung zur Schamlosigkeit', p. 100.

audience of men like Wedekind, rather than the first stages in the description of an alternative reality. It is precisely in this question of voyeurism, however, that the parallels between *Mine-Haha* and *Eden/Die grosse Liebe* are most striking, and that the line between fantasy world and the reality of patriarchal looking-relations becomes most blurred. Crucially important for a resolution of these narratological questions is the fact that the frame narrative, as a later addition absent from the first publication, does not belong to *Mine-Haha*'s original conception, serving rather to 'explain' its fragmentary nature through the conceit of Helene Engel's 'Nachlaß'.

Further tensions between frame and main narrative support the contention that Hidalla and Helene Engel are not in fact one and the same person. Helene Engel's reminiscences, as reported in the frame narrative, include a cherished memory of riding prairie horses bareback in Brazil, 'ebenso sicher [...] wie der geborene Sohn der Wildnis.' (8) The contrast between the nostalgically valued wildness and the strict physical training subsequently described could count as evidence for or against the identity of Helene and Hidalla. Even this Brazilian scene does not evoke a straightforward opposition between a free, untrammelled natural experience and rigorous cultural induction, firstly because of the word 'lernte', secondly because the image of the bareback rider calls to mind Wedekind's preoccupation with the circus, a cultural form which owes its fascination partly to the boundary position it occupies between nature and culture, the caging of the wild, the training of the animal, the transformation of physical grace and agility into spectacle and commodity, and the foregrounding of the body as semiotic site. The fact that this memory also recalls the 'Indianerkinder', whom Helene Engel taught in Brazil, is an important link to the title: 'Mine-Haha' is sourced from Longfellow's *The Song of Hiawatha* (93) and glossed as an 'Indian' (Native American) word meaning 'laughing water'.[69]

However we resolve the question of the relationship between the female protagonist of main and frame narratives, the fact remains that *Mine-Haha* is deliberately associated with *Frühlings Erwachen.* To what end? Critics have tended to focus on the contrasts rather than on the parallels between the pedagogical scenarios of both texts. The educational system portrayed in *Frühlings Erwachen* is characterised as repressive, even cruel, and overly intellectual, with hypocritical values and priorities divorced from reality. The

adolescents struggle with Latin and mathematics and are left in the dark as to what is happening in terms of their physical development. As they seek to inform themselves and to imagine other ways of negotiating this painful and confusing transition, the boys of *Frühlings Erwachen* devise alternative methods of upbringing which presage the world of *Mine-Haha.*

> MORITZ: Ich habe mir schon gedacht, wenn ich Kinder habe, Knaben und Mädchen, so lasse ich sie von früh auf im nämlichen Gemach, wenn möglich auf ein und demselben Lager, zusammen schlafen, lasse sie morgens und abends beim An- und Auskleiden einander behilflich sein und in der heißen Jahreszeit, die Knaben sowohl wie die Mädchen, tagsüber nichts als eine kurze, mit einem Lederriemen gegürtete Tunika aus weißem Wollstoff tragen. — Mir ist, sie müßten, wenn sie so heranwachsen, später ruhiger sein, als wir es in der Regel sind (I:478).

As Gutjahr observes,

> die Erzählung [...nimmt] Erziehungsvorstellungen auf, wie sie die Jugendlichen in *Frühlings Erwachen* als Teil eines Zukunftsprojektes für ihre eigenen Kinder entwerfen. Ziel dieser neuen Erziehung soll dezidiert die Verhinderung der Scham zwischen den Geschlechtern sein.[70]

Johannes Pankau has traced Moritz's fantasy to Wedekind's own erotically invested meditations, recorded in his diary, on how he would raise a daughter.[71] *Mine-Haha*, taken as a response to and progression from these ideas, can thus be read as a utopia of physicality which poses a challenge to the overly cerebral focus of contemporary education satirised in *Frühlings Erwachen.* Under this reading, as Elizabeth Boa summarises it, 'a bodily culture of the senses is set against the mind as the source of illusion', and 'the taboo on close contact inhibits illusory individual love which leads only to possessiveness'. The *Mine-Haha* pedagogy is thus in the service of Wedekind's vision of sex 'divorced from affective bonds',[72] a vision which comes to fruition in *Die grosse Liebe.*

Mine-Haha not only rejects and transforms the educational strategies of *Frühlings Erwachen*, it also repeats or mirrors certain aspects of them. If the call for a more humane and realistic way of facilitating pedagogically the transition to adulthood is implicit in *Frühlings Erwachen*, then it might be reasonable to expect that the contemporary discourse

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[69] Wedekind used this name several times: it served him as a stage-name and pseudonym ('Cornelius Mine-Haha'); one of the prostitutes in the drama *Das Sonnenspektrum* also bears the name.
[70] Gutjahr, 'Erziehung zur Schamlosigkeit', p. 101.
[71] Pankau, 'Prostitution, Tochtererziehung und männlicher Blick'.

of pedagogical reform might inform the intertext, *Mine-Haha.* As Ortrud Gutjahr's essay shows, however, the superficial similarity between the education system of *Mine-Haha* and the priorities of contemporary — and subsequent — pedagogical reform and body culture movements does not withstand closer examination:

> Aber ebenso wie der Text all diese (teilweise erst entstehenden) körperbezogenen Epochendiskurse aufruft, widerspricht er auch jedem einzelnen: der Idee der Lebensreform durch die hermetische Abgeschiedenheit der Enklave zur Außenwelt und dem fehlenden Bewußtsein von Protest oder alternativer Lebensführung; der Reformpädagogik durch die uniforme Behandlung der Schülerinnen, bei der gerade nicht individuelle Fähigkeiten gefördert werden; der Nacktkörperkultur durch die artifizielle Kostümierung und Verkleidung der Körper; der Gymnastikbewegung durch die strenge Körperdressur, die sogar mit Schlägen unterstützt wird; dem freien Tanz durch die Entindividualisierung der Tänzerinnen und die Vorgabe genauer Bewegungsabläufe.[73]

My one misgiving concerning this cogent summary is the question of the relationship between the park and the outside world: it is, I would argue, necessary to look more closely at this relationship, questioning whether it is, in fact, one of 'hermetische Abgeschiedenheit der Enklave zur Außenwelt'. While the girls in the park may be innocent and uninformed and have little contact with the world beyond its walls, their existence and training is not only supported but determined by the entertainment values and demands of the paying public; the dialogic relationship between the 'Philantropin', to use Gutjahr's term, and the realities of late-capitalist bourgeois patriarchy and of its systems of upbringing, education *and* entertainment are inscribed within the text. Muschg sees Wedekind's female figures torn between the expression of an emancipated physicality and sensuality and their subjection to society's codes and values, to brutalising effect. He argues that the 'obscenity' of *Mine-Haha* stems from the attempt to transplant a vision incompatible with society — in this case Wedekind's vision of non-reproductive sensuality (Muschg's word is 'keimfrei') — into that society. Muschg finds in the 'lasciviousness' of that which is portrayed an indictment of society's attitudes to sensuality:

> Der widerwillig geneigte Leser fünfzig Jahre später sieht vor allem das eine darin: die Unmöglichkeit selbst für den hoch spielenden Geist Wedekinds, seine Vision keimfreier Sinnlichkeit in einer Gesellschaft festzupflanzen, die für diese Vision kein Boden sein

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[72] Boa, *The Sexual Circus*, p. 189-191.
[73] Gutjahr, 'Erziehung zur Schamlosigkeit', pp. 102-3.

konnte und sie nur als Reiz duldete — die Transplantation endet in einem Eklat, einem keineswegs komischen Hohngelächter.[74]

For Muschg, the problem lies in the difficult relationship between the ideas of sensuality and body culture shown in *Mine-Haha* and the social context in which these ideas are situated, both within the narrative and in its reception. If the reception of these ideas is unable to rise to the challenge they might pose with regard to a rethinking of repressive norms, the text is reduced to the pornographic function of titillation. Muschg's analysis recognises the difficulty of thinking outside the framework of a society whose reactions and values are dictated by consumption and profit, specifically in this case the consumption of women by men either voyeuristically or sexually in entertainment or prostitution. Wedekind's pedagogical province, imagined from within this society, is caught in its logic and remains a peep-show, a bordello on display (the analogy is supported by the marked parallels between *Mine-Haha* and *Das Sonnenspektrum* regarding scenario, atmosphere, names and costumes). Muschg's reading touches on a fundamental contention of the dystopian position: the incompatibility of vision and social reality results in the vision's devaluation or distortion.

The two possible functions of dystopian writing have been noted: salutary illustration through exaggeration of problematic social trends; or anti-utopian exposure of the fallacy of utopian hopes. Elizabeth Boa highlights the possibility of reading the parkland order as a sinister dystopia of control. Through ignorance on the one hand, exhibitionism on the other, the girls of the parkland are revealed as the de-individualised puppets of a system whose chief aim is the gratification of voyeurism. Under the auspices of an anonymous authority, and to gratify the scopophilia of a paying public the physical education of the girls is foregrounded to such an extent that mental growth is practically non-existent. Even though Hidalla herself attends the performances in later years in the company of her 'friend and protector' Fabian, we may assume from the references to 'rauhe Stimmen', 'Gebrüll', 'Gläsergeklirr', from the content of the performances and from what Hidalla overhears the audience members say, that this public is overwhelmingly male. Elizabeth Boa observes that 'Wedekind's utopian fantasy is simply a monstrous outgrowth of the very culture it set out to oppose';[75] it is possible, however, that opposition to a culture of erotically-charged, titillating entertainment underpinned by gendered looking relations was never part of the conception of *Mine-Haha.* What links

[74] Muschg, 'Frank Wedekind: 'Mine-Haha'', p. 45.

contemporary patriarchal reality to Wedekind's imagined alternative is their common fetish: the female body on display, at the service of the male voyeur who pays for the exhibition.

4.3.3 Stasis — collectivity — narrow horizons. Dystopian problems in *Mine-Haha*

The dystopian motif of the narrow horizon, which symbolises the censorship or curtailment of knowledge, experience and expression, is present in *Mine-Haha*, but also in *Frühlings Erwachen*. This is a consequence of the common focus in both texts on education/upbringing. Drama and fragment alike feature the closure of certain areas of experience and the narrow horizons set by institutionalised pedagogy. Fundamental to education — to induction into culture — is a selective force which ratifies certain types of knowledge, experience and behaviour and filters out or denies others. Induction into culture can thus be seen as a process of determining the horizon of permitted experience. In *Frühlings Erwachen*, the adults who uphold the repressive pedagogical system convene in a room in which the window has been bricked up. This blockage symbolises the simultaneous foreclosure of possibilities for self-knowledge and for knowledge of the outside and the other. In *Mine-Haha*, one of the first explicit references to the narrowness and insufficiency of life in the park has recourse to the image of the horizon:

> Mein Auge hing am Horizont, der sich stetig veränderte. Alle drei Schritte drehte ich mich um, um mir nichts entgehen zu lassen. Dabei erinnere ich mich, daß mich ein tiefer Schmerz überkam, etwas wie Sehnsucht, wie ich sie noch nie empfunden, hinauszukommen, weit fort, in die große Welt hinaus.(45)

Contemplation of the cosmic leads to a questioning of current limitation:

> 'Glaubst du, Hidalla, daß es draußen auch Sterne gibt?'
>
> 'Ich glaube es fast', antwortete ich. 'Sie reichen so weit.'
>
> 'Nun, wir werden ja sehen', meinte sie. Und nach einer Weile: 'Die Menschen im Theater sind so munter und lachen so viel, ich glaube fast, es ist draußen noch schöner als hier im Park.' (81)

When the boy Morni escapes from the parkland with two companions, no questions are asked nor answers given(18). The silence and mystery surrounding this occurrence, as well as the fact that no-one dares to ask questions about it, are an early indication of the ignorance in which the inhabitants of this imaginary society live with regard to their fate,

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[75] ibid., 195.

their future and their purpose. They are also kept in ignorance as to the meaning of the pantomimes they perform(75). By showing how young people are kept in powerlessness and ignorance by the institutions and authorities that oversee and administer their upbringing, *Mine-Haha* echoes the situation in *Frühlings Erwachen*, repeating aspects of the culture of taboo and silence Wedekind is so often seen to be seeking to challenge. The presence of this parallel further complicates the intertextual relationship between *Frühlings Erwachen* and *Mine-Haha*: the later text does not reply to the earlier simply through reversal or alterity, but preserves some of the elements of the drama intact in the fantasy. To use Johannes Pankau's terms, the dirigism of the pedagogy portrayed in the drama does not call forth a counter-vision of freedom, but rather shows a shift in emphasis concerning what is to be controlled.[76] (The related pornographic texts and sketches to be discussed below tend increasingly towards a totally dirigist fantasy.) While the over-intellectual education system that leaves Melchior, Moritz, Wendla and their peers in a ignorance, shame and confusion concerning their awakening desires obviously contrasts with the almost exclusively physical experience of the sexualised children in the walled park, in both systems the young people are discouraged by those responsible for their welfare from asking questions and from acting on their desires. The narrator speculates on the limitations of the system that formed her and failed to prepare her for the events that followed her departure from the park:

> Vielleicht tut die menschliche Gesellschaft nicht unrecht daran, wenn sie durch ihre Erziehung die praktische Betätigung aller Kräfte in uns zurückhält, um uns dann durch ein tobendes Volksfest in wenigen Tagen zu völlig anderen Geschöpfen umzugestalten (85-6).

The insularity and isolation of the park sets it apart — if not fully — from the outside world. This separation, foregrounded in one of Thomas Theodor Heine's illustrations for the first edition (reproduced overleaf) is a fundamental feature of narratives in the utopian tradition and can be achieved through either a spatial or, as with time-travel utopias like those of Morris and Bellamy, a temporal device. As discussed in the introduction, isolation or insularity is the spatial manifestation of a basic problem of utopianism: the utopian project, once it has achieved an alternative to the given reality, forecloses the possibility of a further alternative, an alternative to that alternative (see p. 24 above). Modernist problematisations of the utopian tradition take issue — most

[76] Pankau, 'Prostitution, Tochtererziehung und männlicher Blick', p. 44.

Enclosure and maternity

Thomas Theodor Heine, illustrations for the first edition of Wedekind's *Mine-Haha oder über die körperliche Erziehung der jungen Mädchen* (1903).



'The insularity and isolation of the park sets it apart — if not fully — from the outside world'. (p. 212)



'The regimented and communal nature of their upbringing and their early quasi-maternal responsibilities not only root the girls firmly in the collective but also account at least in part for their early sexualisation' (p. 214)

explicitly in dystopian writing — with this foreclosure and the stasis it engenders through the levelling of individual difference. In *Mine-Haha*, the limited and routine life in the park and the physical focus of the education received there results in the mental uniformity of the girls. The narrator observes: 'Von keinem der Mädchen ist mir im Gedächtnis geblieben, wie sie sprach. Ich weiß von jeder nur noch, wie sie ging' (53). Individual differences — particularly mental differences — are suppressed rather than cultivated in this pedagogical province. Descriptions of individual characters focus more on dress, gait, appearance, stature or colouring than on temperament or intelligence; there is little characterisation, and a notable frequency of the first person plural:

> Wir waren glücklich, eine wie die andere, aber das war auch alles[...] Infolge der gänzlichen Unwissenheit, in der wir lebten, war unser Verkehr auf die einfachsten Elemente beschränkt. So erinnere ich mich auch nicht, daß mir all die Mädchen im Park jemals als geistig voneinander verschieden erschienen wären. Eine dachte und fühlte wie die andere, und wenn eine den Mund auftat, wußten immer alle übrigen schon, was sie sagen wollte. So kam es, daß wir sehr wenig sprachen. Bei den Mahlzeiten sagte oft keine ein Wort. Alle aßen schweigend in sich hinein. Nur an den körperlichen Unterschieden kannte man sich gegenseitig auseinander. (52-3)

It was observed in chapter one that modernist dystopian writing contests the claims of collectivity by portraying its negation of indivuality. Here, the lethargic narrative voice displays no particular concern with regard to the levelling of individual differences within the narrow horizons of a rigid educational system. The unemotional tone of the narrative, established by the sameness and communality of experience, the consequent dominance of the first person plural, the scarcity of direct speech (the first dialogue occurs almost half way through the text) and the focus on physical rather than emotional or mental development and experience, is not substantially disrupted by occasional references to feelings of happiness or nostalgic longing. The somewhat toneless description of a passive sameness among the inhabitants of the park is consistent with the narrator's own formation through that very system. Not only the narrative tone, but also the way in which the characters are drawn remains emotionally disengaged. This is reflected upon within the text, and it is suggested that the girls' upbringing with its physical focus as well as their lack of knowledge about their future, deadens the facility for curiosity and mental expansion — albeit only gradually, as the following excerpt shows.

> 'Wera, sagte ich, 'bitte sag mir, weißt du, was dann kommt, wenn wir hier fort sind?'
>
> 'Wie sollte ich das wissen?' entgegnete sie ruhig.

