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18

2

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Inhaltsverzeichnis

Nikolaus Scholvin · „Vom Realismus zur Wahrheit.“ Zum Stellenwert der Moosbrugger-Passagen in Robert Musils Roman *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*

Thomas R. Bell · Religion without Content in Robert Musil's *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*

Georg-Michael Schulz · „Dreckiger Realismus“ und „spukige Ausflüge ins Phantastische“. Silvia Bovenschens erzählende Texte

Markus Steinmayr · Immunität und Gesellschaft. Juli Zehs *Corpus Delicti*



PETER LANG

Inhaltsverzeichnis

Nikolaus Scholvin

„Vom Realismus zur Wahrheit.“ Zum Stellenwert der Moosbrugger-Passagen
in Robert Musils Roman *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften* _____ 87

Thomas R. Bell

Religion without Content in Robert Musil's *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften* _____ 105

Georg-Michael Schulz

„Dreckiger Realismus“ und „spukige Ausflüge ins Phantastische“.
Silvia Bovenschens erzählende Texte _____ 121

Markus Steinmayr

Immunität und Gesellschaft. Juli Zehs *Corpus Delicti* _____ 149

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PETER LANG



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Religion without Content in Robert Musil's *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*

Religion and science, war and peace, love and hate, chance and determinacy – these are a few of the many topics *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften* (Vol. 1, 1931 / Vol. 2 Part 1, 1933)¹ – an unfinished philosophic and poetic masterpiece spanning more than one thousand pages – addresses, as it communicates the narrator's efforts to think more precisely and more accurately about elemental aspects of the human experience. In his monumental tome, Robert Musil presents numerous figures who espouse a broad range of ideas proliferating within the society of "Kakanien", representative of the Habsburg Empire in 1913/1914. Musil's fictional rendition of this milieu focuses particularly on the intellectual mood pulsating throughout Austro-Hungarian society during the twelve months preceding the outbreak of World War One; the novel's first paragraph ends with the following statement: "Es war ein schöner Augusttag des Jahres 1913" (9). In July of the following year, mayhem breaks out. What were people thinking before the violence erupted? What influential ideas were proliferating and, indeed, may have been adopted prior to the catastrophe known as the Great War? Meticulously and perspicaciously, Musil textually articulates – and experiments with – those concepts permeating throughout the pre-war Austro-Hungarian empire, in order to investigate which of them may have been fallaciously used and, consequently, led to the ensuing disaster. Simultaneously, through his narration, he offers an aesthetic framework for considering the possibilities of more refined thinking, which, if embraced and actualized, may have brought about a more intellectually consistent society that would have been able to stave off the horrific crisis that occurred. Contextually, it is important to keep in mind that he writes about 1913/1914 from the perspective of 1931/1933: the "Weimarer Republik" and the "Erste Republik Österreich" are both on the verge of dissolution; fascism in Germany and Austria is on the rise; and the "Militarisierung Deutschlands" is readily evident.² Musil is keenly aware of the similarity in circumstances. For this reason, he projects the failures apparent in the late 1920's and early 1930's back onto 1913/1914, when the Habsburg Monarchy and the German Empire could not provide a counterforce to the developing war machine.³ Writing in the shadow of a past war and with the looming sense of imminent danger, Musil generates impassioned essays,⁴ endeavoring to think in an informed, dynamic, and new manner about the situation in which he finds himself, hoping that his exploration of ideas will actualize the dissemination of peace.⁵

1 Robert Musil: *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*. Ed. Adolf Frisé. Rowohlt Verlag. Hamburg 1952.

2 Walter Fanta: *Krieg. Wahn. Sex. Liebe. Das Finale des Romans "Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften" von Robert Musil*. Drava Verlag. Klagenfurt 2015, p. 75.

3 Ebd., p. 91.

4 For an extended discussion of Musil's essayism and its use in exploring the ways to orient human life in the modern world, see Andrew Erwin: "Musil's Novelistic Essayism: *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften* and the History of Its Genre." In: *Journal of Austrian Studies*. 46.3 (2013), 77-107.

5 At one point the narrator opines: "Kakanien war ja das friedlichste Land der Welt" (p. 998).

While Musil portrays a plethora of concepts inhering in the pre-war intellectual climate, one topic he repeatedly circles back to is religion. Indeed, this topic, at various moments in the narration, absorbs the protagonist's thinking, as is evident in the following quote: "Ulrich war es gewohnt, nicht sowohl gottlos als vielmehr gottfrei zu denken ... sind doch die handgreiflichen Erfolge des Menschengeschehens schier erst entstanden, seit er Gott aus dem Weg geht. Aber der Einfall, der ihn heimsuchte, sagte: 'Wie, wenn nun gerade dieses Ungöttliche nichts wäre als der zeitgemäße Weg zu Gott?'" (1092). Ulrich understands that the tremendous advances in civilization have occurred as enlightened humanity has freed itself from the metaphysical. God is absent – from the age and from Ulrich's thinking. However, what Ulrich cannot expunge from his mind is the persistent thought that there may be a way back to the divine, namely, through the emptying and negating of religion itself. How then does an irreligious individual – "gottlos" and "gottfrei" – approach religion? How does he reconceive and reimagine it in order to make sense of how it may positively contribute to the human experience and what role its reconception may play in a society surrounded by uninhibited technological progress and inclinations towards war? My suggestion, as I seek to address how Musil's novel handles religion, will be that the narrator rationally resonates with a religion that is void of specific content and, thereby, open to an endless array of momentary, mystical experiences that are possible when no content has been prescribed or predetermined.

Musil conveys the picture of an Austrian social milieu marked as radically rational and secular, a "vernünftige[s] Zeitalter" (552).⁶ Yet, in this scientific society on the brink of war, religion is present;⁷ the spirit – "Geist" – is an entity worthy of investigation;⁸ feelings have not been fundamentally displaced by reason.⁹ Musil scientifically explores these immaterial possibilities with the figures in his novel, principally with his protagonist Ulrich, a mathematician, who, in his early 30's, takes "ein Jahr Urlaub von seinem Leben" (47), to search for the meaning to modern life. To this investigative work, Musil applies the mind of an engineer. In 1901, he passed his "zweite Ingenieur-Prüfung" with the grade "sehr befähigt."¹⁰ He wrote his dissertation on Ernst Mach, the Austrian physicist and philosopher.¹¹ And, he was readily drawn to the ideas of philosopher, physicist and Foreign Minister under Friedrich Ebert, Walter Rathenau, who wrote "Mechanik des Geistes."¹² With scientific proclivities, Musil is, indeed, according to Payne, interested in seeing whether "the critical criteria that science applies

6 For further information on the rational age as depicted in the text, see Tim Mehigan: *The Critical Response to Robert Musil's "The Man without Qualities."* Camden House. Rochester, NY 2003, 49. In his scholarship, Boehm suggests that Musil's work traces the transition from a premodern industrial society to the modern technologized secular state.

