

Sapphic Spectres: Lesbian Gothic in Interwar German Narratives

Hannah Louise O'Connor, M.A.

Cardiff University, 2014

Thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
MPhil.

DECLARATION

This work has not been submitted in substance for any other degree or award at this or any other university or place of learning, nor is being submitted concurrently in candidature for any degree or other award.

Signed (candidate) Date

STATEMENT 1

This thesis is being submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of MPhil.

Signed (candidate) Date

STATEMENT 2

This thesis is the result of my own independent work/investigation, except where otherwise stated.

Other sources are acknowledged by explicit references. The views expressed are my own.

Signed (candidate) Date

STATEMENT 3: BAR ON ACCESS

I hereby give consent for my thesis, if accepted, to be available for photocopying and for inter-library loans **after expiry of a bar on access previously approved by the Academic Standards & Quality Committee.**

Signed (candidate) Date

Abstract

Existing scholarship on interwar German lesbian narratives has largely overlooked the role of Gothicism in their portrayal of sapphic sexuality. This thesis examines the use of established Gothic motifs in Alfred Döblin's *Die beiden Freundinnen und ihr Giftmord* (1924), Anna Elisabet Weirauch's *Der Skorpion* (1919-31) and Annemarie Schwarzenbach's *Eine Frau zu sehen* (2008). It also illustrates how the appropriation and modification of Gothic tropes, such as vampirism, haunting and doubling, reflect the ambivalence and hostility toward homosexuality internalised by the sapphic subject during the interwar period. My analysis considers the reimaging of vampiric figures in the first volume of Weirauch's trilogy and Döblin's fictionalised account of the scandalous 1923 Ella Klein and Margarete Nebbe case. It then outlines the sapphic uncanny aesthetic established in Schwarzenbach's novella and the third volume of *Der Skorpion*, engaging primarily with Freud's theory of the Uncanny. The thesis offers a sapphic Gothic reading of the chosen corpus of texts, broadening Paulina Palmer's notion of lesbian Gothic and Terry Castle's perception of the lesbian as an apparitional figure. My analysis identifies the gothicised aesthetic used in interwar lesbian narratives, such as Weirauch's *Der Skorpion* and Schwarzenbach's *Eine Frau zu sehen*, in order to convey internalised anxieties regarding lesbianism. These ambivalent depictions of same-sex desire invite new understandings of sapphic selfhood at this critical moment in the conceptualisation of modern lesbian identity.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Dr Monika Hennemann and Professor Claire Gorrara for their invaluable feedback and incredible patience. I am especially indebted to Professor Gorrara for her continued support throughout this project.

Particular thanks are due to Dr Becky Munford, who provided insightful comments on chapters one and two. I would also like to thank Dr Ruth Owen for her encouragement during the initial stages of this research, as well as Anna White, who read through early drafts of the chapters.

Finally, thanks must also go to my partner Laura Carter, whose unfailing love, belief and support have made this research possible.

A Note on Translation

Throughout, all translations from the original German source material are my own unless otherwise specified.

Contents

Introduction: Defining the Sapphic Gothic.....	2
I. German Tales? The Modern Gothic and the German Context.....	3
II. Sapphic Subjects and the Female Gothic: Moving Beyond Distressed Damsels and Claustrophobic Castles?.....	7
III. Queer Gothic: A Marriage of (In)Convenience?.....	13
IV. From Lesbian Panic to Sapphic Gothic: Situating the Sexual Stranger Within	18
V. Situating Sapphic Spectres: Lesbian Literature in Interwar Germany	24
Sapphic Suckers: Vampiric Desire in Anne Elisabet Weirauch's <i>Der Skorpion</i> (1919) and Alfred Döblin's <i>Die beiden Freundinnen und ihr Giftmord</i> (1924).....	31
I. Introduction: Homoeroticism, Hostility and the Vampiric Model	32
Domestic Gothic: Anxieties about the Vampire and the Heteronormative Home.....	41
Sapphic Symbiosis: Fearing the Vampire within the Self	46
II. Strolling the Sapphic Streets: Reimagining the Vampiric Figure in the Modern City Space	52
III. Mummy Issues: The Maternal Homoerotic and the Vampire in the Home.....	64
IV. Representing the Urge to Merge: Vampiric Desire and the Loss of Sapphic Selfhood	73
V. Beyond the Carmilla Complex: Reconciling the Stranger within the Self	85
Conclusion.....	86
Haunted by Her: The Sapphic Uncanny in Anna Elisabet Weirauch's <i>Der Skorpion</i> (1931) and Annemarie Schwarzenbach's <i>Eine Frau zu sehen</i> (2008)	88
I. The Stranger Within: The Sapphic Split Subject.....	89
II. Repetition and the Return of the Repressed: Schwarzenbach's Uncanny Aesthetic	107
III. Double Trouble: The Uncanny Doppelgänger in <i>Der Skorpion</i>	115
IV. Memory and the Metropolis: (Un)Dead Representatives.....	124
V. Conclusion: The Female Uncanny and the Lesbian 'Problem'.....	131
Conclusion.....	136
Bibliography.....	144

Introduction: Defining the Sapphic Gothic

I. German Tales? The Modern Gothic and the German Context

The Gothic is a literary mode or aesthetic that allows for the articulation of anxieties by projecting them onto unsettling or monstrous settings, experiences and figures.¹

Consequently, tropes and motifs associated with Gothicism have provided a productive means of representing internalised fears about deviant sexuality and taboo behaviours since the inception of the mode in the eighteenth century. This study proposes a sapphic Gothic reading of interwar German-language portrayals of lesbianism, examining the appropriation and reimagining of established Gothic tropes, such as the vampire, the double and the spectre.² My analysis will focus on the gothicised representation of sapphic sexuality and selfhood in Alfred Döblin's *Die beiden Freundinnen und ihr Giftmord* (1924), Anna Elisabet Weirauch's *Der Skorpion* trilogy (1919-31) and Annemarie Schwarzenbach's *Eine Frau zu sehen* (2008), written in 1929. As an alternative to established medico-legal discourse on the subject, the chosen literary narratives afford a unique understanding into the ambivalent attitudes toward sapphic sexuality. Most notably they invite new approaches to the complex construction of lesbian identity and selfhood during this critical moment in its conceptualisation. This introduction will outline the conceptual, contextual and critical frameworks upon which my analysis is developed. Firstly, it will define what precisely is meant by the Gothic, especially in a German or modern context. It will then map the established scholarship on the female and queer Gothic literary traditions, identifying their constraints as

¹ For in-depth discussion of Gothic motifs and their embodiment of socio-cultural fears, see Fred Botting, *Gothic: The New Critical Idiom* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996).

² Drawing on the established notion of the lesbian Gothic tradition outlined by Paulina Palmer, I suggest the term 'sapphic Gothic' as an alternative to better reflect the distinctly modern conceptualisation of sapphic sexuality and selfhood in the early twentieth century, prior to the contemporary construction of lesbian identity following the advent of the Women's Liberation and Post-Stonewall gay rights movements. For greater discussion of the lesbian Gothic approach to contemporary narratives, see Paulina Palmer, *Lesbian Gothic: Transgressive Fictions* (London: Cassell, 1999).

frameworks for examining depictions of sapphic sexuality and selfhood. It then engages with existing contemporary criticism on lesbian sexuality and Gothicism, most notably Palmer's notion of the lesbian Gothic and Terry Castle's positioning of lesbian literary figures as apparitional. Finally, this introduction will consider examples of lesbian literature in interwar Germany, outlining the chosen corpus of texts and what they can bring to bear on current critical debates in both Gothic and Lesbian Studies.

The transposition of internalised fears onto figures of difference became commonplace in European fiction during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, particularly gothicised characters. Consequently, monstrous figures that signify excess and the transgression of boundaries, such as the vampire, the double and the spectre, became key tropes of Gothic literature. The gothicised aesthetic is usually facilitated by the creation of a dark, alienating and threatening space in which the protagonist, and indeed the reader, is often ill at ease. Fred Botting notes that 'the fascination with transgression and the anxiety over cultural limits and boundaries, continue to produce ambivalent emotions and meanings.'³ The preoccupation with transgression in Gothic literature often manifests in the moral or social transgression of the protagonists, and especially forbidden, deviant desires. The dark tendencies and immoral behaviours of the Gothic figure reflect anxieties of moral disintegration, as well as the prevailing of vice over virtue and destructive desire over rationality. The fascination with transgression and excess are central to the creation of a gothicised aesthetic, which destabilises established social and moral values. Donna Heiland suggests that the mode 'at its core is about transgression of all sorts: across national boundaries, social boundaries, sexual boundaries, the boundaries of one's own

³ Botting, p. 2.

identity.⁴ The transgression of borders and boundaries is not only a key trope of the mode, but also central to understanding its dissemination in both anglophone and European literary circles. The blurring of social and sexual boundaries, as well as those that govern our concepts of individual identity is particularly central to the notion of the modern Gothic.

Typical Gothic plots employ strategies of ambiguity, fragmentation and mystery, in order to evoke terror or uncertainty. In the anglophone context, such strategies were considered to pose a threat to the notion of the rational, stable self, therefore contributing to its disintegration. The traditional German *Schauerroman* also relied heavily on narrative strategies of secrecy, intrigue and uncertainty. Far from undermining emerging Enlightenment notions of the self, however, German narratives of terror like Friedrich Schiller's *Der Geisterseher* (1787) even reflected anthropological discourse regarding the notion of the unified subject in their foregrounding of psychological uncertainty.⁵ Figures, such as the double, the revenant or the alter ego provided a useful means of representing the unconscious desires that lay beneath the respectable social self. Jürgen Barkhoff notes how the *Schauerroman* was deeply preoccupied with the 'problematic unity of body and soul.'⁶ The dualism between the corporeal and psychic or spiritual self was typically embodied not only in the protagonists of the *Schauerroman*, but also in the increasingly popular anglophone Gothic monster. This unstable conceptualisation of the self, and especially the other, was rooted firmly in medical and psychological discourse in the German-speaking world.

⁴ Donna Heiland, *Gothic & Gender: An Introduction* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004), p. 3.

⁵ For more in-depth discussion of the *Schauerroman* and its position within German Enlightenment discourse, see Carsten Zelle, 'Angenehmes Grauen': *Literarhistorische Beiträge zur Ästhetik des Schrecklichen im achtzehnten Jahrhundert* (Hamburg: F. Meiner, 1987).

⁶ Jürgen Barkhoff, "'The Echo of the Question, as If It Had Merely Resounded in a Tomb': The Dark Anthropology of the Schauerroman in Schiller's *Der Geisterseher*", in *Popular Revenants: The German Gothic and Its International Reception, 1800-2000*, ed. by Andrew Cusack and Barry Murnane (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2012), pp. 44–59 (p. 45).

The disintegration or destabilising of the self was epitomised by the gothicised figures, such as the double or the spectre, in horror tales by the likes of Schiller and Hoffmann. The unstable or dualistic notion of the self in gothicised tales like *Die Elixiere des Teufels* (1815) and 'Der Sandmann' (1816) provided the basis for modern psychoanalytical studies about the unconscious, most notably Sigmund Freud's 'Das Unheimliche' (1919). The focus on the intellectual uncertainty that engendered physiological terror gave rise to the notion of a modern Gothic, which prioritised internalised fears and anxieties over images associated with classical horror narratives.

Tropes typically associated with the gothicised mind-body dualism, such as the vampire, the wanderer or the spectre, continued to haunt both literary and scientific discourse long after the *Schauerroman* faded into relative obscurity in the German literary context. Andrew Cusack notes the prevalence of these motifs in modern narratives despite the genre's perceived disappearance according to existing scholarship:

Traditional accounts have seen the gothic novel disappear into late- and post-romantic fantastic literature, although the reappearance of such motifs as the double, the spectre, and the revenant, as well as themes of intrigue and the monstrous in realist and modernist texts, seems to call such a clean break into question.⁷

Whilst overtly gothicised German literature experienced a decline following the late Romantic period, these motifs experienced a renaissance in the anglophone context with the rise of the popular Gothic monster in the late nineteenth-century novel.⁸ The

⁷ Andrew Cusack, 'Introduction', in *Popular Revenants: The German Gothic and Its International Reception, 1800-2000*, ed. by Andrew Cusack and Barry Murnane (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2012), pp. 1-9 (p. 4).

⁸ The aforementioned German texts were available in translation by the mid-nineteenth century. Hoffmann's *Die Elixiere des Teufels* (The Devil's Elixir) was published in translation by Blackwood and Cadle in 1824, translated by R.P. Gillies. Additionally, an English translation of 'Der Sandmann' (The Sandman) was included along with popular works by Jean Paul, Kleist and Schiller in John Oxenford and C.A. Feiling's influential *Tales from the German*, published in 1844. Prior to this translated publication, the

German dualistic notion of the self, which was a typical preoccupation of the *Schauerroman* in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, provided a precursor to the shift from the external threat of the immoral other to the internalisation of such anxieties in anglophone literature during the second half of the nineteenth century. More significantly, the tropes associated with the unstable self began to resurface in twentieth-century popular and scientific discourse as the spectre of modernity emerged at the *fin de siècle*. Gothicised motifs that demonstrated the dualism of mind and body became a productive means of portraying anxieties of the Modernist fractured self. It is this notion of a modern Gothic and its modification of these traditional tropes for a twentieth-century German context, which provides the basis for my sapphic Gothic reading of interwar lesbian narratives. Building on existing female and queer Gothic approaches to the mode, my analysis posits a sapphic Gothic reading in order to better reflect the distinctly modern gothicised conceptualisations of lesbian selfhood and sexuality in an early twentieth-century context.

II. Sapphic Subjects and the Female Gothic: Moving Beyond Distressed Damsels and Claustrophobic Castles?

The Gothic genre has long been associated with the role of women within patriarchal social structures and their complex, often contradictory relationship with the domestic space. Since the eighteenth-century, both female and male-authored narratives of the genre have engaged with anxieties surrounding female sexuality, identity and questions of authenticity. The Gothic heroine rapidly became one of the stock motifs of the early Romantic Gothic novel:

writings of Hoffmann, including *Nachtstücke*, formed the basis for Sir Walter Scott's 1827 essay 'On the Supernatural in Fictitious Composition.'

As early as the 1790s, Ann Radcliffe firmly set the Gothic in one of the ways it would go ever after: a novel in which the central figure is a young woman who is simultaneously persecuted victim and courageous heroine.⁹

Despite the centrality of the heroine in the genre, the female Gothic is a modern field of literary criticism. Ellen Moers, who coined the term 'Female Gothic' in her seminal study *Literary Women*, referred specifically to literature produced by female authors, particularly Radcliffe and Mary Shelley. She defines the term as 'the work that women writers have done in the literary mode that, since the eighteenth century, we have called the Gothic.'¹⁰ However, contemporary studies on the female Gothic, such as Diana Smith and Andrew Smith's 2009 collection *The Female Gothic: New Directions*, have also broadened the scope to encompass gothicised feminine aesthetics indiscriminate of authorial gender. The inclusion of male-authored perspectives can also provide an alternative insight into feminine identity and attitudes toward female sexuality, and especially sexual transgression. It is for this reason that my analysis includes Döblin's portrayal of lesbian sexuality in *Die beiden Freundinnen und ihr Giftmord* in its interrogation of sapphic selfhood. Although questions of authenticity may arise from the inclusion of male authors in the female or lesbian Gothic traditions, I would argue that male-authored portrayals of female protagonists greatly contribute to socio-cultural conceptualisations of femininity and female sexuality.

Regardless of authorial gender or sexuality, the female Gothic is concerned with accepted ideals of femininity and traditional, normative family values. Carol Margaret Davison notes the significance of the female Gothic in exploring the roles traditionally ascribed to women, as well as the anxieties surrounding them:

⁹ Ellen Moers, *Literary Women: The Great Writers* (New York: Doubleday, 1976), p. 91.

¹⁰ Moers, p. 90.

In the process of highlighting the intersection of gender and genre, the Female Gothic brought the Gothic to bear on women's vexed experiences of love and romance, and the multifaceted ideology of femininity, particularly the constraining roles advocated for women and the institutions of marriage and motherhood.¹¹

Moers also outlined the clear association of the mode with fear, and in the case of the female Gothic distinct fears regarding maternity. Although she credits Radcliffe with the genesis of the female Gothic voice, her reading of the mode focuses predominantly on Mary Shelley's 'birth myth' *Frankenstein*, noting that 'perhaps no literary work of any kind by a woman, better repays examination in light of the sex of its author.'¹² In her analysis, the source of monstrosity and Gothicism in the novel is located in 'the anxieties of a woman, who as daughter, mistress and mother, was a bearer of death.'¹³ Moers' definition of the female Gothic is certainly a productive catalyst for analyses of literary representations of creation and maternity. Subsequently, its focus renders it seemingly incongruous with depiction of female homoeroticism owing to its traditional associations with sterility and death that persisted into the early twentieth century. However, anxieties regarding the socio-cultural expectations of marriage and maternity, as well as the place of the sapphic subject within traditional familial structures, have been an enduring preoccupation of lesbian narratives since the nineteenth century. The preoccupations with the absent mother outlined in Moers' reading of the female Gothic can also provide a productive point of reference for a number of lesbian narratives, including *Der Skorpion*.