> Ich sann ein wenig nach. 'Hast du Blanka nicht gefragt?'
>
> 'Nein. Wie sollte Blanka das wissen?' [...]
>
> 'Wera', sagte ich, 'bist du nicht auch mit Knaben zusammen gewesen?'
>
> 'Doch.'
>
> 'Wo sind sie.'
>
> 'Ich weiß es nicht.'
>
> Sie sagte das so ruhig, als lebte sie in einer andern Welt. (40/1)

Hidalla assimilates to this world:

> Ich erinnere mich auch nicht, in den späteren Jahren noch irgendwie von Neugierde geplagt worden zu sein [...] Erlebt habe ich ja sowieso nicht viel während all der Jahre (48-52).

The regimented and communal nature of their upbringing and their early quasi-maternal responsibilities (reflected in another of Thomas Theodor Heine's illustrations to the first edition, reproduced above) not only root the girls firmly in the collective but also account at least in part for their early sexualisation. The portrayal of child sexuality in *Mine-Haha* is astoundingly open given the reaction Freud's theory later provoked. The description of Simba is the least equivocal with regard to the sexual nature of Hidalla's attraction to her. The verbs used are 'berauschte, betörte, übermannte mich' (34). The narrator, now in her sixty-third year, reflects on the strange and premature nature of this desire. 'Und das mit sieben Jahren, wo die Welt noch so gut wie unbemerkt an einem vorübergeht. Wie war das möglich?' (33). A curious reversal occurs in the chronology of Hidalla's sexual sensitivity, perhaps due to the heightened physicality of her upbringing:

> Übrigens habe ich derartige Wunderwerke von Schönheit und Sinnenreiz aus meinen reiferen Lebensjahren nicht mehr zu notieren. Sie hören auf in meiner Erinnerung mit dem Augenblick, wo ich aufhörte, Kind zu sein. (33)

Mine-Haha presents the fantasy of a pedagogical system that produces young girls who remain in a state of ignorance and thus innocence, and yet whose physical and sexual awareness is heightened through the exclusively physical and performative emphasis of their education; young girls who are dressed in white yet walk on their hands allowing their garments to fall around their ears; young girls who simulate sex acts while oblivious to their meaning. It may not be possible to integrate *Mine-Haha* seamlessly into the utopian tradition, yet it is certainly a paedophiliac voyeur's paradise. The focus on performing bodies counters the contemporary cultural norms of prudery and modesty with a sort of manifesto of exhibitionism.

Ortrud Gutjahr sees the enforcement of ignorance through a system of education as the key to this aspect of the text, and highlights in this way the parallels rather than the differences between *Mine-Haha* and *Frühlings Erwachen*. By keeping the girls in ignorance of the outside world, of the realities of sex, and of the purpose of their physical education, it is possible to prevent them from becoming shameful, embarrassed or prudish, and this strategy culminates in the unconscious exhibitionism of the pantomime scenes. The girls' innocence — 'so blindlings tanzten wir allabendlich unsere Rollen durch, so wenig ließen wir uns träumen von dem, was wir spielten'(75) — serves to highlight the ironic dependence of their peaceful, apparently hermetic world on a chaotic, noisy, lewd public, whose members respond to the spectacle with 'Trampeln, Klatschen und Bravorufen'. Sexual consummation is simulated onstage, 'und das Publikum jauchzte vor Wonne' (70), a reaction the showgirls themselves cannot understand:

> Franziska hatte ebensowenig eine Ahnung von dem, was sie spielte, wie ich. Alles, was wir wußten, war, daß das Zubettgehen zu zweien verboten war. Das erklärte uns das Hallo im Publikum. (70)

Contrasting this unwittingly shameless display with *Frühlings Erwachen*, Gutjahr observes:

> Kann das Drama [...] unter der Repressionshypothese gelesen werden, nach der Verhaltensmaßregeln und Bestrafungen eingesetzt werden, um Schamgrenzen aufzubauen, so geht es in *Mine-Haha* um ein Erziehungsmodell, bei dem der erzieherisch forcierte Aufbau von Schamgrenzen im Prozeß der sexuellen Reifung unterbleibt.[77]

The needs of a voyeuristic patriarchy are well served by a system which inculcates shamelessness through ignorance while preserving innocence through sexual repression. The argument advanced by Gutjahr is complicated, as we shall see, by the fact that the girls *do* experience shame in the selection process, but its basic premise — that the point of the pedagogy is the provision of shameless exhibitionism unbeknownst to the performers — is nonetheless borne out in the pantomime scenes. This element of performance and display is a key aspect of the continuity between *Mine-Haha* and *Die grosse Liebe*.

Mine-Haha solves for the voyeuristic perspective the problem of sexually valorised innocence in the female object, a problem that had given rise to inconsistencies and

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[77] Gutjahr, 'Erziehung zur Schamlosigkeit', p. 99.

anxieties within *fin-de-siècle* gender discourse.[78] The demand that girls be innocent was inherently inconsistent. If they were truly in ignorance of the reasons behind the demand for innocence, how could they understand the necessity to comply with it? Innocence was compromised if one was aware of its value. This inconsistency pervades the discussion between Wendla and her mother in the opening scene of *Frühlings Erwachen*: 'Warum hast du mir das Kleid so lang gemacht, Mutter?' (I:475) is a question that can only be answered through the violation of the taboo that prevents Wendla's mother from speaking of sex.[79] Co-operation with the social expectations regarding feminine decency, modesty and innocence is a tacit acknowledgement of their necessity which in turn implies a knowledge about what fuelled these expectations, but such knowledge would compromise the purported innocence. In the play *Die Zensur*, this paradox is alluded to: 'Ein wahrhaft gläubiger Mensch kann über seinen Glauben ebensowenig sprechen, wie ein wahrhaft keusches Mädchen über seine Keuschheit sprechen kann' (II:402). *Mine-Haha* circumvents this inconsistency by means of an isolated training in physical performance which provides as end product chaste maidens in lewd display. Gutjahr has drawn these aspects of the story together under the heading of 'shamelessness', and yet the emphasis on physicality does not fully remove shame; neither does it abolish taboo, as shown by the taboo on lesbianism. To be sure, it seems as if shame has been eliminated in the early childhood scenes where girls and boys bathe naked together without a second thought, recalling Moritz's vision in *Frühlings Erwachen* of unabashed nakedness (I:478); however, as the narrative continues, shame is somehow inculcated into the girls. When they are examined by the women who come to select the fittest of them, the reduction of the girls to mere flesh is explicit, and their shame distresses them:

> Wir mußten uns entkleiden; welch ein sonderbares Gefühl! So sehr wir es unter uns gewohnt waren, einander nackt zu sehen, so hatte sich doch keine, seitdem sie im Park war, je vor Erwachsenen ohne Kleidung gezeigt [...] Jetzt sah ich bei einer wie der anderen, während wir uns mitten im Saal entkleideten, wie sie rot im Gesicht wurde, mit den Augen zwinkterte und sich auf die Lippen biß. [...] Als die Reihe an mich kam, sauste es mir vor den Ohren und vor den Augen sah ich rote Flammen. (56/7)

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[78] For a discussion of these inconsistencies, particularly where categories such as 'innocence' and 'naturalness' are concerned, see Alyth F. Grant, 'Innocence and the Language of the Body in Discourses of the 'Jahrhundertwende', *German Life and Letters*, 52:3 (1999), 343-364.

[79] As Gutjahr observes, 'Die Mutter [Wendlas] agiert als verschämte, sprachohnmächtige Komplizin eines männlichen Diskurses über Sexualität, dessen Objekt die Tochter gerade deshalb werden kann, weil ihr das Wissen über diesen Diskurs versagt wird'. Gutjahr, 'Erziehung zur Schamlosigkeit', p. 99.

As the emphasis on the body — at the expense of the development of mental or emotional life — fails to result in the elimination of shame, Wedekind's foregrounding of the physical cannot be understood as the attempt to regain prelapsarian ease and integration with the body, overcoming estrangement and shame.

The preparation of the girls for the roles they are to play involves the inculcation of masochism as well as of shamelessness. Muschg notes that 'diese Hidallas, Pamelas und Weras sind zu Konsum- und Genussartikeln für ein zahlendes Publikum bestimmt';[80] what is to be consumed and enjoyed is the simulation of sexual and violent acts. The fact that the girls of *Mine-Haha* pride themselves on any physical hardship their training and performance inflicts upon them suggests a sadistic strain in the audience's voyeurism, and anticipates the scenario of *Die grosse Liebe*, in which the spectacle shifts from simulated to actual violence. Blanka and Pamela dance until they drop, merely to see who can dance longest (50); when Filissa has her turn to appear at the theatre, she arrives home with weals on her legs, as the play involves her being beaten on stage by Simba, the dancing teacher. Filissa accepts and indeed welcomes this infliction of physical pain: 'Das Stück werde noch bis zum Frühling gegeben, aber es mache ihr nichts. Man tanze nachher nur um so besser' (59). This is the first clear intimation of the masochistic sacrificial mentality which will become all-important in the *Die grosse Liebe* sketches. Muschg speaks of 'die Kreuzigung des Fleisches auf dem Altar einer Idee';[81] the 'idea' for which the flesh must suffer is not the balletic grace for which the girls strive, but the gratification of a paying public's tastes for the cruel and sensational:

> Das Theater sei jeden Abend bis auf den letzten Platz besetzt, und wenn die betreffende Stelle [involving the beating of Filissa by Simba] komme, höre man die Leute immer schon im voraus jauchzen (59).

The content of the ballet *Der Mückenprinz* is described in great detail in the text; Muschg's comment is justified that the girls' 'hochgezüchtete Unschuld muss sich in Nummern produzieren, deren Dümmlichkeit nur von ihrer Laszivität übertroffen wird'.[82]

The text not only portrays the voyeuristic consumption of the girls' appearance by a paying audience, it is also itself voyeuristic, focussing an authorial male gaze on minutely described female appearance, figure, costume and performance. In the discussion of

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[80] Muschg, 'Frank Wedekind: 'Mine-Haha'', p. 44.
[81] ibid.
[82] ibid.

gendered looking relations in chapter two, it was noted that precisely this coincidence of the diegetic and non-diegetic viewpoints facilitates scopophilic gratification. Wedekind's involvement with the theatre, his fascination for the circus and his frequenting of the *varietés* in Paris all feed into the text, not only in terms of content but also structurally, in the putting-on-display of the body, in this case the female body, in the foregrounding of what Laura Mulvey has called woman's 'to-be-looked-at-ness'. The relation between Wedekind and his complicit reader, gendered male and figured in the faceless, nameless audience of *Mine-Haha* and later in the 'consumers' of the *Die grosse Liebe* ritual, makes it clear that the display of woman as sexual object is really a transaction between men, transgressive perhaps with regard to prevailing standards of 'normal', accepted sexual behaviour in that it pushes against the boundaries of 'modesty' and 'propriety', but otherwise completely consistent with the patriarchal 'traffic in women' which has been described by Gayle Rubin.[83]

This section has sought to establish the main themes and concerns of *Mine-Haha* in order to identify, in the next section, the continuities between the published fragement and the *Eden* and *Die grosse Liebe* sketches. A variety of elements common to utopian writing have been identified in *Mine-Haha*: insularity, stasis, the narrowing of horizons and the privileging of collective over individual. While the utopian criterion of alternativity is clearly answered by the social arrangements described in the text, in their divergence from familial structures and educational priorities found in reality, the emphasis on physicality presaged in the subtitle of *Mine-Haha* does not in fact deliver a clear alternative to the intertext, *Frühlings Erwachen*. Aspects of the drama's repressive pedagogy, such as enforced ignorance and the closure of certain areas of experience, reappear in the parkland scenario. The cultural trope of femininity as body, as immanence, is reflected in the near-exclusive focus on girls in this narrative of corporal development. The display of young girls in training and performance gratifies the scopophilic viewpoint not only of the audience who attend the pantomimes but by extension of both author and reader. The next section will trace the presence of a similar perspective in the related sketches and fragments of Wedekind's utopian project.

4.4 Wedekind's fantasy world: *Eden* and *Die grosse Liebe*

[83] Gayle Rubin, 'The traffic in women. Notes on the 'political economy' of sex' in *Toward an anthopology of*

> Mit Huren, Pfaffen und Sozialisten möchte ich gern keinen Streit haben, denn ich arbeite an der Vereinigung von Kirche und Bordell im sozialistischen Zukunftsstaat.
> Frank Wedekind, 1905/6.

By combining evidence from the notebooks containing the *Die grosse Liebe* material with headings over blank pages found in the draft document *Hidalla, oder Das Leben einer Schneiderin* (which consists mainly of headings over blank pages),[84] it is possible to reconstruct an outline of the eighteen chapters that Wedekind mentions in the letter to Brandes which was quoted above (p. 172), and it is clear from the headings for the first chapters that they correspond to the content of *Mine-Haha*:

Mädchen

1. Kinderheim
2. Mädchenanstalt
3. Auslese
4. Pubertät
5. Frühlingsfeier
6. Mütterliche Freundin [in *Hidalla oder Das Leben einer Schneiderin,* 'Prostitution']
7. Herbstfest [in *Hidalla,* 'Herbstfeier']
8. Gebäranstalt
9. Liebesabentheuer [in *Hidalla,* 'Liebesabeneuer. – Freiheit. – Lebensberuf.']
10. Die Heilige [this is a larger heading covering chapters 10 through 15, with different subheadings e.g. 'Auslese und Novitiat im Tempel', 'Übungen'; the subheadings vary in the various sources.]

[...]

15. Gang ins Knabenheim
16. Acht Tage im Tempel.
17. Der Knabe als Hausfreund.
18. Das Frühlingsfest.[85]

If *Mine-Haha* corresponds to the first chapters of this structural outline, the sketches and drafts for *Die grosse Liebe* answer to the later headings, particularly to 'Frühlingsfeier' and 'Herbstfest'. The similarity, in places identity, of parts of the *Die grosse Liebe* drafts and the earlier prose sketch *Eden* has already been noted. The title and opening sentence of *Eden* explicitly link this text to the utopian tradition: 'Es handelt sich um die Gründung

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women, ed. by Rayna Reiter (New York and London: Monthly Review Press, 1975), pp. 157-210.

[84] Monacensia Literaturarchiv (Wedekind-Archiv), L 3491.

[85] Monacensia Literaturarchiv (Wedekind-Archiv), notebook 39, p. 5 verso.

einer neuen Gesellschaftsordnung, basierend auf der freien Liebe'.[86] As remarked above, Wedekind referred to the project as a whole as 'meine Utopie', and critics since then have tended to follow his lead. Confronted with the content of the fragmentary narrative passages that remain from this uncompleted project, however, the reader will ask how the term 'utopian' is a useful interpretive category for an approach to these texts. The sketches describe the violent sexual rituals of an authoritarian theocracy, focussing particularly on a spring and an autumn festival, during which a chosen sacrificial victim is sexually initiated and then killed. It is thus not merely a question of finding the right genre designation, a task rendered in any case less relevant by the fact that the text in question is an unfinished melange of elements of drama, dialogue, verse and narrative prose; the chairman of the Frank Wedekind-Gesellschaft in Darmstadt concedes that it is philologically difficult to reconstruct the project.[87] Given that these sketches revolve for the most part around scenes of ritualised rape and whipping, of public ceremonial copulation and murder, of a strictly choreographed death-dance with machines and cages housing the actors in a performance which is watched by an audience who later pay the female participants for sex, the designation 'utopia' for such a textual project begs the question whether, and why, the word utopian has, through a proliferation of contradictory meanings, lost its usefulness. The problems that inhere in a genre-based approach to the utopian in literature were discussed in chapter one; the aim of this chapter is not to establish whether *Die grosse Liebe* fits with a given definition of 'literary utopia' understood as genre, but rather to investigate those areas of intersection between the concerns of the sketches and the concerns of the utopian tradition and of the problematisation which this tradition undergoes in modernity.

As Wedekind used the term *Utopie* to describe the project, his understanding of this term must first be clarified. His reading-lists, which are to be found alongside the bulk of the sketches in Notebooks 38-42 of the Wedekind archive in Munich, shed some light on his conception of the 'utopian'. Wedekind understood utopian thought to be constituted by a Western tradition that dated at least from Plato, with Thomas More as an important landmark, Christian theology as a major interlocutor and socialism as a potential practical application which would prove problematic but impossible to ignore. One of

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[86] Wedekind, *Eden* (Münchner Stadtbibliothek, Monacensia Literaturarchiv: MS L2932, p. 1). Page numbers in the text refer to this document. My thanks to Anatol Regnier for permission to have access to the typescript.