7 For example, the industrious, economically minded Arnheim considers "Religion" "diesen anderen Weg" (p. 509).

8 When considering why he has chosen to live in an undecided manner, Ulrich expresses his compulsion to investigate how the world unveils itself in and through the "Geist" (p. 153).

9 Mehigan: *The Critical Response*, p. 91. He writes: "Musil's career was informed from the very beginning by an ambition to inspire a new spiritual concept of humanity."

10 Nanao Hayasaka: *Robert Musil und der „Genius loci“.* Die Lebensumstände des "Mannes ohne Eigenschaften." Wilhelm Fink Verlag. München 2011, p. 137.

11 For a detailed discussion of Ernst Mach's influence on Musil's text, see Kelly Coble: "Authenticity in Robert Musil's *Man Without Qualities*." In: *Philosophy and Literature*. 29.2 (2005). In this analysis, he outlines how Mach's "doctrine of elements" shapes Ulrich to be the individual he is without a coherent inner self.

12 Robert Musil: "Anmerkung zu einer Metapsychik (Walter Rathenau: Zur Mechanik des Geistes) [1914]." In: Robert Musil: *Tagebücher, Aphorismen, Essays und Reden*. Ed. by Adolf Frisé. Hamburg 1955, p. 647-651.

to the study of objective data could also be used in the study of feelings."¹³ Disclosing the inner dimensions of his characters and their deeply-held beliefs, Musil endeavors to unveil and analyze what lies beneath and beyond. In particular instances, he attempts to make sense of what he terms "der andere Zustand,"¹⁴ which, according to Osthövener, is a "Grunderlebnis" recorded "in Religion, Mystik und Ethik aller historischen Völker," involving "eine Unterbrechung unseres Normalzustandes."¹⁵ To probe this foundational human experience – in which an individual momentarily exists in an abnormal, extraordinary condition generated by what religions perform and record – Musil presents the life and reflections of his protagonist Ulrich,¹⁶ providing, thereby, a glimpse into the "spezifische Religiosität der Moderne."¹⁷ What does this religion look like? My assertion is that it is fundamentally without content. To arrive at this contention and its implications, I will move in three distinct steps. First, I will assess the wider cultural context in which Ulrich exists. Second, I will analyze Ulrich's identity, as both scientist and artist, and identify how this identity shapes his secular and spiritual outlook. Finally, I will describe the novel conception of religion as delineated by Ulrich and depicted in this experimental work of art.

Ulrich finds himself in a cultural context of religious and spiritual decline. Many of his contemporaries recognize this. For example, General Stumm von Bordwehr, representing the voice of the Kakanien military, observes the intellectuals around him and concludes that the majority of them have resigned themselves to the fate of "seelischer Unfruchtbarkeit" (519). Mentally and spiritually sterile, they desire a redeemer, whether that be a medical messiah or a messianic poet. This time of spiritual privation "vor dem großen Krieg" is, according to Stumm, a "recht messianische Zeit" (520). Similarly, Dr. Paul Arnheim, the economic voice of imperial capitalism, suggests that the church has lost its influence and that this has had certain societal repercussions, including moral decline. Upon exiting the Imperial Library in Vienna, Arnheim converses with General Stumm and conveys to him his dismay over society's overall obsession with writing and general disinterest in reading. Looking for the cause behind this, Arnheim speaks of ecclesiastical demise.¹⁸ Arnheim states, "Seit die Kirche ihren

13 Philip Payne: *Robert Musil's 'the Man without Qualities: A Critical Study*. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge 1988, p. 105.

14 Robert Musil: "Ansätze zu neuer Ästhetik Bemerkungen über eine Dramaturgie des Films (Béla Balázs: Der sichtbare Mensch) [1925]." In: Musil: *Tagebücher, Aphorismen, Essays und Reden*, P. 667-683.

15 Claus-Dieter Osthövener: "Literarische und religiöse Deutungskultur in Werk Robert Musils". In: *Protestantismus zwischen Aufklärung und Moderne*. Ed. by Roderich Barth and Claus-Dieter Osthövener. Frankfurt/M. 2005, p. 301. Osthövener contrasts "der andere Zustand" with the "Normalzustand[es]," which is marked by "Messen, Rechnen, Spüren, das positive, kausale Denken." In his discussion of "The Other Condition," Mehigan suggests that scholars are not unanimous on the source of this condition. He believes it does not stem from mystical or religious sources, but instead from "the neo-Romantics of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century" (27). For another definition of "der andere Zustand," see Bernd-Rüdiger Hüppauf: *Von Sozialer Utopie zur Mystik: Zu Robert Musils „der Mann ohne Eigenschaften“*. Wilhelm Fink Verlag. München 1971, p. 130. According to Hüppauf, the other condition occurs through the dissolution of boundaries: "Ich und Unendlichkeit durchdringen sich, und keine Grenze läßt sich mehr bestimmen."

16 Ulrich indicates, in various instances, those moments when people move from one conscious state to another. Love, for example, lifts people out of the arms of reason. They move from the rational to the irrational – they move into another emotional state, "Zustand." Ulrich associates this "other" state with the religious, as is evident in the following quote: "Die Liebe [gehöre] zu den religiösen und gefährlichen Erlebnissen, weil sie den Menschen aus den Armen der Vernunft hebe und ihn in einen wahrhaft grundlos schwebenden Zustand versetze" (p. 29).

17 Osthövener: "Literarische und religiöse Deutungskultur in Werk Robert Musils," p. 299.

18 Arnheim represents the views of Walter Rathenau, who gradually came to reject religion in favor of science.

Einfluß verloren hat, gibt es keine Autorität mehr in unserem Chaos" (564).¹⁹ Feelings ("Gefühle") and morality ("Moral") are without an anchor. Confusion and moral ambiguity prevail, because people no longer trust an institution that has been relinquished of its legislating function. Reason – "Nationalökonomie und Physik" – has displaced belief – "Gotteswissenschaften" – in this agnostic age (100). Additionally, Diotima, the chief ideologue of Kakanien, refers to the age, "Geschichtsperiode," as "materialistisch" and suggests that "Atheismus, Sozialismus und Positivismus" have prevented spiritually inclined individuals from rising to a discovery of their true being (106).

