

Gelderloos, Carl. "'Ersticken im Stofflichen.' Characters as Collectives in Alfred Döblin's *Wallenstein* and his Theoretical Writings." *The German Historical Novel Since the 18th Century*. Edited by Daniela Richter, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016.

CHAPTER FOUR

"ERSTICKEN IM STOFFLICHEN":
CHARACTERS AS COLLECTIVES
IN ALFRED DÖBLIN'S *WALLENSTEIN*
AND HIS THEORETICAL WRITINGS

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Alfred Döblin's long historical novel *Wallenstein*, published in 1920, narrates the Thirty Years' War from just after the battle of White Mountain in 1620 to a mythologized version of the death of Habsburg Emperor Ferdinand II in 1637. In Döblin's version, Ferdinand dies alone, in the forest, at the hands of a goblin. As a representation of history, *Wallenstein* has occasioned praise and befuddlement amongst contemporaries and later critics for its subversion of a clear historical narrative and the way it overwhelms the easy discernment of causal relations, temporal sequence, and partisan alignments through an accumulation of descriptive detail, accounts of mass processes, and complex involutions of interpersonal feuds—what Döblin perhaps meant when he called for "Tatsachenphantasie" 'fantasy of fact'¹ in 1913, and what the contemporary reviewer Lulu von Strauss und Torney dubbed the novel's "Ersticken im Stofflichen" 'suffocation in the material' (qtd. in Schuster and Bode 112–113). *Wallenstein* was seen as grotesque and overwhelming when it first appeared, its presentation totally out of joint with the history it was representing, with some reviews acknowledging its radicality as well as its difficulty,² while later commentators have praised the novel's savvy, modernist, or even postmodern approach to historiography and narrative, lauding the ways in which *Wallenstein* indicates the fundamental contingency, horror, or absurdity of history and the corresponding need for it to be narrativized.³ My contention, however, is that the novel's contribution as a literary representation of history is to be found not primarily on the level of its complexly narrated plot but rather in its approach to character.

In a 1929 essay written to accompany August Sander's *Antlitz der Zeit*, Döblin characterizes the distinction between individual and collective as a question merely of the scale of observation.⁴ Similarly *Wallenstein*, by shifting the view upwards to the supra-individual level of mass processes and downwards to the sub-individual level of fragmentary drives and body parts, frustrates any attempt to fixate on autonomous individual as stable source of meaning or historical causality.⁵ *Wallenstein* thereby advances an epic poetics concerned with what Döblin would dub the "Kollektivwesen" 'collective being' or "Massenwesen" 'mass being'.⁶ Yet in contrast to Georg Lukács's influential theorization of the middling protagonist of the historical novel, *Wallenstein*'s characters function as mass beings not by virtue of their typicality but through descriptive registers that evoke an excess of materiality and a violence that ruptures the contours of the individual body in order to destabilize the very distinctions upon which the individual subject might be predicated. By closely attending to the ways in which this historical novel reconfigures

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characters as "Massenwesen," this essay seeks to illuminate a crucial and overlooked moment of the modernist re-appropriation of the epic.

From the reconsiderations of history's relationship to narrative that marked the so-called crisis of historicism in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, to the glut of biographies lambasted by Siegfried Kracauer in 1930, to the surge of interest in historical novels in the Weimar Republic and exile—history and historiography were a focus of modern German thought and literature.⁷ Döblin contributed prolifically to the genre of the historical novel,⁸ and *Wallenstein* certainly lies within this broader constellation. Yet in many important respects Döblin's novel also defied the strategies which history was habitually made to serve: *Wallenstein* does not rely on the coherence of the individual biography to organize the chaos of historical experience and meaning nor, with its spectacular violence and protracted depictions of the miseries of war, does it seem especially vulnerable to the accusations during the following decade that exiled German writers had allegedly turned to history to escape the present. Rather, by depicting characters in ways that frustrate a sustained focus on them as individuals, Döblin's novel must be understood as a major contribution to a modernist discourse of the epic.

From Georg Lukács's *Die Theorie des Romans* (The Theory of the Novel, 1916) to Brecht's epic theater, the heterogeneous discourse of the epic served a diverse and often contradictory array of purposes and positions. Speaking broadly, the idea of the epic enabled the theorization of relationships between narrative and society that pivoted on the category of masses rather than individuals. Crucially, this turn away from the bourgeois individual also involved the reconceptualization of subject matter, representational strategies, audience, media, and the artist, as well as a reconfiguration of the relationship among these terms. The epic turn from psychological interiority and individual reception towards the masses thus proceeded in tandem with the increasing intermediality of literature and the figurative dislocation of the writer from the *Stube* to the *Strasse*.

The turn from individual interiority towards the epic's treatment of masses⁹ implies an ambivalence between plot and character that often tends to be resolved with an emphasis on plot rather than character. Lukács, discussing in his *Theorie des Romans* the deep historical shifts that necessitated the self-aware form of the novel, writes, "The autonomous life of interiority is possible and necessary only when the distinctions between men have made an unbridgeable chasm; . . . when interiority and adventure are forever divorced from one another" (66). This radical historical-philosophical disjunction is analyzed by Lukács as a broken relationship between interiority and adventure with deep implications for both character (insofar as the individual, interior particularity becomes the privileged space for character depiction once the space of the social has lost its epic wholeness) and plot, which is confronted with the problem of arbitrariness once every action is no longer capable of being seen as a "well-fitting garment for the soul" (30).¹⁰

Yet the radical fissure between interiority and adventure would come to be theorized chiefly in terms of plot and narrative rather than character. Lukács himself indicated this ambivalent predilection by declaring that protagonists of novels are by definition seekers. The individual's suddenly problematic place in the modern absence of a closed, given totality entails both the need to give a narrative form to life and the particular, searching

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psychology of the novel's heroes (51). In his essay on Nikolai Leskov, Benjamin's discussion of narrative in the epic and the novel focuses on memory—the exemplary *Gedächtnis* 'memory' of the epic contrasted to the individualized *Eingedenken* 'remembrance' of the novel—and thus implicitly privileges the narrative of events, of the "Lauf der Dinge" 'the course of events' ("Der Erzähler" 453).¹¹ But if the relationship between the epic and the novel pivots in some way on the shifting relationships among interiority, exteriority, and individuality, then the category of character remains potentially as central to this question as do those of plot and narrative.

Döblin, I want to suggest, advanced the theorization and practice of the modernist epic precisely by attending to the possibilities and implications of character depiction.¹² In particular, *Wallenstein* troubles a discourse of subjectivity predicated on the categories of insides and outsides by subverting the very spatial distinction between these categories in the bodies of its characters. *Wallenstein* must therefore be read as a touchstone of a resurgent discourse of the epic within German modernism because of the way it constructs a relationship among masses, history, and narrative upon the violently unstable bodies that populate its pages.

My contention is that Döblin's evolving theory of the epic, which drew on a critique of the novel form and his essayistic insights into embodied subjectivity, allowed and even compelled him to experiment with a kind of characterization that relates the individual and the collective in surprising ways. Major figures of the Thirty Years' War—Emperor Ferdinand, Wallenstein, General Tilly—convey their broader social context not as symbols, national types, or representations of values, but rather through strategies of embodiment, fragmentation, incorporation, and integration, in other words, by disrupting the stability of characters as autonomous individuals bearing historical agency. What Döblin would later call the "Kollektivwesen" will be essential to understanding the functioning of characters in *Wallenstein*, because the concept illuminates the representative strategies—and their underlying ideas—which Döblin used to link historical individuals to larger historical processes.

Döblin scholarship tends to be heavily weighted towards *Berlin Alexanderplatz* (1929), despite decades of prolific literary production both before and after the city novel's publication. This essay therefore aspires to contribute to the ongoing work of rounding out Döblin scholarship—not merely in the belief that the earlier and later works are worthwhile in their own right, nor in the pragmatic sense that a fuller reckoning of Döblin's poetics will help us understand the city novel better. Above all, Döblin's capacious interdisciplinary writing, his dizzyingly prolific production, sustained influence, and ongoing interrogation of the relationship among aesthetic, subjective, scientific, and philosophical categories means that the relative neglect of works like *Die drei Sprünge des Wang-Lun* (The Three Leaps of Wang Lun, 1916), *Wadzeks Kampf mit der Dampfturbine* (Wadzek's Struggle with the Steam Turbine, 1918), *Wallenstein* (1920), and *Berge Meere und Giganten* (Mountains Seas and Giants, 1924) represents a major omission in the study of German modernism. This period of Döblin's writing is particularly crucial for a consideration of the return to the epic in the context of the development of the German historical novel.