[87] Hartmut Vinçon, personal communication, 11.12.2000

Wedekind's reading lists for this project, some of the titles on which are marked with a cross, includes Swift's 'Gullivers Reisen', 'Utopia', 'Robinson', and also mentions the 'Oneidagemeinde' and the 'Mormonen' (38:32v); these last two references, along with a reminder to himself to look up the Albigensians (38:40r) reveal Wedekind's awareness of intentional communities, religious and otherwise. Another similar list (39:2v-3v), divided under the headings 'politische Literatur' and 'poetische Literatur', includes 'Morus Utopia', 'Rousseau Contract Social', 'Aristoteles Politik', 'Plato Der Staat', and 'Campanella Der Sonnenstaat'. References to the utopian tradition are interspersed throughout; the same page contains another note on Thomas More, and Tommaso Campanella's 'Idealstaat der Solarier' is also listed (38:37r), as is Saint-Simon (38:40r). 'Das Goldene Zeitalter', a trope that is central to the utopian tradition, is also referred to in this series of jottings (38:34r). Aristophanes' comedy *Lysistrata* is noted several times, once in connection with the idea that 'Liebe und Politik [sind] aufs allerengste durch einander bedingt' (38:36r); the question of the interface between the political and the sexual, a question fundamental to the *Die grosse Liebe* project, is also implied in the reference to Engels' 'Ursprung der Familie' (38:37r). An unelaborated reference among these jottings to 'Die Staatsreligion' (38:32r) suggests the theocratic aspect of the *Die grosse Liebe* old state: Wedekind's '*Utopie*' is not conceived along secular, modern lines, but, like Hauptmann's matriarchal island society, answers the call of 'Zurück zu!' rather than that of 'Vorwärts zu!'.

Throughout these notebooks, there is reference to two contrasting social orders, 'der alte Staat' and 'der neue Staat'. The fragmentary nature of the project makes it difficult to ascertain how exactly the relation between these two states is imagined. They are usually opposed; there are some references to a revolution, and the designations 'alt' and 'neu' suggest that the latter overthrows the former, asserting a new set of values and ushering in a new order. The contrast between the old and new states articulates a central problem of the utopian tradition: the problem of the relationship, and potential clash of interest, between the individual and the community. Where the old state is opposed to the new state, the opposition suggests the dystopian trope of heroic individual refusal of a static, overly communal and totalitarian order, as the following extract reveals:

> Der alte Staat (Gütergemeinschaft) ist der Gipfelpunkt des Altruismus. Der Staat ist alles, das Individuum nichts. Du sollst niemanden lieben, anbeten, für einen andern leben als Vaterland.

> Der neue Staat (die Ehe) ist der Gipfelpunkt des Egoismus. Du sollst dich auf Erden so hoch entwickeln als irgend möglich. (38:41v).
>
> Das ganze Drama ist der //heroische//Kampf zwischen dem Staat und dem Menschen. Unterströmung: Das Drama ist der Kampf des persönlichen Stolzes gegen die persönliche Feigheit der Utopisten (38:45r).

While the old state/new state opposition as articulated here is clearly subject to evaluation, this evaluation is not consistently present throughout the notes and sketches, and details of the new state are not explicitly worked out. There is sufficient evidence to justify the conclusion that the old state is run along communalist lines leaving little room for individualism, diversity and deviation:

> Erziehungsprinzip im alten Staat: Nicht die schlechten Triebe und Eigenschaften zu bekämpfen, sondern die guten Triebe und Eigenschaften zu hegen und zu pflegen, bis sie das schlechte überwuchern und für das schlechte kein Platz mehr übrig bleibt.

The alignment of the 'new state' with 'die Ehe' in the passage cited above implies that the opposed order of the old sate negates matrimonial values of exculsiveness, monogamy and fidelity. This is borne out elsewhere in the sketches.

Wedekind's alternative sexual universe is one of external regulation and internalised coercion. The world of *Eden/Die grosse Liebe* combines an authoritarian ideology, a eugenic agenda, social engineering, ritual violence and thorough regulation of activity and behaviour; sacrificial ritual plays an important part in the maintenance and perpetuation of the state portrayed, and the fragmentary narrative sections are mainly concerned with describing this ritual and how its participants prepare for it. The project's incompleteness makes it difficult to draw any clear conclusions about the intended effect of the descriptions of ritualised violence. Were they merely a source of titillation, as Muschg says with reference to the related *Mine-Haha*?[88] Was the description of a cruel and barbaric state intended to pave the way to a later, never completed section (indicated perhaps in the dialogue 'Max und der Burgvogt', (40:36r-41r) in which a youth of the old state challenges one of its officials, and by the contrast between old and new states) in which the old state would be overthrown by a revolution, giving way to a new and more humane order? And how do the sketches relate to the interface of fatality and erotics which as we have seen is a central theme in many of Wedekind's works?

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[88] Muschg, 'Frank Wedekind: 'Mine-Haha'.'

The main events narrated in the *Eden* and the *Die grosse Liebe* sketches will now be outlined. The rituals described in these texts take place in a large purpose-built temple or hall. Present at the ritual are the victim, the participants and the onlookers. The relationship between these roles will be further discussed below, as it is crucially revelatory of the gender relations which underlie the fantasy. The rituals begin with processional entry of the participant boys and girls, who will be sexually initiated in the course of the ritual. Like much pornography, *Die grosse Liebe* and *Eden* offer progressively more extreme and explicit scenes, beginning with mild titillation and building from there; the first erotic contact described is the 'Rutenlauf', which involves the whipping of each member of the group by turn as they run around the inside of the circle formed by the pairs of boys and girls (*Eden* 2; 40:2r-3v), and the participants bathe together in a central basin (40:2r). This is a mere prelude to the main focus of both texts, which is the initiation and immolation of a single sacrificial victim, male in one of the rituals, female in the other: the 'Opfermaid' in the *Die grosse Liebe* sketches (40:3r) parallels the 'Herbstopfer' of *Eden* (14). The girl victim is whipped by the participant women and sexually penetrated by the participant men 'bis die Opfermaid die Besinnung verloren hat' (40:5v), 'bis kein Herzschlag mehr wahrzunehmen ist' (*Eden* 16). The boy victim is alternately whipped and forced to copulate with a chosen sacrificial partner, and ultimately whipped to death. Surrounding this central sacrifice is the sexual initiation of a group of girls. In *Eden* each girl is allocated a cabinet, in which by day she receives male visitors who pay for sex; at night she has the company of the boy with whom she is paired in the procession. In *Die grosse Liebe* (Notebook 40), the pairing is arbitrarily decided through the operation of a contraption consisting of upper and lower levels of rotating cages, each of the lower cages housing a girl, each of the upper ones a boy. A minor difference between the texts is that in *Eden* the victim of the 'Frühlingsfeier' is male, the victim of the 'Herbstfeier' female; this order is reversed in *Die grosse Liebe*. In both texts, however, the apparent symmetry of the spring and autumn rituals is disrupted by a significant difference. The male victim is accompanied throughout his sacrifice by a female sexual partner, called a 'Todesbraut' (40:13v) or 'mütterliche Freundin' (*Eden* 9), with whom he has intercourse as often as he is aroused. By contrast, the sexual partners of the female victim, indeed of all the girls participating in the ritual, are a rapidly moving succession of anonymous participants:

> [Wem] nun ein Mädchen gefällt, der legt sich zu ihr nieder und tut seinem Bedürfnis Genüge. Dem Mädchen ist gegen Niemanden irgendwelcher Einwand gestattet. (*Eden* 6)

> Die Herren versammeln sich im Vorzimmer und treten durch einen unter den Bänken durchführenden Gang auf das Lager zu, begatten das Opfer und entfernen sich durch ein in entgegengesetzter Richtung wieder hinausführenden Ausweg. Die einzelnen Herren folgen sich so rasch wie möglich. (*Eden* 15)

The implications of this difference between the rituals and the significance of the polyandry are further discussed below.

4.4.1 *Eden* and *Die grosse* Liebe: the alternativity criterion

The institutions portrayed in the sketches contrast in certain obvious ways with real institutions. It is in this respect that the *Die grosse Liebe* project can most clearly be seen to reflect and incorporate aspects of the utopian tradition. The presentation of the world of *Die grosse Liebe* is distanced from historical reality through its contrast with that reality — a contrast flagged by details like names. Walter Schmitz and Uwe Schneider, in their editorial afterword to the 1994 Insel edition of *Mine-Haha*, direct particular attention to the onomastics of that text and discuss the names chosen both for characters and for the title itself (*MH* 93-4). Of the title *Mine-Haha* they write:

> Übernommen wurde dieser Name und seine Erklärung aus Henry Wadsworth Longfellows Indianer-Versepos *The Song of Hiawatha* (1855). Dort ist *Mine-Haha* der Name eines Wasserfalls [in Longfellow's *Hiawatha*, the name of the waterfall — and the woman — are spelt 'Minnehaha']; danach nennt der Titelheld, Prophet und Lehrer für die Indianer, seine todgeweihte Liebe. Auf die sentimental christliche Verbindung von Liebe, Tod und Erlösung, wie Longfellow sie dann entwickelt, antwortet Wedekind mit dem 'modernen' Entwurf eines Ritus des natürlichen Körpers.

(The reading of *Mine-Haha* advanced above revealed that the designation 'natürlich' for the bodily images found in the text is problematic; the dissociation of *Mine-Haha* from a 'death-cult' is equally so, as we shall see.) The source of the characters' names (Hidalla, Lora, Morni, Selma), as Schmitz and Schneider observe, are the Ossianic epics of James Macpherson (1736-1796). 'Ossian' is mentioned twice in the notebooks among the lists of reading and source material for the *Die grosse Liebe* project (38:40r, 39:3v), and scattered throughout the jottings and lists in the notebooks where the project took shape, references can be found to Tara (40:10r), Samhein (the pagan Celtic festival Samhain) (39:9r), Patric (39:40r, 43r), Brigid (39:43v), Schanacha (probably *seanchaí*, storyteller) (39:43v) and the various Gaelic titles Brehone, Druide, Barden and Ri (king) (40:48r); then, as if to sum up the evidence, the statement 'Das Stück spielt in Irland'

(39:37v). In a possible reiteration of the Irish connection already mentioned, the affirmation of *Todeswollust* takes a poetic form reminiscent of 'St Patrick's Breastplate':[89]

> Todeswollust zu meiner Rechten
> Todeswollust zu meiner Linken
> Todeswollust unter mir, über mir
> Todeswollust vor mir und hinter mir
> Todeswollust all mein Gefühl in mir. (40:24r)

Wedekind's onomastic choices for *Die grosse Liebe*, his situation of the alternative world in a pagan Celtic setting, suggest that he was motivated by the idea that primitive societies and cultic religions enjoyed an unbroken continuity of the sensual and the sacral that is disrupted or lost in later societies.

The striking parallels between Wedekind's spring rite, revolving around a sacrificial maiden, and the scenario of Igor Stravinsky's ballet *The Rite of Spring* would corroborate this suggestion. Drawing on ethnographic sources concerning Scythian ritual and seasonal festival practices, the 'Great Sacrifice' (the original working title of the *Rite*) reflected a general trend of representing primitive antiquity in order to express 'the satiety and fatigue of the existing order as well as apocalyptic premonitions of its demise'.[90] The sacrifice in the ballet is offered to the Slavic sun-god Iarilo, and Richard Taruskin has made a convincing case for considering Sergei Gorodetsky's 1907 poem-cycle *Iar'* a key source for the *Rite*:

> The root *iar'* combines within itself the ideas: a) of vernal light and warmth, b) of youthful, impetuous, violently awakening forces, c) of erotic passion, lasciviousness and fecundation.[91]

In other words, 'Frühlings Erwachen'. This is not to suggest any direct pathways of influence between Gorodetsky/Stravinsky and Wedekind, but rather to illustrate how Wedekind's archaisms in *Die grosse Liebe* are consistent with a modernist aesthetic, in the service of which primitive and pagan resonances were employed both to jar the reader/viewer out of the contemporary world and to suggest that a world more vital and elemental pulsed beneath it. The symbolism of spring and its resonances of a potentially

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[89] See *Church Hymnal with Accompanying Tunes* (Oxford and Dublin: Oxford University Press and APCK, 1960), p. 433, and *Abair Ambrán* (Belfast: Comhaltas Uladh, 1962), p. 18.
[90] Richard Taruskin, 'The *Rite* revisited: the idea and the source of its scenario', in *Music and Civilisation. Essays in Honor of Paul Henry Lang*, ed. by Edmond Strainchamps and Maria Rika Maniates (London and New York: Norton, 1984), pp. 183-202 (p. 191).
[91] Alexander Afanasiev, *The Poetical Attitudes of the Slavs Toward Nature* (1866-9). Quoted in Taruskin, 'The *Rite* revisited', p. 193.

orgiastic vitality were also exploited by Nietzsche in a preparatory text to *Die Geburt der Tragödie aus dem Geiste der Musik*, in which he notes the parallels between ancient Athenian festive performances and later European spring festivals such as Fasching:

> die allgewaltige, so plötzlich sich kundgebende Wirkung des Frühlings steigert hier auch die Lebenskräfte zu einem solchen Übermaß, daß ekstatische Zustände, Visionen und der Glaube an die eigne Verzauberung allerwärts hervortreten.[92]

Through these pre-Christian resonances and through the echoes of Native American myth and Celtic pseudo-myth, as respectively appropriated by Longfellow and concocted by Macpherson, the worlds of *Mine-Haha* and *Die grosse Liebe* are clearly set apart from the usual scene of Wedekind's works, contemporary bourgeois and bohemian life. In the temporally unspecified setting of *Die grosse Liebe*, the borrowed names contribute, along with the presence of theocracy and ritual, to a sense that these scenes occur in a remote, alternative world. This alterity of scene is a hallmark of utopian fantasy; the alien nature of superficial detail paves the way for a consideration of more fundamental differences and/or similarities between the imagined and the real.

While the critical possibilities opened up by the alterity of their scenarios are never made explicit in the texts themselves, some of the premises and assumptions of historically given models are implicitly called into question through the presentation of imagined alternative models. For instance, sex in the 'old state' is freed from many of the practices and institutions which Wedekind, in other works, criticised for their ability to engender repression, hypocrisy and suffering: namely, matrimony, monogamy, secrecy and possessiveness. In the 'old state' of *Die grosse Liebe*, the patriarchal family is destroyed,[93] the sexual act is public property, and sexual initiation, which in *Frühlings Erwachen* was veiled in secrecy, occurred furtively in the hay-loft and lead a bourgeois mother to risk her daughter's life at the hands of an abortionist rather than face a public scandal, is here brought out into the open. A key element of the alterity of *Eden/Die grosse Liebe*, then, is its transformation of sex from a private to a public act. The imperative that sex be public is a fundamental tenet of the theocracy, reflected in the motto 'Wer aber im Dunkeln liebt,/Der lebt auch im Dunkeln' (40:32v). This theme is found elsewhere in Wedekind's

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[92] Friedrich Nietzsche, *Das griechische Musikdrama*. Cited in Helmut Pfotenhauer, *Die Kunst als Physiologie. Nietzsches ästhetische Theorie und literarische Produktion*, p. 139.

[93] 'Die Säuglinge werden unter den Müttern vertauscht um die Entstehung der Familienbande im Keim zu ersticken. [...] Das Kind kommt in die Anstalt für kleine Kinder. Hier werden Knaben und Mädchen bis

work: a version of the ritual prayer from *Die grosse Liebe* is uttered by Effie of *Schloss Wetterstein*:

> Du sollst nicht im Dunkeln lieben,
> Sondern im Licht!
> Wehe der Liebe,
> Die vor den Blicken
> Der Menge vergeht! [...]
> Wer aber im Dunkeln liebt,
> Der lebt auch im Dunkeln! (II:592-3)

A line of continuity is thus drawn between the archaic fantasy state and the decadent, bohemian world of Effie and her entourage. Effie belongs to a type found elsewhere in Wedekind's work: that of the promiscuous, even sexually insatiable woman/prostitute marked out for death (her affinities with Lulu, Ilse (*Frühlings Erwachen*) and Lisiska (*Tod und Teufel*) have been noted). Insofar as they are invested with a subversive, counter-cultural power and viewed as inheritors of the polyandrous practices of prehistoric hetaerism, the various prostitute figures in Wedekind's work are connected to the *Die grosse Liebe* project in their ideological positioning as polemical opposites to the repressive and hypocritical morality of bourgeois society. The 'Liebesstufenleiter' of *Schloss Wetterstein*, a hierarchy of sexual activity, summarises, as it were, the principles of the fantasy theocracy, evaluating erotic acts according to how openly they are performed.

> Erstens im Dunkeln, zweitens im Lampenschein —
> Sklavische Brut in verängstigter Pein!
> Drittens beim Tageslicht, viertens im Freien —
> Freuden, die wir auch im Tod nicht bereuen!
> Fünftens in Nacktheit, sechstens vor Spiegeln —
> Hei, wie im Sturm sich die Sinne beflügeln!
> Siebtens im Perlenschmuck, achtens im Festgewand —
> Längst sind die Sünden der Knechtschaft verbannt!
> Neuntens im Wettkampf, zehntens als Opferfest —
> Daß unsere Gottheit uns nicht mehr verläßt! (II:616)

Notably, the highest rung on this ladder is the 'Opferfest' which takes on a religious character, a clear reference to *Eden*/*Die grosse Liebe*. The reference to 'sklavische Brut' and 'Knechtschaft' re-iterates the opposition of freedom and enslavement; this helps to make sense of the fact that the scenarios of *Eden* are described as 'freie Liebe'. Using the terms

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zu ihrem 10. Jahr gemeinschaftlich erzogen' (*Eden* 1). See Medicus, *'Die große Liebe'. Ökonomie und Konstruktion der Körper im Werk von Frank Wedekind*, p. 195.

freedom and slavery in this way suggests that the conventional moral scheme, according to which sex is consigned to privacy and secrecy and surrounded by taboo, constrains sensuality to such an extent that the alternatives presented by *Eden/Die grosse Liebe* represent a utopian emancipation of the senses, not despite but precisely *because* of their incorporation of sadistic compulsion, bondage and violence, which confront and bring into the open a core element of sexuality, integrating urges currently repressed.