The result of societal reprioritization is that a concern for cultivating the spiritual dimension of human existence is "replaced by a utilitarian emphasis on actions that are based on principles and are directed towards rational ends."²⁰ This utilitarian emphasis on action is evident in the text as the leading figures tirelessly make plans to unify all peoples of the Habsburg Empire in order to celebrate, in 1918, the 70th anniversary of Franz Joseph's rule.²¹ To denote this Austrian campaign, Musil's narrator uses the term "Parallelaktion," indicating that it will coincide with Germany's preexisting plan to celebrate, in the same year, the 30th anniversary of the rule of its Kaiser.²² The activities and ideas delineated in the text revolve heavily around this "Parallelaktion." To the extent that the "Aktion" may include good intentions, it is, simultaneously, indicative of the figures' involvement in preparing for a festivity that will prove to be vain in that Franz Joseph, in 1918, will actually be dead, and the Austro-Hungarian Empire will itself be on the verge of collapse. Herein lies Musil's subtle critique of instrumental reason. What ultimately results when "reasonable" action replaces "religious" contemplation? While the text does not endeavor to answer this latent, rhetorical question, it does incite the reader to consider the goals inherent in activity that is purely rational and practical. As a careful observer of his contemporaries and their apparent neglect of the contemplative, inactive, spiritual side of human existence, Ulrich is convinced that his fellow Austrians want to "do" instead of inwardly reflect; he states: "Unser Zeitalter trieft ohnehin von Tatkraft. Es will nicht mehr Gedanken, sondern nur noch Taten sehn. Diese furchtbare Tatkraft rührt davon her, daß man nichts zu tun hat. Innerlich meine ich" (740). Ulrich finds himself in a society insistent on tangible activity; the intangible remains uninteresting, precisely because it does not entail any empirical work. This society is fixated on the external, because the internal dimension of human experience requires no cultivation. Indeed, the soul has been lost; or, at least, the soul has become a word that people cannot pronounce, "ohne zu lachen" (183).

In this context – evincing the decline of institutionalized religion and the onslaught of technological utilitarianism – Ulrich's identity emerges. He is, indeed, without qualities, because he resists confining himself to the possession of certain attributes,

19 The Imperial Liege-Count Leinsdorf arrives at a similar conclusion. Portrayed as the religious idealist in the novel who consistently advocates for an Austrian ideology, Leinsdorf witnesses, as well, the contemporary perception that "Der Geist [habe sich] in vielem der Bevormundung durch die Kirche entzogen" (p. 99). The spirit is no longer under the tutelage of the church.

20 Payne: *Robert Musil's 'the Man without Qualities': A Critical Study*, p. 105. For further discussion on Musil's stance on utilitarian rationality, see Mehigan: *The Critical Response*, 121. Musil, like his contemporaries – Heidegger, Horkheimer, and Adorno – does not shy away from providing a critique of instrumental reason.

21 Stefan Jonsson: *Subject without Nation: Robert Musil and the History of Modern Identity*. Duke University Press. Durham 2001, p. 61.

22 Payne: *Robert Musil's 'the Man without Qualities'*, p. 100.

although he clearly has many of them; one of the chapters is, in fact, titled “Ein Mann mit allen Eigenschaften, aber sie sind ihm gleichgültig” (151). Not wishing to be contained and identified, Ulrich resolves to live “unklar und unentschieden,” adopting “eine abgeschiedene und unbenannte Daseinsform” (153). As “a site of lack and negativity,”²³ with “no ‘Eigen-schaft’ (‘own-ness’),”²⁴ he holds himself open to an endless array of possibilities that could provide his being with content and form.²⁵ By remaining without content, he, paradoxically, remains open to all possible content. In any moment, a new experience can provide new content that can influence and inform his ever-evolving personality.²⁶ His character formation is malleable and impermanent, dependent as it is on individual moments; Payne suggests that Ulrich has adopted the new, relative theory of selfhood, in which “all selves are constituted in unique but transitory conjunctions of time, space and substance.”²⁷ Ulrich’s identity is momentarily formed, comprised of nothing fixed or permanent – “Er hält kein Ding für fest, kein Ich, keine Ordnung” (154). He believes that “alles besitzt den Wert, den es hat, nur bis zum nächsten Akt der Schöpfung” (154). As the quintessential existentialist, Ulrich lives experimentally, adopting a scientific approach to what transpires in absolute immediacy, and this posture definitively influences his approach to religion.²⁸ Ulrich addresses religion through that lens which he employs to understand every aspect of life, namely through the scrupulous lens of a scientist. The one constant in his character is his supposition that the world is filled with latent possibilities, existing as it does in a constant state of “Conjunctivus potentialis.”²⁹ To disclose the possibilities inherent in the world, Ulrich maintains a strictly scientific stance: “Als wissenschaftlich erzogener Mensch habe ich in jeder Lage das Gefühl, daß meine Kenntnisse unfertig und bloß ein Wegweiser sind” (740). With an experimental attitude, reflecting, in many ways, the intellectual current pervasive in interwar Germany and Austria, he brings a scientific approach to his evaluation of religion. The text is, admittedly, not a detailed analysis of Ulrich’s study of religion. He, indeed, never defines religion – that would be inconsistent with a character that resists containment. Nor does he ever intimate that he is engaged in studying religion itself. Instead, desiring to become a great man, “ein bedeutender Mensch” (44), Ulrich ceaselessly endeavors to discover “new” ways to think and feel – “zu denken” and “zu fühlen” (47). Above all, he is interested in obtaining the “Anblick des Neuen” (47). This is his quest.³⁰ As a scientist, he focuses on the “new.”

To provide a theoretical framework for assessing Ulrich’s approach to the “new,” I want to integrate ideas suggested by Theodor Adorno in his work *Ästhetische Theorie* (1970). In this text, he points to similarities between scientists and artists,

23 Jonsson: *Subject without Nation*, p. 9.

24 For example, “er besitze nichts als eine Fähigkeit, an jeder Sache zwei Seiten zu entdecken” (p. 265).

25 For a further discussion of this idea, see Thomas Kraft: *Musils Mann ohne Eigenschaften – Meisterwerke kurz und bündig*. Piper Verlag GmbH. München 2000. Kraft writes: “Jemand, der über keine Eigenschaften verfügt, hat vielleicht viele Möglichkeiten” (p. 38).

26 This incessant interest in “das Neue” is evident on page 47 in *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*.