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"Nachdem die Böhmen besiegt waren, war niemand darüber so froh wie der Kaiser" ("After the Bohemians had been defeated, nobody was happier about it than the Emperor"; 9). The novel begins with a statement that teeters between the world-historical and the personal. The subordinate clause that opens the nearly 900-page tome establishes the setting as shortly after the Battle of White Mountain in 1620, while the main clause shifts to Emperor Ferdinand as the counterpoint to this historical event. The second sentence moves from Imperial affect to Imperial appetite as it expands on Ferdinand's happiness: "Noch niemals hatte er mit rascheren Zähnen hinter den Fasanen gesessen, waren seine fältchenumrahmten Äuglein so lüstern zwischen Kredenz und Teller, Teller Kredenz gewandert" ("He had never sat with swifter teeth behind the pheasants, his wrinkled little eyes had never wandered so lustfully between credenza and plate, plate credenza"). The scene continues its fragmentary depiction of excess, introducing in passing major figures of the court by foregrounding an animal corporeality and detached scraps of raiment and garb (9). If the first sentence involves the Emperor's affect but not his agency in the military victory, later passages replace him as a grammatical subject entirely, granting his body parts autonomy and agency of their own. "wer ißt, liebt keine Pausen; was schluckt, muß spülen. Ferdinands Lippen wollten naß sein, sein Schlund naß, sie verdienten's reichlich, droschen ihr Korn" ("he who eats does not love pauses; what swallows must swill. Ferdinand's lips wanted to be wet, his gorge wet, they had amply earned it, threshed their grain"; 9).

Contemporary reviews of Döblin's novel found that the emphasis on bodies, appetites, and drives of such scenes made the novel a grotesque (Koepeke 13; Schuster and Bode 83, 102, 107, 112-113). And indeed, even where the passage seems to return to the level of historical event, a mythological, allegorical framing prevents both a clear historical overview—the novel lacks historical dates—and a definite identification of narrative perspective: "Die Böhmen geschlagen, Ludmilla und Wenzel, die heiligen, hatten die Hand von ihren tollen Verehrern gezogen: da saßen sie auf dem Sand, haha, samt Huß, allen Brüderschaften, ihrer Waldhexe Libussa, dem Pfalzgrafen Friedrich" ("The Bohemians defeated, Ludmila and Wenceslaus, the saints, had withdrawn their hands from their mad worshippers; there they sat in the sand, haha, along with Hus, all brotherhoods, their forest witch Libuše, the Count Palatine Frederick"; 9). The defeated party is represented through oddly personalized figures from Czech lore and history, while the narrator's amused interjection suggests at least a partial focalization through Ferdinand. In Ludmila, Wenceslaus, Hus, and Libuše we have at least the lineaments of a national collective, but the elliptical, allusive image withholds any meaningful overview of history, national or otherwise. Where the depiction of the banquet collapses into fragments and drives, the immediate effect of this apparently bigger historical picture is similarly to frustrate a grasp both of the contours of the novel's plot from the outset and of a specific event-nature of history.¹³

What is one to make of such an account of the beginning of the Thirty Years' War? The brief allusion to the defeated Friedrich, which had seemed to be setting the historical stage, quickly turns back to the celebratory gluttony. Enthusiastic exclamations that shift from

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Ferdinand's hypothetical voice (9) to narrative interjection (9,10,12) reinforce the partial focalization through Ferdinand. In doing so, the narrative strategies of this opening passage suggest two alternate readings. On the one hand, the thematic overlay of the banquet and the victory, both causes of the Emperor's enthusiasm, contributes to a richly suggestive psychological character sketch of Ferdinand—he is inhabited by lusty drives for consumption, power, and pleasure, and inhibited by his constitutional inability to take the active role in realizing these. On the other hand, the text's fragmentary depictions of both history and individual bodies marks a rapid level shifting among disparate elements—food, clothing, individual bodies, world-historical processes—that eludes the grasp of a kind of reading that would locate historical meaning or causality in individual psychology, motivation, and action. It is this tension between individual character and strategies of depiction that frustrate any sustained focus on individuals that I wish to explore here.

Indeed, the relationship between individual and social context is a central question of the novel form in general, and especially of the historical novel. How might a historical novel convey broader processes of history or salient features of a given historical moment through the representative possibilities of prose fiction and the conventional narrative reliance on individual character? When Georg Lukács, in his 1916 *Theorie des Romans*, suggests that it is precisely the individual biography that can anchor a narrative to the unmoored "transcendental homelessness" of the modern subject (41), we may see this as a local inflection of a broader aesthetic and epistemological moment. Wilhelm Dilthey, in his "Entwürfe zur Kritik der historischen Vernunft" (Drafts for a Critique of Historical Reason) describes the individual biography as a privileged form that can make the passage of time—itsself inaccessible to direct experience—meaningful (195). Where the act of fixing a moment means that it is necessarily withdrawn from the "flow of time" (Dilthey 193), the context of a biography provides a meaningful whole that lends significance to the isolated moments (199). And Rüdiger Campe has traced the relationship between form and life back to Friedrich Blankenburg's theory of the novel in order to show how the modern novel poses form not as a question of poetic category but rather as a question of the fundamental need to give form to life.

In a similar vein, Georg Simmel theorizes the relationship between history and life as one of rupture and narrative re-contextualization. In his essay "Die historische Formung" (Historical Formation), Simmel uses a complex and vivid image of a carpet whose connections mostly run beneath the visible surface but nevertheless form the meaningful patterns we can see. The historian however is interested not in the unbroken patterns of the surface, but in the connections organized by a unifying concept (330).

Indeed, when Siegfried Kracauer analyses the ideologically dubious flood of post-WWI biographies as the "neobourgeois art form" in a 1930 essay, this critique indexes both the prevalence and the senescence of the idea that an individual *Lebenslauf* can give aesthetic form to the chaotic manifold of the experience of time and history. Kracauer criticizes biographies as a kind of escapism that would seek to avoid the fraught insights into history provided by the World War, technological change, and the problematization of the autonomous individual subject. In linking the privileging of a particular aesthetic form to a view of history that is itself the result of a historically-specific subject position—that of the

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bourgeoisie—Kracauer's essay shares features with Lukács's 1936 study, *Der historische Roman* (The Historical Novel). Drawing on Walter Scott as a prime example, Lukács characterizes the historical novel as a specifically bourgeois form that could arise only in the post-Napoleonic era, once history as a total process became visible (9–23). In further developing the question of the relationship between individual experience and social world addressed in *Theorie des Romans* and the idea of class-specific epistemologies explored in *Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein* (History and Class Consciousness, 1923), Lukács characterizes the classical historical novel as one centered on a typical, middling protagonist, linked to a pragmatic, living knowledge of the age through the category of *Volkstümlichkeit*.¹⁴ Heroes like Scott's Edward Waverley are able to represent social processes and changes of their time precisely because of their average quality (25–35). World historical figures such as Mary Stuart, on the other hand, appear only on the margins of the plots (33).

By foregrounding the characters of *Wallenstein*, Ferdinand, Maximilian, and other prominent individuals, Döblin's novel would seem to take precisely the opposite tack, yet his epic is not a history of great men. *Wallenstein* does not present us with a Thirty Years' War that is the result of the conscious conflict of historical agents. In contrast to the biographies with which Kracauer takes issue, *Wallenstein* does not rest upon a bedrock of supposed historical facticity to provide epistemological stability to the experience of history, nor does it organize its events, processes, and material with recourse to the form of the individual biography. Rather, Döblin's novel turns to history in order to rethink the categories of individual and character as a key step in his development of the modern epic. The way that the characters in *Wallenstein* function as *Kollektivwesen* suggests a different relationship between individual and collective/mass than the typical representation found in Lukács.