Whilst the significance of the absent mother shifts in distinct portrayals of sapphic sexuality and desire, as in Weirauch's narrative, the trope remains particularly

¹¹ Carol Margaret Davison, *Gothic Literature 1764-1824* (University of Wales Press, 2009), pp. 85–6.

¹² Moers, p. 92.

¹³ Moers, p. 98.

significant in the sapphic Gothic configuration of selfhood. The emergence of feminist literary criticism also provided a platform for expanding Moers definition of the female Gothic, particularly shifting focus to the fear of the mother figure. Feminist criticism of the gothicised mother in the 1980s and 1990s engaged primarily with Adrienne Rich's notion of matrophobia, namely 'the fear not of one's mother or of motherhood but of becoming one's mother.'¹⁴ In her study *Of Woman Born*, Rich outlines the feminine subject's anxiety regarding the limitations and degradations of the female existence within traditional patriarchal structures. Tamar Heller notes the significance of matrophobia in Wilkie Collins' Gothicism, focusing on the daughter's fear of becoming as 'powerless and repressed' as their mother.¹⁵ Building on this idea of matrophobia within a Gothic Studies context, Juliann E. Fleenor situates 'the conflict at the heart of the Female Gothic, [as] the conflict with the all-powerful, devouring mother.'¹⁶ However, the depictions of maternal figures at the heart of my chosen lesbian narratives are rather more ambivalent. Nevertheless, I would argue that the gothicised elements in my chosen corpus of texts further expand Fleenor's definition of the female Gothic, which centres on the ambivalence surrounding female identity, and especially the maternal presence in all her guises. Despite the complex relationship between sapphic sexuality and maternity in the modern context, the maternal presence is certainly a stock motif in gothicised lesbian narratives, associated with simultaneous feelings of anxiety and desire.

¹⁴ Adrienne Rich, *Of Woman Born: Motherhood As Experience and Institution* (New York: W W Norton & Company, 1976), p. 235.

¹⁵ Tamar Heller, *Dead Secrets: Wilkie Collins and the Female Gothic* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992), p. 19.

¹⁶ Juliann E. Fleenor, 'Introduction', in *The Female Gothic*, ed. by Juliann E. Fleenor (Montreal and London: Eden, 1983), pp. 3-28 (p. 16).

The notion of a universal female Gothic reading has become gradually complicated by the increasing prevalence of narratives written by and about women of differing subject positions, particularly with regards to class, nationality, ethnicity and sexuality. Wallace and Smith note that since its inception, the term ‘has become much contested.’¹⁷ The categorisation of texts solely by gender can be considered reductive, owing to the tendency to generalise female experience and identity:

Since the early 1990s, however, there has been considerable debate over the usefulness of the ‘Female Gothic’ as a separate literary category or genre. A variety of other terms have been offered, some alternative, others more specific: ‘women’s Gothic’, ‘feminist Gothic’, ‘lesbian Gothic’, ‘Gothic feminism’ and most recently ‘postfeminist Gothic.’¹⁸

My analysis does not engage with feminist, and especially postfeminist, readings of women’s writing, in order to avoid transposing anachronisms onto early twentieth-century narratives. It does, however, seek to broaden the notion of a lesbian Gothic as defined by Paulina Palmer, shifting the focus to important precedents for both contemporary female- and lesbian-authored gothicised narratives. The notion of a female Gothic can be particularly useful here in its challenge to dominant socio-cultural structures:

It also proved inspiring to other critics who read the Female Gothic as a politically subversive genre articulating women’s dissatisfactions with patriarchal structures and offering a coded expression of their fears of entrapment within the domestic and the female body.¹⁹

The works examined in this thesis each employ gothicised motifs in order to interrogate patriarchal social structures and institutions, such as marriage, as well as the role of the sapphic subject within them. As in eighteenth-century female Gothic narratives like the

¹⁷ Diana Wallace and Andrew Smith, ‘Introduction: Defining the Female Gothic’, in *The Female Gothic: New Directions* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pp. 1–12 (p. 1).

¹⁸ Wallace and Smith, p. 1.

¹⁹ Wallace and Smith, p. 2.

works of Radcliffe and Sophia Lee, they are deeply preoccupied with issues of agency, authority and authenticity. In this respect, these gothicised lesbian narratives belong to a female Gothic literary tradition. Nevertheless, the gendered approach to the mode can prove an inadequate means of understanding the distinct conceptualisations of sapphic sexuality depicted by the likes of Weirauch and Schwarzenbach.

Not to deny the significance of the female Gothic conventions outlined previously in lesbian narratives, I argue that a gender-focused approach to the mode alone does not provide an adequate lens with which to read the specificities of sapphic sexuality and selfhood. As Moers stressed that Shelley's distinctly female employment of Gothicism was in need of further study in light of the author's sex, my research demonstrates that lesbian-authored texts, such as the works of Weirauch and Schwarzenbach, invite greater attention and examination in light of the sexuality of their authors. However, male-authored accounts like Döblin's novella can also helpfully illuminate prevalent attitudes to lesbian sexuality and identity during the interwar period. Despite its limitations, Wallace and Smith suggest the increased critical attention paid to the female Gothic, and especially its 'move from the margins into the mainstream of literary criticism' over the past few decades, ensures that it remains a productive and fruitful area for further discussion and development.²⁰ It is, therefore, timely to consider what these chosen sapphic narratives can bring to bear on current debates surrounding the female Gothic. Nevertheless, to situate these texts solely in a tradition of the female Gothic would be to neglect the specificities of their distinct constructions of lesbian identity and desire. Moreover, my proposed sapphic Gothic reading deviates from the socio-political or gender-focused approaches to Gothicism, associated with contemporary debates on the female Gothic, focusing predominantly on

²⁰ Wallace and Smith, p. 3.

the psyche and constructions of self and identity, as well as their complex conceptualisation of sapphic sexuality.

III. Queer Gothic: A Marriage of (In)Convenience?

The sapphic Gothic approach to lesbian literature outlined in my analysis also engages with the growing body of queer Gothic criticism, sharing its focus on the depiction of forbidden, and especially homosexual, desire. The emergence of the queer approach to the Gothic, which typically combines portrayals of both female and male homosexuality in the genre, has undoubtedly increased the critical attention paid to lesbian Gothic narratives in recent years to an extent. This theoretical marriage of convenience, however, has a tendency to generalise identity and experience, typically prioritising masculine perspectives, arguably as a result of its genesis in gay studies. Although queer Gothic is a comparatively new area of investigation within Gothic Studies, established criticism on literary representations of desire between men had offered early 'queer' readings of the mode. In his 1977 volume *Homosexuality and Literature*, Jeffrey Meyers examines the depiction of homoeroticism in Oscar Wilde's gothicised tale *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891). Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick then expanded the focus on gothicised depictions of male bonding from include instances of the 'unspeakable' in the Romantic Gothic to later portrayals of homosexual panic in the Victorian Gothic in her 1985 study *Between Men*. Sedgwick notes the long-established relationship between the mode and the representation of homosexuality:

The Gothic was the first novelistic form in England to have close, relatively visible links to male homosexuality, at a time when styles of homosexuality, and

even its visibility and distinctness, were markers of division and tension between classes as much as between genders.²¹

As the prevalence of queer readings of Gothic narratives increased, the homoerotic connotations of the Gothic monster, and especially the vampire, became increasingly recognised in criticism on the genre. Christopher Craft's reading of gender and inversion in Stoker's *Dracula* afforded an important insight into the homoerotic potential of the Gothic mode. Despite his predominantly androcentric focus, Craft's essay was significant in its discussion – albeit fleeting – of vampirism and female homosexuality. Craft credits what he terms J. Sheridan Le Fanu's 'novella of lesbian vampirism' *Carmilla* (1872) with identifying the 'analogy between monstrosity and sexual desire that would prove, under a subsequent Freudian stimulus, paradigmatic for future readings of vampirism.'²² Despite the significance of *Carmilla* as a precedent for the gothicised portrayals of same-sex desire, few earlier studies on the Gothic and homosexuality focused on depictions of lesbianism.

The emergence of the – supposedly – less gender-focused notion of queer theory in the 1990s largely led to the replacement of its predecessor gay and lesbian studies, particularly as the millennium approached. Queer theory saw a widespread synthesis of male and female homosexuality, along with a plethora of non-normative sexualities, in literary and cultural criticism. The queer reading also provided a productive approach to the Gothic, which had long been associated with unstable subject positions and deviant sexuality. In *Queer Gothic* (2006), George Haggerty situates Gothic fiction as a 'historical model of queer theory and politics: transgressive, sexually coded, and

²¹ Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York and Chichester: Columbia University Press, 1985), p. 91.

²² Christopher Craft, "'Kiss Me with Those Red Lips": Gender and Inversion in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*', *Representations*, 1984, 107–33 (p. 107).

resistant to dominant ideology.²³ William Hughes and Andrew Smith also note the long-established association between the mode and representations of difference:

Gothic has, in a sense always been 'queer'. The genre, until comparatively recently, has been characteristically perceived in criticism as being poised astride the uneasy cultural boundary that separates the acceptable and familiar from the troubling and different.²⁴

The notion of queerness and difference, particularly in a Gothic context, can certainly be a useful means of considering the marginality of the homosexual subject. It can also provide a useful means of articulating non-normative sexual practices that do not fall under the distinct contemporary categories of gay or lesbian:

In fact, gothic fiction offered a testing ground for many unauthorized genders and sexualities, including sodomy, tribadism, romantic friendship (male and female), incest, pedophilia, sadism, masochism, necrophilia, cannibalism, masculinized females, feminized males, miscegenation, and so on.²⁵

The notion of a queer Gothic is particularly useful in emphasising the mode's ability to destabilise established boundaries, particularly those dictating the depiction of gender and sexuality. However, the all-encompassing nature of queer approaches can be considered somewhat problematic when examining the modern Gothic's preoccupation with questions of individual identity and subjectivity.

The erasure of the binaries that dictate gender and sexuality in queer theory also imply a universality of experience and identity, which ultimately undermines any notion of a distinctly gay or lesbian subject position. Whilst its predecessor gay and lesbian studies was considered problematic in a contemporary socio-political context owing to its lack of inclusivity, queer theory can be a potentially problematic approach to

²³ George E. Haggerty, *Queer Gothic* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2006), p. 2.

²⁴ William Hughes and Andrew Smith, 'Introduction: Queering the Gothic', in *Queering the Gothic*, ed. by William Hughes and Andrew Smith (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2009), pp. 1-10 (p. 1).

²⁵ Haggerty, p. 2.

questions of individual identity and cultural history precisely because it is so inclusive. The subject position of a gay man, for example, differs greatly from that of his lesbian counterparts, not only in terms of gender identity and position within accepted social structures but also in terms of conceptualisations of desire. In *Between Men*, Sedgwick notes the 'strategic and philosophical differences between lesbians and gay men.'²⁶ I would argue that it is precisely these dissimilarities that shape the manner in which certain tropes and conventions are deployed in literary depictions of sexuality. In vampire narratives, for example, whilst the monster's bite is typically associated with oral sexuality, the exact signification of vampiric imagery often differs in different conceptualisations of desire or sexuality. In depictions of the male vampire, such as Stoker's *Dracula*, the phallic association of the monster's fangs is typically prioritised in portrayals of both male homoeroticism and masculine virility more broadly. However, in depictions of sapphic vampirism, such as *Carmilla*, the foregrounding of the wound is rather more implicit of oral sexuality between women. Palmer notes that this signification is further developed and adapted in contemporary lesbian narratives, such as Anna Livia's *Minimax* (1991) and Katherine V. Forrest's short story 'O Captain, My Captain' (1993).²⁷ The notion of an amalgamated queer subject position that applies to gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and those that refuse sexual categorisation more broadly becomes especially problematic when analysing these distinct constructs of sexuality in detail. In this respect, the extent to which a queer Gothic approach alone can usefully illuminate my sapphic Gothic reading, which centres on the issue of lesbian self-conceptualisation and individual identity, is limited.

²⁶ Sedgwick, p. 5.

²⁷ Palmer, *Lesbian Gothic*, p. 114.

In her 2012 study *The Queer Uncanny*, Palmer outlines the complex and contradictory relationship between lesbianism and the 'queer movement.' She notes that some features of the 'queer agenda' are to be welcomed, whilst others can be regarded as 'problematic and retrograde.'²⁸ She emphasises the strong ethnic and gender-bias of the contemporary queer theory perspective:

A sense of ambivalence and uncertainty is also prominent, as numerous publications ranging from the 1990s to the present day illustrate, in the response that the queer movement has elicited from the Anglo-American lesbian and male gay community.²⁹

This androcentric focus is especially problematic when considering modern lesbian narratives, which are still deeply preoccupied with questions of femininity and the place of the sapphic subject in the feminine roles traditionally ascribed to them. Therefore, I argue that the queer lens, which has emerged from the rapid socio-political changes since the genesis of contemporary gay rights movement, becomes increasingly problematic when transposed onto an early twentieth-century or interwar context. Moreover, the prioritisation of a unified queer perspective on Gothic narratives places lesbian Gothic texts at risk of becoming increasingly marginal, or even spectral, once more, as they are typically overshadowed by their more prevalent male counterparts. The proposed sapphic Gothic reading diverges from the queer Gothic approach, owing largely to its inherent androcentric bias and consequent constraints with regards to articulating distinctly lesbian identity, sexuality and cultural heritage. Although the chosen corpus of texts certainly does belong to the increasingly acknowledged queer Gothic tradition, to overlook their specific and distinctly modern constructions of sapphic sexuality and selfhood in favour of a contemporary queer reading would be

²⁸ Paulina Palmer, *The Queer Uncanny: New Perspectives on the Gothic* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2012), p. 9.

²⁹ Palmer, *The Queer Uncanny*, p. 9.

negligent. Whilst this research does draw and expand on both female and queer readings of the Gothic, my proposed sapphic Gothic reading engages primarily with lesbian literary theory owing to the limitations of these alternate approaches outlined previously.

IV. From Lesbian Panic to Sapphic Gothic: Situating the Sexual Stranger Within

Although there are few publications dedicated solely to lesbian readings of Gothic literature, an increasing body of scholarship on the subject has begun to emerge over the past few decades. In an anglophone context, there has been some discussion of the use of Gothic tropes, particularly the spectre, in modern lesbian literature, such as Terry Castle's *The Apparitional Lesbian* (1993). The volume, a blend of autobiographical anecdote and literary criticism, suggests a new paradigm for understanding the notion of lesbian invisibility centred on the notion of spectrality and 'ghosting.' Castle argues that the use of the spectre motif contributes to the historical need to 'derealize' lesbian sexuality:

One woman or the other must be a ghost, or on the way to becoming one. Passion is excited, only to be obscured, disembodied, decarnalized. [...] Panic seems to underwrite these obsessional spectralizing gestures: a panic over love, female pleasure, and the possibility of women breaking free –together – from their male sexual overseers. Homophobia is the order of the day, entertains itself (wryly or gothically) with phantoms, then exorcises them.³⁰

Whilst this reading may be largely true of the anglophone canon, the chosen body of German-language portrayals of sapphic sexuality challenge this notion, employing gothicised motifs in order to interrogate assumptions regarding lesbian panic. The use

³⁰ Terry Castle, *The Apparitional Lesbian: Female Homosexuality and Modern Culture* (Columbia University Press, 1993), p. 34.

of the apparition motif is comparatively ambivalent in *Der Skorpion* and *Eine Frau zu sehen*. There is little 'ghosting' or 'decarnalizing' in Weirauch's vivid depiction of lesbian sex and her haunting depictions suggest her protagonist's desire to retain and reconcile the ghosts of lovers past, rather than to 'exorcise' them. However, despite providing a clear precedent for the appropriation of traditional Gothic tropes, as my analysis demonstrates, little critical attention has been paid to gothicised German lesbian literature. The proposed sapphic Gothic reading attempts to redress this balance by challenging some of the assumptions outlined by existing anglophone lesbian literary criticism.