27 Payne: *Robert Musil’s ‘the Man without Qualities:’ A Critical Study*, p. 64.

28 See Mehigan: *The Critical Response*, p. 31. He makes the connection between Ulrich’s non-dogmatic stance and his predilection towards existentialism.

29 Jonsson: *Subject without Nation*, p. 145. Ulrich suggests that God himself would probably prefer to speak of his world in this “Conjunctivus potentialis” (p. 19).

30 For a discussion of Musil’s use of the term “quest,” see Erwin: “Musil’s Novelistic Essayism,” p. 82-83.

drawing out the experimental nature of their respective projects; Adorno writes: “Das Gewalttätige am Neuen, für welches der Name des Experimentellen sich eingebürgert hat, ist nicht der subjektiven Gesinnung oder psychologischen Beschaffenheit der Künstler zuzuschreiben. Wo dem Drang kein an Formen und Gehalt Sicheres vorgegeben ist, werden die produktiven Künstler objektiv zum Experiment gedrängt.”³¹ When the “new” is identified as that which is inherently unstable and uncertain – void and vacuous, without specific form and content – the experiencing, producing subject adopts the urge to become itself the “new” – imbued with ever-evolving content – to become itself the experimental object. To see Ulrich as a scientist is to view him, simultaneously, as an artist, who – while exploring what resides in the ever-expanding parameters of his own mind – is fundamentally interested in divulging the new.

For Ulrich, this “new,” as it relates to that interstitial space between immanence and transcendence, is that “jenes andere” (826), which is neither knowledge (Wissen) nor faith (Glaube), neither science nor religion. As the text presents Ulrich’s approach to this “something else,” it portrays him as both scientist and artist. In one particularly vivid scene, Ulrich suggests that beauty and goodness come from what people believe and not from what they know. Making this assertion, Ulrich shows a desire to entertain the notion that the religious impulse may be just as vital to the human experience as knowledge; accordingly, Ulrich asserts, “Die Kunst der Erhebung über das Wissen muß neu geübt werden” (826). Scientific knowledge, while essential, is, on its own, inadequate. To progress, there must be, as well, the artistic inclination to move beyond the quotidian. As one adopts this artistic life, one commences with working beyond the known towards the unknown. This, Ulrich believes, is “das wahrhaft experimentelle Leben” (826), because, in the productive act of transcending beyond the known, one generates results that are not yet determined. The life of the artist is, for both Ulrich and Adorno, the life of the scientist. It is this dual perspective that Ulrich integrates into his analysis of religion, as he attempts to scientifically and artistically understand what religion is, how it functions, and what role it plays in shaping and informing the multifaceted dimensions of the human experience. Before assessing some of the specific ways in which Ulrich perceives religion and spirituality, it will be helpful to establish how Ulrich understands the relationship between truth and the respective fields of religion and science.

Religion, according to Ulrich, is restrictive. Resorting to a religious account of the world is an expression of disinterest in the truth. The pursuit of truth entails the movement away from what is established and towards what is open, unknown and uncontained. As indicated in a previous paragraph, Ulrich is keenly aware that his knowledge is limited and incomplete; his “Kenntnisse” are “unfertig.” Because his knowledge is not finished, an endless array of possibilities remains open; he is, indeed, a “Möglichkeitsmensch.”³² In that he is a man without qualities, he is, simultaneously, a man with possibilities. With “Möglichkeitssinn” (16), he resists dogmatic assertions that would inhibit invention.³³ He, in fact, detests those who attempt to contain knowledge in a positivistic manner. He looks askance at those who resort to explanations anchored in disseminated tradition, those who do not heed Nietzsche’s call to pursue truth at

31 Theodor W. Adorno: *Ästhetische Theorie*. Suhrkamp Verlag. Frankfurt/M. 1970, p. 42.

32 Kraft: *Musils Mann ohne Eigenschaften – Meisterwerke kurz und bündig*, p. 37.

33 Speaking to Leo Fischel, Ulrich declares that a true faith, morality or philosophy has never existed (p. 134).

all costs, even if it requires dismissing religious nonsense. Accordingly, the narrator writes: "Er haßte die Menschen, die nicht nach dem Nietzsche-Wort 'um der Wahrheit willen an der Seele Hunger leiden' können; die Umkehrenden, Verzagten, Weichlichen, die ihre Seele mit Faselien von der Seele trösten und sie ... mit religiösen, philosophischen und erdichteten Gefühlen ernähren" (46).³⁴ Here, Ulrich makes a strong differentiation between truth and religion/philosophy. Those who seek refuge in religion, philosophy and fictionally (erdichtet) created feelings are uninterested in cold, hard facts. By juxtaposing truth with religion, Ulrich provides a scathing critique of religion, including it, as he does, in that category that has nothing to do with empirical reality. Those nourishing themselves on religious explanations of the world do not relentlessly pursue truth, a pursuit restricted to science alone, because science remains open to what is new: "aber in der Wissenschaft kommt es alle paar Jahre vor ... daß ein unscheinbarer und verachteter Gedanke zum Herrscher über ein neues Gedankenreich wird" (40). In its radical openness to new realms of thought, science pursues truth and renders, in the process, moral and metaphysical ideas as intolerable, "unerträglich" (46). Ideas revolving around religion are unbearable, because they center on the discussion of antiquated ideas; they deal with "unnützen Fragen," to which the only possible answers can be a "Noch nicht" (46). Immaterial in nature, religious questions are superfluous. Science, on the other hand, deals with the material; science, with its sober, neutral stance towards the world, is the order of the day.

While science has, indeed, replaced religion and become the sole basis through which modern individuals can interpret their existential experience, the presupposition within science that it alone has sole access to the truth must be assessed with a degree of skepticism. After Musil's narrator uses the Nietzsche quote to depict Ulrich's aversion towards religion, he continues with an allusion to Ulrich's circumspect view towards science. Ulrich provides a critique of science, as he intimates at its own limitations. Science has created a sober (nüchtern) concept (Begriff) that has displaced the metaphysical (metaphysisch) and replaced it with, ironically, "nur die Hoffnung." That is, science expelled the metaphysical and inserted, in its place, not the empirical, but instead, "hope," and this hope consists of the expectation that "eine Rasse geistiger Eroberer" will eventually return to a place of "seelischen Fruchtbarkeit" (46). For Ulrich, then, science (die Wissenschaft) does not end at the concrete, but instead at a concept – "hope" – which contains within it conspicuous elements of instability and uncertainty. Science subsists on the notion that future scientists – spiritual conquerors – will come up with new definitions and analyses that – when implemented and actualized in the empirical realm – will ultimately engender a robust and fertile spiritual and intellectual climate.