Over the course of the 1910s and 1920s, Döblin developed a sustained critique of the nineteenth-century psychological novel. Significantly, he articulated this critique in the conjoined terms of aesthetics, psychology, and a philosophy of nature. A reductionist idea of plot and narrative causality, on the one hand, and a notion of the autonomous subject guided by psychological interiority, on the other, formed the tandem targets of his attack. In his 1913 essay, "An Romanautoren und ihre Kritiker. Berliner Programm" (To Novelists and Their Critics: Berlin Program) for example, Döblin rejects the attribution of individual action to internal emotional states such as "rage," "love," and the like, which are themselves convenient narrative fictions that condense a host of disparate processes (120). Calling for a "Tatsachenphantasie," Döblin exhorts the novelist to follow the example set by psychiatry by merely noting the processes and movements of subjective mental and physical life (*Schriften zu Ästhetik, Poetik und Literatur* 119–120), rather than hastily imposing a signifying framework onto these processes and movements. Fifteen years later, in his extended philosophical essay, *Das Ich über der Natur* (The I Above Nature), Döblin probes the individual subject with the eyes of an anatomist, rejecting not just a classical psychic interiority, but also the very notion of any interior at all. Instead of a "hole for the thinking soul," Döblin's monist exploration of selfhood merely finds within the human body

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connection, integration, and a pervasive embodiment that links internal organs, thought, perception, and extended cosmos (114-115).

Common to these various explorations is a rejection of a dualist model of human subjectivity that would locate autonomous, stable subjects within their bodies, in favor of a monist option that sees subjectivity as necessarily both embodied and material. Döblin's monist conception of the materiality of subjectivity is linked to the idea of a *Tatsachenphantasie* and to the concept of the *Kollektivwesen*. This is especially significant for *Wallenstein* where, as we shall see, the category of character is reconfigured precisely by means of paratactic listings, an expansive accumulation of images of bodies, material objects, and social processes, and a spatial logic of embodiment, fragmentation, and rupture that undermines the contiguous bounds of the contained, autonomous individual. These strategies reflect the way that Döblin's thoughts on subjectivity and literary character were developing in dialogue with his philosophy of nature. In particular, characterization in *Wallenstein* suggests a significant ambivalence in the concept of *Leben* 'life' as it relates to *Form* 'form'.

On the one hand, individual lives as biographies are an organizing principle for *Wallenstein*. Main characters like Wallenstein, Emperor Ferdinand, and Maximilian serve as centers of accretion and condensation that structure the manifold events and processes of the Thirty Years' War. Yet on the other hand, *Leben* 'life' considered not as biography but as biology taps into a more vitalist register in Döblin's thought, tied to the idea of unrestrained growth and change.¹⁵ Where life as biography provides form, life as biology destroys it.¹⁶ Thus, to return to the example of the opening banquet, Ferdinand's celebration may well be the vessel for presenting the history of the war up to that point, yet the corporeal fragmentation and excess threaten to spill over at every turn.¹⁷ As we shall see, the bodies depicted in *Wallenstein* serve as centers of meaning, by containing and binding mass processes and social movement, but they also, in being overrun and ruptured by movements they cannot fully contain, frustrate the desire for narrative, semantic, and historical closure. In its depictions of life and bodies *Wallenstein* develops a strategy of characterization that portrays individuals as *Kollektivwesen*.¹⁸

Early in the novel, a depiction of Vienna surveys the city as a whole in order to then zoom in on the figure of Ferdinand.

Im Ring seiner Mauern Wälle und Basteien lag Wien; Häuser, Türme, Kirchen gemauert an Häuser, Märkte, Gäßchen, überschwellend gegen die Donau, jenseits den Werd mit Steinen bedrückend, mit tastenden Fingern nach der Venedigerau, dem Rustschacher, den beiden weiten Galizinwiesen (78).

In the ring of its walls, ramparts and bastions lay Vienna; houses, towers, churches walled up against houses, markets, lanes, spilling over towards the Danube, oppressing the Werd beyond with stones, with groping fingers towards the Venediger Au, the Rustschacher, both broad Galizin meadows.

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Vienna is both contained in its walls and overflows it, and the way the city exceeds its frame here indicates the shifting among levels and scales that marks the passage as the floating perspective moves through the city's streets (78-79). Each sentence describes a visual scene with no connection to the next except for spatial adjacency and horizontal coordination within the urban social space. The way that each sentence treats a different social groupings—such as soldiers, students, "Bürgerfräulein" 'young bourgeois ladies', nuns, cripples, pages, Cossacks, a burial procession—suggests a working ecosystem. And indeed, the sense of bustling purpose recalls the descriptions of the modern metropolis in Döblin's 1924 essay, "Der Geist des naturalistischen Zeitalters" (The Spirit of the Naturalistic Era), where he writes, "Die Städte sind Hauptorte und Sitze der Gruppe Mensch. Sie sind der Korallenstock für das Kollektivwesen Mensch" (Cities are the principal seat of the human being. They are the coral reef for the human collective being"; 180).

Comparing cities to a "Korallenstock" 'coral reef' suggests the biological perspective at play here, and the concept of the "Kollektivwesen" is in fact developed in the same essay in order to rethink the status of technological modernity from a longer perspective than that of a classical "scholastisch-humanistische Schulbildung" ("scholastic-humanist education"; Döblin, "Der Geist" 168), which obstructs an accurate view of the present. In contrast to the transcendence that marked the earlier "metaphysical period," increasing observation of the physical world gradually leads to the technological existence of the "naturalistic era" (Döblin, "Der Geist" 169-170). In setting out to undo the sentimental dichotomies of culture and civilization, past and present, Döblin thereby also undermines the distinction between nature and technology (168). In describing the social drive ("Gesellschaftstrieb," 170) of human beings towards greater complexity and agglomerations, he asks: "Was ist das biologisch gesehen?" ("What is this, seen biologically?"; 170). He answers this question in terms of the "Tierart Mensch" 'animal species of the human' and the "Kollektivwesen," which allows him both to position his discussion of technology as a phenomenon that is the expression of nature, on the one hand, and to sweep not just bourgeois humanism but modern European culture in general into a relatively marginal corner (171).

The concept of the *Kollektivwesen* must therefore be seen as a key moment in Döblin's sustained criticism of the autonomous bourgeois subject (Becker 47). In situating the *Kollektivwesen* in the metropolis as the expression of a biological drive, Döblin is able to attack the notion of the contained individual from both sides: in terms of an embrace of mass, urban, technological society, and in the rejection of a transcendent human privilege vis-à-vis nature.¹⁹

I suggest, therefore, that such depictions of characters in *Wallenstein* be read as an early engagement with this concept. In reworking the literary category of character in his depiction of historical individuals, Döblin is furthering the critique of character and the conception of individuality upon which it rests that he had announced in his 1913 "Berliner Programm." In the following passage, Ferdinand is depicted as the symbolic and spatial center of Imperial Vienna, yet he cannot really be dissociated from the chaos of the streets, the materiality of the court, or the nestled symbolic order of the city. He is a kind of "Kollektivwesen," and this association is reinforced by how marginal Ferdinand himself actually is in the depiction of the court. He is not named directly, and mention of him is

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conveyed either through the symbolic apparatus of royal titles or through the names of a retinue entrusted with his body and soul:

Breit fußte neben dem Augustinerkloster an der Mauer das riesige Massiv der Burg, viereckig, ellbogenartig die Ecktürme ausstemmend, drei hohe Stock ragend. Darin hauste der Gewaltigste des Heiligen Römischen Reiches inmitten seines ungeheuren Trosses, beschützt von der Trabantengarde und den kaiserlichen Hatschieren, hundert Mann samt Fourieren und Trompetern unter Don Balthasar, ihrem Kapitän. Benedicite und Grantias an der Tafel sagten sieben Kapläne. Für seine Küche sorgten Mundköche Meisterköche Unterköche Bratenköche Suppenköche Küchenträger Holzmacher Adjunkten. . . . Um die Seele des Kaisers mühten sich neben dem Beichtvater der Pater Johann Weingartner, der Hofkaplan Paul Knorr von Rosenrot. . . . Seinen Leib hatte er großen Ärzten anheimgegeben, Managetta war Doktor der vier Fakultäten, dazu Mingonius, Mahlgießer, Johann Junker. (80-81)

Beside the Augustine cloister on the wall the castle's gigantic massif rested widely with its four corners, splaying its corner towers out like elbows, rising three tall stories high. Within resided the most powerful one of the Holy Roman Empire amidst his formidable retinue, protected by the trabants and the imperial hartschiers, a hundred men along with foragers and trumpeters under Don Baltasar, their captain. Benedictions and grace at table were said by seven chaplains. Personal chefs master chefs sous chefs roasting chefs soup chefs waiting staff wood splitters and general assistants looked after his kitchen. . . . In addition to his confessor Father Johann Weingartner, Court Chaplain Paul Knorr von Rosenrot labored on the soul of the Emperor. . . . His body he had committed to great doctors, Managetta was a doctor of the four faculties, Mingonius, Mahlgiesser, Johann Junker in addition.