In her pioneering study *Lesbian Gothic: Transgressive Fictions* (1999), Palmer posits the connections between lesbianism and the Gothic mode, establishing an important paradigm for understanding the construction of lesbian sexuality and subjectivity in contemporary gothicised lesbian fiction. She notes the exploitation of the Gothic mode in these narratives, which draw on 'its marginality and stylistic eccentricities to portray an eccentric, disruptive subject who exists in marginal relation to mainstream society.'³¹ Her focus on the marginality of the lesbian subject is also relevant to modern lesbian narratives, as women who preferred the companionship of other women were especially bound by normative social structures during the early twentieth century. Palmer's chosen post-Stonewall portrayals of 'out and proud' lesbian identity, however, differ considerably from the introspective interwar depictions of sapphic selfhood and sexuality by the likes of Weirauch and Schwarzenbach, which cautiously navigated the possibility of love between women in a significantly more subtle and nuanced fashion. Nonetheless, her notion of the contemporary lesbian Gothic and its parodic, interrogative revision of the mode can provide a productive point of

³¹ Palmer, *Lesbian Gothic*, p. 1.

reference for this sapphic Gothic reading of interwar lesbian narratives. Her analysis of spectral visitation and vampirism, for example, shed considerable light on how traditional Gothic tropes have been appropriated and adapted to reflect changing attitudes toward the politics of lesbian sex and desire. My sapphic Gothic analysis seeks to broaden the tradition of lesbian Gothic writing as defined by Palmer, outlining a clear precedent for the appropriation and modification of gothicised motifs in order to articulate sapphic sexuality prior to the advent of the contemporary women's and gay rights movements.

The term sapphic Gothic may initially appear somewhat antiquated and incongruous with the contemporary notion of the lesbian Gothic outlined by Palmer, as well as typical German colloquialisms and terminology used in lesbian culture during the early twentieth century. Nevertheless, I would argue that the term is particularly relevant to the nature of the portrayals examined throughout my analysis, owing to their distinct class bias, connection with high culture and depiction of lesbian love, in keeping with the model of romantic friendship. It also situates my analysis within current debates surrounding sapphic Modernist literature in both the anglophone and francophone context, which can be usefully illuminated by the German perception of lesbian sexuality. In *Sapphic Modernities* (2006), Laura Doan and Jane Garrity outline the implicit association of the term 'sapphism' with 'Glamorous excess,' high society and cultural elitism:

Often, as is the case with Woolf, the terms "sapphism" and "sapphist" are shorthand for a lesbian of a certain class, pedigree, and social standing. When we refer to sapphists, therefore, we mean – in general – to signal a select group of

British, Anglophone, and European lesbians who hobnobbed with the cultural and social elites.³²

This notion of sapphism applies to the majority of lesbian-authored narratives, such as *Der Skorpion* and Christa Winsloe's *Gestern und Heute* (1930), whose portrayals provided a basis for the self-conceptualisation of many lesbians in the German-speaking interwar context. Weirauch's protagonist Mette Rudloff belongs to a wealthy family and her lover Olga shares delusions of a similar social standing owing to her interest in high culture and aversion to anything inexpensive. Additionally, Schwarzenbach's conceptualisation of lesbian identity was largely informed by her family's wealth and social standing, as well as her experience of belonging to the cultural and literary elite of the period. Her relationship to the Mann family, and especially her enduring love for Erika Mann following a brief and failed relationship, was well documented. This notion of 'sapphism' and its distinct associations with class and culture during the interwar period is particularly productive in differentiating the Gothic aesthetic established in these earlier modern narratives from that of contemporary depictions of lesbianism outlined in Palmer's reading of the lesbian Gothic, which is less concerned with issues of social standing.

My sapphic Gothic reading of the chosen corpus of texts also engages with the distinctly Modernist preoccupation with the unconscious and the split subject. Whereas the notions of lesbian Gothic outlined by Palmer focuses predominantly on expressing difference and post-Stonewall concerns regarding lesbian subjectivity and sexual politics in contemporary society, the sapphic Gothic is rather more focused on individual psychological conceptualisations of selfhood and internalised anxieties.

³² Laura Doan and Jane Garrity, 'Introduction', in *Sapphic Modernities: Sexuality, Women and National Culture*, ed. by Laura Doan and Jane Garrity (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), pp. 1-13 (p. 9).

Rather than overtly foregrounding sex between women and the lesbian body as a site of rebellion or 'disruption' that Palmer identifies in contemporary texts, the sapphic Gothic model provides an aesthetic for the articulation of anxieties regarding the difficulty of reconciling the sapphic stranger within the self. However, these interwar narratives still challenge the idea of decarnalising or derealising lesbian desire outlined by Castle in her analysis of anglophone texts. Self-identified interwar lesbian writers, such as Weirauch and Schwarzenbach, prioritise spiritual and emotional attachments with women in their depictions of sapphic sexuality, when contrasted with comparatively more explicit contemporary portrayals of sapphic sexual relationships. Nevertheless, their descriptions of desire and sapphic sex are particularly pioneering in reconciling the idealised and insidious emotional or spiritual bonds, typically conveyed in the discourse of 'romantic friendship,' with the reality of experiencing forbidden sexual desire for another woman. My analysis demonstrates that the focus of these lesbian-authored narratives is rather more the attempt to reconcile this internalised notion of the sexual stranger with previously accepted notions of the self, formed within normative social and family structures. This sapphic Gothic model deviates from male-authored accounts, such as Döblin's *Die beiden Freundinnen und ihr Giftmord* and sexological discourse on lesbianism, as well as nineteenth-century Gothic narratives like Le Fanu's *Carmilla* that foregrounded the fears surrounding the foreign other.

The sapphic Gothic mode prioritises anxieties regarding the relationship with the true self and individual conceptualisation of identity, rather than the socio-political fears foregrounded by both the previous and following generations. The three interwar German narratives, which form my chosen corpus of texts, convey the internalisation of the myths regarding lesbian panic perpetuated by nineteenth-century gothicised

literature that preceded them, such as Samuel Taylor Coleridge's 'Christabel' (1797), Charles Baudelaire's lesbian vampire poems in *Les fleurs du mal* (1857), and Le Fanu's *Carmilla*. This is especially true of Weirauch and Schwarzenbach's lesbian-authored portrayals of internalised hostility and ambivalent conceptualisation of sapphic selfhood. Döblin's account, on the other hand, provides an insight into the widespread perceptions regarding the dangers of lesbian desire that were typically internalised. It also offers an alternate perspective on the subsequent insecurity and internal conflict faced by the sapphic subject during the interwar period. This thesis examines how the appropriation and modification of traditional tropes associated with the Gothic, such as vampirism and haunting, exploit the mode in order to articulate distinctly modern anxieties regarding forbidden sapphic sexuality. It then considers how the creation of a gothicised aesthetic in these chosen interwar texts challenges established ideas regarding the German tradition and the accepted Gothic canon more broadly. In doing so, my analysis questions the limited notion of what precisely constitutes Gothic literature, especially in a modern German context. The proposed sapphic Gothic model draws on Palmer's reading of the lesbian Gothic and Castle's notion of the apparitional lesbian, seeking to broaden the perception of gothicised lesbian narratives to include these notable interwar precedents. Finally, it considers precisely what is distinct about the sapphic Gothic aesthetic established in these German lesbian narratives, especially in their conceptualisation of selfhood and sexuality, and what they bring to bear on current debates regarding lesbian identity in modern literature and culture. The three chosen narratives are significant in their embodiment of the shifting nature and perceptions of lesbian desire, from the nineteenth-century paranoia about the threat of the queer other, to internalised anxieties surrounding the stranger within the self.

V. Situating Sapphic Spectres: Lesbian Literature in Interwar Germany

At the turn of the century, depictions of sapphic sexuality in German literary texts, including Duc's *Sind es Frauen?* and Frank Wedekind's 1904 drama *Die Büchse der Pandora* (Pandora's Box) drew heavily from rapidly evolving medico-legal views of female homosexuality. Mainstream interwar fictions, such as Vicki Baum's *Zwischenfall in Lohwinckel* (Results of an Accident, 1930), Erich Kästner's *Fabian: Die Geschichte eines Moralisten* (Fabian: the Story of a Moralist, 1931) and Irmgard Keun's *Das kunstseidene Mädchen* (The Artificial Silk Girl, 1932) situate the sapphic subject as marginal figures of difference.³³ Their portrayals, however, remain only a peripheral concern in their respective texts. This study instead focuses on three prose narratives, where lesbianism is a central concern: the first and third volumes of Weirauch's *Der Skorpion* trilogy, Döblin's *Die beiden Freundinnen und ihr Giftmord* and Schwarzenbach's *Eine Frau zu sehen*.³⁴ The perception of lesbianism as deviant and pathological behaviour in the chosen literary narratives is perpetuated not only through the adoption of sexological discourse, but also by the appropriation of established Gothic motifs. Tropes, such as the vampire, the wanderer, the double and the spectre, provided a means of connoting the difference and marginality associated with the sapphic subject. Moreover, lesbian-authored narratives were deeply preoccupied with themes like death, loss and haunting, perhaps largely owing to the common narrative trajectory

³³ For a more in-depth discussion of these more mainstream narratives, see Katie Sutton, *The Masculine Woman in Weimar Germany* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn, 2011).

³⁴ English editions of Weirauch's text, translated by Whittaker Chambers, were published during the early 1930s. The first two volumes appeared as *The Scorpion* (1932) and the third volume as *The Outcast* (1933). Weirauch's *Der Skorpion* was blacklisted on the 1938 *Liste des schädlichen und unerwünschten Schrifttums*. In Germany, the text had largely faded into obscurity before volume one was reprinted in 1977 (volumes two and three were not reprinted until 1993). Schwarzenbach's *Eine Frau zu sehen* was published posthumously in 2008; like Döblin's text, an English edition is yet to be published.

of tragic destiny that had dictated the depiction of homoerotic desire since the Renaissance period.³⁵

My analysis argues that the appropriation and modification of established Gothic motifs provided an alternative model for the representation of sapphic sexuality or selfhood, and especially the anxieties that surrounded it. Weirauch's reimagining of gothicised images in *Der Skorpion* provides a precedent for the use of a gothicised model in order to represent sapphic sexuality. The novel, which Nancy P. Nenno situates as a lesbian *Bildungsroman*, 'offers an unparalleled opportunity to explore the negotiation of definitions of lesbianism during the Weimar Republic.'³⁶ Weirauch's trilogy charts the experiences of her young protagonist Melitta 'Mette' Rudloff as she comes to terms with her sexuality through instances of love, loss and longing. The first volume, published in 1919, portrays her developing admiration for and subsequent relationship with Olga Radó, a Hungarian woman ten years her senior. Their tumultuous relationship is depicted as intensely interdependent and subversive, culminating in Olga's suicide at the end of the volume. The subsequent volumes, centred on Mette's mourning and memories, contribute to an overtly Gothic aesthetic, most notably the third instalment published over a decade later in 1931.

The depiction of Mette's second significant lover, Corona von Gjellerstrom, draws heavily on tropes associated with the Gothic, such as the vampire, the double and the

³⁵ The association of same-sex desire with tragic destiny is arguably established during the Renaissance period, especially in the homoerotic works of Christopher Marlowe, such as *Edward II* (1594) and *Doctor Faustus* (1604). Thomas Mann's portrayals of homoerotic desire later modified this established trajectory for a modern German literary context, particularly in *Der Tod in Venedig* (Death in Venice, 1912), which provides an important precedent to noteworthy instances of tragic destiny in lesbian narratives, such as Weirauch's *Der Skorpion* and Christa Winsloe's drama *Gestern und Heute* (Yesterday and Today, 1930).

³⁶ Nancy P. Nenno, 'Bildung and Desire: Anna Elisabet Weirauch's *Der Skorpion*', in *Queering the Canon: Defying Sights in German Literature and Culture*, ed. by Christoph Lorey and John L. Plews (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 1998), pp. 207–21 (p. 208).

witch.³⁷ Weirauch situates the enigmatic character as an inherently Gothic figure, describing her as a ‘Kannibalin,’ ‘Seelenraubtier’ (predator of souls), ‘Vampir’ and ‘Strige.’³⁸ I would argue, however, that the gothicised aesthetic is established from the first volume of the novel, albeit in a rather more subtle and nuanced manner. Throughout the narrative, Olga is depicted using the established motif of the Gothic wanderer, reminiscent of the marginal, monstrous figures of difference in gothicised works from Charles Maturin’s *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820) to Gustav Meyrink’s *Der Golem* (The Golem, 1913-4). Additionally, the consuming and subversive dynamic between Mette and her older lover is conveyed in terms reminiscent of the representations of sapphic seduction in traditional Gothic vampire literature, such as Coleridge’s poem ‘Christabel’ and Le Fanu’s *Carmilla*. However, the distinctly modern evocation of the vampire metaphor in *Der Skorpion* is more in keeping with Nina Auerbach’s notion of psychic vampirism, and especially the appropriation of identity and the blurring of boundaries between the self and the other, than it is with blood-sucking supernatural figures.³⁹ In this respect, Weirauch’s appropriation and modification of the Gothic vampire motif facilitates the expression of twentieth-century anxieties regarding lesbianism and sapphic selfhood. Moreover, the centrality of the typically Gothic trope of haunting in the narrative, especially following Olga’s death, suggests the significance of the motif in exploring Mette’s complex sapphic self-conceptualisation without the reassuring presence of her lover. Weirauch’s adoption and reimagining of the Gothic mode enables the depiction of internalised anxieties

³⁷ Anna Elisabet Weirauch, *Der Skorpion: Band III* (Wiesbaden: Feministischer Buchverlag, 1993), p. 63.

³⁸ According to Romanian folklore, the *strigale* are the spirits of witches, either living or dead, which cause mischief and even harm to humans. The Romanian *Strigoi* (vampire) is derived from this mythical character. For more information, see Agnes Murgopci, ‘The Vampire in Roumania’, in *The Vampire: A Casebook*, ed. by Alan Dundes (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1998), pp. 12–34. and Jan L. Perkowski, ‘The Romanian Folkloric Vampire’, *East European Quarterly*, 16 (1982), 311–22.

³⁹ For more in-depth discussion of the shift towards psychic vampirism in twentieth-century literature, see Nina Auerbach, *Our Vampires, Ourselves* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), p. 101.

surrounding the place of the sapphic subject in interwar society from a lesbian perspective. As a result, *Der Skorpion* affords a unique insight into the complex construct of sapphic selfhood at this critical moment in the conceptualisation of modern lesbian identity.

The use of characteristics associated with the vampire figure is equally significant in Döblin's *Die beiden Freundinnen und ihr Giftmord*. The Modernist novella is a hybrid composition, comprised of a loosely fictionalised description of the love affair between two Berlin housewives and a journalistic-style account of their criminal trial for murder. This male-authored depiction of lesbian love draws heavily on sexological discourse perpetuated by the likes of Krafft-Ebing and Hirschfeld, equating sapphic sexuality with degenerative criminal behaviour. Katie Sutton notes that Döblin's depiction of lesbianism is linked to a 'sexual pathology' that 'causes them to blatantly disregard patriarchal legal and relationship structures, and become a menace to the metropolis on a much larger scale' than those confined to Berlin's gay and lesbian underworld.⁴⁰ Döblin's modern reimagining of vampiric sexuality between women reflects anxieties surrounding the dangers posed by sapphic sexuality not only to society, but also to innocent and vulnerable young girls that are pursued by predatory older lesbians. The subversive depiction of the dynamic between Grete Bende and her younger lover Elli Link also reflects a 'Mutter-Kind-Beziehung' (mother/daughter relationship).⁴¹ This subversion of the bad mother figure, reminiscent of the incestuous maternal bond depicted in nineteenth-century vampire narratives, is reminiscent of Weirauch's modification of the vampiric lesbian relationship model established in *Der Skorpion*. Döblin's narrative also reflects the Modernist preoccupation with the unstable

⁴⁰ Sutton, *The Masculine Woman*, p. 163.

⁴¹ Claudia Schoppmann, *'Der Skorpion': Frauenliebe in der Weimarer Republik* (Hamburg: Verlag Frühlings Erwachen, 1991), p. 59.

subject and especially the transgression of the boundaries between self and other, which is central to the modern depiction of sapphic sexuality. In this respect, his portrayal of lesbianism reflects the perceived self-destructive nature of sapphic sexuality.