Fundamental to the sketches is the supposition that the dichotomy of pain and pleasure can be transcended in violent sex. Of the sacrificial victim of the *Herbstfeier*, Wedekind writes:

> In ihren Mienen spiegelt sich der verzehrende Durst nach dem Verderben, dass ihr heute bevorsteht. In alles das mischt sich die brennende Erwartung eines einzigen kurzen Augenblickes, indem sie des denkbar höchsten Genusses teilhaftig werden soll, um dann in der unendlichen Empfindung den qualvollsten Tod zu finden. (*Eden* 24.)

Both Höger and Medicus see the *Die grosse Liebe* project to be motivated by a utopian vision of sexual pleasure, free from constraint and repression and followed to its ultimate extreme. Such a reading of the project follows the lead of the opening sentence of *Eden*, which announces the text's theme as 'die Gründung einer neuen Gesellschaftsordnung, basierend auf der freien Liebe' (*Eden* 1). Given that what follows this proclamation of a social order based on 'free' love is the depiction of a highly repressive, authoritarian order which relies for its sexual ritual on actual constraints ('Riemen', 'Peitschen', 'Käfig') as well as social conditioning and psychological pressure, it is clear that the term 'freie Liebe' requires interrogation. Medicus is also aware of this contradiction:

> Wedekind befindet sich in der absurden gesellschaftlichen Situation, wo ihm Schändung, Vergewaltigung und Prostitution Provokation und Emanzipation bedeuten als scheinbare Gegenbilder rigider Sexualmoral.[94]

Pain and pleasure may meet half-way in *Die grosse Liebe*, both subsumed in the all-embracing category of the erotic; but this *coincidentia oppositorum* occurs not as the expression of an emblematically liberated counter-culture in which individuals are free to push desire to its very limits, but rather within the context of a restrictive totalitarian theocracy which regulates every detail of the sexual activity described. The love in these scenes is in more than one way not free: it is both strictly regulated and subject to a monetary transaction.

The rituals of *Eden/Die grosse Liebe* are furthermore an important link to the utopian tradition. Utopian narratives tend to prioritise the social and communal, and as rituals serve to express communal bonds and shared beliefs, and to lift the participants beyond individuality into the unity of the group, it is common for utopian narratives to offer a snapshot of the imagined society by describing ritual or festivity. From the Feast of the Family in Bacon's *New Atlantis* to the orgy-porgies in Huxley's *Brave New World* and the festivals and funerary rites of Mattapoisett in Marge Piercy's *Woman on the Edge of Time*, the portrayal of ritualised group activity functions in utopian fiction as a means of expressing the collective mentality of the alternative world, whether it be patriarchal or pleasure-seeking. Group rituals mitigate the temporal and spatial limitation of the individual by expressing and inculcating a sense of communal belonging and participation that seems to challenge or at least relativise his or her isolation and mortality. Stefan Scherer, in his commentary on the ritual scene ('Tempeltraum') in Richard Beer-Hoffmann's *Der Tod Georgs*, describes the function of its orgiastic outcome as the abolition of the fear of death through the suspension of the principle of individuation.[95] Dionysian moments of extreme pain or pleasure anticipate death by temporarily staging and thus pre-empting the dissolution of boundaries and the extinction of consciousness. The theology underpinning the rituals described in *Eden/Die grosse Liebe* revolves around the idea that death must not be feared but rather embraced: 'Die Todesfurcht wird durch die Todeswollust überwunden' (39:35r). The theme of overcoming the fear of death is referred to also in Wedekind's one-act play *Die Zensur*, under the heading 'Anleitung zur Überwindung der Todesschauer' (II:408). Wedekind's rituals are based on the assimption that a conflation of erotic bliss and death, of sex and fatality, is a fundamental human characteristic: 'Der Begriff des wollüstigen Opfertodes gehört wie der Gottesbegriff wie die Begriffe von Raum und Zeit zu den dem Menschen angeborenen Begriffen' (39:40r). This assumption looks forward to Georges Bataille's idea that eroticism sets humans apart from other animals.[96] It is to Bataille's theory of eroticism that we will turn in an attempt to elucidate the pornographic function of Wedekind's fantasy. For now it may be noted that the sexual rituals serve to convey the totalitarian quality of a dirigist state in which all aspects of life are planned and

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[94] Medicus, *'Die große Liebe'*, p. 90.

[95] 'In der orgiastischen Entgrenzung des Frühlingsfests ist das Individuationsprinzip und damit auch die Bedrohlichkeit des Todes aufgehoben.' Scherer, *Richard Beer-Hofmann und die Wiener Moderne*, p. 250

[96] Bataille describes eroticism as 'the sexuality peculiar to man, the sexuality of a creature with the gift of tongues', arguing that man is 'a problem for himself' insofar as that he is an erotic animal: 'eroticism is the problematic part of ourselves'. Bataille, *Erotism*, pp. 257, 273.

regimented. This quality was discussed in chapter one as a central problem of utopian imagination and writing in the twentieth century. Among the notes and sketches for *Die grosse Liebe* is a jotting which illuminates this aspect of the imagined state: 'Der Unterschied zwischen Arbeit Spiel und Genuß ist aufgehoben' (38:34r). The successfully totalitarian society is one in which people want to do what they have to do, in which all human activity serves the given relations of power (it is precisely this subsumption of desire into necessity that lies at the heart of Huxley's nightmare in *Brave New World*).

4.4.2 Affirmation of life, affirmation of death

Wedekind's appropriation of names from Longfellow and Macpherson does not, according to Schmitz and Schneider, signal continuity with the value-system and mentality put forward in *Hiawatha* and *Ossian's Fingal* but rather highlights the fact that Wedekind questions, transforms and departs from the ideologies and assumptions present in those earlier works:

> So zeigt sich in der Namenswahl insgesamt die Erzählung *Mine-Haha* als eine Kontrafaktur des natürlichen Lebens gegen eine spirituelle Tradition des Todeskultes — in der Kunst wie in der christlichen Religion (94).

For Schmitz and Schneider, the key transformative moment in *Mine-Haha* is the vitalistic rejection of martyrdom and other-worldly consolation, present in *Hiawatha* as in *Ossian's Fingal* through the fact that most of the main characters of these texts are marked out for death. *Mine-Haha*, concerned with physical education, with the life of the body and its development in gracefulness, represents under this reading a departure from the cultural obsession with death. However, any attempt to interpret *Mine-Haha* as a life-affirming alternative to death-obsessed narratives whose characters perish is complicated when *Eden/Die grosse Liebe* is taken into account as the broader context of the published fragment. Death is central to the scenarios of *Eden/Die grosse Liebe*, albeit placed outside the religious and moral schemes of afterlife and punitive deity and relished rather for its own sake as the apex of sensuality and eroticism and the centrepiece of ritual. The theocratic ritual of the sketches, prefigured in the performances of *Mine-Haha*, in fact centres precisely on a *Todeskult*, one which marries death to extreme erotic experience. This makes it difficult to claim that either the published fragment or the sketches advance a 'life-affirming' perspective. Yet the speculative suggestion that *Die grosse Liebe* would develop further Wedekind's 'affirmation' of life and of the instincts, particularly the sexual instincts, is frequently encountered in the critical literature. Alfons Höger

places Wedekind in the tradition of vitalism, reading his work as a critical refusal of 'Lustfeindlichkeit' and of the 'automatisation' of man.[97] Wedekind's plays, poems and stories express according to Höger resistance to, and critique of, a morbid, oppressive culture in which the life of the instincts was subject to constraint and repression and in which sex — particularly transgressive sex — was punishable, often by death; *Die grosse Liebe* is read by Höger as part of this resistance and critique. John Hibberd, in an article whose title draws on the central premise of the sketches, namely 'die Wiedervereinigung von Kirche und Freudenhaus', also extends the 'life-affirming' perspective to *Die grosse Liebe*:

> that work [*Die grosse Liebe*] was to concentrate on human sexuality; but it is not certain whether Wedekind hoped to show there the compatibility of spiritual and sensual values or to attribute a positive function to the tension between them. [...] we may assume that *Die grosse Liebe* was to show that life could be affirmed.[98]

With this assumption Hibberd aligns the sketches with his overall understanding of Wedekind's work as 'part of that important offshoot of 'Lebensphilosophie' that is concerned primarily with the life-affirming and mystical potential of eroticism'.[99] The plans for *Die grosse Liebe* seem, for Hibberd, consistent with vitalism, as they appear to work from the premise that

> physical, religious and moral needs, once in primitive societies united in one cult, might once again be reunited through an advance in man's knowledge of himself and of the world.[100]

In order to counterbalance approaches to *Eden/Die grosse Liebe* that read Wedekind's project as an affirmation of life, Eros and sexuality, and as a disavowal of a death-obsessed, repressive culture, it is important to focus on those elements of the sketches which precisely expand the fascination with death and its centrality to sex, while acknowledging the less than stable opposition between death and life which characterises *Lebensphilosophie* and anticipates Georges Bataille's theory of eroticism. Affirmation of the instincts and of life need not always be premised on negation or refusal of death, but may encompass the acknowledgement that these are inseparable facets of existence. As

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[97] Höger, *Hetärismus und bürgerliche Gesellschaft*, p. 25. Höger thus aligns Wedekind with Bergson's position; Bergsonian vitalism was critically counterposed to the contemporary mechanisation and objectification of the world and the devaluation of life. See Gunter Martens, *Vitalismus und Expressionismus. Ein Beitrag zur Genese und Deutung expressionistischer Stilstrukturen und Motive* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1971), p. 55 ff.
[98] John Hibberd, "Die Wiedervereinigung von Kirche und Freudenhaus'. Wedekind's *Die Zensur* and his ideas on religion', *Colloquia Germanica* 19 (1986), 47-67 (p. 51).
[99] ibid., p. 61.

Wolfgang Riedel has shown, the cultural centrality of the concept 'life' in *fin de siècle* discourses by no means excludes death, rather embracing it as an inherent part of life and as evidence of the fallacious nature of religious belief in an afterlife.[101] The refusal of the fear of death in Wedekind's *Die grosse Liebe* goes hand in hand with the foregrounding of the sexual not by coincidence or merely from a desire to shock, but because the centrality of sex and of death both result from the embrace of life, immanence and the body as the only knowable reality and the only possible source of meaning, in short, from the vitalistic view that life must be lived for life's sake. The embrace of death is the apex of experience in the cult of the body. The 'Todeskult' of *Die grosse Liebe* is not a negation of life but a rehabilitation of its inevitable obverse; as Friedrich Rothe observes, 'Tod und Leben gehen unter lebensphilosophischem Aspekt ineinander über'.[102] The continuum between sex and death and the related themes of fatal eroticism and the *femme fatale* were examined in chapter two. The *Die grosse Liebe* sketches, with the trope of *Todeswollust* at their core, call for contextualisation within the complex of ideas concerning sex as death and death as sex. If they do represent a vitalistic affirmation of the instinctual, then this is a vitalism that places destruction and fatality at the heart of the erotic, in the Nietzschean sense of a desire that incorporates desire for annihilation, a joy from which resounds a cry of horror.[103]

Wedekind formulated his portrait of an alternative world against the backdrop of a cultural crisis, the central issues of which can inform our reading of his utopian project. Chapter one discussed the self-problematising turn in modernity and noted some key figures of thought in this process, including: a sense of unease concerning social atomisation and technical modernisation; a re-evalution of instinctual and irrational forces; and a questioning of rationalism. It cannot be overlooked that Wedekind's 'old state' has several features in common with the 'new state' of National Socialism that was to emerge from the cultural ferment of the early twentieth century, namely: eugenic discourse, positive valuation of sacrifice, fearlessness in the face of death, and privileging of the communal over the individual. It is possible to discern, not only in *Die grosse Liebe*, but also in *Mine-Haha*, elements of the specific cultural and discursive trends that would

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[100] ibid. p. 62

[101] Wolfgang Riedel, *'Homo Natura'. Literarische Anthropologie um 1900*, p. 23.

[102] Rothe, *Frank Wedekinds Dramen*, p. 84.

[103] 'Aus der höchsten Freude tönt der Schrei des Entsetzens'. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Die Geburt der Tragödie aus dem Geist der Musik*, in Nietzsche, *Werke*, ed. by Karl Schlechta, I, p. 29. See also Gunter Martens, *Vitalismus und Expressionismus*, p. 38 ff.

feed into the 'konglomerat disparater Elemente', the 'opportunistisches Gemisch verschiedenster Weltanschauungskomplexe' that was National Socialist ideology.[104] This is to a certain extent inevitable given the focus on the body in Wedekind's texts; Nazi ideology drew together a range of contemporary concerns in a simplifying way, and its obsession with 'Rassenhygiene' led to a fetishisation of the 'healthy', i.e. racially acceptable, body which echoed earlier reform discourse. The emphasis in *Mine-Haha* on the body, physical exercise, fresh-air, naked bathing, grace through dance and movement, as well as the depiction of a pedagogical enclave in a beautiful natural environment, reflects and even anticipates aspects of the various reform movements which came to prominence in the early decades of the twentieth century. The reform movements often situated their cause and justified its urgency with reference to a spectrum of health issues, from sexual and personal to public, national and even racial health. It has been noted that a eugenicist agenda was embedded in contemporary feminism (see p. 152 above), but this was also true of a number of other ideologically-charged movements, including naturism, as Ulrich Linse has noted:

> Auffällig ist die starke ideologische Überhöhung des neuen naturistischen Körper- und Schönheitsgefühls, das der bisherigen 'Entartung' entgegengehalten wird und sich mit den rassebiologischen Degenerationsängsten der Jahrhundertwende verbindet.[105]

Isadora Duncan, by situating racial health at the heart of her programme of dance reform, also reflected this tendency:

> It is not only a question of true art, it is a question of race, of the development of the female sex to beauty and health, of the return to the original strength and to natural movements of woman's body. It is a question of the development of perfect mothers and the birth of healthy and beautiful children.[106]

In the old state of Wedekind's *Die grosse Liebe*, like in Huxley's *Brave New World*, sexual openness and abolition of monogamy form part of a eugenic reproductive policy; whereas *Brave New World* achieves this through the complete divorce of sex from reproduction, Wedekind's 'old state' — not unlike the society described in Edward

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[104] Klaus Vondung and Jost Hermand, cited in Karl-Heinz Joachim Schoeps, *Deutsche Literatur zwischen den Weltkriegen III: Literatur im Dritten Reich* (Bern: P. Lang, 1992), pp. 15-16.

[105] Ulrich Linse, 'Zeitbild Jahrhundertwende', in *'Wir sind nackt und nennen uns Du'. Von Lichtfreunden und Sonnenkämpfern. Eine Geschichte der Freikörperkultur*, ed. by Michael Andritzky and Thomas Rautenberg (Giessen: Anabas, 1989), pp. 10-50, p. 19. Quoted in Ortrud Gutjahr, 'Erziehung zur Schamlosigkeit', p. 101.

[106] Isadora Duncan, *The Dance*, p. 20.

Bellamy's utopia *Looking Backward*[107] — relies on hierarchical selection of sexual partners through tests of their physical beauty, grace, agility and strength.

> Wie schon bemerkt, wurden in der Knabenerziehungsanstalt, durch Schönheit hervorragende Exemplare mit einem Mal versehen [...] 2 Tage vor Beginn des Fr[ühlings]festes wird unter den Gezeichneten, die sich unter den Insassen der Interimsanstalt befinden, eine Verlosung abgehalten (*Eden*, 4).

The female participants who have been deflowered in the ritual are brought to a 'Gebäranstalt' (*Eden* 1) or 'Geburtsstätte' (39:15r), and any children born to them are raised communally (a common motif of utopian writing) (40:18r). The centrality of eugenics reveals the indebtedness of fantasy to reality: the seemingly alternative sexual agenda of *Eden/Die grosse Liebe*, despite its temporally and culturally alienated setting, is enmeshed in contemporary discourses and debates.