As a "Kollektivwesen," Ferdinand mobilizes and contains larger social impulses, and his body, appetites, habits, and soul are dispersed throughout the social, institutional space of the court. Conversely, the text ties broad social phenomena to his person and his body. During the rising unrest that results from the depredations of Wallenstein's army in the Imperial lands, the curses directed towards Emperor Ferdinand are compared to rodents gnawing away at wood, a simile that is in turn literalized as the curses are said to bite and claw at the Emperor's clothes and body: "Schreie, Drohungen; wie wenn Mäuse an einem Schrank beißen, so knisterten, knackten, knatterten um Ferdinand die leisen scharfen Verwünschungen, rissen mit blitzschnellen Krällchen an seinen Schuhen, Strümpfen, ließen sich durch kurze Stöße nicht verjagen in ihrer Wut, knabberten, liefen an, kratzten, krallten, bisßen" ("Screams, threats; as when mice bite at a cupboard, the hushed sharp imprecations creaked, clicked, crackled about Ferdinand, tore at his shoes, stockings with lightning-fast little claws, couldn't be chased away with quick kicks"; 378). Later on, in the tumultuous wake of rapid victories and rising tensions at court over Wallenstein's increasing power, Ferdinand becomes a fluttering standard: "Ferdinand der Andere, des Römischen Reiches Mehrer, rauschte als glöckchenklingelnde bänderwerfende Riesenstandarte in Purpur über

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ihnen, in den Boden gerammt, häuserhoch am Mast, an der sein Ungestüm zerrte, als wollte er sie hochtragen" ("Ferdinand the Second, Augmenter of the Roman Empire, rustled above them as a bell-ringing ribbon-flinging giant standard in purple, driven into the ground, as tall on its pole as a house, which his boisterousness yanked at as though it wanted to carry it aloft"; 392-393). This description represents a stark contrast to his feeble, evacuated physical state at the time.²⁰

The discrepancy between Ferdinand's body and personality, on the one hand, and his office on the other is a major theme of the novel. During his arranged wedding to Princess Eleonore of Mantua, the Emperor's feeble and creaturely self all but disappears into the social vestments of his collective role:

In der Hofkirche zu Innsbruck begegneten sie sich, von Priestern einander zugeführt; sie sahen sich vor dem Altar zum erstenmal. Die Prinzessin blickte weg, erschüttert von dem gramzerrissenen, halb hilfeflehenden, halb stumpfen Gesicht, das über den ungeheuren Prunkmänteln, über den millionenwerten Halsketten Agraffen Spitzen Bordüren und Ringen sich bewegte; das verquollene ältliche graubärtige Wesen, versteckt in der Schale, mißtrauisch und leidend. (142-143)

In the Hofkirche at Innsbruck they met each other, brought together by priests; before the altar they saw each other for the first time. The Princess looked away, shaken by the grietorn, half imploring half lethargic face which moved above the immense pomp cloaks, moved above the necklaces, agraffes, lace trim and rings worth millions; the swollen elderly graybearded creature, hidden in its shell, mistrustful and suffering.

On the one hand this passage expresses the lack of fit between Ferdinand the man and the expectations of his office. The grotesque mismatch between his creaturely, helpless mien and the emblems of his imperial office, "millionenwert," 'worth millions' plays to the characterization of the Emperor as a "furchtbar-groteske Schwächling," 'terrible-grotesque weakling' as Lulu von Strauss und Torney has it in her review (qtd. in Schuster and Bode 111). Yet, on the other hand, the novel's repeated depiction of its main characters as assemblages suggests that this mismatch is due not to Ferdinand's weaknesses alone, but must also be read as a de-emphasis of an individual character's particularity in order to show the essentially social, collective nature of all characters. As a *Kollektivwesen*, Ferdinand embodies aspects of his office and his empire, and the text's literalization of metaphors that compare the Emperor to a standard or his detractors to mice suggests that embodiment and corporeality provide ways of linking the individual character to the historical collective that are distinct from either symbolic representation or the *Volkstümlichkeit* linked to historically situated praxis that is so central for Lukács.

Just as the novel's opening passage shifts the view away from the individual in two directions—upwards to the symbolic figures of a national community and downwards to the fragmentation of body parts—depictions of Ferdinand in the novel also involve an affective dimension. Thematically the Emperor can be said to be the object of his own

Gelderloos, Carl. "'Ersticken im Stofflichen.' Characters as Collectives in Alfred Döblin's *Wallenstein* and his Theoretical Writings." *The German Historical Novel Since the 18th Century*. Edited by Daniela Richter, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016.

affects; this holds true on the stylistic level as well, as innumerable moments in the novel cast Ferdinand as an object to which things—both outside events and inner states—happen. Especially at moments where he is faced with a decision regarding his shifting dependencies on Bavaria and Wallenstein, we come across sentences like: “Und dann, gerade wie der Fürst eine Pause machte . . . , sauste urplötzlich der Gedanke Bayern über ihn, als wenn ihn die Riesen geworfen hätten, die an der Decke nicht gehalten wurden, beinbewegend ihn mit den platten Fußsohlen betrampfelnd” (“And then, just as the Prince paused . . . the thought of Bavaria suddenly swept over him, as though he had been tossed by the giants who weren’t held to the ceiling, moving their legs trampling him with the flat soles of their feet”; 324), or “ein feiner kurzer Schmerz wirbelte durch ihn” (“a fine quick pain swirled through him”; 463), or “Als der Kaiser vier Tage hatte verstreichen lassen, . . . ließ er noch einmal das Theater der Beschuldigungen, Bedingungen, des Grolls, der Wildheit an sich passieren” (“When the Emperor had let four days elapse . . . , he once more let the theater of incriminations, stipulations, resentment, truculence pass before him”; 564).

So in one direction, Ferdinand is dispersed through the material connections of a larger social context—whether this is the city of Vienna, the networks of allegiances and unrest that mark the warring lands, or the opulence of his symbolic office—while in the other direction his autonomy and agency are fragmented into affects, drives, and passions. Either way, the possibilities for any kind of successful, intentional interface between individual subject and historical processes are sharply curtailed. Ferdinand’s status as a *Kollektivwesen* embodying political conflict on both a supra- and sub-individual level prevents him from acting. Yet this also indicates the epic strategy of representation towards which Döblin was working, in order to narrate mass historical processes without subordinating them to the convenient narrative fiction of individual motivation.

This dual movement between sub-individual tendencies and a larger collective aspect also marks the Emperor’s counterpart, Wallenstein. Albrecht Wenzel Eusebius von Wallenstein, who commanded the Imperial armies while aggrandizing his own fortunes and reshaping the way wars were waged in Europe, is also subject to his own affects and body. He specifically suffers from a condition referred to in the novel as “der Schiefer” ‘the splint’. In moments of setback or frustration, his emotional state finds physiological expression:

die Gicht war ihm in den Kopf gestiegen, seine Augen geschwollen, tiefrot, das Gesicht tiefblaß. Er saß, lag brütend herum; auf Pantoffeln mußte man gehen. Brüllte, sobald sich ihm einer näherte in Sporen oder mit Hunden; in furchtbarer Gereiztheit schleuderte er Becher, Gläser, fiel Unbedachte mit Peitsche und Degen an. (241)

The gout had risen to his head, his eyes swollen, deep red, his face deep pale. He sat, lay about brooding; one had to walk in slippers. Roared as soon as someone approached him in spurs or with dogs; in a terrible temper he hurled cups, glasses, attacked the incautious with whip and rapier.