The self-shattering potential of lesbian love is significant in the uncanny depiction of same-sex desire in Schwarzenbach's *Eine Frau zu sehen*, written in 1929 but not published until 2008. The novella explores the *Ich*-narrator's initial recognition of her desire for another woman named Ena Bernstein and her attempt to come to terms with this discovery. Like Weirauch's *Der Skorpion*, Schwarzenbach's coming out narrative appropriates the traditional Gothic haunting motif. However, rather than experiencing repeated recollections of a lost loved one or deceased spirit, the protagonist is haunted by incessant memories of her encounter with the woman she desires. Although deeply concerned with loss and longing, as the narrator is initially unable to act upon her desire, the text posits the notion of unrequited or unfulfilled love as a form of loss. In this respect, Schwarzenbach explores anxieties regarding the inability of the narrator to repress her unconscious forbidden desires indefinitely. This is due to the outward necessity to conform to normative ideals of heterosexuality, therefore reflecting fears regarding the place of the sapphic subject within society. Moreover, the narrative exposes the incompatibility between the outward normative persona and the authentic sapphic self that lies beneath, therefore interrogating the gothicised notion of the mind-body dualism from a lesbian perspective. Through the emotional turmoil of the narrator who experiences these haunting memories of her encounter with Ena, Schwarzenbach also implies the potentially self-shattering effect of repressed lesbian desire. The narrative is significant in its creation of a sapphic uncanny

aesthetic, modifying established Gothic tropes of haunting and repetition in order to convey anxieties regarding sapphic selfhood and internalised hostility. Like Weirauch's novel, *Eine Frau zu sehen* creates a sapphic uncanny model, which enables the articulation of the lesbian subject's anxieties and ambivalence toward her homosexuality. Each of the chosen texts is significant in its contribution to the conceptualisation of sapphic sexuality in interwar German-language cultural productions. The corpus of texts outlined above broadens the accepted notion of the lesbian literary tradition according to existing anglophone scholarship, therefore providing an invaluable insight into early constructions of sapphic selfhood and challenging the accepted notion of what constitutes lesbian Gothic in a modern context.

The proposed sapphic Gothic paradigm for the representation of lesbian sexuality is outlined in the following two chapters. The first chapter focuses on the use of vampiric figures in the aforementioned narratives. It will identify the more subtle and nuanced signifiers of vampirism, in order to examine the modification of the established Gothic vampire motif for a modern context in the first volume of Weirauch's *Der Skorpion* and Döblin's crime narrative. In the second chapter, the analysis moves to a discussion of the uncanny aesthetic in lesbian-authored depictions of haunting. It will consider the possibility, and indeed constraints, of a sapphic uncanny model for the representation of lesbian sexuality and selfhood. This chapter will identify instances of haunting, doubling and repetition in the third volume of Weirauch's novel, as well as Schwarzenbach's *Eine Frau zu sehen*. Finally, my analysis will conclude with a brief discussion of the primary conclusions drawn from the chosen corpus of texts, as well as suggest new directions for future research that this study may inform. My sapphic Gothic reading will demonstrate that the reimagining of established tropes associated

with the Gothic can usefully illuminate the ambivalent conceptualisation of modern lesbian identity in its formative stages.

Chapter I

Sapphic Suckers: Vampiric Desire in Anne Elisabet Weirauch's *Der Skorpion* (1919) and Alfred Döblin's *Die beiden Freundinnen und ihr Giftmord* (1924)

I. Introduction: Homoeroticism, Hostility and the Vampiric Model

The vampiric figure in all of its guises, from the traditional Gothic bloodthirsty noblewoman to the modern vamp or femme fatale, has become a staple motif for the literary representation of sapphic sexuality since the late eighteenth century.⁴²

Vampiric representations of lesbian love and desire, such as Coleridge's 'Christabel' and Le Fanu's *Carmilla*, provided important precedents for the modern depiction of sapphic sexuality and love between women. The common association of the parasitic monster with non-normative sexuality has been outlined by seminal studies on the vampire, including Auerbach's *Our Vampires, Ourselves* (1995) and Ken Gelder's *Reading the Vampire* (1994). Despite their differing approaches to analysing the vampire, in *Lesbian Gothic*, Palmer stresses that both Gelder and Auerbach 'prioritize' the vampire's homoerotic associations.⁴³ The monstrosity of the vampiric figure lies predominantly not in its supernatural or blood-sucking qualities 'but because at some "deeper level" it symbolizes an erotic threat.'⁴⁴ It is perhaps this erotic threat to established heteronormative ideals that has rendered the vampire the quintessential queer Gothic monster. Erik Butler emphasises the regenerative quality of the vampiric figure in socio-cultural representations, stating that 'not all vampires inhabit Gothic castles':

all vampires share one trait: the power to move between and undo borders otherwise holding identities in place. At this monster's core lies an affinity for rupture, change, and mutation. Because of its inimical relationship to stability,

⁴² The term 'vampiric,' employed throughout the chapter, is intended to connote not only the traditional fantastic depictions of vampirism in traditional Gothic narratives, but also modern adaptations of the vampire metaphor, with a particular emphasis on psychic vampirism, the notion of parasitic desire and the figure's power to transgress the boundaries of individual identity.

⁴³ Palmer, *Lesbian Gothic*, p. 99.

⁴⁴ Robert Mighall, *A Geography of Victorian Gothic Fiction: Mapping History's Nightmares* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 211.

tradition, and order, the vampire embodies the transformative march of history.⁴⁵

In the modern, realist literary tradition, the vampiric figure becomes increasingly associated with this rupture of the boundaries dictating identity. Auerbach notes the shift from the traditional image of the Gothic bloodsucker to the psychic vampire in the modern context:

Technically, psychic vampires are a breed apart; instead of drinking blood, they sap energy; but all twentieth-century vampires suck identity from the psychic vampires who infiltrate eroticism, the ambition, and the power determinants of ordinary life.⁴⁶

The vampire metaphor in modern literature, and especially in my chosen sapphic Gothic narratives, hinges on Auerbach's notion of the psychic vampire, and especially its ability to blur the boundaries of individual identity and conceptualisations of sexuality.

Modern portrayals of sapphic sexuality, reminiscent of traditional Gothic vampire narratives like *Carmilla* and 'Christabel,' are significant in articulating the ambivalence and internalised anxieties surrounding the intense and interdependent bonds forged in lesbian relationships. The adoption and adaptation of the vampire motif in modern lesbian narratives like Djuna Barnes's *Nightwood* (1936) reflects this perceived self-destructive dynamic in lesbian relationships. However, I would argue that more subtle, yet significant, precedents of this sapphic Gothic signifier for lesbian desire can also be found in interwar German fiction, including Weirauch's *Der Skorpion*

⁴⁵ Erik Butler, *Metamorphoses of the Vampire in Literature and Film: Cultural Transformations in Europe, 1732 - 1933* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2011), p. 1.

⁴⁶ Auerbach, p. 101.

and Döblin's *Die beiden Freundinnen und ihr Giftmord*.⁴⁷ Although these narratives do not depict the traditional fantastic, bloodsucking vampirism, the representation of bonds between women and the subsequent perceived erotic threat to normative identity and values reflect the vampiric portrayals of lesbian love and desire in 'Christabel' and *Carmilla*. The relationships depicted in the chosen corpus of texts modify this traditional vampiric seduction model for a modern context, emphasising the transgression of the boundaries dictating identity and selfhood. With this in mind, this chapter will engage with current debates regarding what constitutes a vampiric desire, especially in a modern or queer context, drawing on Auerbach's notion of psychic vampirism. Additionally, it considers how the traditional vampiric figure and its stock characteristics have been modified in these chosen texts in order to convey distinct anxieties regarding sapphic sexuality and individual identity in a modern context. It will also question how the reimagining of the established Gothic motif in these narratives can develop our understanding of sapphic self-conceptualisation and experience during the interwar period.

The first volume of Weirauch's *Der Skorpion*, published in 1919, chronicles the developing romance between the young Mette Rudloff and Olga Radó, a mysterious Hungarian woman ten years her senior. The protagonist is completely enamoured with her from their first meeting, although her love initially appears to be unrequited. Shortly after this first encounter, Olga begins to teach Mette about history and culture on an informal basis, before taking on a formal position as her language instructor. Contrary to the accepted boundaries between student and teacher, as well as the

⁴⁷ In existing scholarship on Döblin's text, the translation of *Freundinnen* varies between 'friends' and 'girlfriends'. My translations mostly use the term 'friend' in order to avoid transposing anachronisms onto interwar texts. However, the choice of term is not intended to overlook the increasingly romantic and even sexual nature of the bond between the two women, as it intensifies throughout the narrative.

differences in age, nationality and social standing, their relationship gradually shifts from professional to romantic. In existing scholarship on the narrative, Olga is typically situated as a 'stereotypical masculine lesbian' that influences the innocent and 'still-naïve' young admirer.⁴⁸ However, my analysis draws on the traditional Gothic depictions of sapphic sexuality in vampire narratives, such as *Carmilla* and 'Christabel' in order to interrogate this assumption. As in Le Fanu's narrative, the perceived binary of the older, often predatory masculine lesbian and their innocent younger lovers is challenged by reciprocal nature of the desire.⁴⁹ In fact, far from entirely innocent and still-naïve, Mette's 'bad reputation' is outlined in the opening description of her (p. 7). Moreover, contrary to the perception of those around her, it is the younger Mette who pursues Olga. Throughout the first volume of *Der Skorpion*, a close, symbiotic and even parasitic bond forms between the two women, as Mette begins to model her own worldview and individual identity on Olga's teachings and opinions on life, love and literature. In this depiction of lesbian love and desire, reminiscent of Le Fanu and Coleridge's representations, the boundaries between the self and other become blurred, as Mette takes on qualities and characteristics associated with her lover, eventually assuming aspects of her identity and role within the relationship whilst the dynamic between them starts to shift. The complex relationship between Mette and Olga, especially the intense, interdependent bond that develops between them, can be usefully illuminated by the depiction of sapphic sexuality in these traditional vampiric depictions of lesbian desire.

Döblin's novella *Die beiden Freundinnen und ihr Giftmord* blends crime reportage, sexological discourse and fiction in its depiction of destructive lesbian love.

⁴⁸ Sutton, *The Masculine Woman*, p. 169.

⁴⁹ For further discussion of the prevalence of this representational model in the 1920s and 1930s, see Nenno's 'Bildung and Desire' and Sutton's *The Masculine Woman in Weimar Germany*.

The narrative originally appeared as the first instalment of the series of criminal case studies *Außenseiter der Gesellschaft: Die Verbrechen der Gegenwart* (Outsiders of Society: Contemporary Crimes). The fictionalised account is based on the 1923 criminal trials against Ella Klein and Margarete Nebbe, who faced charges of the murder and attempted murder of their respective husbands. However, Döblin's novella focuses rather more on the romantic relationship that develops between the two Berlin housewives, rather than their alleged crimes. Sutton argues that despite his attempt at adopting an objective, journalistic style, Döblin's account is 'ultimately far more judgemental than [his] epilogue suggests.'⁵⁰ His account seems to suggest a causal link between sapphic sexuality and criminal behaviour, situating the lesbian as a destructive and deviant figure. Despite the fact that Elli Link is responsible for poisoning her abusive husband, her lover Grete Bende is initially portrayed as the predatory, vampiric figure that has corrupted the innocent younger girl, leading her to commit such a crime.⁵¹ As in Weirauch's novel, the intensely interdependent relationship between the two women is reminiscent of the portrayals of sapphic sexuality in traditional vampire narratives. Döblin foregrounds signifiers associated with these early vampiric precedents, such as parasitic desire and the transgression of boundaries between the self and other, in his portrayal of the destructive lesbian relationship between Elli and Grete.

The link between vampiric figures and sapphic sexuality in literature stems from Coleridge's narrative poem 'Christabel,' which depicts the seduction of the eponymous victim by a vampiric stranger Geraldine. This early depiction of the vampire

⁵⁰ Sutton, *The Masculine Woman*, p. 162.

⁵¹ Döblin uses the easily recognisable pseudonyms Elli Link and Grete Bende throughout his narrative. These given names shall be used to refer to the fictionalised characters throughout the chapter unless stated otherwise.

foregrounds her lesbian tendencies through the portrayal of her desire for her young victim Christabel. This link between the vampire and homoeroticism is further developed in nineteenth-century anglophone Gothic narratives, such as John Polidori's *The Vampyre* (1819), Le Fanu's *Carmilla* and Stoker's *Dracula*.⁵² Owing to its association with forbidden and dangerous desires, the vampire has become the queer Gothic monster *du jour*. Despite the perceived negative connotations of the vampire metaphor, in traditional Gothic narratives, such as *Carmilla* and 'Christabel,' the assumed predatory erotic threat of the lesbian vampire is actually challenged by victim's reciprocated desire for their sapphic seductress. Auerbach notes that the vampires of the nineteenth century 'offered an intimacy, a homoerotic sharing, that threatened the hierarchical distance of sanctioned relationships.'⁵³ Since the *fin de siècle*, this traditional Gothic trope of vampirism has been appropriated and modified in order to convey the same-sex model of intimacy and the anxieties associated with it. In *Carmilla*, the perceived 'victim' Laura desires the sharing and intimacy associated with same-sex sexuality, even though it is considered dangerous or destructive by the paternal authority figures around her. This complex construction of lesbian love as a feeling to be both feared and desired is particularly significant in reading modern depictions of sapphic sexuality. In Döblin and Weirauch's ambivalent portrayals of lesbian love, the recognition of apparent threat also becomes internalised by the sapphic subject, therefore simultaneously engendering desire and anxiety upon the recognition of this non-normative sexuality within the self.

⁵² Homoerotic readings of Polidori's narrative have been discussed at greater length by Mair Rigby and Erik Butler. For further discussion of homoerotic readings of Stoker's *Dracula*, see Christopher Craft, "'Kiss Me with those Red Lips': Gender and Inversion in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*", *Representations*, 8 (1984), 107-133 and Talia Schaffer, "'A Wilde Desire Took Me': The Homoerotic History of *Dracula*", *ELH*, 61, no. 2 (1994), 381-425.

⁵³ Auerbach, p. 60.

Although the link between the vampiric figure and the homosexual other was established by the anglophone Gothic narratives mentioned above, this association was also introduced into the German cultural context by Ulrichs in his short story 'Manor' (1885).⁵⁴ He published a number of essays and informative leaflets on homosexuality, which he named *Uranismus* (or Uranism), speaking publically in defence of same-sex love in an attempt to reform anti-homosexuality laws in Germany. His use of the vampire motif in both his legal and literary works, however, suggests a rather more complex, and even ambivalent, attitude towards same-sex desire. Although the parasitic vampiric figure is seemingly incongruous with Ulrichs' favourable public stance toward Uranism, his writings are the first to establish the homosexual as a vampiric figure in the German canon. In 1869, Ulrichs published the seventh volume of his *Forschungen über das Räthsel der mann männlichen Liebe* (Research in the Riddle of Love between Men), entitled *Incubus: Urningsliebe und Blutgier* (Incubus: Uranian Love and Bloodlust). The study focused on the Berlin criminal proceedings against Lieutenant von Zastrow, who was charged with the rape, murder and physical mutilation of two young boys in 1867 and 1869. Some of the gruesome details of von Zastrow's alleged 'teuflische Grausamkeiten' (diabolical atrocities) included inflicting bite wounds and castrating his victims, as well as sodomising one boy with a stake, driving it up into his abdomen.⁵⁵ In his study, which also outlines similar historical cases, Ulrichs repeatedly suggests a correlation between homoerotic desire and 'wilde Blutgier.' This link between Uranism and *Blutrausch* (bloodlust) implies the potentially vampiric, destructive nature of same-sex desire.

⁵⁴ Karl Heinrich Ulrichs, 'Manor', in *Matrosengeschichten und Gedichte: Ein Lesebuch*. (Verlag Rosa Winkel, 1998), xviii, 73–84.

⁵⁵ Karl Heinrich Ulrichs, *Incubus: Urningsliebe und Blutgier*, *Forschungen über das Räthsel der mann männlichen Liebe*, XII vols. (Leipzig: A. Serbe's Verlag, 1869), pp. 45–50.

Ulrich's short story 'Manor,' published in his anthology *Matrosengeschichten* (Sailor Stories), also directly established the link between vampirism and same-sex desire. The narrative chronicles a homosexual love affair that transcends death, as the eponymous sailor Manor returns to suck the blood of his younger lover Har after perishing in a shipwreck. The local community, whilst seemingly tolerant of the homosexual nature of Manor's desire, wish to eliminate the vampiric threat. Unlike traditional anglophone Gothic narratives, however, in 'Manor' the vampire and victim were lovers in life, therefore suggesting that their homosexuality is not merely symptomatic or a product of vampiric seduction. The modification of the established Gothic motif in Ulrichs' short story provides a clear literary precedent for the vampiric portrayal of same-sex desire in German literature at the turn of the century. Ulrichs' shipwrecked vampire saga may have appeared antiquated by the standards of twentieth-century German narratives, set in and inspired by the decadent modern metropolis.