Elsewhere in Wedekind's work, the eugenics question is confronted in a contemporary setting which dramatically relativises and deflates the utopian pretensions of eugenicism. The 'Verein für Rassezüchtung' of Wedekind's 1904 play *Karl Hetmann, der Zwergriese* reflects in comic terms the centrality of eugenicist ideas to debates about reproduction and the future of society. Having shopped around for a reform concept on which to pin his profit-driven 'Institut für Sozialwissenschaft', and rejected feminism because of the unattractiveness of its female supporters (a familiar motif, as we have seen), the entrepreneur Rudolf Launhart is won over to the cause of Karl Hetmann's society for racial improvement, which places eugenics at the heart of a revolutionary programme in which the bonds of matrimony and family are to be dissolved. Here, at least, the problem of ugliness will not arise as it is firmly excluded from the outset: 'Die Mitglieder sind ausschließlich Menschen von auffallender, allgemein bewunderter Schönheit' (II:235). Hetmann propounds a Nietzschean refusal of material comfort and well-being; beauty, not welfare, is to be the focus of human existence:

> HETMANN: Wenn die Menschen dazu emporsteigen, die Schönheit höher zu achten, als Hab und Gut, als Leib und Leben, dann sind die Menschen der Gottheit um eine Stufe näher, als wenn der Sieg über die Erdenqual ihr höchster Preis ist! (II:235).

Through the infatuation of the female characters for the hideous yet charismatic Hetmann, the intervention of the censors, the antics of the rich divorcées who fund the society, and the scandal caused when Hetmann proclaims that 'die Bewertung der Jungfräulichkeit ist unsittlich' (II:274), the programme of the 'Verein für Rassezüchtung'

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[107] See Bellamy, *Looking Backward. 2000-1887*, pp. 256-8.

descends into farce; when a circus impresario calls to invite the washed-up revolutionary to appear in the role of *dummer August*, this confirmation of the futility of his endeavours leads him to commit suicide, leaving his legacy to fall into the hands of the myth-making profiteer, Launhart. Thus, in broad outline, the plot; what is of particular relevance here are the continual references to the ideology of the 'Verein für Rassezüchtung', which resonate unmistakably with *Eden/Die grosse Liebe*, for instance in the dissolution of conventional sexual morality. The refusal of traditional marital monogamy in favour of a system in which both men and women are entitled to sex with whomever they want is described in the play in terms not of freedom but rather of duty.

> HETMANN: Die Mitglieder des Bundes verzichten durch ein feierliches Gelübde auf das Recht, einander die Bezeugungen ihrer Gunst zu verweigern. [...] Jedes Vereinsmitglied hat ein unverbrüchliches Recht auf die Gunstbezeugung des andern. [...] In der Liebe sind unter den Mitgliedern des Bundes alle Frauen allen Männern und alle Männer allen Frauen untertan.
>
> LAUNHART: Das wäre dann also so ungefähr dasselbe, was man bis jetzt mit dem Ausdruck 'Freie Liebe' bezeichnete?
>
> HETMANN: Im Gegenteil! In der Liebe haben unsere Mitglieder keine Freiheit. (II: 237)

The untenable claim made for the *Eden* project — 'Es handelt sich um die Gründung einer neuen Gesellschaftsordnung, basierend auf der freien Liebe' — is here revised. It is as if Wedekind, realising the difficulties that impeded the completion of the utopian project, decided to incorporate its main ideas at an ironic remove in a plot about a revolution that fails. By embedding the exposition of these ideas within a context in which they are perceived as new, strange or threatening, he is compelled to work out their implications.

The various currents of the *Zeitgeist* that intersect in *Eden/Die grosse Liebe*, then, include a focus on the body, an affirmation of life that also encompasses a cult of death, and a refusal or negation of conventionally validated forms of sexuality. As a framework for exploring these issues, Wedekind uses a number of writing strategies: a primitivist aesthetic, a temporally undetermined alternative social order, and a focus on the description of ritual which facilitates the portrayal of a collective. What first strikes the reader of the sketches, however, is that they are undoubtedly pornographic. The examination of certain aspects of pornographic writing and of interpretive practices called forth by other pornographic texts will thus provide a useful theoretical orientation for an approach to *Die grosse Liebe*.

4.4.3 *Eden/Die grosse Liebe* as pornography

Violent pornography (the *Eden/Die grosse Liebe* texts answer for the most part to this description) is the most direct expression of a varied and widespread cultural trope which was explored in chapter two: the interface between sex and death. The primary aim of pornography is to occasion sexual arousal in its reader. It is thus a variety of writing that exposes in a particularly acute way the permeable boundary between text and body. The fact that printed matter can cause a physiological response draws attention to the fact that texts derive in the first place from physical experience, that bodies can never be written out of texts as they are the condition of textual production. The aroused or titillated state which gives rise to and pursues the pornographic situation or fantasy is transmitted from the pornographer through the text to the reader. The text forms a link in a chain of arousal and desire, thus forcing us to confront the very real ways in which the written word is not only produced by corporeal experience, but can in turn intervene in it — not through titillation alone but also through other forms of incitement, for instance wherever textually transmitted ideology occasions violent acts. The pornographic text is however not comprehensible solely in terms of this seemingly direct relation between written word and physical response in the reader, as the discussion of the complex relationship between real and imagined violence will suggest (see above, p. 144 ff).

In discussing pornographic texts that depict acts of violence it is necessary to avoid any simplifying opposition of the 'life-affirming' or positive side of the instincts versus a fascination with death and a tendency towards violence. As Susan Sontag argues in her essay 'The Pornographic Imagination', pornography poses a challenge to mainstream culture precisely where it calls any such clear opposition of Eros versus Thanatos into question. The encounter with the extreme situations violent pornography describes is transgressive in the sense that it pushes against the boundaries of what is generally accepted and forces a rethinking of sexuality and a confrontation with its culturally invalidated forms. Violent pornographic texts are counterposed to dominant cultural narratives such as romance, sentimentality, family, individuation, sublimation, monogamy and unproblematically positive desire that denies or suppresses any trace of violence or disgust. It is this transgressive or subversive potential that has led cultural theorists from

de Beauvoir onwards to accord such significance to the work of pornographers from the Marquis de Sade to Georges Bataille (indeed, Bataille's theoretical work on eroticism is itself part of this critical reception of pornography). The aesthetics of outrage their pornography is seen to expound lies at the heart of modernism: 'every product of disgust capable of becoming a negation of the family is Dada'.[108] Pornography is seen from this critical perspective as the logical extreme of the tendency for thinkers and movements concerned with cultural subversion to place eroticism at the centre of their preoccupations. Theoretical approaches to pornography are concerned, *inter alia*, with the possibility that there might be a 'metaphoric equivalence between the violation of *sexual* taboos and the violation of *discursive* norms'.[109]

Sontag sees pornographic literature as one element in 'the whole body of contemporary literature insistently focused on extreme situations and behaviour'.[110] She outlines a connection or continuum between the erotic and the violent, such that violent acts in pornography do not disrupt some otherwise untroubled erotic but rather are fundamental to it. The often fatal violence depicted in much pornographic work is, she contends, not so much a distortion of a 'natural, pleasant function' through the neuroses of a sick society, but rather reveals a more fundamental truth about sexuality:

> Human sexuality is, quite apart from Christian repressions, a highly questionable phenomenon, and belongs, at least potentially, among the extreme rather than the ordinary experiences of humanity.

Bataille describes these opposed spheres of experience under the headings 'violence' versus 'work', 'sacred' versus 'profane'.[111]

Many accounts of sexual transgression are ostensibly concerned with the relationship between a given order or system for sex and those acts, behaviours, and relationships which contravene or fall outside that order. The concept of transgression provides a template for discussing the ways in which such contraventions come into being and are perceived, experienced and dealt with. For instance, in a culture that officially endorses heterosexual marital monogamous reproductive sex above any other type of sex, and in

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[108] Tristan Tzara, *Dada manifesto* [1918], quoted in Steiner, *The Trouble with Beauty*, p. 19.
[109] Susan Rubin Suleiman, 'Pornography, Transgression and the Avant-Garde: Bataille's Story of the Eye', in *The Poetics of Gender*, ed. by Nancy Miller (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), pp. 117-136 (p. 119).
[110] Susan Sontag, 'The Pornographic Imagination', in Sontag, *Styles of Radical Will* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1969), pp. 35-73 (p. 40).
[111] Bataille, *Erotism*.

which an ideology of romance supports and disseminates the privileged position of this one type of sexuality, other sexualities and sexual behaviours — infidelity, adultery, homosexuality, celibacy, promiscuity, polyandry/polygyny, incest, paedophilia, sadism/masochism — are defined in relation to the validated form of sexuality as varying degrees of deviation from it. The privileged position of the validated form is consolidated in many modes: through cultural visibility, ritual, narrative, language, economics/marketing and assumption. Some, but not all, pornographic texts write against the grain of the culturally validated form of sex, and not all texts that do this are pornographic. The tradition of the novel of adultery, for instance, eloquently described by Tony Tanner and Peter von Matt, draws its power from an intense concern with the transgression of the validated sexual form.[112]

Pornographic texts, then, have been of interest to cultural theorists for their expression of 'extreme' or 'transgressive' situations. Categories such as 'transgressiveness' or 'extremity', useful though they may be for understanding the function of violent pornography, run the risk of failing to account for the differences *within* these 'extreme situations'. In the acts of violation around which violent pornographic texts revolve, there remains an irreducible difference between the violator and the violated (even if their roles are reversed from act to act). The totalitarian regimes of de Sade's castles emerge in opposition to prevailing standards of hypocritical decency, Christian ideology, monogamy, chastity/modesty and unambivalent pleasure; de Sade's texts are transgressive relative to these cultural norms. In its flagrant subversion of the norms of the contemporary reality against which it is written, in its conflation of sexual with violent experience, and in its focus on ritual and sacrificial acts, Wedekind's pornography in *Eden* and *Die grosse Liebe* operates similar strategies to that of de Sade and Georges Bataille. Just as the subversions — and perversions — in the writings of Sade and Bataille converse critically with contemporary ideologies and hypocrisies regarding sex, pain and violence, so too must the alterity of the world of *Die grosse Liebe* be understood not in isolation from, but in dialogue with, the sexual economy from within which Wedekind wrote and with which much of his work was concerned.

Theoretical writing on pornography has often overemphasised the transgressive potential of pornographic writing. Pornography may push against certain cultural norms, but

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[112] See Tony Tanner, *Adultery in the Novel. Contract and Transgression* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins

within the pornographic text a new normative standard is established, as Adorno and Horkheimer acknowledged when they called de Sade's work an early monument to the planning skills of fascism.[113] Pornographic acts may express transgression of one norm while simultaneously marking the observance of another; the sexually explicit acts are often carried out as a reaction to compulsion or coercion, and contest the law of 'normal' sexuality only by establishing a counter-law of 'perversity'. Suleiman has argued that 'the Sadean hero, or heroine, puts a premium on transgression [...] transgression in Sade occurs when a sovereign subject defies an external Law'.[114] Perhaps; but this defiance of an external law inaugurates a new law internal to the scene and act. Against the authoritarian order portrayed in the text, attempts to resist the onslaught of sexual violence can become, in this new context and particularly for a feminist sensibility, a form of internal transgression, a protest against the violence of the text. The violent pornographic text is seen as culturally transgressive because it confuses categories by refusing to hold apart the fundamental opposition of Eros and Thanatos and by laying bare their mutual imbrication. But, as noted in chapter two, a duality inheres within the destructive impulse (see p. 94 above). Thanatos is Janus-faced:

> Tamed as it may be, sexuality remains one of the demonic forces in human consciousness — pushing us at intervals close to taboo and dangerous desires, which range from the impulse to commit sudden arbitrary violence upon another person to the voluptuous yearning for the extinction of one's consciousness, for death itself.[115]

In suggesting a spectrum of this 'dark side' of the sexual that would include on the one hand a desire for 'the extinction of one's consciousness, for death itself' and on the other hand a desire to commit 'sudden arbitrary violence upon another person', Sontag refers to the duality of Thanatos, the tension between the passive and active elements within the destructive drive; this duality is of central importance to the forms violent pornography takes. How does the introspective, ultimately isolated tendency to succumb to the magnetism of the inorganic relate to the outwardly-directed aggressive act, which acknowledges an other only to destroy it?

Wolfdietrich Rasch has outlined how these two seemingly contrasting forces — the outwardly-directed versus the inwardly-directed destructive urge — are both

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University Press, 1979) and Peter von Matt, *Liebesverrat. Die Treulosen in der Literatur* (Munich: dtv, 1989).

[113] Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialektik der Aufklärung. Philosophische Fragmente* in Adorno, *Gesammelte Schriften*, III, p. 106.

[114] Suleiman, *Subversive Intent. Gender, Politics, and the Avant-Garde* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 1990), p. 82.

fundamental to *décadence*, a cultural sensibility he identifies in many literary texts of the *fin de siècle*: in the texts he examines, Rasch finds that weakness, passivity, and the lack of a will to live is often expressed through a violence that does not contradict the weakness but is compensatory and complementary to it.[116] Self-destructive drives are clearly destructive drives turned inwards and directed towards the self; but this insight into the continuity between sadism and masochism does not obviate the necessity to interrogate the contexts, forms and modes of outwardly-directed aggression, and to unravel the relationship between these forms and cultural tropes such as gendered oppositions and looking relations. Identifying the presence in aggressive or destructive drives of both inwardly-directed and outwardly-directed impulses makes it possible to ask some important questions about violent pornography, such as: how do these contrasting impulses relate to each other? Which takes precedence at a particular narrative moment, and why? Andrea Dworkin's objection to Sontag's analysis of the pornographic is that the latter occludes the difference between these two aspects of Thanatos; Dworkin sees in Sontag's essay a failure to acknowledge the vast divergences within violation, the gulf between violating and being violated.

To occlude the clear differences between the positions of violated and violator by subsuming them both under a category such as 'Thanatos' or 'transgression', and to argue that they share a common basis (such as the refusal of order, the embrace of chaos, the presenting of the unpresentable, or, as in Bataille, a succumbing to a generalised violence) is to disregard their very different effects and applications when it comes to the perhaps obvious but nonetheless important question of the relations of actor to acted upon, the question that drives much pornography: who does what to whom? If desire tends towards its own annihilation, if implicit in the dynamic of sex lies the ultimate goal of loss of consciousness, even death, then whose? Hegarty quotes Bataille: 'I want to have my throat slashed while violating the girl to whom I will have been able to say: you are the night,' glossing this passage as follows:

> In this case there is no victor, only the loss of control, of individual sanctity for both; there is an equivalence in the undoing of the positions of power held before the encounter.[117]

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[115] Sontag, 'The Pornographic Imagination', p. 57.
[116] Wolfdietrich Rasch, *Die literarische Décadence um 1900* (Munich: Beck, 1986), p. 87 ff, p. 95 ff.
[117] ibid., p. 68.

Hegarty's reading allows the concern with transgression of boundaries to eclipse the differences between the violator and the violated. The voice of the passage may dream of extinction and thus of being 'undone' as the girl is, but on the path to this goal there is still a will: 'I want'; a power to speak: 'to whom I will have been able to say'; a power to define: 'you are'; none of these powers are accorded to the girl being violated. Even through this brief example, we can see how focussing on the notion of transgression, of loss of individuality brought about by excessive states or acts (a notion at no point fully explicated or justified) can blind the reader to the power relation between, in this case, male subject and female object. What Andrea Dworkin suggests is that the two contrasting tendencies within Thanatos outlined above — the 'impulse to commit sudden arbitrary violence upon another person' versus 'the voluptuous yearning for the extinction of one's consciousness' are, in many pornographic texts, differentiated along the lines of the familiar gendered polarity between active male (subject) and passive female (object). The objectifying tendency that inheres in the Western concepts of subject and object, self and other, and the dynamics of the gaze discussed in chapter two, are central to the deployment of power within pornography and to the relations of subjectivity and objectification described therein. Johannes Pankau sees the objectifying gaze at work in Wedekind's diaristic accounts of encounters with prostitutes, and identifies violence and destruction as a potential outcome of this objectifying tendency:

> Nicht von der Lust sprechen die Tagebücher, nicht einmal durchgängig vom Verlangen, umso stärker jedoch von der Entwicklung des Künstlers und Frauenforschers Wedekind, der sich noch mitten in der retrospektiv vergegenwärtigten sexuellen Situation als Beobachter und Materialsammler sieht. [...] Der zwanghafte Beobachter von Weiblichkeit, der in der Objektivierung Faszinationskraft wie Bedrohlichkeit der Frau zu bannen versucht, ist in Wedekinds Person wie in seinem Werk präsent, etwa in der Figur des Jack in der *Büchse der Pandora*.[118]

A focus on the problematics of gendered power relations may provide an angle from which to critique an overly celebratory reception of pornography as inherently transgressive or exploratory. Pornographic texts may sometimes contest or resist a culture's dominant sexual mores but they can also document them, transferring basic assumptions and beliefs about sex and gender into 'extreme' situations but nevertheless preserving them intact. The pornographic fantasy may be as fated as the utopian fantasy to repeat, despite its alteration of detail, existing conditions and relations.