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These attacks express the tyrannical character of Wallenstein, but they also illustrate his helplessness in the face of this state. In expressing his affect through outbreaks of gout, his body takes on a life of its own. After he is dismissed by the Emperor in the wake of the 1630 Diet of Regensburg, his condition is particularly severe:

Sieben Tage lang ließ Wallenstein alle Arbeit liegen. Gelähmt vor Wut an Armen und Beinen. . . . Jetzt trampelte er nicht auf seinen Hut, sondern zerriß ihn. Er war völlig blind. . . . Der lange magere Herzog war ein sterbendes Untier zwischen seinen Laken und Kompressen, den Tod wünschte er sich herbei, zerreißen wollte er den Bayern, den Kaiser, die Jesuiten, die Franzosen. An seinen dünnen Unterschenkeln brachen Gichtgeschwüre auf, das erleichterte ihn; seine Augen schwollen rot und liefen; sie standen wie Beulen zwischen den fleischlosen Wangen, neben der hohen Nase. (569-570)

For seven days Wallenstein let all work rest. His arms and legs lamed with rage. . . . Now he did not trample on his hat but tore it to pieces. He was completely blind. . . . The long lean duke was a dying beast amongst his sheets and compresses, he wished for death, he wanted to tear the Bavarian to pieces, the Emperor, the Jesuits, the French. Gouty ulcers broke open on his thin shanks, this relieved him; his eyes swelled red and ran; they stood like bulges between his fleshless cheeks, beside his high nose.

The physiological indices of his inner state both express and give relief to his anger. The hapless detail of his thin legs contrasts with the potency of his rage, while the fact that he is metaphorically blinded by anger is augmented and muddled by the description of his eyes' physical swelling. The multiple objects of his actual and imagined "ripping to shreds"—his hat, on the one hand, and his adversaries, on the other—overlay his bodily surroundings with his political surroundings, and the creaturely tenor of the description of Wallenstein as a dying beast, or of his swollen eyes undermines the calculating mastery by which he is frequently characterized. The effect of such scenes is one of bodily and affective fragmentation: the dissolution of Wallenstein into pieces, drives, and tendencies is tied to a laming incapacitation.²¹

Like Ferdinand, Wallenstein is also portrayed as a larger collection of forces. In particular, the way that he mobilizes fiscal, material, and martial resources on a vast transregional scale earns him the repeated narrative epithet of "machinery" (424, 446, 470-471, 740). The mechanical register conveys not only efficiency and impersonality, but also a decentralization and dispersal of the effects of the novel's titular character. If Ferdinand is a *Kollektivwesen* in his imbrication with the court, his office, and the extent of his power, Wallenstein increasingly functions as a collective being as his influence spreads. Through long passages of the novel, especially as Wallenstein equips, arms, and readies the imperial armies, the more we read of Wallenstein as effect, system, and machine, the less we see of him as an individual character. And when the narrative does return to depictions of Wallenstein the individual, the individual focus tends to be frustrated by the

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fragmentariness of his affects and drives. Indeed, there is something mechanical at play in the corporeal eruptions that indicate Wallenstein's rages.

While these characterizations do partly function on a level of psychological characterization—Wallenstein the machine and Ferdinand the weakling—my contention is that their primary function is in fact to move the focus away from the psychologically driven individual and towards other ways of articulating the relationship between single character and the historical collective. This would be in line with Döblin's discussion, in various texts that lay out his philosophy of nature in the 1920s, of the individual ontological unit as such. In an essay entitled, "Das Wasser" (Water), published in *Die neue Rundschau* in 1922, Döblin explores the fluid element in order to deny the stability of individual bodies of any kind, whether physical or conceptual.

Was ist das: Meer? Wer ist das? Es ist gar nicht „das Meer.“ Diese Wellen sind keine Einzelwesen. Ich treffe im Wasser nie auf Einzelwesen. Es ist so biegsam, ineinander geschmolzen, ineinandergehend. Ich komme auf keinen Teil, den ich isolieren kann. . . . In der Flüssigkeit sinken die Grundteile zu tieferer Anonymität zurück. Die schärfere hitzigere Wallung der Körper, ihre Isolierung und Flucht voneinander nimmt ein Ende. ("Das Wasser" 854–855)

What is that: ocean? Who is that? It is not "the ocean" at all. These waves are not individual beings. In the water I never encounter individual beings. It is so pliable, fused into each other, moving into each other. I come across no part that I can isolate. . . . In liquid, the basic components sink down to a deeper anonymity. The sharper more heated churning of bodies, their isolation and flight from each other, comes to an end.

Water here functions as a model for the ontological relationship between particle and fluid, mass and individual. The indivisible material extension of subjectivity is a theme which Döblin would develop in more detail over the course of the 1920s, most notably in his 1927 book-length treatise, *Das Ich über der Natur*, in which he will repeat more or less verbatim the above passage from "Das Wasser" (22–23). This confluence alone begins to suggest how tightly intertwined his considerations of the individual human subject were with his monist philosophy of nature. Another essay from 1922, "Die Natur und ihre Seelen" (Nature and its Souls), gives a sense of the social stakes of this materialist conception of subjectivity.

Mit diesem Salz, diesem Wasser, diesem Eiweiß verbreitern wir uns in die Welt. Mit dem Meer, den Wüsten, den Bergen, den Felsen, den Winden. Darum kann man die Welt durchfühlen. Darum ist man nicht diese halbkomische bürgerliche Figur, die froh ist ihren Rock zu tragen, sondern ausgebreiteter, ernster und zugleich dunkler, anonym. Anonym: das Zauberwort. Das führende Wort. Die Person spielt keine Rolle. . . . Das Leben und die Wahrheit ist nur bei der Anonymität. ("Die Natur Und Ihre Seelen" 9)

Gelderloos, Carl. "'Ersticken im Stofflichen.' Characters as Collectives in Alfred Döblin's *Wallenstein* and his Theoretical Writings." *The German Historical Novel Since the 18th Century*. Edited by Daniela Richter, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016.

With this salt, this water, this protein we widen into the world. With the ocean, the deserts, the mountains, the cliffs, the winds. This is why we can feel through the world. This is why one isn't this half-comical bourgeois figure who is happy to wear its frock, but is rather more dispersed, more serious and also darker, more anonymous. Anonymous: the magic word. The guiding word. The person is of no importance . . . Life and truth are only in anonymity.

The appearance of the "half-comical figure" of the bourgeois recalls the scornful dismissal in "An Romanautoren und ihre Kritiker" (1913) of the self-delusions of an outmoded *Belletristik* 'fiction,' based upon the hegemony of the autonomous individual and the unaware narrative fictions of individual psychological motivation. In all of these instances, Döblin's attack is on the idea of a contained individual on every level—ontological, psychological, literary—and the snide mention of the *Rock* 'frock' suggests the perceived cultural, social context in which Döblin was intervening—the autumn years of a long-dominant and self-satisfied bourgeois humanism, which he will eagerly bury and summarily elegeize in "Der Geist des naturalistischen Zeitalters."

This tight analogy among various critiques of the individual unit suggests precisely why representative strategies of collectivity and embodiment should serve to advance the portrayal of characters in *Wallenstein*, and why the category of character itself should be a privileged one for Döblin's developing conception of epic narrative. By deploying various devices that undermine the solidity of individual bodies and individual motivation—particularly corporeal and affective fragmentation, on the one hand, and collective dispersal, on the other—the historical novel is able both to portray history as a process unmoored from individual motivation or decision, and to challenge what was seen as the primacy of psychological interiority and conscious motivation within literary representation.