The vampiric depiction of the sapphic subject in modern German literature can, therefore, be seen as emphasising anxieties surrounding the threat of lesbianism not only to society but to established perceptions of individual identity. Despite the shifting signifiers associated with the vamp in a twentieth-century context, the depiction of sapphic desire in *Der Skorpion* and *Die beiden Freundinnen und ihr Giftmord* still centres on the transgression of boundaries and dangerous, excessive sexuality. Palmer notes that the vampire's transgression of established boundaries can facilitate the depiction of lesbian desire:

Her shape-changing abilities can be read as denoting her refusal to become entrapped in the conventional domestic role, while her erotic relations with

women represent a challenge to the institution of marriage and the control men seek to exert on female sexuality.⁵⁶

Like the traditional Gothic vampire, the modern sapphic vampiric figure causes anxiety owing to her abject disregard for boundaries - spatial, moral and corporeal. Broadening Palmer's contemporary definition of the lesbian vampire, which focuses primarily on the corporeal imagery such as blood and other bodily fluids, my analysis engages with the more subtle sapphic vampiric signifiers of the earlier Gothic precedents provided by Coleridge and Le Fanu. The transgression of boundaries (social, familial and bodily), subversion of maternal desire and parasitic love for other women can all be considered key characteristics of the modern vampiric lesbian. This chapter considers the extent to which the psychic vampire metaphor can provide a productive aesthetic for the representation of sapphic sexuality in interwar German narratives. It will also question how modern modifications of the traditional vampiric figure, such as the lesbian wanderer, or *flâneuse*, and the bad mother, in my chosen corpus of texts can nuance our understanding of anxieties surrounding lesbianism during the interwar period.

Auerbach notes that the versatility of the vampire motif lends itself to appropriation, as 'the alacrity with which vampires shape themselves to personal and national moods is an adaptive trait their apparent uniformity masks.'⁵⁷ Despite its original supernatural associations, the lesbian vampire figure has survived the shift from Coleridge's fantastical Romantic Gothic depiction of sapphic sexuality to the realist style of modern lesbian narratives. By the interwar period, deviant and dangerous vampiric desires were far more in keeping with modern preoccupations of threats to the self than the blood-sucking night stalker of the previous century. In this respect, the modern literary depiction of the vampire, or vampiric figure, had begun to reflect

⁵⁶ Palmer, *Lesbian Gothic*, p. 101.

⁵⁷ Auerbach, p. 5.

widespread fears and anxieties that stemmed from the recognition of the non-normative other within the self. The emphasis remained, however, on its homoerotic associations and its subsequent threat to traditional values of society, family and established notions of identity. The depiction of the vampiric other in the modern context conveys anxieties concerning the exploration of deviant desire facilitated by the modern metropolis and its queer spaces, alluding to anxieties surrounding the place of the homosexual in early twentieth-century society. Additionally, the portrayal of the vampiric figure within the domestic or private space reflected fears of the sapphic subject's sexual dissonance and threat to traditional family values. The shift in perceptions regarding sexuality and identity in modern psychology rendered the perceived threat of the vampiric figure to established boundaries between the self and the other especially relevant. The subsequent recognition of the vamp within affords a valuable insight into the complex and ambivalent conceptualisation of lesbianism in interwar Germany, especially the depiction of the modern sapphic subject and her preoccupations with selfhood and individual identity. The fear in modern lesbian narratives stems not from the foreign queer monster, but rather the recognition of these strange desires in familiar figures, and even the self. In this respect, modern evocations of the vampire metaphor to convey sapphic sexuality foreground anxieties surrounding the stranger within our society, our home and especially ourselves.

Domestic Gothic: Anxieties about the Vampire and the Heteronormative Home

In traditional Gothic literature, the vampire figure is initially portrayed as an invasive, parasitic presence in the family home of his or her chosen victim, rendering it the site of seduction. In the German-language context, this domestic Gothic trope can also be

recognised in Ulrich's portrayal of the homoerotic vampiric haunting in 'Manor,' as the eponymous vampire repeatedly returns to the home of his young lover to suck his blood as he lies in bed. Recognising the threat to their child, the concerned patriarch in the lesbian vampire narratives, and matriarch in the case of Ulrichs' short story, wish to eliminate the parasitic queer threat. Nevertheless, the victim in each of these traditional Gothic texts appears somewhat less concerned about the queer vampiric visitations, citing their affection and even love for the haunting perpetrator. In nineteenth-century Gothic narratives like 'Christabel' and *Carmilla*, which directly associate vampirism with sapphic sexuality, the lesbian vampire is situated as a threat to the domestic space. Both Coleridge and Le Fanu's vampiric sapphists are invited into the family home of their victim under the guise of their own vulnerability and perceived fragile state. As in 'Christabel,' Le Fanu's lesbian vampire proceeds to drain her victim of her blood, and her energy, after being welcomed into the family. However, the greatest threat to the domestic space in *Carmilla* is arguably the desire and genuine affection that she awakens in Laura, causing her to transgress the boundaries of an acceptable relationship with another woman and her assumed normative sexual identity. In Le Fanu's narrative, when asked about whether she is glad her vampiric visitor came to the house, Laura replies affectionately 'Delighted, dear Carmilla?'⁵⁸ The supposed victim's longing for the continuation of the vampiric seductions thus spawns anxieties regarding the recognition of such desires within the home. The vampire metaphor provides a productive means of interrogating the role of the sapphic subject in normative patriarchal structures.

⁵⁸ J. Sheridan Le Fanu, 'Carmilla', in *In a Glass Darkly* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 243–319 (p. 273). All further references are to this edition and shall be given parenthetically in the body of the text.

Despite the clear reciprocation of desire in these early sapphic vampire narratives, the misappropriation of this established Gothic image in both sexological and cultural discourse on same-sex sexuality at the turn of the century situated the homosexual as a predatory, vampiric figure that preys on innocent young victims, converting them to his or her deviant lifestyle.⁵⁹ Florence Tamagne notes that the sodomy scandals at the *fin de siècle*, such as the Wilde trial also ‘crystallised in the public view the image of the homosexual as a “corruptor of youth,” a source of danger and depravity.’⁶⁰ This perception of the same-sex sexuality became central to the depiction of both male homosexuality and lesbianism in the twentieth century. Lesbian-authored depictions appeared to be equally reliant on the discourse of degeneration and sexological stereotypes in their portrayal of desire and relationship dynamics. However, German lesbian narratives, such as Weirauch’s *Der Skorpion* and Christa Winsloe’s *Gestern und Heute* (1930), which was adapted into the popular film *Mädchen in Uniform* (1931), were pioneering in challenging this perception of same-sex love by subverting these prevalent predatory representational models. In many lesbian-authored narratives, such as *Der Skorpion*, not only is the same-sex desire reciprocated, but it is typically the younger protagonist that pursues the older object of their desire. As in these earlier Gothic vampire stories, modern lesbian narratives like *Nightwood* modified the motif to explore fears regarding the perceived threat of non-normative sexuality to accepted family values and how these became internalised by the sapphic subject.

⁵⁹ In 1895, the Oscar Wilde scandal brought the idea of homosexuality and the threat posed by it to respectable society into the headlines. Wilde, known for his decadent and gothicised aesthetic in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890), was convicted for gross indecency and sentenced to imprisonment. The trial proved influential in the vampiric representation of homoerotic desire in literary portrayals like *Dracula*, situating the homosexual as an abject, predatory figure. For further, detailed discussion of the influence of the Wilde trials on Stoker’s *Dracula*, see Talia Schaffer, “‘A Wilde Desire Took Me’: The Homoerotic History of *Dracula*,” *ELH*, 61 (1994), 381–425.

⁶⁰ Florence Tamagne, *A History of Homosexuality in Europe, Berlin, London, Paris 1919-1939: Vol. I & II*. (Algora Publishing, 2006), p. 17.

The subversion of traditional family structures through positioning the older lesbian lover as a maternal authority figure is central to the conceptualisation of sapphic sexuality in the chosen gothicised narratives. Judith Halberstam notes that the female vampire is especially horrific because they represent 'the exact reversal of a mother's nurturance.'⁶¹ The association of the vampiric sapphic seductress with the –typically absent – mother figure, popularised by Gothic texts like 'Christabel' and *Carmilla*, poses a particular threat to established heteronormative family values. Andrew Smith notes that in Coleridge's poem, the vampire Geraldine 'attempts to supplant the position of authority that Christabel's dead mother held.'⁶² Auerbach also outlines the subversion of maternal desire in Coleridge's poem, stating 'Like Carmilla, Geraldine is eerily inseparable from the spirit of her victim's mother, whom she both displaces and becomes.'⁶³ The portrayal of the older lesbian as a maternal figure in the modern, realist tradition reflects these traditional vampiric precedents. *Fin de siècle* sexological claims that homosexuality was innate intensified anxieties surrounding lesbianism and motherhood, owing to the suggestion that the sapphic subject's apparent unwillingness to procreate may in fact be an inability. The gothicised sapphic narratives examined in this chapter demonstrate how widespread stereotypes and anxieties about lesbian desire become internalised by the sapphic subject. They also show how established concerns surrounding sapphic sexuality evolve to include distinctly modern concerns regarding same-sex desire, especially as homosexual couplings were beginning to be recognised as a viable –albeit marginal or condemned – alternative to the heteronormative family structure. The perceived association of homosexuality and sterility provided an evident threat to the social situation following an unprecedented

⁶¹ Judith Halberstam, *Skin Shows: Gothic Horror and the Technology of Monsters* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995), p. 100.

⁶² Andrew Smith, *Gothic Literature* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), p. 211.

⁶³ Auerbach, p. 49.

decline in European birth rates, particularly in Germany, during the First World War and the Spanish Flu pandemic. It also challenged the authority of the patriarchal social order and established values regarding the family and the acceptable limits of sexuality.

As in 'Christabel' and *Carmilla*, the subversion of the maternal role is central to the depiction of sapphic desire in modern lesbian narratives, as the sapphic subject is typically situated as both a mother figure and a lover to her younger companion. In *Die beiden Freundinnen und ihr Giftmord*, the older woman Grete Bende transfers her desire for a maternal bond onto her younger lover Elli. In *Der Skorpion*, the younger protagonist Mette transfers her longing for her absent mother onto her older lover Olga. Their maternal homoerotic attachment also evokes anxieties surrounding the lesbian's desire to recreate established family bonds, rather than to procreate within the heteronormative family structure. In creating alternative relationship structures that subvert the normative model, Palmer notes that female vampires 'become the mothers they dispel, restoring the life they consume.'⁶⁴ This incestuous model of lesbian desire replicates and subverts the traditional mother-daughter relationship, transgressing the acceptable boundaries between motherly and romantic love. This maternal homoerotic vampiric model for depicting sapphic sexuality can provide a productive lens for reading and understanding the portrayal of lesbian love in modern narratives. In her reading of *Carmilla*, Auerbach notes that 'the intimacy, the sharing, the maternal suffusion, were the essence, in the nineteenth century, of the vampire's allure.'⁶⁵ Palmer also notes the draw of the maternal imagery in contemporary vampiric depictions of lesbian sex in

⁶⁴ Auerbach, p. 50.

⁶⁵ Auerbach, p. 59.

the way sexual relations between women indirectly reproduce features of mother/daughter relations, such as sensuous contact, emotional and physical interdependence and patterns of dominance/submission.⁶⁶

The description of sapphic sex in terms of maternal images of pregnancy, breastfeeding and raising a child stems from the less overt maternal homoerotic aesthetic developed in earlier sapphic Gothic narratives. Whilst this graphic contemporary corporeal image of the lesbian vampire is not present in earlier lesbian narratives, I argue that maternal homoerotic attachments are central to both Weirauch and Döblin's portrayal of sapphic sexuality. This transgression of the accepted boundaries of the motherly role situates the sapphic subject as a source of anxiety within the domestic space, namely the family home, therefore reflecting the psychic lesbian vampire figure. The possibility of creating an alternative lesbian family model challenges the authority of the traditional patriarchal order, no matter how deviant it may be considered by normative standards. In this respect, the vampiric depiction of the sapphic subject within the domestic realms of the home and family afford an understanding of twentieth-century anxieties surrounding the threat of lesbianism to traditional family values. Moreover, these pioneering portrayals convey the internalisation of these fears and subsequent feeling of not belonging within these normative structures, allowing an insight into the conflicted and fragile conceptualisation of sapphic selfhood during the interwar period.

Sapphic Symbiosis: Fearing the Vampire within the Self

At the turn of the century, the concept of a distinct individual identity and subsequent sense of self for lesbians was problematic. Early sexological studies largely modelled lesbianism on male gender inversion, overlooking any possibility of a distinct lesbian

⁶⁶ Palmer, *Lesbian Gothic*, p. 124.

identity or sexual orientation. Heike Bauer argues that for Ulrichs, for example, female homosexuality was a 'mere afterthought.'⁶⁷ Lilian Faderman also notes that leading thinkers behind the widespread perceptions of lesbianism at the time, such as Krafft-Ebing and Freud, 'grouped male and female same-sex love together as one entity.'⁶⁸ Into the twentieth century, medico-legal discourse on inversion largely still equated female homosexuality and its male counterpart, or omitted it altogether. Despite its constraints, the gender inversion model was influential in early twentieth-century lesbian literature, such as the 1901 novel *Sind es Frauen? Roman über das dritte Geschlecht* (Are they Women? A Novel about the Third Sex) published by journalist Minna Wettstein-Adelt under the pseudonym Aimee Duc.⁶⁹ Unlike in Austria, there was no provision for lesbianism under either Paragraph 143 of the Prussian criminal code, or Paragraph 175 of the new penal code that was adopted with the formation of the German Empire in 1871.⁷⁰ In this respect, lesbianism could be considered a lesser legal and political priority and so received less attention. In British legal trials surrounding sapphic sex, such as the Woods-Pirie trial (1811), it was deemed 'physically impossible,' as two women would not have the 'tools.'⁷¹ The myth concerning the impossibility of lesbian sex was widespread until prominent sexologists, such as Krafft-Ebing and Havelock Ellis argued to the contrary, outlining a tradition of same-sex sexuality amongst women.⁷²

⁶⁷ Heike Bauer, 'Theorizing Female Inversion: Sexology, Discipline, and Gender at the Fin de Siècle', *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 18 (2009), 84–102 (p. 86).

⁶⁸ Lilian Faderman, *Surpassing the Love of Men: Romantic Friendship and Love between Women from the Renaissance* (London: The Women's Press, 1985), p. 314.

⁶⁹ There appears to be some dispute over the initial publication date of the text, with some studies citing 1901 and others 1903. It should be noted, however, that both the 1976 Amazonien Frauenverlag edition of the text and Claudia Schoppmann's seminal study *Der Skorpion: Frauenliebe in der Weimarer Republik* (1991) give 1901 as the original publication date.

⁷⁰ Although Krafft-Ebing noted that in Austria same-sex acts between women were criminalised, he also references the lack of convictions, stating that public opinion considered sex between women as an act against morality but not the law. For further discussion, see Bauer, p. 96.

⁷¹ Martha Vicinus, *Intimate Friends: Women Who Loved Women, 1778-1928* (University of Chicago Press, 2004), p. 65.

⁷² The ambivalent relationship between lesbianism and sexological studies by the likes of Krafft-Ebing and Ellis is outlined in Faderman, pp. 239–53.

Nonetheless, the abnormal and forbidden status assigned to excessive desire for another female lead to internalised anxieties surrounding the place of the sapphic subject within both the family and society.⁷³

Le Fanu's portrayal of sapphic seduction challenged the prevalent myth situating lesbianism as non-sexual and merely modelled on the notion of romantic friendship. Nevertheless, his vampiric depiction was largely reliant on sexological stereotypes of the predatory, masculine invert. In *Carmilla*, the protagonist Laura is unable to reconcile Carmilla's feminine beauty with her ardour and aggressive advances and considers the possibility that she may be a 'boyish lover' in disguise (p. 265). As in Le Fanu's novella, the behaviour of Mette's lover Olga Radó in *Der Skorpion* is also typically read as a 'stereotypical masculine lesbian' owing to her behaviour despite the description of her appearance, which is rather more in keeping with feminine aesthetic beauty.⁷⁴ Despite its limitations, the assumed masculine associations of the vampiric metaphor established in Le Fanu's narrative rendered it an appropriate means of articulating sapphic sexuality at a critical juncture in its conceptualisation when the possibility of lesbian sex was often still overlooked altogether. However, this model left little space for a distinct sense of sapphic identity, even casting the lesbian subject's identity as a woman into doubt. The gender inversion model of representing sapphic sexuality suggested an incongruity between the outward female appearance and the hidden desires, which were perceived to be typically masculine. In this respect, the vampire

⁷³ Even progressive, rapidly modernising European nations, such as Great Britain and Germany, were not ready to embrace the homosexual in mainstream society. Male homosexuality was criminalised, whereas lesbianism was not even recognised by the law as a viable possibility, let alone an individual identity.