Dworkin argues that the objectifying strategies in pornography are indissociable from relations of commodification: pornographic images are laid out for consumption, and the looking relations that underlie them polarise the consumer and the consumed. For Dworkin, the 'unrestricted economy' Georges Bataille expounds through the exploration of nonreproductive sexuality, waste, and violent excess is inseparable from the highly restrictive economy of the sex industry which is legitimated by reference to 'high-class' or 'philosophical' porn, such as that of Bataille or of de Sade. Bataille's insight into the continuity of eroticism with death is situated by Dworkin in a real context of exploited, battered, raped and murdered women. Similarly, for Wendy Steiner, the 'horror story lurking in Sade' is the 'logical progression from ideal beauty to inaccessible woman to dehumanised object to corpse'.[119] It is necessary, however, when dealing with literary portrayals of violence, to question just how logical this 'logical progression' is. The sacrificial victims in Wedekind's fantasy remain a fantasy, and as Elisabeth Bronfen observes,

> any theoretical insistence on a direct, unambiguous and stable analogy between cultural images and experienced reality defuses both the real violence of political domination and the power of representations. For it seems as necessary to stress the fundamental difference between real violence done to a physical body and any 'imagined' one (which represents this 'dangerous fantasy' on paper or canvas without any concretely violated body as its ultimate signified), as it is necessary to explore the way in which these two registers come to be conflated and confused.[120]

For Dworkin, as for Steiner, there is a logical progression, a direct link between the imagined violence and the real; for Bronfen, by contrast, violence in a text has no direct connection to actual violated bodies. Bronfen registers the complexity of the relation between the imagined and the real, but in doing so refuses the possibility that this relation might, sometimes, be straightforward. While it seems reasonable to distrust claims that the text 'makes' the world, it is no less important to draw attention to ways in which the world 'makes' the text and to the fact that the real (real violence, real gender relations) constitutes the imagined (imagined violence, imagined gender relations).

Whatever the limitations of her reading may be, Dworkin restores the problem of gender to the centre of questions of sexual transgression that had been effectively de-gendered by theoretical approaches concerned with issues such as textuality, excess, and the refusal

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[118] Pankau, 'Prostitution, Tochtererziehung und männlicher Blick', p. 34.
[119] Steiner, *The Trouble with Beauty*, p. 17.

of normativity. Paul Hegarty, in his book on Georges Bataille, argues that Dworkin's polemic, and feminist objections to Bataillean pornography generally, miss the point or at least overstate the case. The formulation of Hegarty's argument, however, makes a telling admission: 'Bataille's fiction, at its most pornographic, is not reliant on the death or annihilation of women (the prostitute, however, is accorded such a dubious honour, as she is, as a subject, dead)'.[121] For Hegarty, then, the annihilation of the prostitute is a separate case, not to be considered as evidence of an inherent gendering within the violent-pornographic. However, in Dworkin's reading of pornography — which she defines with reference to its etymology as the 'graphic depiction of vile whores' — the boundary in pornography between 'woman' and 'prostitute' is blurred: wherever the image of a woman is sold for profit to a consumer for the scopophilic and sexual gratification of the latter, this woman is, for the purposes of the transaction, prostituted. Weininger had gone even further in blurring the boundaries between 'Weib' and 'Dirne', and indeed Bataille also voiced a similar thought: 'Not every woman is a potential prostitute, but prostitution is the logical consequence of the feminine attitude'.[122] As Johannes Pankau notes of the *fin-de-siècle* interest in the problem of prostitution,

> die Prostituierte erscheint nicht ausschließlich als Antithese zur 'anständigen Frau', sie wird vielmehr zur extremen Ausprägung dessen, was im Weiblichen wesensmäßig angelegt ist.[123]

For Weininger, prostitution is merely the economic reality of the indiscriminate, animal nature of female sexuality, which consists in 'das Koitiert-sein-wollen'.[124] For Dworkin, prostitution is the epitome of subjugation by men of women, the logical outcome of objectification within patriarchy, of which pornography is the visual/textual product. In different ways, both these positions see prostitution as an emblem of antagonistic gender difference — a question of cultural norms and economic relations in Dworkin's view, a question of essences in Weininger's and Bataille's. Dworkin refuses the possibility that a female gaze could also consume pornography, or even that any female desire — even sadistic desire for female-on-female or female-on-male violence — could be represented within pornographic discourse; any representations of such female activity, she argues, are ultimately directed by and for the consuming, controlling male gaze. Gilles Deleuze's reading of masochistic fantasies of female-on-male violence would concur with this view:

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[120] Bronfen, *Over her dead body*, p. 59.
[121] Paul Hegarty, *Georges Bataille. Core Cultural Theorist* (London: Sage Publications, 2000), p. 67.
[122] Georges Bataille, *Erotism*, p. 131.
[123] Pankau, 'Prostitution, Tochtererziehung und männlicher Blick', p. 23.

> the masochistic hero appears to be educated and fashioned by the authoritarian woman whereas basically it is he who forms her, dresses her for the part and prompts the harsh words she addresses to him. It is the victim who speaks through the mouth of his torturer, without sparing himself.[125]

Even the frequent portrayal of lesbian sex in pornography — also an aspect of *Die grosse Liebe* and particularly of *Eden* (19) — is, under this reading, situated within these looking relations. The common fate of Lulu and Geschwitz — the fact that their relationship ultimately gravitates towards the male knife — may be explicable by Dworkin's argument that 'in the male mind, two women cannot be together without a phallic third'.[126]

Susan Rubin Suleiman has also levelled at Dworkin's readings the criticism that they are reductive and overlook the 'textuality' of Bataille's writings. Seeking to reclaim aspects of Bataille's work for a feminist reading, Suleiman writes that Dworkin is 'so intent on looking at 'the scene and the characters' that she never sees the frame'. Suleiman defines the 'frame' as 'all those aspects of a fictional narrative that designate it, directly or indirectly, as constructed, invented, filtered through a specific medium';[127] by becoming aware of the frame, the reader realises and acknowledges the textuality of the text. (Perhaps Dworkin's 'flattening', dead-pan way of reading might have fared better with Wedekind's pornographic sketches, which, as incomplete drafts, are narrated in the dead-pan style of his stage directions).[128] This view of Dworkin's readings as overly literal is called into question by a striking instance of awareness on her part of the constructedness of texts, particularly of pornographic texts. In fact it is only through an awareness of this constructedness that she can attempt to peel back its layers and arrive at the conditions of its construction, as the following passage shows.

> Coleridge's 'willing suspension of disbelief' operates more consistently in the viewing of pornography than it ever has in the reading of literature. The willing suspension of disbelief is crucial. Without it, one might remember that this rendition of women in private [she is discussing a particular piece in *Hustler* which displays two women engaged in lesbian acts] is not women in private at all, but women in makeup and costumes under

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[124] 'Das ganze Sein des Weibes offenbart sich im Koitus, aufs höchste potenziert [...] Die Dirne will von allem koitiert werden'. Weininger, *Geschlecht und Charakter*, pp. 306-7.

[125] Gilles Deleuze, cited in Roland Bogue, *Deleuze and Guattari* (London and New York: Routledge, 1989), p. 47. See also Annemarie Taeger, *Die Kunst, Medusa zu töten*, p. 30 ff., for an account of the inscription of traditionally gendered power relations in representations of female sadism.

[126] Andrea Dworkin, *Pornography: Men Possessing Women* (London: The Women's Press, 1981), p. 132.

[127] Suleiman, 'Pornography, Transgression and the Avant Garde', p. 126.

[128] As are the accounts of his erotic experiences in the diaries, as Pankau has pointed out. See Pankau, 'Prostitution, Tochtererziehung und männlicher Blick', p. 34.

> hot lights in uncomfortable positions posed before a camera behind which is a photographer behind whom is a publisher behind whom is a multibillion-dollar industry behind which are rich lawyers claiming that the photogaphs are constitutionally protected speech essential to human freedom behind whom are intellectuals who find all of this revolutionary behind all of whom – except the models – are women who launder their underwear and clean their toilets. Indeed, to be a consumer of pornography one must be adept at suspending disbelief.[129]

In industrial pornography, representations of erotic excess are produced, consumed and contained by a capitalist economy and patriarchal looking relations. Literary representations of erotic excess are seen on the other hand to partake of an 'agonised re-appraisal of the nature of literature',[130] to 'break out of a restrictive economy'.[131] What this shows is that the interpretation of a pornographic text, like the interpretation of any text, is contingent on the context of its production and reception, on the perception of its proper setting, whether intellectual/counter-cultural, or trashy/commercial. As Wedekind's sketches are unpublished and reflect concerns dwelt upon in his published literary works, they have thus far invited the kind of reception that reads them in a literary-critical setting; but their possible purpose as titillating and *risqué* pieces for the ends of entertainment and arousal must not be overlooked for all that. The constant references to the audience's reaction, and the presence of the numerous anonymous 'Herren' who pay to copulate with the girls, underscore the entertainment analogy: in *Eden* we read that 'Der Mittelraum der Rotunde [the venue of the ritual] hat durchaus den Character eines grossen Café' (2). The presence of these 'Herren' is a reflective moment within the text on the problematics of depicting sexual acts: the gaze of the reader is intermittently mediated through the textually immanent gaze of the paying audience in the scenario. The question of whether this raises the texts to a 'metapornographic' level, at which the focus is less on bodies and sexual acts than on the representation of bodies and sexual acts, on what texts can do rather than on what bodies can do to other bodies and can have done to them — this question will doubtless become a focus for the interpretative debates the forthcoming publication of these texts can be expected to spark. In this context it remains to address the striking affinity between Wedekind's fantasy and Bataille's later writing on eroticism; the discussion thus moves now to the portrayal of sacrificial practices and masochistic attitudes in pornographic writing.

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[129] Dworkin, *Pornography: Men Possessing Women*, pp. 136-7.
[130] Sontag, 'The Pornographic Imagination', p. 44.

4.4.4 The problematics of sacrifice

> Die Unterworfenen [tun] das ihnen angetane Unrecht sich selber nochmals [an], um es ertragen zu können.[132]

Violence and murder in the context of ritual are normally described as 'sacrifice', and the victims in the *Herbst-* and *Frühlingsfeier* of *Eden/Die grosse Liebe* are accordingly called 'Opfer'. Sacrifice, in its everyday usage which suggests the 'destruction, surrender, or foregoing of anything valued for the sake of anything else, especially a higher consideration' (Chambers Dictionary), refers to the culturally fundamental strategy of deferral of gratification.[133] This usage of the word sacrifice generalises its more specific meaning of ritual offering. The practice of sacrificing a young member of the community — obviously a destruction of 'something valued' — draws its meaning and validation from the belief that this destruction will appease a deity, prevent poor weather conditions and illness, guarantee a good harvest and so on. But the significance of ritual sacrifice is not exhausted by this aspect of appeasement or bargaining. Sacrifice also suggests the possibility that through a communal act performed by a group of people, the participants may be raised above the normal, mundane plane of existence (the profane) and united not only with each other but with something beyond themselves (the sacred). The sacrificial offering both occasions and expresses this unity, hence its significance in Georges Bataille's enquiry into the relationship of mysticism and eroticism.

Acts of sacrifice are supposed to counteract the principle of individuation, what Georges Bataille calls the 'discontinuity' of individual beings. In Hugo von Hofmannsthal's *Das Gespräch über Gedichte* (1903), the sacrificial victim — a sheep — does not merely stand in for the primeval man who seeks to appease his gods, initially through his own immolation. The symbolic relation between participant and victim is, like the poetic

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[131] Hegarty, *Georges Bataille*, p. 37.

[132] Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialektik der Aufklärung. Philosophische Fragmente* in Adorno, *Gesammelte Schriften*, III, p. 69.

[133] Freud privileges deferral of gratification as a founding moment in the progress of civilisation, and speculates on the taming of fire as an exemplary instance: 'Als wäre der Urmensch gewohnt gewesen, wenn er dem Feuer begegnete, eine infantile Lust an ihm zu befriedigen, indem er es durch seinen Harnstrahl auslöschte. [...] Wer zuerst auf diese Lust verzichtete, das Feuer verschonte, konnte es mit sich forttragen und in seinen Dienst zwingen. Dadurch daß er das Feuer seiner eigenen sexuellen Erregung dämpfte, hatte er die Naturkraft des Feuers gezähmt. Diese große kulturelle Eroberung wäre also der Lohn für einen

relation of metaphor and object, not one of substitution, but rather one of identification or mutual subsumption: 'er muß, einen Augenblick lang, in dem Tier gestorben sein, nur so konnte das Tier für ihn sterben'. The boundaries of the individual are contravened by the sacrificial act.

> Clemens: Er starb in dem Tier. Und wir lösen uns auf in den Symbolen. So meinst du es?
>
> Gabriel: Freilich. Soweit sie die Kraft haben, uns zu bezaubern.
>
> Clemens: Woher kommt ihnen diese Kraft? Wie konnte er in dem Tier sterben?
>
> Gabriel: Davon, daß wir und die Welt nichts Verschiedenes sind.[134]

The sense of complete unity with the world expressed in the sacrificial act — the overcoming of discontinuity, in Bataille's terms — is also referred to by Freud in his essay *Das Unbehagen in der Kultur*. In the first section of this essay Freud attempts to understand — or rather, admits his inability to understand — the 'oceanic feeling' which he suspects may be fundamental to religious experience and which would explain the endurance of religious practices in spite of their obviously irrational and often counter-instinctual basis. Freud circles around the issue of the oceanic feeling and paraphrases a literary quotation in his tentative effort to characterise it: 'Ja, aus der Welt werden wir nicht fallen. Wir sind einmal darin'.[135] In both instances, in Freud and in Hofmannsthal, the sense of the primordial unity of all things is seen as a fundamental underlying element of religious or aesthetic practice. Sacrificial rituals seek to access this sense of primordial unity. This aspect of sacrifice is central to the theology of the old state in the *Die grosse Liebe* sketches. Embracing death as the pinnacle of sensual experience in order to overcome the fear of dying — perhaps the most fundamental aspect of the *Die grosse Liebe* theology — is predicated on a similar sense of a primordial and ultimate universal unity, and enacts a similar negation or dissolution of individuality, described by Georges Bataille as 'full and limitless being unconfined within the trammels of separate personalities, continuity of being'.[136] The rupture of the boundaries of the individual through communality, sex, violence, and death is Bataille's central concern. He writes: 'In his strange myths, in his cruel rites, man is *in search of a lost intimacy* from the first',[137] suggesting, again, this connection between sacrificial acts and primordial unity. Bataille's

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Triebverzicht.' Freud, *Das Unbehagen in der Kultur*, in *Studienausgabe*, 11 vols (Frankfurt a.M.: Fischer, 1974), IX, p. 221. In this case, the pleasure of quenching the fire in this way is 'sacrificed' to cultural gain.

[134] Hugo von Hofmannsthal, 'Das Gespräch über Gedichte' DATE in Hofmannsthal, *Gesammelte Werke in Einzelausgaben: Prosa II* (Frankfurt a.M.: Fischer, 1951), p. 105.

[135] Freud, *Das Unbehagen in der Kultur*, p. 198. The quote is from D. Chr. Grabbe's *Hannibal*. Arthur Koestler, speculating on this experiential dimension, uses the term 'integrative tendency'. See Koestler, *The Ghost in the Machine* [1967] (London: Arkana, 1989).

[136] Bataille, *Erotism*, p. 21.