The incomplete, the not-yet that drives science forward suggests that science itself operates according to a worldview that is shared with religion, namely the belief that present expositions and explications of the world are permanently partial. The very foundations of science are chock-full of sentiments associated with supernatural

34 For the source of Musil's Nietzsche citation, see Friedrich Nietzsche: *Also sprach Zarathustra. Ein Buch für Alle und Keinen*. Walter de Gruyter & Co. Berlin 1968, p. 25. Musil's narrator cites a passage from "Von den drei Verwandlungen," in which Nietzsche writes: "Oder ist es das: sich von Eicheln und Gras der Erkenntnis nähren und um der Wahrheit willen an der Seele Hunger leiden?" Nietzsche's narrator poses this question when considering what is difficult for the spirit.

perspectives. When Ulrich considers “die heutige Forschung,” he observes that it operates according to a “Religion, deren Dogmatik von der harten ... scharfen Denk- lehre der Mathematik durchdrungen und getragen wird” (39). Scientific research aims at discovering and depicting what is new in the natural order. In its execution, science operates under the dogmatic belief that numbers do not lie. By resting on the certainty of math, science relies on an absolute, an intellectual gesture with its own intransigent undertones. In a position of primacy, math determines those religious (superstitious) sentiments by which science operates, as it, “science,” endeavors to explicitly establish laws to account for those invisible causes behind empirical occurrences. In identifying the religious presuppositions operative within the scientific, Ulrich cannot preclude the religious framework, which, in its emphasis upon the not-yet, remains open to possibility, and this is crucial because the idea of possibility points back to the preeminence of math. Here, it is important to keep in mind that Ulrich is, fundamentally, a mathematician. As readers, one of our initial images of him is as he is carrying out mathematical calculations; looking out of his window, he “zählte mit der Uhr seit zehn Minuten die Autos, die Wagen, die Trambahnen” (12). Principally in love with mathematics (40) – and the interpretation of the world it affords – Ulrich employs his mathematical mindset in his assessment of religion; that is, any theory of religion, if it is to be feasible, must accord with the logic of mathematics. Just as math inherently contains the ability to portray an infinite array of potentialities,³⁵ so too must religion, for Ulrich, consist in its capacity to convey an endless array of experiential possibilities.

As a mathematician, Ulrich understands that his knowledge is not yet complete, and this perspective pertains, particularly, to his approach to religion. Religion, like science, must be open to new discovery. Ulrich’s resistance to fixed and established sentiments within religious systems is evident in his disavowal of an incarnate God: “Ich glaube nicht, daß Gott da war, sondern daß er erst kommt. Aber nur, wenn man ihm den Weg kürzer macht als bisher!” (1022) God, according to Ulrich, has never been physically present. Instead, God may, at some unknown point, empirically establish himself. However, at this point, God – absent of any definitive form and content – remains God only in and through perpetual deferral; God has the potential to arrive, a theological perspective finding greater resonance in Judaism than in Christianity.³⁶ The view that God is (or, could be) coming, which may have intonations of hyperbole (the exclamation mark suggests this), is consistent with the title of this section of the novel – “Ins Tausendjährige Reich.”³⁷ Just as the utopian empire to come is only a possibility, so too is the God, who could enable this kingdom, a mere probability. According to Ulrich, God could reveal himself, depending on the role people play to improve society and usher him in. What this suggests is that the form religion takes is dependent on what people do to fashion it. Without an incarnate God – a fixed form – religion is open to new forms and new content. Because of its openness,

35 Whether that be through such mathematical concepts as probability and infinity.

36 Here, one can think of Kafka’s formulation when he writes the following: “Der Messias wird erst kommen, wenn er nicht mehr nötig sein wird, er wird erst einen Tag nach seiner Ankunft kommen, er wird nicht am letzten Tag kommen, sondern am allerletzten.” Franz Kafka: *Hochzeitsvorbereitungen auf dem Lande und andere Prosa aus dem Nachlaß*. Schocken Books. New York City 1953, p. 90.

37 To understand this one-thousand-year reign as a possible utopia in which the principle of peace reigns supreme, it is important to keep in mind the millennial outlook emphasized within the Christian tradition. See chapter 20 of the book of Revelation.

religion will change; it will have various manifestations. Limiting religion to one particular expression would be to contain the limitless nature of transcendent experiences; religion must go beyond religious dogma. According to Payne, Ulrich is quite skeptical of the Christian church, because, within it, "religious dogma dictates to the faithful the way they ought to feel; it stands for the tyranny of past over present."³⁸ Instead, religion must avoid injunctions and become open to an ever-changing present. Ulrich himself resists the "Sicherheit einer gestifteten Religion;"³⁹ he avoids any institutionalized religion in which specific content prevail: "Ohne Zweifel war er ein gläubiger Mensch, der bloß nichts glaubte" (826).⁴⁰ Believing nothing enables him to experience, beyond the bounds of religion, what religion affords, namely "Die Kunst der Erhebung über das Wissen" (826). He finds such artistic moments in those "other conditions" generated in and through mystical experiences.

Ulrich does not consider himself a religious person – "Ich bin nicht fromm" (751). In fact, he is skeptical of those inclined to pursue a holy life through mystical practices. He makes this known in one of his "Helige Gespräche" with his sister Agathe, who, similar to her brother, wishes to distance herself from belief – "Heftig hielt sie sich vor, daß sie doch gar nicht an Gott glaube" (860). In this particular conversation with his sister, Ulrich indicates that he is instructing himself about the ways of the holy life. She laughs. With a hint of his own humor and sarcasm, he responds with the following: "Ich bin nicht fromm; ich sehe mir den heiligen Weg mit der Frage an, ob man wohl auch mit einem Kraftwagen auf ihm fahren könnte!" (751) For Ulrich, the idea of pursuing a holy way is a joke. In a mocking manner, he jeers at this impractical pursuit, considering it fundamentally absurd.