For a final example of how *Wallenstein* reworks character as something both fragmentary and collective, we should consider the case of Tilly, general to Prince-Elector Maximilian I of Bavaria and of Bavaria's Catholic armies. Where Ferdinand might be said to be an assemblage of parts and symbols and Wallenstein is described as a machine, Tilly is a battlefield. The first major appearance in the novel of Tilly—"der flinke alte Brabanter, der Freiherr von Marbiß und Tilly, Johann Tserclaes," ("the deft old Brabanter, Freiherr of Marbiss and Tilly, Johann Tserclaes"; 291)—presents him as a living battlefield: "Der Brabanter, steif, gespenstig, mit einer weißen Schärpe, zwei Pistolen und einen Dolch im Gurt, kurze weiße Haare; an den Haarspitzen schwankten ihm wie Ähren die Tausende erschlagenen Menschen" ("The Brabantian, rigid, ghostly, with a white sash, two pistols and a dagger in his belt, short white hair; on the tips of his hair the thousands slain waved like ears of corn"; 292). The description of Tilly's physical appearance quickly gives way to the phantasmic and ghoulish spectacle of his dead enemies, clinging to and covering his own body:

Sein bleiches spitzes Gesicht, buschige Brauen, starrer borstiger Schnurrbart, überrieselt von den verstümmelten Regimentern eines Menschenalters; sie hielten

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sich rutschend an den Knöpfen seines grünen Wamses, an seinem Gurt. Seine knotigen Finger bezeichneten ein jeder die Vernichtung von Städten; mit jedem Gelenk war ein Dutzend ausgerotteter Dörfer bezeichnet. Über seine Schultern schoben sich her, zappelten die Körper der gemetzelten Türken, der Franzosen, der Pfälzer, und doch sollte er damit erscheinen vor Gericht einmal, samt ihren Pferden und Hunden, die über ihm hingen kreuz und quer, einer vor dem andern, über dem andern, eine ungeheure Last, so daß sein Kopf samt dem Hütlein darunter verschwand. (292)

His sharp pale face, bushy brows, stiff bristly mustache, sprinkled by the mutilated regiments of a generation; slipping down, they held onto the buttons of his green doublet, onto his belt. Each one of his knobbly fingers marked the annihilation of cities; with every joint a dozen eradicated villages were designated. The bodies of the slaughtered Turks, French, Palatines shuffled, flounced over his shoulders, and yet he was supposed to appear with all this before Judgment one day, together with their horses and dogs, which hung over him this way and that, one in front of the other, over the other, a monstrous burden, so that his head along with his little hat disappeared beneath them.

The bodies of the dead and the cities and villages he has destroyed accrue to his own physique in a kind of delayed reckoning of his violence. The effect of this passage is, first of all, to preserve the effects of his past actions by representing them as properties of his physical body. The accumulation of battles and victories that would go towards the making of a general while remaining invisibly in the past is here added to and made visible on Tilly's stature. As a *Kollektivwesen*, he is the sum of his actions and preserves the ghostly collectivities which his actions had destroyed. This strategy for invoking a relationship between historical individual and social collective is far removed from Lukács's analysis in *Der historische Roman*. This account of Tilly has him not so much reflecting, representing, or concentrating historical processes as embodying them. The sense of embodiment is heightened by the anatomical register of the following lines.

Ein Mammut, belastete er den Boden; aber eisig hielt er sich, hörte nicht das Gebrüll der Menschen, das markerschütternde Schreien Schrillen Pfeifen der Pferde, die sich alle an ihn hielten, ihr Leben aus ihm saugen wollten, aus den feinsten Röhrchen seiner Haare; herumlangende Pferdehälse, nüsternzitternd, scheckig, schwarz; zerknallte Hunde, die nach seinem Mund, seiner Nase schnupperten, gierig seinen Atem schlürften. Er mußte längst ausgeleert sein, sie sogen an einem dünnen Holz, er klapperte drin und sie brachten ihn nicht zum Sinken. (292-293)

A mammoth, he burdened the ground; but icily he maintained himself, did not hear the people yelling, the bloodcurdling screams, shrill whistling of the horses that all held onto him, wanted to draw their life from him, out of the finest capillary tubes of his hair; horse necks reaching around, nostrils quivering, brindled, black; dogs, who

Gelderloos, Carl. "'Ersticken im Stofflichen.' Characters as Collectives in Alfred Döblin's *Wallenstein* and his Theoretical Writings." *The German Historical Novel Since the 18th Century*. Edited by Daniela Richter, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016.

had been shot, who sniffed at his mouth, his nose, eagerly slurped his breath. He must have long been emptied, they sucked at brittle wood, he rattled inside and they did not make him fall.

The bodies of Tilly's vanquished no longer merely cover his body as the visual reminder of an otherwise invisible history, they are physically incorporated into his body in a parasitic way. Sucking life from him, the bodies of humans and animals stand in a contradictory relationship to the one who took their lives in the first place. While this portrayal certainly depends on a synecdochal concentration—so that "Tilly" already stands for all the armies under his control (293)—the grotesque corporeal relationship between Tilly the individual and the masses of the dead goes much further. Symbolically, the fact that he drags a trail of dead behind him is certainly a figurative way of maintaining the presence of a history that is by definition absent.

Yet Tilly must also be seen as a prefiguration of a key image in Döblin's next novel. A scene in Döblin's 1924 science fiction work *Berge Meere und Giganten* depicts the construction of the titular giants, enormous living defensive turrets made by the violent fusion of human, animal, and plant bodies—the giants are organs, bodies, landscapes, and ecosystems all at once (517-518). Key details of the passage from *Wallenstein*, in particular the images of horses and dogs eating from a gigantic human body and the focus on digestive processes marks it as a direct precursor to the giants of the science fiction novel.

This convergence—a shared image that depicts both a historical individual from the 17th century and a futuristic organic technology from the 27th century—supports the claim that the literary and aesthetic stakes of the *Kollektivwesen* as a strategy for representing the relationship between individuals and masses must be read in the context of Döblin's philosophical examination of the individual as such. In Döblin's conception, developed in essays on literature but also in philosophical writings such as *Das Ich über der Natur*, subjectivity is corporeal and material. Thought is described as an *Aneinanderhaften* 'adherence' and an *Aneinanderhaken* 'linking together' of matter, and perceptive organs are characterized with the neologism, "Ausgeweide" 'extestines' (*Das Ich über der Natur* 44). The underlying idea is of a material, bodily integration among all things, with subjectivity as the origin, result, and, effectively, as the synonym of this process.

For Döblin materiality and embodiment themselves exhibit particular features that effectively preempt a stable or static delineation between individual and mass. Thus the individual is inherently social and collective, in a more fundamentally ontological way. So when Tilly dies some four hundred pages after his first major appearance, we must read the scattering of souls that results as an early articulation of the material entanglement of subjectivities, an idea that is crucial to Döblin's thought over the course of the 1920s.

Da löste sich das Gespensterheer von dem warmen blutsickernden kleinen Körper. Zappelnde Rümpfe der gemetzten Türken Franzosen Pfälzer, der jaulenden hängenden zertretenen Hunde, kletternden Pferde, die mit den Hufen sich an ihm hielten. Zwischen ihnen gezogen matt, noch naß, seine eigene erstickte Seele.

Gelderloos, Carl. "'Ersticken im Stofflichen.' Characters as Collectives in Alfred Döblin's *Wallenstein* and his Theoretical Writings." *The German Historical Novel Since the 18th Century*. Edited by Daniela Richter, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016.

Verknäult flogen sie, unaufhörlich rufend, durch die verschneite Luft, ihrem dunklen Ort zu. (689)

Then the ghostly army freed itself from the warm little body seeping blood. Flouncing torsos of the slaughtered Turks French Palatines, of the yowling hanging duntrodden dogs, climbing horses that held onto him with their hooves. Between them drifted feebly, still wet, his own smothered soul. Entangled they flew, ceaselessly calling out, through the snowy air, towards their dark place.

The "tangle" of ghosts that departs with Tilly's soul is thus a strategy of literary representation meant to depict the broader social context of a historic individual. As a way of representing a *Kollektivwesen*, it is also a comment on the necessary entanglement of individual subjectivities. In this latter sense it proves to be a local instance of a guiding image in Döblin's work. Whereas the tangle here evokes the relationship among historical subjects, inextricable even in death, Döblin used it elsewhere to describe the poetic process and the constitution of the self. In his late essay "Epilog" (1948), Döblin characterizes the initial moment of artistic creation in terms of the suggestive power of an individual image: "Da fesselte mich zu irgend einer Zeit eine Meldung, eine Schilderung . . . Ich kann auch sagen, mir fiel ein Faden in die Hand, das Ende eines Knäuels, und ich fing an, das Ganze aufzurollen, bis ich ans Ende gelangt war" ("Then at some time a note, a depiction would fascinate me . . . I can also say a thread fell into my hand, the end of a tangle, and I began to unravel the whole thing until I had gotten to the end"; 287-288). The tangle that accompanied Tilly's soul is here a way of describing an inchoate mass of material that can be initially organized by a single image and unrolled in the epic work from potentiality into actuality.