[137] Bataille, quoted in Hegarty, *Georges Bataille*, p. 37, emphasis added.

writing on sacrifice focussed on a presumed dissolution of identity among the actors in a sacrificial ritual. This dissolution is intimately bound up with the idea of transgression, with the crossing of boundaries that are usually observed. Suleiman summarises Bataillean transgression as an 'interior experience in which an individual — or, in *fête*, ritual, a community — exceeded the bounds of rational everyday behaviour'.[138]

Rational everyday behaviour is summed up in the Bataillean phrase 'restricted economy', which denotes the world of work, usefulness, order, and self-preservation; for Bataille, Christianity — and organised religion generally — represented the attempt of the restricted economy to tame the transgressive potential of ritual, profaning the sacred, rendering it safe and containing it. Nonetheless, religion is one of the few spheres which retains a residual understanding of sacrifice. Bataille's work, which has been 'felt so deeply to correspond to a certain notion of textual and cultural modernity',[139] confronts among other themes sacrifice, violence, dirt, and pornography, taking to great lengths the characteristic avant-garde gesture of promoting to a central place that which had been marginal, refused, covered over or unseen. His persistent unfolding of an aesthetics of outrage seems driven by the need to reveal and overturn the often unacknowledged denials and boundaries which police excess in culture. For Susan Sontag, Bataille's work, particularly his pornographic writing, is an exemplary instance of modern art's task of 'making forays into and taking up positions on the frontiers of consciousness', and manifests the modern artist's constantly renewed attempt to 'advance further in the dialectic of outrage', to focus on the 'repulsive, obscure, inaccessible; in short, to give what is, or seems to be, *not* wanted'.[140] Bataille gives the name 'heterology' to this strategy of privileging and centering acts and things usually left unsaid. His foregrounding of violence and excess and his inquiry into the meaning and function of sacrifice illuminate some of the more opaque features of *Eden/Die grosse Liebe* and help us to understand the place these texts occupy in Wedekind's work. Wedekind's texts often make the avant garde gesture of presenting the unpresentable — for example, Lulu's 'unwomaning'[141] at the end of *Die Büchse der Pandora* is excessively gruesome. Even disregarding *Eden/Die grosse Liebe*, Wedekind's work abounds with sexual death and 'perverse' (in the sense of non-reproductive, non-teleological) sexuality — while his characters are obsessively

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[138] Suleiman, 'Pornography, Transgression and the Avant-Garde', p. 120.
[139] ibid., p. 118.
[140] Sontag, 'The Pornographic Imagination', p. 53.
[141] I borrow this term from Elizabeth Boa, who suggests that the surgery Jack the Ripper performs on Lulu's corpse is 'a novel twist to the classical practice of unmanning'. Boa, *The Sexual Circus*, p. 22.

sexual, few of them reproduce. Their non-reproductive sexuality can be seen in the broader context of the anti-utilitarian 'Verklärung der Unfruchtbarkeit' identified by Rothe as a feature of *fin de siècle* décadence;[142] it is also a key aspect of the 'alternative economy' Bataille proposes as a refusal of the restrictive economy of individual and social self-preservation and reproduction. To the central economic tenets of daily husbandry — productivity, use, profit, cleanliness, order and moderation — Bataille opposes a counter-economy of free play, nonproductive expenditure, drunkenness, waste, dirt, disorder and excess. This non-productive, potentially self-destructive counter-economy is always implicitly present within the productive, self-preserving economy. The two realms are not mutually exclusive, but implicated in each other; as Suleiman states:

> The experience of transgression is indissociable from the consciousness of the constraint or prohibition it violates: indeed, it is precisely by and through its transgression that the force of a prohibition becomes fully realised.[143]

Bataille himself uses the Hegelian term *Aufhebung* to explain the relationship between transgression and taboo: transgression does not negate the taboo, but acknowledges it through its contravention.[144]

Desecration of a desired object is a key element in the excessive or violent sphere of experience which contests, and falls outside, the restrictive economy. Beauty or attractiveness are desired in this context, but not in the sense that the desirer wishes to possess them or enjoy them. The break with the restrictive economy — for which, not by coincidence, the word *husbandry* is used, as this question of possession is central to patriarchy — lies, according to this reading, precisely in the *desecration* of the desired object, a destructive act that refuses possession. 'Beauty is desired in order that it may be befouled; not for its own sake, but for the joy brought by the certainty of profaning it,' writes Bataille.[145] Bataille's counter-economy is radically other because, it would seem, it does not have possession at its centre. It cannot be encompassed by capitalist categories and is more amenable to the operations of alternative social-economic practices such as potlatch, according to which there is 'no distinction between giving and destroying'.[146]

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[142] See Rothe, *Frank Wedekinds Dramen. Jugendstil und Lebensphilosophie*, p. 9, 12.
[143] Suleiman, *Subversive Intent. Gender, Politics, and the Avant-Garde*, p. 75.
[144] Bataille, *Erotism*, p. 36.
[145] ibid., p. 144.
[146] Hegarty, *Georges Bataille*, p. 37.

The opposition Bataille suggests between possession and destruction is, however, questionable.[147] Ecologist discourse, in which, not by coincidence, the metaphor of rape is frequently employed to describe the exploitation of the natural environment, makes it clear that the violation or destruction of an object, while it may preclude further enjoyment of that object, is not the antithesis of possession, but rather the fullest expression of the object character of the thing destroyed. Dworkin remarks:

> An object is always destroyed in the end by its use when it is used to the fullest and enough; and in the realm of female beauty, the final value of the object is to be found in its cruel or deadly destruction.[148]

Destruction is thus not necessarily an antidote to a possessive mentality, but potentially its apotheosis. We have already seen how the destruction of the *femme fatale* figure re-affirms the sexual norms she calls into question; it may not be possible to tame her or make her faithful, but it is possible to destroy her, and this destruction compensates for the failure to possess and is thus motivated by the desire to possess, not inimical to it.[149] The destruction of the sacrificial victims in Wedekind's fantasy state seems, approaching it from Bataille's reading of sacrifice, to be of a piece with the *Die grosse Liebe* project of imagining a sexual order radically different from the culturally ratified order of patriarchal marital monogamy. But it is important to bear in mind the possible affinities between sexual destruction and sexual possession. It is furthermore necessary to interrogate the ways in which Bataille's theory passes over the fact that, of the 'symbiotic unit' of sacrificer, sacrificed and participants, only the sacrificed victim ends up dead. Of course, from within the logic of the sacrificial discourse, this concern over the fact that only one of the participants in a sacrificial ritual dies is completely beside the point. If the ritual itself negates individuation, then both all and none of the participants die: all die in the victim ('er starb in dem Tier') and the victim lives in all. If in the moment of sacrifice there occurs a 'dissolution of the discrete identities of sacrificer, sacrificed and participants',[150] then a concern with one of these discrete parties would require a negation of the very moment that brought about the death. But while sacrifice as described by Bataille might give access to a realm where it was possible to negate individuation, this

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[147] Gerhart Hauptmann formulated the identity of possession and destruction in one of the frame narratives to *Die Insel de grossen Mutter* as follows: 'Und wie besitzt man denn wirklich ein Bild, einen Diamanten, eine Statue? Mit dem Rechte, das Bild zu zerschneiden, den Stein zu zerschlagen und die Statue einzuschmelzen, das wäre ja nur das Recht zum Nichtbesitz'. *Gerhart Hauptmann: Sämtliche Werke*, ed. by Hans-Egon Hass, 11 vols (Frankfurt a. M.: Propyläen, 1962-74), xi, pp. 350-351.

[148] Dworkin, *Pornography: Men Possessing Women*, pp. 117-8.

[149] As Elisabeth Bronfen demonstrates in her reading of Proper Merrimé's *Carmen*. See Bronfen, *Over her dead body*, p. 183 ff.

[150] Hegarty, *Georges Bataille*, p. 48.

realm does not exist separately from the normal realm of individuals who either act or are acted upon, violate or are violated, kill or are killed; rather, this realm of transgression and disintegration co-exists alongside and within a world made up of individuals. To suggest that the one realm can be fully separated off from the other would be to posit an opposition — a boundary — at odds with Bataillean heterology.

Most of the writing on Bataille — with the clear exception of Dworkin's — accepts the Bataillean premise that in eroticism, as in any transgressive experience, the limits of the self become unstable. It is necessary to ask with what definition of *self* a particular reading — of Bataille, as of any violent pornography — is operating if sex is seen as a negation, rather than an enhancement, intensification or affirmation of the self? The very assumption that the extreme or transgressive erotic experience dissolves or threatens the limits of the self is predicated on a particular definition of selfhood as boundaried and integral.[151] Foucault has interrogated the long tradition of associating sex with an embattled self and the question of 'self-control', the paradox of which resides in its implication of self-division, of the struggle to be 'stronger than oneself'.[152] Hegarty, reading Bataille, recognises the masculinist bias of this conception of selfhood, its tendency to confuse 'loss of self' with 'loss of self-mastery'.[153] Bataille maintains this bias, even though he reverses its evaluation: 'the fear [of loss of self] is to be welcomed, not overcome, avoided or destroyed'.[154] Bataille's erotic texts refuse to dread the loss of self, rejecting such dread as a product of the 'restricted', everyday world, and embracing instead the dissolution of individual boundaries seen to be a fundamental part of the orgasmic moment. Furthermore, this dissolution is not read within a Romantic template of union with the other through sex, of the two lovers becoming one; it is, rather, dissolution as negation, the yawning of the void:

> There is no real union; two individuals in the grip of violence brought together by the preordained reflexes of sexual intercourse share in a state of crisis in which both are beside themselves.[155]

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[151] That this is only one possible definition of selfhood, and a limited one at that, has been shown by Arne Naess. See Naess, 'Self-Realisation. An ecological approach to being in the world', in *Deep Ecology for the Twenty-First Century*, ed. by George Sessions (Boston and London: Shambhala, 1995), pp. 225-239. My thanks are due to Andrew Liston for alerting me to this article.

[152] Michel Foucault, *The Use of Pleasure* [*History of Sexuality*, Volume II] (Harmondsworth: Viking 1986), p. 68.

[153] Hegarty, *Georges Bataille*, pp. 75.

[154] ibid., p. 100.

[155] Bataille, *Erotism*, p. 103.

Bataille's insistence that erotic experience violates the integrity of the self is predicated on an assumption of the self's integrity to begin with, and effects a mere reversal rather than a refusal of the dichotomous terms of self and other according to which sex and self are understood. Exploration of extreme situations and 'forays into the frontiers of consciousness' rely in Bataille, as in Wedekind, on received conceptual frameworks concerning self and other, subject and object — frameworks in which the gendered oppositions of masculine and feminine are so often embedded.

4.4.5 Gender discourse in *Eden/Die grosse Liebe*

The estrangement created by presenting a seemingly different world can function in utopian and dystopian texts to throw into relief the similarities between the imagined world and reality. As the main sexual rituals described in *Die grosse Liebe* are defloration rituals, it is necessary to interrogate possible continuities between the realities of bourgeois patriarchy and the fantasy state insofar as the fetishisation of female virginity — a correlate of patriarchal economy — is concerned. Karl Kraus read Wedekind's *Die Büchse der Pandora* as a rejection of the virginity fetish, a break from the tradition of building tragic plots around the loss of female innocence.[156] *Die grosse Liebe* turns the 'tragedy' of defloration into public celebration. The sexual openness of the old state, which contrasts so greatly with the taboo, secrecy, ignorance and hypocrisy of social practices Wedekind criticised elsewhere, is however bound up in the economics of prostitution and performance. The old state's sexual rituals are strictly regulated and violent, representing the culmination of a training in and performance of prescribed gender roles. The girls and boys are educated separately (as shown in *Mine-Haha*), and while the rituals of the 'Herbst-' and 'Frühlingsfeier' are symmetrical — both a boy and a girl are sexually initiated and then sacrificed — this seeming symmetry is contradicted by certain asymmetries. The sacrificial victim is, in the case of the boy, whipped to death; in the case of the girl, 'zu Tode koitiert'; and the sacrifice, in both cases, is the centrepiece of a three-day festival which also encompasses prostitution in the traditionally gendered sense of women selling sexual favours to male customers. The counterpart to the girls' task of whipping the boys is, for the boys, that of copulating with the girls. The issue of

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[156] 'Die tiefsten Erforscher männlichen Gefühlslebens haben vor dem Augenaufschlag ihrer eigenen Heldinnen zu stammeln begonnen, und die unsägliche Tragik, der sie Worte verliehen, war durch alle Zeiten die Tragik der verlorenen Virginität [...] immer wieder sehen wir den dramatischen Knoten aus einem Jungfernhäutchen geschürzt'. Karl Kraus, 'Die Büchse der Pandora' [1905] in Kraus, *Werke* (Munich, 1958), VI (*Literatur und Lüge*), p. 10.

the *Todesbraut* also undermines the initial impression of gender symmetry created by the *Herbst-* and *Frühlingsfeier*. The *Todesbraut* is chosen to accompany the male victim throughout his ordeal, and may die with him. His counterpart, the female victim of the parallel ritual, dies alone. The male victim is intermittently whipped during the course of the ritual in order that he may become aroused and be capable of copulating with the *Todesbraut*; the female victim is whipped in preparation for repeated sexual penetration by a seemingly endless stream of men (*Eden* 15-16; 40:4v). The frequency and anonymity of the coitus, however, is far from chaotic or orgiastic, but rather mechanised and hygienic (*Eden* 27), as well as regimented, bureaucratic and orderly: 'Über die rechte Brücke betreten die Männer nach der Nummer ihrer Liebesscheine die Insel. Sie verlassen die Insel über die linke Brücke' (40:4v) (the coitus occurs between arrival and departure). The object character of the sacrificial victim is thus much more clearly pronounced in the case of the female than the male. The trace of monogamous patriarchy is present in this reservation of a single *Todesbraut* for the male's sexual performances and in the contrast between this unvaried partnership on the one hand, and the female victim's indiscriminate stream of anonymous sexual partners on the other hand. This asymmetry encompasses both the fantasy of the insatiable, polyandrous woman and the refusal of this fantasy in the image of the *Todesbraut* faithful unto death.[157] While the symmetry of the paired seasonal rituals allows for the portrayal of both male and female masochism, the operation of sadistic and masochistic desires seems on the whole to be gendered in Wedekind's work according to the discursive norm of female passivity and male activity. The recurrent figure of the masochistic prostitute provides support for this contention. This figure, who gains significance in *Tod und Teufel*, *Die Büchse der Pandora*, *Schloss Wetterstein* and *Eden/Die grosse Liebe*, in fact emerges early in Wedekind's work, in the story 'Das Opferlamm'. The story's protagonist, Martha, seeks pain as a route to oblivion, in order that she may forget the injustices she has suffered:

> Ich fühlte, wenn man mich mit Füßen treten würde, dann wäre mein Schmerz geringer. Ich mußte mich entwürdigen lassen, so tief, so tief wie es möglich war, dann spürte ich vielleicht nichts mehr von den Krallen, die mir das Herz abdrückten. [...] ich mußte hinunter, hinunter, wo man nichts mehr sieht und hört. Ich sagte mir, ich müsse so elend werden, daß ich meinen Kummer nicht mehr fühlen könne. (I:280)

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[157] On the insatiable polyandrous woman, see Weininger, *Geschlecht und Charakter*, p. 307. This figure emerges in comically inflated form in Wedekind's 1908 play *Oaha. Die Satire der Satire* as Georg Sterner's mistress Wanda Washington, who describes herself as 'eine Frau, der nie ein Mann genügt hat, der nie einer genügen wird! Eine Frau, der die Liebe der ganzen Welt nicht zu viel wäre! Eine Frau, die alles erträgt und ewig unersättlich bleibt!' (II: 477). The verb *ertragen* highlights the masochistic aspect of this type.

Martha's masochism thus differs in certain important respects from the masochism of the prostitute figures in the other texts mentioned. Her desire for suffering is still firmly rooted in a framework of good and evil: the punishment that should be meted out to the lover who ruins and then abandons her is turned in upon herself. In later texts, the operation of masochism and pain moves out of this kind of moral scheme and into a more exclusively sensual one. Particularly in *Eden/Die grosse Liebe*, but also in the characters of Lisiska (*Tod und Teufel*) and Effie (*Schloss Wetterstein*), as well as in Lulu's prophetic dream of encountering a *Lustmörder*, the masochistic desire for chastisement represents a heightening of sexual feeling such that pleasure becomes indistinguishable from pain as part of a spectrum of sensual experience whose extreme is the *Todeswollust* expressed by the fantasy rituals of the old state. The world of *Die grosse Liebe* is to a certain extent prefigured by the trope of the masochistic, doomed 'Freudenmädchen': Ilse (of the lyric), Ilse (of *Frühlings Erwachen*), Elise, Lisiska, Effie and, of course, Lulu. These figures represent on an individual level what *Eden/Die grosse Liebe* attempts for a whole society: the rejection of the bourgeois family model and its attendant hypocrisy and repression; the practice of polyandry; the rupture of sex taboos concerning privacy and invisibility; but also more problematically the fluidity of the boundaries between pleasure and pain, penetration and mutilation. Boa observes of Lulu:

> The disruptive stranger bringing the threat of adultery has multiplied into lovers popping out of every nook and cranny. If the monstrosity at the heart of Goethe's *Wahlverwandschaften* is the interchangeability of women underlying relations of individual love, at the heart of the Lulu plays is the much more shocking interchangeability of men, a blow at the very roots of patriarchy. [...] The prostitute accessible to all men is contemptible, but also frightening, for she suggests that men are interchangeable, thus threatening masculine power and identity. In killing a prostitute, Jack destroys the threat of being reduced to a cipher, one man who might as well be another. [158]

The excess of 'lovers popping out of every corner' becomes systematised and ritualised in *Eden/Die grosse Liebe*, but still culminates in the death of the protagonist. Karl Kraus saw in Jack the Ripper a vengeful figure who seeks retribution for the whole male sex; Kraus argues that this retribution avenges not sins committed *by* Lulu but the sins the men commit *on* Lulu; it is 'die Revanche einer Männerwelt, die die eigene Schuld zu rächen sich erkühnt'.[159] This is consistent with Simone de Beauvoir's observation that

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[158] Boa, *The Sexual Circus*, pp. 21, 104.

[159] Kraus thus characterises Lulu as '[das Weib], das zur Allzerstörerin wurde, weil es von allen zerstört ward'. Kraus, 'Die Büchse der Pandora', pp. 11-12.