Nevertheless, Ulrich speaks of certain experiences through terms associated with those disposed towards religion. As he further dialogues with his sister, he conveys his sense of being in an alternative state of consciousness – "Another Condition" – and he delineates this state by incorporating the words and ideas that the Austrian-born Jewish Philosopher, Martin Buber, collected in his text *Ekstatische Konfessionen* (1909).⁴¹ In this text, Buber introduces an array of primarily Christian mystics oriented towards obtaining union with God. One such mystic Buber cites is Meister Eckhart, a German theologian and philosopher who lived from 1260 to 1328; Eckhart wrote the following: "Ich habe überstiegen alle Berge und all mein Vermögen, bis an die dunkle Kraft des Vaters. Da hörte ich ohne Laut, da sah ich ohne Licht ... Dann wurde mein Herz grundlos, meine Seele lieblos, mein Geist formlos und meine Natur wesenlos."⁴² To note in this quote is the movement of crossing boundaries – transcending. The subject transgresses beyond mountains ("Berge") and its own faculties ("Vermögen"); it moves beyond itself only to find itself in a sphere without sound and light, "ohne

38 Payne: *Robert Musil's 'the Man without Qualities: A Critical Study*, p. 90.

39 Hüppauf: *Von Sozialer Utopie zur Mystik*, p. 134.

40 His unbelief is reiterated, when the narrator writes the following: "Spricht einer von der zweiseitigen und unordentlichen Beschaffenheit des menschlichen Wesens, setzt es voraus, daß er meint, sich eine bessere vorstellen zu können. Ein gläubiger Mensch kann das tun, und Ulrich war keiner" (p. 1102-1103).

41 For an extended discussion on the influence of Buber's text on Musil's novel, see Dietmar Goltschnigg: *Mystische Tradition im Roman Robert Musils: Martin Bubers „Ekstatische Konfessionen“ im „Mann ohne Eigenschaften.“* Lothar Stiehm Verlag, Heidelberg 1974. He suggests that the "Tausendjähriges Buch" that leads the siblings, Ulrich and Agathe, into the "anderen Zustand" in the "Tausendjähriges Reich" could very well be Buber's *Ekstatische Konfessionen* (p. 61).

42 Martin Buber: *Ekstatische Konfessionen*. Eugen Diederichs. Jena 1909, p. XVII.

Laut und Licht." In this void, where nothing exists except the possibility of existence, the subject indicates that its entire being consists of absence and deficiency. The subject is without ("los") anything; it is "grundlos," "lieblos," "formlos" and "wesenlos." For Eckhart, this is the precondition for the mystical moment.

Ulrich, the figure who himself lacks all qualities, cites Eckhart's words, via Buber's text, as he engages in this "Heiliges Gespräch" with Agathe. This particular conversation transpires between brother and sister after the two of them, not having seen each other for many years, reunite for their father's funeral. Meandering through their deceased father's house and garden, Agathe and Ulrich exchange deep reflections, contemplate unexplainable mysteries, and arrive at linguistic terms expressive of extraordinary experiences. Consequently, the two of them quickly develop an awkward, semi-incestuous relationship. As they reflect on their connection to each other – which hovers between sister and brother, stranger and friend, lover and beloved – they notice a deep intimacy that involves the transcending of their ordinary faculties and into an extraordinary, mystical state.⁴³ Important to note here is the observation that Ulrich and Agathe arrive at their "Other Condition" – experienced as a union achieved through the dissolution of boundaries – by engaging in an act considered a taboo in traditional, institutionalized religion. Caught up in a condition outside of religion, they are drawn to each other as they are drawn out of themselves.⁴⁴

To discuss the sense of being spiritually and existentially close to his sister, Ulrich adopts the language of the mystics, who, as Hüppauf reminds us, possessed a faith not based "auf den verbürgten Mitteln der Kirche und ihrer institutionalisierten Heilslehre, sondern im einzelnen Akt der jeweils neu zu erlebenden Gotteserfahrung."⁴⁵ The faith of mystics did not depend on instruction about the divine, but instead on experience of the divine. Resonating with those mystics who experienced God immediately, outside of any religious institution or faith tradition (that is, outside of a specific content),⁴⁶ Ulrich reads out loud to Agathe from one of the books he has brought along to this holy conversation: "Die Heiligen [the Mystics] beschreiben es so ... Ich hatte alle meine Vermögen überstiegen bis an die dunkle Kraft. Da hörte ich ohne Laut, da sah ich ohne Licht. Dann wurde mein Herz grundlos, mein Geist formlos und meine Natur wesenlos" (752). The correspondence between this quote and the one previously mentioned – Buber's quote of Eckhart – is more than conspicuous. What is also evident is that Ulrich directly employs the words of a mystic to elucidate that existential state transpiring between himself and Agathe when they are in the presence of each other. When they return to their origin – textually depicted in the locations they occupy, the house of their upbringing and the (Biblical) garden – they lose the identities they had obtained in the process of their respective individuation, and they become, essentially, without individual identity. This state, in which

43 Jonsson: *Subject without Nation*, p. 92. Providing insight into the peculiar circumstance between sister and brother, Jonsson suggests that they have arrived at an "Ontological Homeland" of sorts, existing as they do in "Another Condition" within "a State of Mysticism."

44 Kraft: *Musils Mann ohne Eigenschaften*, p. 86. He suggests that Ulrich and Agathe reach "den anderen Zustand," "ohne an Gott zu glauben."

45 Hüppauf: *Von Sozialer Utopie zur Mystik*, p. 132.

46 Goltschnigg: *Mystische Tradition*, p. 61. He makes the following observation: "Die Mystik im 'MoE' ist keiner bestimmten religiösen Richtung zuzuordnen, denn Musil ... schält aus den überlieferten Zeugnissen einen rein subjektiven 'Erlebniskern' heraus."

they are both without content, is the precondition for their aesthetic experience.⁴⁷ Being without enables them to rise above themselves – “Ich hatte alle meine Vermögen überstiegen” – in order to occupy a new sphere of existence. Physically, this elevated state is reflected most clearly in the text when it details the sibling’s aesthetic experience in the garden, where “Der Zustand, in den die Beiden auf diesen Wegen gerieten, trieb im Kreis, wie es eine Strömung vor einer Sperre tut, an der sie *hochsteigt* [my italics]” (749). Just as a current rises upwards when it confronts an obstruction, so too does the existential state, in which the siblings deliriously find themselves on this labyrinthine garden path, exhibit a circular movement rotating upward. A few paragraphs later, Ulrich speaks of a “Steigerung wie ein Verlieren,” indicating that upward movement coincides with loss. The intensification of loss evoked through an elevated state – being essentially without – is what the siblings had just experienced while walking through the garden and continue to experience as they explore new ideas. To interpret their experiences, Ulrich resorts to the language of mystics. How do brother and sister react to Ulrich’s citation? The words correspond with what they equally sensed; the ideas expressed share “Ähnlichkeit mit der Unruhe” (749) existing between them. Agathe is, indeed, surprised that the saints also called their hearts “grundlos” and their spirits “formlos,” because that is exactly how she feels. Ulrich, as well, identifies that this “other condition” expressed by the mystics is a circumstance into which he has been drawn, as he has been experientially pulled away from the quotidian.