⁷⁴ Although her behaviour is typically read as masculine, Weirauch's initial depiction of Olga emphasises characteristics that are typically associated with female beauty, such as slender build, facial symmetry and defined features. Additionally, the initial description of her foregrounds her 'beautiful' face, as well as her 'smooth' and 'rich' dark hair (p. 32), therefore placing emphasis on these traditionally feminine signifiers. However, for a detailed reading of her perceived masculinity, see Sutton, *The Masculine Woman*, pp. 168-9.

motif is particularly troubling in a modern context, owing to the threat to individual identity and the perception of the unified self.

The vampiric ability to imbibe not only the victim's bodily fluids, but also their identity, posed a threat to the very foundations of our self-conceptualisation, and especially the Enlightenment perception of the unified subject. Butler argues that the nineteenth-century vampire 'possesses an identity chiefly to the extent that his victims invest him with one,' stating that the traditional foreign monster 'refracts the uncertainties of the world.'⁷⁵ His notion of the vampire as an empty vessel, devoid of a distinct identity and appropriating the characteristics of others, can also usefully illuminate the vampiric appropriation of identity in both Döblin and Weirauch's narratives. Faderman states that 'in twentieth-century novels of lesbian vampirism, it is not the victim's blood that the villain lives on but her youth and energy, which the modern vampire requires to transfuse her aging, hideous, malcontented self.'⁷⁶ Nenno notes that this representational model for the supposed threat of the predatory older lesbian was common during the interwar period:

The threat seemed to stem primarily from nurturing, maternal figures who became the focus of schoolgirl crushes or who caused much of the kind of childhood traumas that "caused" lesbianism.⁷⁷

In these interwar lesbian narratives, the older women, Olga Radó and Grete Bende are initially situated in the dominant role associated with the notion of the stereotypical vampiric figure – even if only to interrogate or subvert it. On a superficial level at least, it appears that Weirauch adopts this established model of the 'nurturing maternal

⁷⁵ Butler, p. 86.

⁷⁶ Faderman, p. 343.

⁷⁷ Nenno, 'Bildung and Desire: Anna Elisabet Weirauch's *Der Skorpion*', p. 210.

figure' and the motherless younger girl. However, as in traditional vampire narratives, the dynamic between the Mette and Olga is rather more complex.

These modern German-language lesbian narratives subvert the established model, as it is typically the younger lover that initially assumes the identity of her lover, engendering a shift in the relationship dynamic. Additionally, they challenge this established stereotype of the predatory older lesbian, by emphasising the rather more interdependent bonds forged between the women, which reflect the reciprocal portrayal of lesbian love in earlier vampire narratives like *Carmilla*. As the relationships depicted in both *Der Skorpion* and *Die beiden Freundinnen und ihr Giftmord* develop from affection into sexual intimacy, the power balance begins to equalise. This shift undermines the roles, subject positions and identities initially established between their respective lesbian couples, subverting these stereotypical normative relationship models that are reliant on dominant and submissive partners. In doing so, the sapphic subject assumes the role and identity initially ascribed to her lover. In both narratives, the recognition of lesbian sexuality is portrayed as pivotal in the erosion of individual identity. In keeping with Auerbach's notion of the psychic vampire metaphor, most notably the transgression of boundaries between the self and other in both a physical and ideological sense, the fixed notions of individual identity and established positions break down as the respective romantic relationships develop. In *Der Skorpion*, Mette describes herself as 'empty vessel' that was reliant on Olga to 'give her content' and subsequently a sense of selfhood, reflecting the notion of psychic vampirism, and especially the appropriation of identity.⁷⁸ In this respect, the chosen modern narratives establish a connection between lesbian love and parasitic desire reminiscent of the vampiric model established by Coleridge and Le Fanu. In breaking down the boundaries

⁷⁸ Weirauch, *Skorpion III*, p. 316.

of their individual identities and appropriating that of their lover, Döblin and Weirauch's respective protagonists and their complex sapphic self-conceptualisation can be helpfully illuminated by Auerbach's idea of the psychic vampire.

By assuming the characteristics and behaviours associated with the other, the sapphic subject challenges the established notion of a stable, distinct sense of selfhood. The appropriation of identity linked with vampiric desire also leads to the recognition of characteristics typically associated with the other within the self. However, in my chosen twentieth-century depictions of lesbian desire, the psychic vampire metaphor implies a merging, rather than a mere appropriation of identity. The subsequent acknowledgment of the stranger within, therefore, reflects internalised anxieties regarding the notion of a stable sapphic selfhood. As the narratives unfold, the original identity of the young protagonists and the conceptualisation of the self, constructed on the characteristics of the other women, become enmeshed. The complex commingling of the self and other in vampiric depictions of sapphic sexuality, such as *Carmilla* and *Nightwood*, allude to the characteristic oneness of lesbian attachments, which threaten to erase individual identity and the established perception of selfhood. The stereotypical phenomenon typically associated with lesbian relationships, dubbed the 'urge to merge' in the contemporary context, has been well-documented in both psychological and cultural discourse.⁷⁹ This symbiosis or merging of identities in lesbian relationships emphasises the self-destructive potential of sapphic sexuality. It is the foregrounding of the parasitic interdependency that differentiates the modern, realist adaptations of the vampiric lesbian figure from her traditional fantastic, blood-sucking precedents. These twentieth-century narratives imply that the destructive potential of

⁷⁹ For greater discussion of the urge to merge and the contemporary 'U-Haul lesbian' stereotype, see Liahna E. Gordon, 'Bringing the U-Haul: Embracing and Resisting Sexual Stereotypes in a Lesbian Community', *Sexualities*, 9 (2006), 171–92 <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1363460706063118>>.

sapphic sexuality stems from this interdependent desire and the subsequent merging of identities. The internalised anxiety associated with the modern sapphic Gothic vampiric narrative centres on this oneness and the self-shattering recognition of the sapphic stranger within the self.

II. Strolling the Sapphic Streets: Reimagining the Vampiric Figure in the Modern City Space

Although the modern, realist texts written by Döblin and Weirauch bear little resemblance to the fantastic Romantic Gothic bloodthirsty revenant, the notion of a vampiric figure that may only act upon his or her desires by night, still provided a productive means of depicting the sapphic subject in a modern context. Increased social mobility and urban movement for a certain class of women following the First World War afforded some lesbians the opportunity to explore their sexuality in the public realm, as well as behind closed doors in the domestic, private space, at least to an extent. The opening of *Damenklubs* in gay districts like Berlin's Nollendorfplatz, such as *Violetta* on Bülowstraße and *Verona-Diele* on Kleiststraße, afforded lesbians the relative freedom to act on their desires in a safe, sapphic space –if only by night.⁸⁰ Palmer notes that the association of the vampire with the twilight period 'is pertinent in metaphoric terms to the closeted lesbian, who having concealed her sexual orientation during the day, emerges at night to seek romance in the half-lit world of clubs and bars.'⁸¹ This affinity toward the vampiric figure, which is relegated to the urban underworld in

⁸⁰ Other notable Berlin sapphic spaces during the interwar period included the *Skorpion* club at Alexanderplatz, allegedly named after Weirauch's novel, as well as late-night favourite *Le Garconne*, owned by Susi Wanowski the former wife of Berlin's Chief of Police and lover of infamous dancer and actress Anita Berber. For further discussion of the city's lesbian *Lokale* see Adele Meyer's reworked contemporary version of Ruth Margarete Roellig's 1928 guide *Berlins Lesbische Frauen*, entitled *Lila Nächte: Die Damenklubs der Zwanziger Jahre* (Köln: Zitronenpresse, 1981).

⁸¹ Palmer, *Lesbian Gothic*, p. 102.

public or required to keep her deviant desires concealed in the domestic space, can also provide an insight into the double existence of lesbians in interwar Germany. As with the vampire, the normative outward appearance of the sapphic subject is at odds with the deviant and dangerous desires that lie beneath. This association of the closeted lesbian with the vampiric night stalker, or wanderer, engenders fear predominantly because it presents a threat to the traditional, unified notion of a stable self.

The Gothic wanderer or vagabond motif has long been appropriated and modified in traditional vampire narratives, owing to the wanderer's marginal status in society and transgression of borders and boundaries. Bram Dijkstra posits the wanderer's 'near-vampire' status, situating Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer* as a vampiric Gothic narrative, alongside Polidori's *The Vampyre* and Malcolm James Rhymer's penny dreadful *Varney the Vampire* (1847).⁸² Polidori's narrative provided a significant precedent for the modern depiction of the vampiric figure, positioning the protagonist as a 'complex blending of the vampire character with many of the stock motifs of the Gothic wanderer figure.'⁸³ The wanderer has also been linked with vampiric transgression and non-normative desire in the popular contemporary narratives, such as Stephanie Meyer's *The Host* (2010), which features a parasitic alien protagonist named Wanderer, and most notably Anne Rice's *The Vampire Chronicles* (1976-2003). Rice's vampire Armand is depicted in these terms throughout the series. The association with the vagabond is strengthened during homoerotic exchanges, such as his reunion with his maker Marius, who is described as kissing 'Armand's lips, and his

⁸² Bram Dijkstra, *Idols of Perversity: Fantasies of Feminine Evil in Fin-de-Siècle Culture* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 341.

⁸³ Tyler R. Tichelaar, *The Gothic Wanderer: From Transgression to Redemption, Gothic Literature from 1794 - Present* (Modern History Press, 2012), p. 247.

long loose vagabond hair.’⁸⁴ Moreover, in *The Vampire Armand* (1998) the allure of Lestat is described in romanticised terms by the eponymous narrator as a ‘vagabond’, a ‘wanderer’ and an ‘Oscar Wildean fantasy.’⁸⁵ Since the nineteenth century, the vampiric Gothic wanderer has provided a useful motif for the articulation of anxieties surrounding the transgressive other within society. During the interwar period the wandering vampiric figure enabled the depiction of homosexuality in the city space, owing to its association with urban movements, transgression of boundaries (both geographical and social) and established homoerotic connotation. Keith Tester likens the urban wanderer to the parasitic monster, posing the question ‘could it be that the flâneur is rather like the metropolitan vampire – a domesticated variant of the figure popularized by Stoker?’⁸⁶ Additionally, Avril Horner and Sue Zlosnik outline the status of the *flâneur* as ‘a distinctive modernist figure’ but also as a motif that evokes ‘Gothic resonances of monstrosity and vampirism.’⁸⁷ They allude to the interior emptiness of the urban stroller, noting that ‘haunted by a sense of dissatisfaction and of incompleteness which compels him to look for fulfilment outside himself, he gazes upon and interacts with the city space.’⁸⁸ The *flâneur*, like the vampire, is an ‘utterly empty’ vessel ‘wait[ing] to be filled,’ devoid of a sense of autonomous selfhood and reliant on the urban environment to provide an impression of purpose or self.⁸⁹ The *flâneur* can be read as a vampiric figure in so far as he, or she, consumes the essence of the city, commingling it with his, or her, own identity. Parsons notes that ‘*Flânerie* can thus be

⁸⁴ Anne Rice, *The Queen of the Damned* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1997), p. 269.

⁸⁵ Anne Rice, *The Vampire Armand* (London: Arrow Books, 1999), p. 370.

⁸⁶ Keith Tester, ‘Introduction’, in *The Flâneur*, ed. by Keith Tester (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), pp. 1–21 (p. 19).

⁸⁷ Avril Horner and Sue Zlosnik, ‘Strolling in the Dark: Gothic Flânerie in Djuna Barnes’s *Nightwood*’, in *Gothic Modernisms*, ed. by Andrew Smith and Jeff Wallace (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), pp. 78–94 (p. 78).

⁸⁸ Horner and Zlosnik, p. 87.

⁸⁹ Tester, p. 7.

interpreted as an attempt to identify and place the self in the uncertain environment of modernity.’⁹⁰

The vampiric urban wanderer, and especially the *flâneur*, has typically been considered a problematic motif for the representation of female experience, owing to its traditionally masculine associations. Both Griselda Pollock and Janet Wolff argue that the prospect of the female *flâneur* or *flâneuse* is simply not possible, owing to the relative public invisibility of women in nineteenth-century society. Pollock notes that the majority of women were denied access to urban, or public, spaces, as they were ‘supposed to occupy the domestic space alone.’⁹¹ Similarly, Wolff maintains that the ‘public world of work, city life, bars, and cafes was barred to the respectable woman.’⁹² However, Deborah Parsons argues that ‘Wolff and Pollock both overlook the *flâneur*’s inherent contradictions, perhaps as a result of their tendency to blur historical actuality with its use as a cultural, critical phenomenon.’⁹³ Moreover, the female urban wanderer was unlikely to be categorised as a ‘respectable woman,’ even by the fairly liberal standards of 1920s Berlin, owing to her rejection of domestic space and the roles it dictated. The purpose of my analysis is not to bemoan the lack of a female *flâneur* or to correct any gender disparities in critical theory surrounding the urban wanderer, but rather to examine the appropriation and modification of the figure in German interwar lesbian narratives. At the turn of the century, the female stroller was a transgressive figure, crossing the boundaries between the public and private, or urban and domestic spaces. Elizabeth Wilson notes that ‘with the intensification of the public/private divide

⁹⁰ Deborah L. Parsons, *Streetwalking the Metropolis: Women, the City and Modernity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 41.

⁹¹ Griselda Pollock, *Vision and Difference: Femininity, Feminism and Histories of Art* (London: Routledge, 1988), p. 95.

⁹² Janet Wolff, *Feminine Sentences: Essays on Women and Culture* (University of California Press, 1990), p. 58.

⁹³ Parsons, p. 5.

in the industrial period, the presence of women on the streets and in public places of entertainment caused enormous anxiety.⁹⁴ The female figure that dared to traverse the urban environment engendered fears surrounding both female and non-normative sexuality:

The androgynous woman, the lesbian, the prostitute, the childless woman, all indicate new fears and new possibilities, raising questions – even if they do not provide answers – as to the eroticization of life in the metropolis.⁹⁵

The urban landscape was home to a glut of temptations, immoral behaviours and forbidden sexualities, threatening heteronormative family ideals and established moral boundaries. It is, therefore, unsurprising that the female urban wanderer in literary representations of the city was typically depicted as a gothicised figure, both a product and source of urban Gothic anxiety.

Virginia Woolf considers the experience of the female wanderer in her essay 'Street Haunting: A London Adventure' (1930). Her perception of urban movement is closely linked with the practice of writing, as her subject traverses the city streets under the guise of purchasing a pencil, as 'it can become supremely desirable to possess one.' She clarifies that 'when the desire comes upon us to go street rambling, the pencil does for a pretext.'⁹⁶ This essay provides an insight into the interwar female experience of urban life, outlining the centrality of both wandering and writing to articulating, and acting on, previously forbidden desires. Woolf's use of the term 'haunting' in the title implies the marginality, even detachment, of women from the traditionally masculine realm of city life. It also suggests a return of repressed desires, facilitated by the urban environment, as well as a transgression of established boundaries. This notion of street

⁹⁴ Elizabeth Wilson, 'The Invisible Flâneur', *New Left Review*, I, 191 (1992), 90–110 (p. 90).

⁹⁵ Wilson, p. 106.

⁹⁶ Virginia Woolf, *Street Haunting* (Toronto: Penguin Group Canada, 2005), p. 1.

haunting is particularly relevant in relation to the sapphic subject, owing to the common association of lesbianism with spectrality. The lesbian appropriation and reimagining of the *flâneur* contributes to a gothicised urban aesthetic, challenging the traditional androcentric perspective of the city.⁹⁷ Literary portrayals of the lesbian wanderer provide a unique insight into the ways in which the sapphic subject experienced modern city life and negotiated the place of the sapphic self in the early twentieth-century urban environment. The gothicised sapphic stroller can provide a critical understanding into how lesbian self-conceptualisation was shaped by marginality and the modern urban experience during the early twentieth century.

Both the Gothic wanderer and the vampire carry connotations of difference. Throughout the first volume of *Der Skorpion*, Olga Radó is positioned as a transgressive, marginal wanderer, characterised by her *Wanderlust* and parasitic interdependence on her younger companion Mette. She embodies the 'defining principles' of the *flâneur*, such as her 'freedom from financial/familial responsibility', movement in 'aesthetic circles', 'fascination with womanhood' despite her (initial) detachment from sexual relationships, and especially her 'position of isolated marginality.'⁹⁸ With this in mind, Simmel's notion of the social outsider, especially *Fremde* (strangers), can also provide a productive point of comparison for Weirauch's depiction of Olga. Although he neglects to consider the marginal position of the lesbian, his analyses of urban outsiders can

⁹⁷ Through the process of appropriation and modification for an interwar sapphic context, the original male identity of the *flâneur* is arguably rendered comparatively insignificant. If anything the appropriation of a traditionally male figure is in keeping with sexological stereotypes of lesbians trying to fulfil typically masculine roles within society. The figure of the *flâneur* in a modern lesbian context can be considered as a reimagining of the Benjaminian marginal urban wanderer, which emphasises the characteristics of wandering (both physical and metaphysical), anomie and marginality depicted in Weirauch's narrative and Barnes' *Nightwood*, rather than gender roles.