'the prostitute is a scapegoat; man vents his turpitude upon her, and he rejects her'.[160] What is punished in the violated prostitute is the transgressive male desire which creates and destroys her: she is thus a doubly nullified figure, not only outcast and violated but also subject to a narrative of transgression and desire not her own. From this perspective, the methods of social organisation and sexual initiation presented in *Eden/Die grosse Liebe*, while outwardly radically different from those of contemporary reality, can on closer inspection be seen to retain many of the premises of the latter. The status of project as fantasy, alternative or utopia is thus fundamentally split, called into question by its own re-articulation of aspects of the dominant discourses on gender and sex. Through the various discrepancies between the rituals, it is clear that the sexual act continues in this alternative world to be seen as a male prerogative and equated with a violent act, that of whipping, and the gendered dichotomy of passive and active remains a definitive feature of sex relations. In *Die grosse Liebe*, the passive figure is always female, and even where the beatings are administered by another female, this action is determined by and performed for the male gaze, the presence of the audience who will later pay for sex.

The sexuality portrayed in the sketches is dominated by the performance principle:

> jeder, der ein Mädchen besucht, [hat] die Pflicht, sich persönlich in die Liste der betreffenden einzutragen. Diese Liste hängt an jedem Cabinet über dem Kopfende der Bettstelle und trägt als Überschrift in grossen Lettern den Namen des auf dem Lager hingestreckten Mädchens. Nach der Anzahl der auf dieser Liste verzeichneten Namen werden die Mädchen zum Schluss des Festes prämiert (*Eden*, 7).
>
> Die Jünger sind ihren geschlechtlichen Leistungen nach nummeriert (40: 33r)

All sexual activity, including the expression of pain during moments of sadistic violence, is strictly regulated; sexual acts are devoid of spontaneity.[161] Self-control is demanded and rewarded, as we see from the first violent acts of *Eden*: 'Das Mädchen, das noch nie im Leben selber einen Schlag gespürt, schreit laut auf, aber das Murren des Publicums bringt sie bald zur Besinnung' (15). A central part of the sacrifice of the male victim is the value set on his ability to achieve and sustain an erection in front of a large crowd of onlookers — this is the purpose of the whipping to which he is subjected. While the archaisms and references to a theology and cult of death lend the scenario a sacral character, its

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[160] Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, p. 584.

[161] 'Hier sei in Parentese bemerkt, dass hinter den Blumengruppen sowohl der ersten wie der zweiten Etage gezogene Waffen blitzen von handfesten Männern, die beauftragt sind, falls sich etwas programmwidriges ereignen sollte ohne Verzug einzugreifen'. (*Eden*, 10)

regimentation recalls de Sade's fantasies, in which the key element is not sacrality but a planning rationality which becomes its own purpose, as Adorno and Horkheimer have argued:

> Was Kant transzendental begründet hat, die Affinität von Erkenntnis und Plan, die der noch in den Atempausen durchrationalisierten bürgerlichen Existenz in allen Einzelheiten den Charakter unentrinnbarer Zweckmäßigkeit aufprägt, hat mehr als ein Jahrhundert vor dem Sport Sade schon empirisch ausgeführt. Die modernen Sportsriegen, deren Zusammenspiel genau geregelt ist, so daß kein Mitgleid über seine Rolle einen Zweifel hegt und für jeden ein Ersatzmann bereit steht, finden in den sexuellen teams der Juliette, bei denen kein Augenblick ungenützt, keine Körperöffnung vernachlässigt, keine Funktion untätig bleibt, ihr genaues Modell.[162]

The exhaustive catalogue of sexual acts presented in *Die grosse Liebe*, the strict allocation of roles in the ritual, and the absence of characterisation combine to produce scenes redolent of this kind of planning rationality. Admittedly, a lack of spontaneity and a regulation of events are functions of all ritual; however, the competitive aspect of the *Die grosse Liebe* scenarios, and the fact that they are assessed and marketed, means that it is more meaningful to speak of the rationales of competition and commodification than of a 'sacralisation' of the acts presented.

It is a constant throughout *Eden/Die grosse Liebe* that girls and women sell their favours. The section of the *Die grosse Liebe* material entitled 'Der Götterknabe' (42:6v-19v) describes a situation that approximates to a male prostitute/female client relationship; significantly, however, there is no mention of payment for this service. In any case, the 'Der Götterknabe' section contrasts with most of the other material in its critical stance *vis-à-vis* the institutions of the old state. Unlike most of the other narrative sections of the sketches, 'Der Götterknabe' presents a first-person, subjective narrative voice, in which emotion and opinion play a part. In the main, the narrative passages which describe the seasonal rituals are narrated in the third person and tend towards an impassive tone, documenting details such as the methods and rates of pay received by women and girls in return for sex (40:7r). These rates of pay are linked to demand, popularity and performance (42:30v). A table outlines a monetary system in which different amounts equate to the prices of everyday objects, most of which have a connection to farming (in keeping with the archaic, pre-industrial setting evoked by the Celtic names):

> Das Zeitgeld

1. Ackergeld = 1000M
2. Stutengeld = 500M
3. Kuhgeld = 200M
4. Pfluggeld = 100M
5. Schweinegeld = 50M
6. Ziegengeld = 30M
7. Sensengeld = 20M
8. Hundegeld = 10M
9. Hammergeld = 5 Mark
10. Hühnergeld = 10 Groschen
11. Messergeld = 5 Groschen
12. Brodgeld = 1 Groschen

(40:46r)

The operation of this currency system is revealed in the reminiscences of a 'Göttermädchen' in a later section:

> Übrigens brachte an jener Herbstfeier auch der Liebeskauf an unserer Bank am Abend des zweiten Feiertages mehr Geld ein, als er seit hundert Jahren an einem Herbstfeiertag eingebracht haben sollte. Nach der ersten halben Stunde durften wir keine Karte mehr unter einem Pfluggeld verkaufen und die Hälfte der Götterfrauen gelangte im Lauf des Abends dazu daß wir ein Ackergeld für ihre Karte fordern mußten, während die drei Beliebtesten während des ganzen Abends gar nicht billiger als für ein Ackergeld zu besuchen waren. (42:32r-33v).

The administration of sexual activity in *Eden/Die grosse Liebe* thus institutionalises the traditionally gendered dichotomy of consumer versus object to be consumed. To be sure, Wedekind sought to re-evaluate and re-interpret the female prostitute/male client relationship throughout his work. Lulu, Effie of *Schloss Wetterstein*, Elise of *Das Sonnenspektrum*, and Lisiska of *Tod und Teufel* all engage in prostitution not merely out of economic need, but in response to some inner necessity. These figures thus express the fraught patriarchal dream of the polyandrous woman. Casti Piani of *Tod und Teufel* formulates the possibility of turning her compulsion to economic advantage (II:301).

The portrayal of indiscriminate public sexual activity is, of course, not unique to Wedekind's texts. The provision of a detailed comparison between Wedekind's orgiastic rituals and comparable scenes elsewhere in literature of the period unfortunately lies beyond the scope of this thesis. A brief note on some instances can however point the

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[162] Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialektik der Aufklärung*, p. 107.

way towards possible points of similarity and divergence. In several texts featuring orgiastic scenes of this kind — Gerhart Hauptmann's *Die Insel der grossen Mutter* (see chapter three above), Alfred Kubin's *Die andere Seite*[163] and Richard Beer-Hofmann's *Der Tod Georgs*[164]— it is clear that the erotic activity notable for its anonymity, indiscriminacy and disregard for privacy is the function of a breakdown in ordinary behaviour, in which Dionysian forces are unleashed in a sexual mêlée that departs from normality. Thomas Mann portrays similar orgiastic chaos in the context of dreams and visions: Aschenbach of *Der Tod in Venedig* and Hans Castorp of *Der Zauberberg* confront the extremes of humanity's dark side through images of this kind. The orgiastic Dionysian outbursts described in these texts occur under circumstances that are exceptional, beyond the norm in some way (even if the implication is that they symbolise forces ever-present in the individual or collective psyche). Unlike these scenes, Wedekind's *Herbst-* and *Frühlingsfeier* do not represent anomalous conditions in the world of the text but are integrated into its structures. The rites in *Eden/Die grosse Liebe* are seasonal festivities, and this admittedly sets them outside daily life; it is clear, however, as far as the *Götterjungen* and *Göttermädchen* are concerned, that for the remainder of the year their lives outside the *Herbst-* and *Frühlingsfeier* prepare for, and are justified by, these two three-day festivals, much in the same way as the lives of the girls in *Mine-Haha* were geared towards exhibitionist performances. Thus, the scenario encountered in contemporary texts featuring mass orgiastic scenes does not apply in the Wedekind texts. Rather, the festivities represent the culmination of the teaching of the old state, the apotheosis of the existence of the *Götterknaben* and *-mädchen.*

One of the greatest difficulties in dealing with the *Eden/Die grosse Liebe* material is establishing the status of the project. This chapter has underlined the impossibility of reading these texts as an unqualifiedly positive utopia, and shown how the author's designation of the project as 'utopian' can be neither ignored nor unproblematically accepted. *Eden/Die grosse Liebe* has been described in the title of this chapter as a 'sexual utopia' because it reflects and incorporates certain aspects of the utopian tradition. The representation of a system and world clearly different from historical reality is achieved on several levels; the difference between fantasy and reality is superficially marked by names, but consists more fundamentally in the abolition of specific practices and

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[163] Alfred Kubin, *Die andere Seite. Ein phantastischer Roman* [1909] (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1994), p. 196 ff.

conventions (patriarchal family, monogamous marriage, taboos on sex) and the enshrinement of others (enforced polyandry, ritual sacrifice, sex in public). Utopian alterity has a critical function, and the otherness of the sexual order in *Eden/Die grosse Liebe* is consistent with Wedekind's ongoing critique of the repressiveness and duplicity of real contemporary sexual practice. This fantasy world also reflects other, more problematic elements of the utopian tradition, namely those elements that were to provoke dystopian satire and critical re-thinking as the twentieth century wore on, and that gave rise to a perception of affinity between the utopian and the totalitarian. The regulation of behaviour, the absence of spontaneity, the subsumption of desire into social necessity; the saturation of the individual by the needs and ideology of the community at all times, to the extent that individuality is negated — all these hallmarks of the dystopian nightmare are present in Wedekind's project. It was demonstrated in earlier chapters of this thesis that in this period, wherever utopian fantasy issues in a totalitarian or dirigist order in which the question of sexual and social reproduction is given high priority, eugenicism is never very far away; this goes also for Wedekind's fantasy state. Furthermore, the tendency of utopian texts to remain, despite their attempt to envision difference, enmeshed in the given, is also a facet of *Eden/Die grosse Liebe*. Sexual relations are re-invented, and yet certain fundamentals of patriarchy remain, such as the operation of male voyeurism, the relation between female prostitute and male client, the centrality of female defloration, and perhaps most crucially, the conventional dualism of active (purchasing) male and passive (purchased) female.

There remains the problem of Wedekind's stance with regard to the sadomasochistic totalitarian state he sketched in these texts. This chapter has pointed to possible approaches in the hope that these will be followed up in the critical response to these texts that will ensue from their publication. Stephanie Libbon's article on prostitution in Wedekind's work offers another angle, advancing a reading of the many masochistic and ultimately doomed prostitutes as figures of wish-fulfilment: 'Although [Wedekind] professed to advance a freer sexuality, what this ultimately meant was the freedom for all men to prostitute all women'.[165] Features such as the role of the male sacrificial victim

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[164] Richard Beer-Hofmann, *Der Tod Georgs*, in Grosse Richard Beer-Hofmann-Ausgabe in sechs Bänden, ed. by Günter Helmes and others, iii, p. 549 ff.

[165] Libbon, 'Frank Wedekind's prostitutes', p. 58. Libbon does not refer to *Eden/Die grosse Liebe* in this article, and I have been unable to establish whether her unpublished dissertation, *Frank Wedekind's fantasy world. A theater of sexuality* (Columbus, Ohio: 2001), which has only come to my attention in the final stages of this project, engages with the unpublished sketches.

makes it difficult to map such an interpretation directly onto the sketches. The economic and looking relations of patriarchy may be inscribed in the fantasy scenario, but the relevance of the 'sexual freedom' concept is questionable, given the regimented nature of the acts and rituals. The only freedom we can usefully speak of in this context is the authorial freedom of imagination, the freedom to construct an alternative world, even a world as cruel as this. A jotting in the notebooks refers to this unfettered authorial power:

> Der Mensch bildet sich Gott nach seinem Ebenbilde. Ich bilde Gott (für den alten Staat) nach mir. (38:38v)

The imagination that constructs this world is equally free to reject it after having thought through its implications. Perhaps this is what Wedekind means when he writes:

> Die Todesfurcht wird durch die Todeswollust überwunden. Die Todeswollust wird durch die große Liebe überwunden (39:35r)

The dialectical model this suggests would link in with the continually implied opposition between the 'alter Staat' and the 'neuer Staat'. The features of the latter and its relationship to the former must remain in the realm of speculation, but it seems reasonable to assume that the tension between them inscribes an ambivalent, self-critical perspective into the 'utopian' project.

Conclusion

This thesis has sought to illuminate the connections between utopian imagination and gender discourse in the early twentieth century, both generally and with reference to specific textual examples. The dystopisation in this period of discourses which had previously been utopically inflected was identified as the context for intensified discursive concern with the body, sex and sexual difference. Utopian prose experiments of two major German dramatists — the one a forerunner of Expressionism whose principal theme was sex, the other best known as a key figure in realism whose later writings tended increasingly to engage with mystical and esoteric subjects — were examined as instances of this discursive shift.

The fantasies of both Hauptmann and Wedekind were explicitly connected by their authors to the utopian tradition, but the readings advanced here did not accept these authorial claims without problematising them. The use of utopian motifs was identified in both sets of texts, but it was also demonstrated that the utopian concept was under considerable strain at the time these texts were written. The acute signs in the early twentieth century that modernity was divided against itself heralded the failure and repudiation of modern utopian optimism, a situation most powerfully expressed in the dystopian narratives which dominated utopian writing in the mid-twentieth century. The fantasies examined here did not follow the trend towards futurism or time travel characteristic of Anglo-American utopian writing (and found also in the German context, for example in Kellermann's *Der Tunnel*), but were projected into archaic or idyllic, pagan or pre-cultural settings. Regressive and restorative strands in cultural criticism and reform discourses in which modernisation was negatively characterised played a formative role in these scenarios, but so too did the ubiquitous polarities of gender discourse: the focus on the body, specifically the female body, brought a panoply of associated concepts — grace, nature, immanence, fertility, animality, sensuality — to bear on the narratives. The texts reflected broader trends by utopising these concepts in an ambivalent way as 'others' of a civilisation that was self-critical but deeply reliant for its self-definition on the belief that such forces could be definitively known and contained.

In the specific utopian and fantasy scenarios that were referred to here, the re-imagining of sexual morality and behaviour embraced forms of sensuality and sexuality proscribed

in reality while retaining key elements of contemporary discourses concerning sex and gender, from looking relations and economic relations to binaries of active and passive or transcendent and immanent. It was demonstrated that the essentialist polarities on which gender discourse of the period relied so heavily permeated both conventional and counter-cultural thinking on sex and sexual difference. Hauptmann explored the implications of gender difference through the conceit of single-sex societies in a narrative which affirmed the essentialist polarity of feminine and masculine principles, implying a utopian vision of their complementary co-existence. Wedekind's break with conventional morality was enacted through an aesthetics of outrage; his pornographic fantasy of a world in which sex is public, prostitution is ritualised and institutionalised, and the fear of death is overcome represented a radically different approach to utopian writing, demonstrating that the limits of the tradition were being tested at this time. His fantasy world nonetheless preserved certain fundamentals of contemporary gender discourse intact: the looking relations and economic relations that pertained in reality were given exacerbated form in his primitivist theocracy. That utopian imagination, which positions itself counter-culturally as an expression of critique and an exploration of alternative possibilities, can be in thrall to received conceptual frameworks was further demonstrated by reference to the gendered metaphors at work in Ernst Bloch's utopian philosophy. Bloch anticipated many elements of the postmodern rehabilitation of the utopian concept as a dynamic, open and processual figuring of critical social desire, but he also incorporated the long-standing cultural trope of utopising the feminine into his theory of hope.

The findings of this enquiry into modern intersections of utopian imagination and gender discourse highlight the need to historicise utopian thinking and writing and imaginative constructs generally. The residual presence of the given in the alternative, of the real in the imagined, is a forceful reminder of the limits of imagination. Discussing the cultural importance of speculative fiction, Margaret Atwood contended recently that 'understanding the imagination is no longer a pastime or even a duty but a necessity, because increasingly, if we can imagine something, we'll be able to do it'.[1] Understanding the limits of imagination, its historical constitution and indebtedness to broader cultural discourses, is no less a necessity. Utopian thought and utopian writing can provide a partial, but only a partial, speculative alternative to the social conditions within which and

[1] Cited in Marleen S. Barr, 'Textism — An Emancipation Proclamation', *PMLA* 119:3 (May 2004), 429-441 (p. 440).

against which they function. In the postmodern phase of modernity, the partial nature of alternative proposals and critical perspectives has been increasingly emphasised, in both senses of the word partial: fragmentary, limited by their historical and social constitution and expressive of non-universalisable interests and priorities. Acknowledgement of and reflection upon this partiality can become a positive feature of utopian imagination, a safeguard against hypostatisation in an age which, as Popper noted, has seen all too clearly the tendency for utopianism to engender violence.

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