Reflecting further on mystical thought, Ulrich provides a few more examples of how specific, historically situated people have experienced extraordinary moments and then given expression to these in mystically laden terms. He mentions “die Kaiser,” “die reichen klugen Damen,” “Van Gogh,” and then, finally, the Germans. As opposed to Van Gogh, who felt inclined to cut off his ear to express what he felt, the Germans find their “Gefühlsausdruck” reflected in those sentiments that emerge in regions of emptiness and elevation. What expresses their feeling is “die unverkennbare Leere des Hochblicks ... auf Berggipfeln. Für sie [the Germans] sind Einsamkeit, Blümelein und rauschende Wässerchen der Inbegriff menschlicher Erhebung” (752). In moments of utter vacuity, when the feeling of nothingness accompanies the observation of empty space infinitely extended, the “German” viewer has a mystical moment. Interpreted in a philosophical framework, the viewer senses the sublime, a significant concept in the German intellectual tradition. For Kant, the idea of the sublime surfaces in the individual when she has the representation of boundlessness – “Unbegrenztheit”⁴⁸ – that results in the subjective experience of powerlessness – “Gefühl der gänzlichen Ohnmacht.”⁴⁹ When a subject experiences a natural occurrence that evokes a sense of limitlessness, he has a feeling of emptiness – “Leere” – unable to incorporate the experience into a rational category. According to Ulrich, it is in such an instance in the natural order that resides “die mißverständene letzte Auswirkung eines geheimnisvollen zweiten Lebens” (752). Experiencing the sublime invokes the

47 Citing Menke, Schade writes: “Aesthetic force is ‘without general content-without norm, law or purpose’” (p. 214). See Johannes Schade: “‘Gestaute Bedeutung’: Robert Musil and the Aesthetic Order of Sense.” In: *Monatshefte*. 107.2 (2015), p. 201-218.

48 Immanuel Kant: *Kritik der Urteilskraft und Schriften zur Naturphilosophie*. Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft. Darmstadt 1983, p. 329.

49 *Ibid.*, p. 351.

intuition of a reality that cannot be disclosed, remaining, therefore, “geheimnisvoll.” Shrouded in secrecy, this second life remains, in Kantian terms, “anziehend;”⁵⁰ it raises the energy of the soul – “die Seelenstärke.” When considering the possibility of this mysterious, other life, Ulrich concludes with the following: “und alles in allem muß es dieses also doch wohl geben oder gegeben haben” (752). In this flash of seriousness, Ulrich asserts that “das zweite Leben” either exists, or at least did exist at some point. This was/is an actually existing reality, and, therefore, as a scientist, he must take his own object of experience seriously. The secret second life Germans experience on mountaintops is similar to the life Ulrich experiences in rapturous moments with his sister. What the mystics wrote regarding another condition in which one’s heart is without foundation, one’s spirit without form, and one’s nature without essence finds resonance with the Germans and with him. For this reason, Agathe is befuddled as to why Ulrich previously jeered those mystics with whom he resonates. After Agathe asserts that it is relatively illogical of Ulrich to make fun of what the mystics wrote – particularly because they supplied the language that allows them to make sense of what occurred between them – Ulrich responds by saying “ich spotte nur, weil ich es liebe” (752). He mocks the mystical because he loves it. He admires how the extraordinary – that is, itself, without form, content, and distinction – takes shape and form through mystical language that emphasizes formlessness, absence, and emptiness. It is the contentless-ness of the mystical that gives the extraordinary content. In the language of the mystics, the irreligious Ulrich has found a way to comprehend and speak about “der andere Zustand,” emerging, as it does, without content, uninformed through previously existing religious discourse.

Mystical experiences correspond to religion, in so far as they reflect what religions convey, while resisting the content of specific religions. Such experiences stem from religion without content, because the content of the mystical precedes religion. This is how Ulrich understands the connection between religion and mysticism. He considers the mystical a real possibility, because he is aware that he has occasionally experienced such mystical states, specifically with his sister. However, he approaches the mystical with a measure of rationality. In another one of their holy discourses, Agathe waxes eloquently about one-time mystical experiences, in which the participants unite in such a way that “beide [sind] kaum noch für einander da, und was übrig bleibt, ist eine Welt für lauter zwei Menschen, die aus Anerkennung, Hingabe, Freundschaft und Selbstlosigkeit besteht!” (765) Sensing that Agathe has become too abstract and idealistic in her reflections, Ulrich calls for a return to the logical: “Laß uns jetzt wieder nüchtern reden” (765). Shifting the conversation back to rational discourse, Ulrich points to his books – “auf die Bücherweisend” – and commences with his commentary on the substance of religion: “Das sind christliche, jüdische, indische und chinesische Zeugnisse; zwischen einzelnen von ihnen liegt mehr als ein Jahrtausend. Trotzdem erkennt man in allen den gleichen vom gewöhnlichen abweichenden, aber in sich einheitlichen Aufbau der inneren Bewegung” (766). All religions have a uniform structure that consists in its divergence from the ordinary.⁵¹ Every religion contains a

50 Ibid., p. 349.

51 General Stumm von Bordwehr expresses a similar sentiment when he thinks back on what he learned in his religion and history classes: “alle Religionen [hatten] in der Erläuterung des Lebens, den sie dem Menschen schenkten, einen irrationalen, unberechenbaren Rest vorgesehen, den sie Gottes Unerforschlichkeit nannten”