In "Der Bau des epischen Werks" (The Construction of the Epic Work) Döblin describes the genesis of *Wallenstein* in a similar way: Ich fühle, das widerfährt mir; *es ist als ob ich einen wirren Knäuel in der Hand gedreht habe, und jetzt habe ich das Ende gefaßt* ("I feel, this happens to me; *it is as if I have turned a confused tangle in my hands and now I've grabbed the end of it*"; 232, italics added). This passage takes up the now-familiar image from "Epilog"—the moment of epic inspiration likened to finding the end of the thread—but by adding the adjective "wirr" ties it to the thematic complex of subjectivity that is also central in this essay. Describing the process of writing *Berge Meere und Giganten* and especially the accumulation of raw documentary and factual materials,²² Döblin writes that the writing of an epic may result in a kind of self-discovery: "Eines Tages entdeckt man auch etwas anderes neben der Rhone, den Tälern und den Nebenflüssen: man entdeckt sich selbst. Ich selbst—das ist das tollste und *verwirrendste* Erlebnis, das ein Epiker haben kann" ("One day one also discovers something else besides the Rhone, the valleys and the tributaries: one discovers oneself. I myself—that is the wildest and *most confusing/entangled* experience an epic writer can have"; 226; emphasis added). Given the pervasiveness of the imagery of entanglement to describe both subjectivity and the epic process, the use of "verwirrendste Erlebnis" must here be read not simply as "the most confusing" but as "the most entangled experience."

Gelderloos, Carl. "'Ersticken im Stofflichen.' Characters as Collectives in Alfred Döblin's *Wallenstein* and his Theoretical Writings." *The German Historical Novel Since the 18th Century*. Edited by Daniela Richter, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016.

In *Wallenstein*, the basic idea of the *Kollektivwesen* is generated through logics of fragmentation and incorporation that undermine the solidity of the centered, individual character; this in turn bears on the articulation of character and history, individual and collective. If we view the concept of the *Kollektivwesen* as the expression of Döblin's sustained critique of bourgeois subjectivity, then it also becomes clear that the collective integration of the individual character represented by the *Kollektivwesen* on the one hand and the turn away from the subject towards the materiality of the object world in his early call for "Depersonation" and "Tatsachenphantasie" ("An Romanautoren" 122) on the other are but two sides of the same token.

The discovery of the *Ich* as the most "entangled" experience an epic writer can have bespeaks the necessary entanglement of the I within various collectives, an entanglement enabled by the subject's object status in the world of facts. "*Der wirkliche Dichter war zu allen Zeiten selbst ein Faktum. Der Dichter hat zu zeigen und zu beweisen, daß er ein Faktum und ein Stück Realität ist*" ("*The real writer has always been a fact himself. The writer has to show and to prove that he is a fact and a piece of reality*"; "Der Bau des Epischen Werks" 227–228). If Döblin had energetically externalized subjectivity in "An Romanautoren und ihre Kritiker" by declaring, "I am not I, but rather the street, the lanterns, this and this event, nothing else" (121), here he draws the conclusion from this expulsion of subjectivity into the world by including the self among the facts that must be assimilated and incorporated by the epic poet.

Despite the fact that the modern epic writer no longer has access to an immediate, listening public, the incorporation of massive amounts of documentary and linguistic material means that a social collective is present in the work as a bifurcation of the writer into the *Ich* and the *dichtende Instanz* ("Der Bau des Epischen Werks" 233). This conception would not work were it not for the fact that facts and the object world more generally have for Döblin a certain sufficiency unto themselves. "Ich gebe zu, daß mich noch heute Mitteilungen von Fakta, Dokumente beglücken, aber Dokumente, Fakta, wissen Sie, warum? Da spricht der große Epiker, die Natur, zu mir, und ich, der Kleine, stehe davor und freue mich, wie mein großer Bruder das kann" ("I admit that even today communications of facts, documents make me happy, but documents, facts, do you know why? There the great epic writer, nature, speaks to me, and I, the small one, stand in front of it and am happy at what my big brother can do"; "Der Bau des Epischen Werks" 226).

The idea of nature as "der große Epiker," in turn, would be incomprehensible without the way that, for Döblin, subjectivity is already fundamentally material, collective, and distributed. The *Tatsachenphantasie* that calls for an attention to processes, material, things, is therefore not a rejection of subjectivity but rather a theory of subjectivity. When Döblin writes in 1913, "I am not I, but rather the street, the lanterns, this and this event, nothing else," this must be read as an early articulation of the idea expressed in "Die Natur und ihre Seelen," where we read, "With this salt, this water, this protein we widen into the world. With the ocean, the deserts, the mountains, the cliffs, the winds. This is why we can feel through the world" (9).

It is through this particular view of the material articulation of world and subjectivity, developed at length in *Das Ich über der Natur*, that subjectivity for Döblin is essentially

Gelderloos, Carl. "'Ersticken im Stofflichen.' Characters as Collectives in Alfred Döblin's *Wallenstein* and his Theoretical Writings." *The German Historical Novel Since the 18th Century*. Edited by Daniela Richter, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016.

already collective. The fundamental "Aneinanderhaften der Dinge" he will describe in that work (200-204) also gives us a way to return to our starting point, which was a consideration of how depiction of individual characters might relate to the questions of form and life that guided contemporary theorizations of both history and literature. When Döblin writes that a good novel must be capable of being cut into pieces like an earthworm, and each piece must be self-sufficient enough, vital enough to keep moving ("Bemerkungen zum Roman" 124-125), we can hear not only an echo of the rejection of the individual unit within the fluid mass of "Das Wasser," but also a complication of the typical relationship between life and form. Where the classic articulations of this relationship saw the individual biography as a premade form suited to contain the messy, inexperienceable heterogeneity of the passage of time, theorized the novel as a form that gives form to life, or drew upon the organic wholeness of the body as an analogy for the organic unity of the work of art, here it is a different, more vital kind of *Leben* that provides its own form. If the individual unit is a fiction, then aesthetic representation can essentially start and end anywhere, much like Döblin described the relationship of his individual novels to each other.

"Los vom Menschen!" "Los vom Buch!" ("Away from the human! Away from the book!")²³—these two slogans can serve as shorthand for Döblin's epic project. *Wallenstein* and the essays I have discussed here show how these twin projects reinforce one another analogically: the individual subject, the individual body, and the individual work are recast as containers in need of rupturing. The critique of a kind of narrative that would grant explanatory force to psychological interiority draws on Döblin's view of materially dispersed subjectivity, and his rejection of a particular version of individual subjectivity in turn gains leverage by suggesting that depictions of affects like "Zorn" and "Liebe" are themselves convenient and tidy narrative fictions. Underlying these linked critiques is a common topology—things exceeding their frames and bodies rupturing their boundaries. In Döblin's programmatic essays about art and nature, this spatial figure appears as the earthworm that remains vital when divided into pieces, as the frequent invocation of the closed *Stube* of the bourgeois poetaster, and as the refusal of the self-sufficiency of the individual body or even material particle ("An Romanautoren" 118; "Der Bau des epischen Werks" 228).

Characters in *Wallenstein* are able to function as *Kollektivwesen* because of this frame-rupturing tendency that draws on fragmentation and autonomous affects, on the one hand, and a cumulative invocation of materiality, on the other hand. This is what we can understand when Döblin calls in 1913 for a fantasy of fact, and this emphasis on material, facts, documents, and objects that is so central to Döblin's articulation of the epic in turn enables the conception of subjectivity contained in the *Kollektivwesen*.