⁹⁸ Parsons, p. 17.

usefully illuminate the portrayal of sapphic identity in Weirauch's novel.⁹⁹ Olga is characterised throughout by her difference and positioned as a marginal, foreign outsider despite her initial familial welcome in Berlin. This notion of acceptance and belonging, however, is short-lived:

Später [...] war in Frau Konsul Möbius' Gedächtnis jede Erinnerungen einer Verwandtschaft völlig erloschen. Ihr Schwager, der Mann ihrer verstorbenen Schwester, hatte eine Preßburgerin geheiratet, diese hatte einen Vetter in Budapest, der eine Schwester der Olga Radó zur Frau hatte...oder so ähnlich.¹⁰⁰

Olga's difference and position as an outsider is established from the initial description, referencing her Hungarian heritage in Pressburg and Budapest. Following the revelation of her scandalous relationship with Mette, any recollection of this kinship is erased and the family attempt to distance themselves from her, further contributing to her marginal status. The statement 'Als Olga damals in Berlin auftauchte und alle Welt von ihr begeistert war, hieß es immer »Unsere Cousine«'¹⁰¹ when contrasted with the damaging descriptions of her as a 'kriminelle Hochstaplerin' (criminal imposter, p. 30) implies the fleeting and fickle nature of this social acceptance. Also, the repeated use of her Hungarian family name throughout the narrative connotes her difference, as Radó is even linguistically conspicuous by the presence of the acute accent not found in the

⁹⁹ My analysis engages Simmel's concept of the urban character, rather than his rather problematic binary approach to gender, which equates femininity with a 'subjectivity' that cannot ultimately be reconciled with the dominant, masculine 'objective' culture. For a more in-depth discussion of Simmel's theories of gender, see Dorothy Rowe, *Representing Berlin: Sexuality and the City in Imperial and Weimar Germany* (Aldershot ; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2003), pp. 63–80.

¹⁰⁰ Anna Elisabet Weirauch, *Der Skorpion: Roman* (Berlin and Frankfurt am Main: Ullstein Verlag, 1993), p. 30. All further references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the body of the text. Translation: 'Later any recollection of that kinship was completely effaced from Frau Möbius' memory. Her brother-in-law, her dead sister's husband, had married a girl from Pressburg, who had a cousin in Budapest that was married to Olga Radó's sister...or something to that effect.'

¹⁰¹ 'At the time, when Olga appeared in Berlin and the whole world was taken with her, it was always "our cousin."'

German alphabet. Parsons notes the significance of foreign origins in positioning of the wanderer as a figure of difference:

[T]he wanderer never escapes completely from the cultural system of his origins (be it class, gender, or national identity); the expatriate is identified by his different homeland, the Jew is categorised by his racial difference.¹⁰²

Like the traditional Gothic wanderer figure, Olga's ethnic difference and inability to belong in established family and social structures are connoted through her foreignness. Accordingly, her rented room is positioned in a marginal, queer space on Motzstraße, in the heart of Nollendorfplatz (Berlin's gay district), further positions her as a social outsider. Her marginal status and difference, which situates her as an outsider, also becomes a visual signifier for her difference in terms of sexuality.

The marginal and restless parasitic figure of the *Vagabund* can also be useful in reading Weirauch's portrayal of lesbian identity in *Der Skorpion*. According to Simmel, the figure is characterised by perpetual drifting and proclivity towards mobility.¹⁰³ Owing to its characteristic wandering, transgression of boundaries and tendency to lurk on the margins of settled society, the vagabond can be read as a gothicised motif. The depiction of Olga Radó can certainly be read in this light. Like the archetypal vagabond, she expresses her internalised restlessness through her relationship with the urban environment, notably through her desire for a continuous change of scenery. Like the urban wanderer, Olga displays a 'desire to escape the confines of the domestic environment, coupled with wanderlust expressed through forays into the city, or further afield in foreign travel.'¹⁰⁴ Mette is initially distressed by Olga's unannounced

¹⁰² Parsons, p. 14.

¹⁰³ Georg Simmel, 'Soziologie des Raumes', *Jahrbuch für Gesetzgebung, Verwaltung und Volkswirtschaft im Deutschen Reich*, 27 (1903), 27–71. Available at: <http://socio.ch/sim/verschiedenes/1903/raum.htm> [Last accessed: 12.12.2013].

¹⁰⁴ Parsons, p. 27.

excursions, largely owing to her fear of abandonment, until their mutual friend Peterchen emphasises their spontaneity. He describes how she had leafed through his *Kursbuch* (railway guide) and picked a destination, before leaving in secret (p. 79). This tendency to disappear when threatened is in keeping with the image of the vagabond. Rowe notes the 'exposed and vulnerable position' of the vagabond in her analysis of Simmel's theory, stating that the vagabond or traveller is 'open to hostile attack from those who regard him as a restless parasite.'¹⁰⁵ Throughout the narrative, Olga is situated as a marginal and restless figure, open and vulnerable to hostile threats and blackmail by Mette's family, who regard her as a dangerous, influential presence. Her positioning as a restless wanderer, perceived as a parasitic threat by others that do not understand her love for Mette, is reminiscent of the misunderstanding of the vampire in Le Fanu's novella. As in *Carmilla*, the patriarchal authorities in Weirauch's novel, represented by her uncle and the professor, condemn her older lover's morally corrupt and criminal influence (p. 135), despite Mette's reciprocated desire and unencouraged pursuit of her. Despite the mutual love and affection, Olga is exposed to the condemnation and blackmail by her younger companion's family, who blame her for Mette's transgressive behaviour. Weirauch's depiction of this vulnerability affords an insight into the hostility faced by the lesbian subject, which contributes to the ambivalent conceptualisation of sapphic sexuality.

In a superficial sense, Olga does hold some degree of influence, but only in so far as she unwittingly engenders a sexual awakening of sorts in Mette, who becomes infatuated with her. Following her recognition of this desire after their initial meeting, Mette begins to mirror her object of affection's behaviour, especially her proclivity for wandering:

¹⁰⁵ Rowe, p. 77.

Dann kamen dringende Besorgungen, die einen gezwungenermaßen in die Motzstraße führten. Und wenn man an dem Haus vorüber mußte, war es natürlich, daß man ein wenig langsamer ging, zu den Fenstern hinauf sah, die Straße entlang spähte (p. 54).¹⁰⁶

She begins to stroll along Olga's street, attempting to catch a glimpse of her and to create an opportunity to cross paths. Significantly, it is Mette's compulsive wanderings in the urban environment that enable the first meeting the pair share alone, which takes place on Motzstraße. As the bond between them intensifies, Mette increasingly begins to adopt Olga's *Wanderlust* (p. 80). Her restless desire to travel later comes into fruition in the form of their excursions and wanderings together around Berlin (p. 114). Their shared desire to travel as an escape from the domestic reality is in keeping with Sally Munt's notion of the lesbian *flâneur*, as 'the lesbian voyager's imagination is freed from cultural constraints to wander at will, for in this Sapphic paradise all temporal and spatial barriers are excised.'¹⁰⁷ This association of the sapphic subject with the restless vagabond or wanderer, especially owing to her desire to escape the confines of the domestic reality, can be especially useful in deciphering the complex conceptualisation of sapphic selfhood in modern lesbian narratives like *Die beiden Freundinnen und ihr Giftmord*.

As in *Der Skorpion*, the centrality of mobility and urban wandering in Döblin's parasitic depiction of sapphic sexuality is immediately clear. The end focus on the metropolis in the opening sentence 'die hübsche blonde Elli Link kam 1918 nach Berlin' conveys the significance of the urban setting in the narrative.¹⁰⁸ In her brief analysis of

¹⁰⁶ 'Then urgent errands would arise that compelled one to go to Motzstraße and since one had to pass the house, it was natural to walk a little slower, gaze up at the windows and peer along the street.'

¹⁰⁷ Sally Munt, *Heroic Desire: Lesbian Identity and Cultural Space* (London and Washington: Cassell, 1998), p. 37.

¹⁰⁸ Alfred Döblin, *Die beiden Freundinnen und ihr Giftmord* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Verlag, 2013), p. 7. All further references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the body of the text. Translation: 'In 1918, the pretty blond Elli Link came to Berlin.'

Döblin's account, Sutton notes the importance of the city environment in the depiction of sapphic sexuality:

[T]he lesbian is depicted as a perverse and even pathologized figure, whose lack of sexual morality and disrespect for patriarchal legal and relationship structures is firmly located within the boundaries of the metropolis.¹⁰⁹

She maintains that 'it is no accident that the murderous masculine lesbian is situated firmly within the metropolis,' owing to its typical associations with crime, perversion and degeneracy.¹¹⁰ Döblin's portrayal of sapphic sexuality emphasises the shift between urban and domestic spaces. Reflecting the transgressive nature of the urban stroller, the women cross the public/private boundaries by articulating their desire in the form of written correspondence, but also by exchanging their letters on the city streets. In keeping with the connection between writing and wandering posited in Woolf's 'Street Haunting,' Elli and Grete's exchange of love letters is described in imagery pertaining to urban movement and mobility. Their letters are described as 'ein großer Schritt auf dem Weg zu neuen Heimlichkeiten (p. 21)'.¹¹¹ Additionally, the lovers are only able to meet 'im Husch auf der Straße (p. 26) for fear of being caught by their husbands.¹¹² Despite the brevity of these exchanges, their excursions enable an escape from the confines of the domestic space and its prescribed roles. By rejecting the domestic in favour of the urban environment, the lesbian subject is depicted as a transgressive figure with a disregard for established boundaries and the social order.

In Döblin's account, the city is depicted as a sapphic space and an alternative to the domestic reality, which facilitates the expression of lesbian desire. His protagonists'

¹⁰⁹ Katie Sutton, 'Bridging the Rural/Urban Divide: Representations of Queer Female Experience in 1920s Germany', in *From Weimar to Christiana: German and Scandinavian Studies in Context*, ed. by Florence Feiereisen and Kyle Frackman (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007), pp. 37–53 (p. 45).

¹¹⁰ Sutton, 'Bridging the Rural/Urban Divide', p. 46.

¹¹¹ 'The letters were a great step on the path to new secrets.'

¹¹² 'Fleetingly on the street.'

urban excursions, which enable their exchange of love letters, afford them the freedom to articulate their feelings for one another. The bond between the pair grows and intensifies on the streets of Berlin, where their risky communication takes place:

Das gefährliche Briefschreiben, das die Gefühle übersteigerte, nahm zu: es war schon eine Flucht vor den Männern, ein ideales Zusammenleben ohne Männer. Sie gaben sich selbst die Briefe auf der Straße (p. 26).¹¹³

The intense bond between the two women is established and cultivated during their wanderings in the urban environment, thereby rejecting the heteronormative ideal of the domestic space as the site for ‘an ideal coexistence.’ Their excursions and subsequent dangerous exchange of letters on the streets, which only intensifies their desire, allow them to transcend the confines of their domestic roles. The use of the verb *übersteigern*, which carries connotations of excess and overreaching, implies the notion of pushing boundaries too far. Like the sprawling modern urban environment, which cannot be easily contained or limited by borders, lesbian desire is conveyed as excessive and abject. This association between the city environment and deviant self-conceptualisation is evident in Döblin’s urban narratives, including his influential novel *Berlin Alexanderplatz* (1929). This ‘dark’ and ‘symbiotic’ relationship between the city and its transgressive inhabitants is outlined in the Epilogue of *Die beiden Freundinnen und ihr Giftmord*:

Die Menschen stehen mit anderen und auch mit anderen Wesen in Symbiose. Berühren sich, nähern sich, wachsen aneinander. Dies ist schon eine Realität: die Symbiose mit den anderen und auch mit den Wohnungen, Häusern, Straßen, Plätzen. Dies ist mir eine sichere, wenn auch dunkle Wahrheit (74).¹¹⁴

¹¹³ ‘The dangerous letter-writing, which over intensified the feelings, increased: it was really an escape from the men, an ideal coexistence without men. They gave the letters to each other on the street.’

¹¹⁴ ‘People form a symbiotic relationship with others and with other entities, touching each other, drawing nearer and growing together. This is already a reality: the symbiosis with others and also with dwellings, houses, streets and places. This to me is a certain, if also dark, truth.’

With this in mind, Döblin implies that the urban environment facilitates the union between Elli and Grete. The permeability and transgression of boundaries is significant in the portrayal of deviant or non-normative sexuality as an overspill of urban life, emphasised by the close connection between the individual psyche, the other figure and their surroundings. In his depiction of their developing romance, the urban wanderings are credited with facilitating, and even intensifying, the characters' dangerous desires. Their street exchanges enable the protagonists' recognition and articulation of their sapphic sexuality, as well as the development of their excessively close, symbiotic relationship, which transgresses the boundaries of the accepted domestic roles assigned to them.

III. Mummy Issues: The Maternal Homoerotic and the Vampire in the Home

In *Die beiden Freundinnen und ihr Giftmord*, the relationship between Elli and Grete not only transgresses the boundaries associated with the traditional domestic role through their rejection of the family home, but also in the subversion of traditional family structures. As in 'Christabel' and *Carmilla*, the older lover Grete is situated as a maternal figure to Elli despite the relatively minimal age difference. The initial description of Grete begins, 'sie war drei Jahre älter als Elli, 25 Jahre alt'¹¹⁵ (p. 17), foregrounding her age and situating her as the older, more experienced woman. In this respect, Döblin's initial depiction of her seems to be in keeping with the predatory, parasitic image of the lesbian that was commonplace in sexological discourse of the period. It is implied that she notices and preys on Elli's distress and childlike manner, evident by the statement 'Die Bende hatte das bekümmerte Wesen Ellis bemerkt, aber noch mehr ihre kindliche

¹¹⁵ 'She was three years older than Elli, 25 years old.'

Art, die zierliche Figur, den blonden Wuschelkopf (p. 17).¹¹⁶ The constant reiteration of Elli's naivety and childlike innocence, such as her 'lustige bubenhafte Art' (p. 18)¹¹⁷ and 'kindliche Konstitution' (p. 62), seemingly reaffirm Grete's apparent position as the predatory, vampiric figure that preys on her innocent victim, inflicting her deviant desires upon her.¹¹⁸ However, I would argue that Grete is depicted rather more as a protective, caring presence rather than a predatory figure, therefore complicating this stereotypical reading. Moreover, typical of the model for vampiric lesbian desire outlined by Palmer, Döblin positions the older lover in a nurturing, motherly role over her younger object of desire.

As in Coleridge's vampiric precedent for the depiction of sapphic sexuality, Döblin establishes a clear link between maternal and lesbian love throughout the narrative. Grete initially assumes a maternal role, as she is compelled by a desire to nurture and protect Elli from her abusive husband, evident by her justification 'Man müßte Elli, das Kind, von diesem schlechten Mann, dem Schuft, der sie schlug und der solche Frau gar nicht verdiente, befreien (p. 20-1)'.¹¹⁹ In a scene, reminiscent of Geraldine's motherly embrace in 'Christabel,' Döblin outlines Grete's maternal tenderness toward Elli:

Es war etwas von der Einhüllung des Kindes durch die Mutter. [...] Aber die leidenschaftliche, von überschüssigen Gefühlen getriebene Freundin sprach ihr

¹¹⁶ 'Bende had noticed Elli's distressed nature, and her childlike manner, petite figure and blond mop of curls even more.'

¹¹⁷ 'Then Elli came along, the playful little person with the funny, boyish manner.'

¹¹⁸ The descriptions of Elli's boyish characteristics, which are repeated throughout the narrative, are also in keeping with sexological stereotypes about lesbians and perceived visual signifiers of sapphic sexuality.