structure, an “Aufbau,” that is, in itself, unified. Any religious system has the potential of making sense, as it is built and developed according to its own internal logic (here, one could think, for example, of a field like “systematic theology,” in which the goal is to fit all aspects of a faith tradition into a unitary structure, so that the tradition itself makes logical sense). To its adherents, a specific religion will resonate rationally in that it accords with its unified structure. What is common to all faith traditions existing logically on their own is that they diverge from the ordinary; that is, they logically deviate from what is logical in the empirical world. Because their “logical” (unified/systematized) teachings revolve around explicating and affirming the extraordinary (whether that be the miraculous, the absurd or the ineffable), religious traditions and their texts operate under the assumption that the “illogical” exists within the “logical,” empirical world; the “extraordinary” and the “illogical” are categories inhering in individuals. Religions stem, then, from a state that precedes them.⁵² The given – the origin of religion – resides in the abnormal situation – the Other Condition – which people are capable of accessing and entertaining. Religion(s) can lead people into this other condition, because the condition itself is both prior and primary. Continuing on, Ulrich states: “Wir dürfen als einen bestimmten zweiten und ungewöhnlichen Zustand von großer Wichtigkeit voraussetzen, dessen der Mensch fähig ist und der ursprünglicher ist als die Religionen” (766). According to Goltschnigg, this “zweiter, ungewöhnlicher Zustand” is the definition of “der andere Zustand,” which is – because it is prior to religion – secular mysticism, “säkularisierte Mystik.” That is, it is an abnormal state without religion. The uncommon, extraordinary condition that may be arrived at in and through religion is a condition that humans can experience without religion, because the condition itself precedes religion. Taking a cue from the text – “Dieses Nichts hatte einen bestimmten, wenn auch unbestimmbaren, Inhalt” (857) – I would suggest that the state prior to religion has a characteristic, and the characteristic of this state is that it is without a specific content. This content-less state is dependent on (or derived from) individuals who are, themselves, without definitive content, as they perpetually vacillate between two states, the ordinary and the extraordinary, the material and the immaterial, the immanent and the transcendent. The figure who exemplifies existing in this state is Ulrich. He is without specific content, ineluctably caught between juxtaposing conditions, unable to find consonance in any object, entity or concept, unless it too is without content. Hence, the religion with which he resonates is that religion which is, itself, without content.

As scientists and artists, Ulrich and Musil endeavor to locate the “new.” When considering religion, they conceive the “new” as that which does not circumscribe, limit, or contain. Commenting on the “new,” Adorno suggests, “Das Neue ist die Sehnsucht nach dem Neuen, kaum es selbst, daran kränkt alles Neue.”⁵³ The new remains new in that there is perpetual deferral and never arrival. To perceive the “new” in religion is to understand and ascertain it as an ever-evolving concept – experienced without content – because it is this contentless religion that resonates with the human desire

(p. 520). At the core of all religions is an irrational element, which is rationally conveyed as “God’s inscrutability.” To find resonance with people, religion depends on conveying the irrational in such a way that it accords with the irrational element stemming from the individual.

52 For the German word “Zustand,” I use “condition, state and situation” interchangeably, as they are all appropriate translations of the term.

53 Adorno: *Ästhetische Theorie*, S. 55.

for “another” condition, a condition that is “other” in that it does not conform to a preexisting model, but is, instead, new in the instance of its occurrence. Such a religion remains open and responsive to those extraordinary experiences not conforming to prior definition. Experiences according with this definition of religion take into account what happens in the present; these religious experiences emerge in creative acts, which are creative in that they involve the unfolding of something new. This religion without content is filled with what is new in the next act of creation, in artistic acts that occur in the immediacy of the present: “das Jenseitige offenbare sich eben heute nicht deutlicher als sprunghaft, in überkörperlicher, begreiflicherweise schwer festzuhaltender Schauung, deren Niederschlag höchstens große Kunstwerke seien” (557). The beyond reveals itself in artistic productions, namely, in this novel itself, as it provides momentary glimpses into the intangible as it tangibly represents an individual mind involved in the process of exploring both the visible and invisible elements of the natural order. Late in the novel, Ulrich, working to unlock new avenues of understanding, arrives at the idea of the “ewige Augenblicklichkeit der Literatur,” suggesting that literature, perceived within this framework, is “ein Inbegriff von Reizzuständen, aus dem in keiner Weise etwas Bestimmtes hervorgeht” (868). Just as Ulrich the scientist/artist is involved in experimentation, so too is this experimental novel (i.e. scientific artwork).⁵⁴ In its portrayal of a religion without content, this text, through the space it creates for experimental forms of art, enables “das Jenseitige” to provide momentary perceptions of nothing “Bestimmtes,” but instead a realm of possibilities, “Möglichkeitsträume,”⁵⁵ an array of novel ideas based on exploratory thinking, which for Ulrich, the mathematician, takes definitive precedence over acting. According to Hüppauf, “Denn das Denken ist für ihn eine andere Art des Handelns, eine Art, der er den Vorzug gibt vor dem Aktionismus der Parallelaktion, der keine Veränderungen bewirkt und plötzlich in der Katastrophe des Kriegsausbruchs endet.”⁵⁶ Musil’s work of art, evinced in textual form, opens up a space for the activity of thinking, the generating of ideas capable of going in an infinite array of directions. Such ideas have the potential to challenge those ideas oriented towards action, ideas disinterested in the development of inner depth, as they focus, instead, on preparing for a celebration, which never occurs, because the action of war eliminates the content of the celebration.

To conclude, I would like to mention an exchange that occurs towards the end of the unfinished novel, when Arnheim and Ulrich are engaged in philosophical conversation. With boldness, Ulrich suggests that the current lack of inward reflection on the question as to why we are here is “eine Hauptquelle aller Gewalttaten der Welt.” Furthermore, the age of empiricism, “das große Zeitalter der Erfahrung,” has done nothing to end the violence. The answer, Arnheim suggests, “wäre ja ein steigendes Verhältnis zu Gott!” To this, Ulrich responds: “Das wäre doch nicht das Schrecklichste?” Perhaps it would not be such a terrible idea if people refamiliarized themselves with God. In the context of the militarism and nationalism rampant in 1913/1914 and

54 Ibid., p. 63. “Meist kristallisiert das Experiment, als Ausproben von Möglichkeiten, vorwiegend Typen und Gattungen ... die Experimente indessen, fast ihrem Begriff nach vorweg an Mitteln interessiert, lassen gern auf den Zweck vergebens warten.” Here, Adorno provides a helpful framework for considering what this novel does. It provides a content that is without content in that it does not arrive at an end.

55 Osthövenner: “Literarische und religiöse Deutungskultur in Werk Robert Musils,” p. 311.

56 Hüppauf: *Von Sozialer Utopie zur Mystik*, p. 138.

in the early 1930's, such an idea may not have been misplaced. "Aber," Ulrich quips, "so weit bin ich ja gar nicht gegangen!" (1038-1039). While he, throughout the text, consistently entertains mystical moments and reflects, with profound depth, upon the internal dimensions of the human situation, Ulrich, the scientist and artist, can only perceive religion as that which has not yet arrived at precise concepts (including the concept of God). Instead, for Ulrich, religion must remain open to new experiences and possibilities, that is, it must be, fundamentally, a religion without content.