These tangled implications of objectivity and subjectivity, spatial rupture and temporal development, individual and collective, that characterize the epic for Döblin might allow us in turn to usefully complicate our picture of German modernist aesthetics. In particular, the development of Döblin's poetics suggests, in both biographical and conceptual ways, a tighter entwinement of Expressionism's subjective revolt against bourgeois strictures and *Neue Sachlichkeit's* stance of documentary objectivity. Döblin's own work during the period

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runs the gamut between works closely associated with Expressionism, such as "Die Ermordung einer Butterblume" and "Jagende Rosse," and pieces such as *Berlin Alexanderplatz* and *Die beiden Freundinnen und ihr Giftmord*, in which the incorporation, often via montage, of documentary and non-literary material, recalls the concerns and strategies associated with New Objectivity. His styles and techniques during this period evince a similar spread. Yet what I hope to have shown with reference to *Wallenstein* is that the incorporation of objects, the emphasis on materiality, and the probing of various conceptions of subjectivity are but various aspects of the same epic project. The turn away from the human subject and towards the object world is an attempt to rework the idea of subjectivity in opposition to the notion of the contained, autonomous individual, associated with psychological and moral interiority and an outmoded humanist poetics. The exploration of the individual, in turn, is a key part of Döblin's monism, which distributes subjectivity throughout nature at the same time that it renders it material.

The epic project thus runs much deeper in Döblin's work than a revision of the novel form; rather, it involves a nearly cosmological view of subjectivity and nature itself. The return of the idea of the epic is a prominent feature of German modernism and served diverse projects that sought to link aesthetic experience to the experience of modernity in ways not available through existing forms. Döblin's work, particularly the major novels that appeared before *Berlin Alexanderplatz*, stands amidst this epic negotiation of subjectivity, experience, narrative, and modernity. In *Wallenstein*, the genre of the historical novel—with its heightened emphasis on the often violent mass processes of history, its documentary and descriptive possibilities, and its imbrication of individuals, offices, institutions, and material networks—provided Döblin with a way to develop his poetics, particularly his entwined critiques of a particular novel form and a particular conception of individual subjectivity. Paradoxically, perhaps, world-historical figures from a seventeenth-century conflict, when depicted as *Kollektivwesen*, enable parallel reconfigurations of subjectivity and character that must be seen as central both to Döblin's poetics and to German modernism's return to the epic.

Notes

¹ "An Romanautoren" (122). All translations are mine, unless otherwise noted.

² For contemporary reviews of Döblin's novel, see Schuster and Bode, 81-113.

³ See for example Axel Hecker (1986), Bernd Hüppauf (1991), Harro Müller (1995), Steffan Davies (2009), and Reiner Niehoff (2010).

⁴ "Das Individuum und das Kollektivum (oder das Universale) sind dann ... Angelegenheiten der wechselnden Entfernung." ("The individual and the collective (or the universal) are then ... a matter of varying distance"; "Von Gesichtern, Bildern und ihrer Wahrheit" 11).

⁵ Indeed, Döblin criticized Schiller's depiction of *Wallenstein* precisely for its "barbarisch-rohe Kausalitätsgesetz" 'barbaric-crude law of causality' ("Überfließend von Ekel" 111)

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⁶ Unlike Ernst Jünger, in whose 1932 book-length essay *Der Arbeiter* the idea of the chaotic mass served as an opposite, negative pole to the tight collective made up of types, Döblin did not tend to differentiate strongly between the collective and the mass, using both as positive counterpoints to the self-contained bourgeois individual. For further discussion of Döblin's positive use of a term that his contemporaries tended to treat negatively and associate with irrationality, see Becker (48).

⁷ For a detailed and important study of the relationship between the crisis of historicism around the turn of the century and the German historical novel, see Kittstein. For a discussion of the booming market in historical fiction and biography during the Weimar Republic, see Streim (84).

⁸ Besides *Wallenstein* one must also take *Die drei Sprünge des Wang-lun* (1916), the *Amazonas* trilogy (1937-1938), and *November 1918* (1939-1950) into account.

⁹ From the *Innen* of the novel to the *Außen* of the epic, in Benjamin's terms: he contrasts in his 1930 review of *Berlin Alexanderplatz* the self-reflexive interruptions of narrative found in Gide's "roman pur" to the "epic stance" of "Erzählen" ("narration"/"storytelling"). The novel is the form of the isolated individual, while Döblin's epic used montage to rupture the closed boundaries of the novel. ("Krisis des Romans" 230-232).

¹⁰ The language of interiority and exteriority is central in Lukács's depiction of the altered relationship between individual and world: "That is why philosophy, as a form of life or as that which determines the form and supplies the content of literary creation, is always a symptom of the rift between 'inside' and 'outside,' a sign of the essential difference between the self and the world, the incongruence of soul and deed" (29).

¹¹ For a discussion of Benjamin's essay in the context of the contemporary crisis of narrative and the turn to the epic, see McBride (41-61).

¹² *Wallenstein's* emphasis on character over plot should not surprise, given Döblin's repeatedly voiced suspicion of narrative concatenation and causality. In "Bemerkungen zum Roman," (Notes on the Novel) for example, he writes, "Der Roman hat mit Handlung nichts zu tun; . . . Vorwärts ist niemals die Parole des Romans" ("The novel has nothing to do with plot. . . . Onward is never the motto of the novel"; 123).

¹³ Ursula Kocher has described this opening scene as akin to a battle; the fragmentation, shifting viewpoint, and lack of narrative commentary deny the reader access to the whole of the scene, in a way that is indicative of how the novel works more generally (62).

¹⁴ "Volkstümlichkeit" means something like "popularity," but in the sense of "relating to the people." In positing an immanent development in Lukács's aesthetic framework rather than a series of heteronomous breaks and reversals, I am following Fredric Jameson's reading of Lukács (161-163).

¹⁵ For a more detailed study on the relationship between Döblin's philosophy of nature and *Wallenstein's* conception of history see Mayer.

¹⁶ For a detailed study on the guiding cultural tropes that opposed life to form, from *Lebensphilosophie* to the novels of *Neue Sachlichkeit*, see Lindner.

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¹⁷ For more on the spatial strategies Döblin used to undermine integral bodies in order to advance his conception of subjectivity, see my article on *Berge Meere und Giganten*: Gelderloos, Carl. "'Jetzt Kommt Das Leben': The Technological Body in Alfred Döblin's *Berge Meere und Giganten*." *German Quarterly* 88.3 (2015): 291–316.

¹⁸ In so doing, Döblin's work parts with a long-dominant paradigm that draws on a biological register to vouchsafe the idea of an organic unity for the artwork. On the issue of the "immanent unity of the aesthetic object as a closed and self-sufficient structure" (Woloch 11), Döblin's physiologically-informed vitalism mobilizes more modern registers of biology to emphasize the form-rupturing, recombinatory, and diffuse potential of organic growth.

¹⁹ On the biological basis of Döblin's thought about (and depictions of) "masses," see also Midgley 56.

²⁰ In Döblin's 1919 essay on the Thirty Years' War, he directly addresses the question of a synecdochal historiography whereby royalty stands in for a nation. He finds this synecdoche problematic, and its political and economic implications troubling (50).

²¹ Hoffmann has argued that the autonomy of body parts in Döblin's work should be seen as indicative of a conflict between the uncontrollable body and a concept of "Geist" that prevailed in Expressionism. By pointing out the psychological, philosophical, and medical centrality of the body for Döblin, Hoffmann shows how the idea of an autonomous human spirit is displaced (58). Hoffmann also suggests that apparent gaps in character motivation and causality could be filled in by attention to the medical texts. This account of the relationship between psyche and body in Döblin's work can help us make sense of the ways in which the main characters in *Wallenstein* seemed pinned between their bodies and drives on the one hand, and meta-individual social, historical clusters on the other.

²² For a full reckoning of Döblin's working process and the sources he used to write his 1924 epic future history, see Sander, Gabriele. "Alfred Döblin's Roman *Berge Meere Und Giganten* – Aus der Handschrift gelesen. Eine Dokumentation unbekannter textgenetischer Materialien und neuer Quellenfunde." *Jahrbuch der deutschen Schillergesellschaft* 45 (2001): 39–69. Print.

Gelderloos, Carl. "'Ersticken im Stofflichen.' Characters as Collectives in Alfred Döblin's *Wallenstein* and his Theoretical Writings." *The German Historical Novel Since the 18th Century*. Edited by Daniela Richter, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016.

²³ ("An Romanautoren" 122) and ("Der Bau des Epischen Werks" 245), respectively.

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