¹¹⁹ 'Elli, the child, ought to be freed from this bad man, the villain that hit her and did not deserve such a woman.'

zu, drückte ihr die Hand, hielt sie so an sich. Solche lockende Zartheit hatte Elli – sie musste es sich gestehen – noch nie kennengelernt (p. 22).¹²⁰

The swaddling image suggests that the older lover becomes not only a maternal presence but also a substitute source of love and affection for Elli, therefore blurring the boundaries between familial and erotic love. Nevertheless, the scene traditionally associated with comfort is also depicted as potentially suffocating. As in Coleridge's poem, the motivation behind the motherly embrace is implied to be potentially harmful:

And lo! The worker of these harms
That holds the maiden in her arms,
Seems to slumber still and mild,
As a mother with her child. (ll. 298-301)¹²¹

In both narratives, the maternal homoerotic desire is depicted as both protective and potentially destructive. Far from a selfless act of protection, Döblin emphasises that Grete's urge to protect her lover does not stem from a purely parental desire to defend, but rather from her own 'excessive emotions.' However, significantly Elli finds her companion's attentions alluring and reciprocates her love. Despite the implied dubious motivation behind the maternal behaviour, the supposedly innocent younger recipients of this dangerous desire reciprocate the affections of their older lovers, therefore challenging the established stereotype of the older lesbian as a threatening, predatory presence.

Döblin further situates Grete as a dominant, maternal presence for Elli by directly positioning her younger lover as her child, particularly as the love between the

¹²⁰ 'It was reminiscent of a mother wrapping up a child. But the passionate friend, driven by excessive emotions, encouraged her, squeezed her hand and held onto her in that fashion. Elli had to admit that she had never known such an alluring tenderness.'

¹²¹ Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 'Christabel', in *Samuel Taylor Coleridge - The Major Works*, ed. by H. J. Jackson, Reprint edition (Oxford and New York: Oxford Paperbacks, 2008), pp. 68–86 (p. 77). All further line references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the body of the text.

pair begins to intensify. This transgression of the accepted the maternal role can be usefully illuminated by the maternal homoerotic desire portrayed by the likes of Coleridge and Le Fanu in earlier Gothic precedents. As in 'Christabel' and *Carmilla*, the replication of the maternal bond reinforces the mother/daughter dynamic between the pair. Grete models her relationship with Elli on her own relationship with her mother, as her desired object is described as her child:

Hier musste Grete trösten, zustimmen, aufrichten. Das löste sie etwas von ihrer Mutter; zugleich zeigte sie sich als echtes Kind ihrer Mutter, indem sie deren Rolle spielte. Sie zog Elli an sich. Die war ihr Trost, Ersatz für den schlechten Mann, den sie nicht festhalten konnte. Im Gefühl für Elli versteckte sich die Bende, hüllte sich warm ein, wie sie es brauchte. Die Link musste man schützen, sie brauchte Hilfe. Sie wollte sie ihr geben. Die Link war ihr Kind (p. 19).¹²²

Döblin also situates Grete's extremely close and implicitly interdependent relationship with her own mother, which is referred to throughout the narrative, as a model for the bond she establishes with Elli. She takes on the role not just of a mother, but of her own mother, implying the parasitic, possessive and incestuous nature of her desire. This direct transgression of the accepted familial bond is reminiscent of the incestuous bond that develops in Le Fanu's *Carmilla*, as it is revealed that Laura and her vampiric lover are both 'descended from the Karnsteins' through their maternal bloodline (p. 273). Grete's mimicry of her mother also suggests the subversive reliance on accepted models for relationships between women, in order to articulate her desire for Elli. Additionally, the end-focus of the statement 'die Link war ihr Kind' emphasises the use of the possessive determiner, therefore conveying her sense of ownership of the object of her desire. This assertion of possession is repeated throughout the narrative.

¹²² 'Here Grete had to comfort, commiserate, support. This detached her somewhat from her mother; at the same time, she showed herself to truly be her mother's daughter by playing her role. She drew Elli in to her. She was her solace, substitute for the bad man, whom she could not hold onto. Bende hid herself in her feeling for Elli, wrapped up warmly, as she needed. Link needed protecting, she needed help. She wanted to give her that. Link was her child.'

In his analysis of the vampiric maternal attachment in *Carmilla*, Victor Sage notes the association between lesbian seduction and possession as evidence of the sapphic subject's longing for 'another half.'¹²³ This idea of possession challenges the stereotypical assumption of the predatory, dominant older lesbian, suggesting a rather more complex relationship dynamic in these vampiric depictions of sapphic sexuality. As in Le Fanu's portrayal of lesbian love, Grete's desire to possess her lover, which stems from her own need for love and affection, implies that the relationship is rather more interdependent than the mother/daughter model may initially suggest. As their relationship develops, the balance of power shifts and the initially dominant Grete becomes equally reliant on her feeling for Elli for warmth and love:

Anfangs war Elli ihr Kind gewesen, das sie beschützen musste. Jetzt bewunderte sie die kleine entschlossene Aktive. Sie schob sie ganz in die Rolle eines Mannes hinein. Dieser Mann liebte sie, dieser ließ sich von ihr lieben (p. 24-5).¹²⁴

By expressing her admiration and situating Elli in the dominant masculine role, the parasitic and dependent nature of Grete's desire becomes increasingly apparent. Also, the transformation of Elli from a passive innocent to an active, dominant masculinised figure with murderous tendencies is certainly reminiscent of a vampiric transformation. By establishing this maternal homoerotic bond and assuming the masculine role, the vampiric lesbian other intrudes on the domestic space. In doing so, she transgresses the boundaries of acceptable relationships with women and threatens the heteronormative family ideal. However, it is implied that her motivation for doing so stems from the inability of these established social structures to provide the comfort and affection that

¹²³ Victor Sage, *Le Fanu's Gothic: The Rhetoric of Darkness* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p. 178.

¹²⁴ 'At the beginning, Elli had been her child, whom she had to protect. Now she admired the small, resolute active woman. She completely pushed her into the role of a man. This man loved her and allowed her to love her.'

she craves, inviting a somewhat more understanding and sympathetic reading of the sapphic subject.

As in Döblin's narrative, the intense, interdependent maternal homoerotic attachment formed between Mette and Olga contributes significantly to Weirauch's conceptualisation of lesbian sexuality. Mette's older lover is cast as a 'pedophilic temptress' in the eyes of those around her to cite Nenno.¹²⁵ The opening description of their relationship seemingly reflects typical sexological rhetoric at the turn of the century, which emphasised the threat of maternal figures of authority to vulnerable, and especially motherless, girls:

Als junges Mädchen lief sie einer merkwürdigen Frau nach, einer Hochstaplerin mit ausgesprochen männlichem Gebaren. Vielleicht verführt von dieser Freundin, von der sie nebenbei späterhin hinausgeworfen wurde – stahl sie im väterlichen Hause das Silberzeug und trug es aufs Leihamt. Nach einem Tobsuchtsanfall, bei dem sie ihre Tante, die treue Pflegerin ihrer mutterlosen Kindheit, erwürgen wollte, wurden sie zu ihrem Onkel nach einer kleinen Stadt gebracht (p. 7-8).¹²⁶

In this account, the reference to Mette's motherless childhood is juxtaposed with the description of the perceived negative influence of her relationship with the older woman. The initial description of their relationship seemingly situates Olga as a detrimentally influential figure, who casts Mette aside after coercing her into immoral and violent behaviour against her own family. However, *Der Skorpion* is particularly significant in challenging the stereotypical image of the predatory older lesbian, especially as the narrative progresses. Despite the negative description of Olga, the foregrounding of the fact that Mette has pursued her undermines this assumption of her predatory, immoral nature. Whilst Weirauch does portray her as an influential figure, I

¹²⁵ Nenno, 'Bildung and Desire: Anna Elisabet Weirauch's *Der Skorpion*', p. 213.

¹²⁶ 'As a young girl, she had pursued a strange woman – a con artist with a decidedly masculine manner. Perhaps misled by this friend, who incidentally later threw her out, she stole the silver service from her father's house and pawned it. After a fit of rage, in which she wanted to strangle her aunt, the true guardian of her motherless childhood, she was taken to her uncle in a small town.'

would argue that situates her as a rather more positive influence on her younger lover than initially implied.

As their relationship develops Weirauch positions Olga as a nurturing and maternal presence, who encourages Mette to learn. During Mette's first visit to her boarding house, a clear hierarchical power relationship is established between the young protagonist and the rather intimidating object of her desire, sat at her diplomat's desk (p. 55). Similarly, the repetition of the affectionate terms *Kind* and *Mädchen* throughout the dialogue not only emphasises her superior knowledge and age, but also situates Olga as a maternal figure. Additionally, her informal offer of history, and later formal language instruction, overtly places her in a position of authority over her young student. However, she transgresses the accepted boundaries between student and teacher, referring to Mette in an affectionate manner. The linguistic slippages between the uses of *Sie* and *du* (p. 59) during their initial discussion of tuition reflect this transgression of these accepted boundaries. By using terms of endearment throughout the dialogue and omitting the expected formalities of the role, Olga is situated rather more as a figure of maternal authority than pedagogical authority. During the third or fourth lesson Olga even mocks Mette for her overly formal approach, insisting that she address her in the more familiar manner (p. 65). Despite the description of Olga as a 'strict and pedantic' teacher, who encourages the protagonist's passion for learning, the level of familiarity between them certainly transgresses the acceptable boundaries of their ascribed roles. Whilst the repeated reference to Mette's *Feuereifer* (ardour) to impress her teacher suggests Olga's positive influence on her education, the term implies the passion awakened by the latter in her previously apathetic student (p. 59).

Weirauch suggests that the exchange of knowledge facilitates the development of a closer relationship between the two women.

Olga's position as a mother figure becomes more overt as Mette articulates her fear of abandonment by her companion following Olga's desertion of her on their final excursion together. The description 'eine heiße, schmerzhaft Sehnsucht quoll in ihr auf, wie schon sooft [sic], stark wie ein mühsam unterdrückter Schrei: » Mutter! «' (p. 121) emphasises the maternal, as well as the romantic, nature of her desire for Olga.¹²⁷ In this moment of anguish, her desire for her lover becomes inextricably interwoven with her desire for her dead mother, as it is uncertain which maternal presence she refers to in this ambiguous cry. This blurring of the boundaries between mother figure and lover is reminiscent of the depiction of the vampiric lesbian desire in Le Fanu's *Carmilla*, as the embrace of the maternal figure becomes eroticised.¹²⁸ Even following the physical expression of their desire, Olga is still depicted in a maternal role, especially evident during the scene in which she comforts Mette after the death of her father. Her comforting embrace is depicted as simultaneously motherly and romantic, therefore transgressing the acceptable boundaries of the role. The statement 'Olga hob sich auf, zog sie aus wie ein kleines Kind und legte sie ins Bett (p. 194)'¹²⁹ reaffirms her position as a maternal presence, through the reference to Mette as a small child. However, this image of parental nurturing is then juxtaposed with images that are more in keeping with a romantic scene:

Sie verriegelte die Tür, sie stellte die Lampe hinter das Bett, breitete noch einen Seidenschleier über das Licht, ließ den Kimono von den Schultern gleiten – alles

¹²⁷ 'As so often before, a burning, excruciating desire swelled up inside her like a painfully repressed cry: "Mother!"'

¹²⁸ For an in-depth analysis of the vampire as a simultaneously maternal and erotic presence in *Carmilla*, see Sage's *Le Fanu's Gothic*.

¹²⁹ 'Olga lifted her up, undressed her like a little child and laid her in the bed.'

mit einem wehen Lächeln und schweren langsamen Bewegungen, als rüste sie sich zu einem Opfergang. Sie schob den Arm unter Mettens Nacken, breitete die Decke fester über sie, strich ihr das verwirrte Haar aus der Stirn (p. 194).¹³⁰

Through the act of removing her nightgown, along with her own languid movements, Olga once again transgresses the boundaries between the maternal and erotic embrace. The images associated with security, such as the bolted door and tucking Mette into bed, also situate Olga as a protective maternal presence. The danger of transgressing the boundaries between motherly affection and lesbian desire, however, is further emphasised by the reference to sacrifice, seemingly incongruous with the description of this tender scene. Moreover, the image of the locked door also suggests an air of secrecy or concealment, which is consistent with the idea of forbidden or transgressive desire that must be kept from sight. The reference to the harmful potential of the maternal homoerotic embrace, in the statement 'als wollte sie sie in dieser Umarmung ersticken, vernichten, zerstören (p. 196),¹³¹ emphasises the potentially destructive nature of this transgressive desire. By blurring the boundaries of maternal and erotic love within the domestic space, Weirauch builds on the maternal homoerotic model established in Gothic vampire narratives in order to interrogate the role of the sapphic subject within normative social structures in a modern context. However, this reference to the potentially self-annihilating nature of lesbian desire also implies the ambivalence and internalised anxiety that arose from this uncertain subject position.

¹³⁰ 'She bolted the door, placed the lamp behind the bed and also spread silken veil over the light. She let her kimono slip from her shoulders – all with a pained smile and slow, heavy movements, as if she were preparing herself for a sacrifice. She slid her arm under Mette's neck, tucked the covers more securely over her and stroked her dishevelled hair from her forehead.'

¹³¹ 'She entwined her arms around Mette with a sudden movement and pressed her to her, as if she wanted to smother, to annihilate, to destroy her in this embrace.'

IV. Representing the Urge to Merge: Vampiric Desire and the Loss of Sapphic Selfhood

Contrary to traditional Gothic portrayals of lesbianism, which centred on otherness, modern lesbian narratives, such as *Der Skorpion* and *Die beiden Freundinnen und ihr Giftmord*, are deeply concerned with the ambivalent and detrimental self-conceptualisation of sapphic sexuality. In Döblin's novella, the anxiety surrounding sapphic sexuality and selfhood proves not only deadly to others, but also self-destructive. Elli's decision to prove her love for Grete by poisoning her husband seemingly situates the lesbian subject as a dangerous and violent character, once again drawing on the established gothicised vampire metaphor. In this case, the vampiric figure's threat to the patriarchal social order and family values posed by the lesbian relationship becomes literalised in Ella Klein's murder of her husband. Nevertheless, this act of poisoning also emphasises the protagonist's willingness to relinquish her public self and the benefits afforded by conforming to normative ideals. Reminiscent of Weirauch's reference to the self-shattering potential of lesbian love, Elli becomes driven by the compulsion to 'prove' her love for Grete by sacrificing the stability of marriage and the comforts it provides. The protagonist initially is somewhat more ambivalent toward having 'Solche Bindung, solche Hingabe an die Bende' owing to the 'Scham und das Schuldgefühl wegen dieses Verhältnisses' that coursed through her (p. 30).¹³² Nevertheless, fuelled by this insecurity in her sapphic sexuality and selfhood, as well as Grete's fear of abandonment by her companion, Elli becomes consumed with the compulsion to prove her love. She is driven by this incessant urge to evidence her love through action, as she 'dachte nur daran, aktiv zu sein, männlich zu sein, der Freundin

¹³² 'Such a bond, such a devotion to Bende: she did not want that either. Shame and guilt always coursed through her because of this relationship.'

ihre Liebe zu beweisen (p. 25).¹³³ Her promise 'daß ich alles opfern werde, und wenn es mein Leben kostet' (p. 36)¹³⁴ emphasises the destructive and self-annihilating potential of her bond with her lover. In this respect, the *Giftmord*, and her reiterated awareness of its consequence of shattering any illusions of a normative family existence, can also be read as reflecting anxieties about renouncing the conforming, public image of the self in favour of her true sapphic identity.

Döblin's depiction of the *Giftmord* is particularly vampiric, as her husband is slowly and gradually consumed by his corrupted blood.¹³⁵ Karl Link, like his wife, becomes unrecognisable from his former self before Grete's intrusion into their lives. This change is reflected in the protagonist's metamorphosis from passive, innocent girl to active, violent lesbian owing to her alleged corruption by her lover. Elli's poisoning of her husband also reflects her own moral poisoning by Grete, as she succumbs to her deviant desire for 'ein ideales Zusammenleben ohne Männer' (p. 26). In spite of Elli's decisive and calculated action to murder her husband over a prolonged period, in her trial Grete Bende is portrayed as the source and cause of her criminal behaviour. The crime is justified with statements, such as 'sie war der Bende untertan, hörig und wollte ihr den Beweis erbringen, daß ihre Liebe echt sei' (p. 62).¹³⁶ Elli's 'impressionable nature' and 'childlike constitution' are also cited (p. 62), emphasising this alleged lack of individual agency. Whilst Elli may have committed the murder, Döblin suggests that it is Grete that has awakened these deviant and uncharacteristic behaviours in her. During

¹³³ 'She only thought about being active, being manly and proving her love to her friend.'

¹³⁴ 'That I will sacrifice everything and even if it costs me my life.'

¹³⁵ The significance of poisoning and the notion of 'bad blood' is pertinent to any reading of homosexual desire as vampiric and is in keeping with *fin de siècle* discourse equating homosexuality and disease, especially given the preconceptions about moral poisoning. The image of poison is also significant in Mette's early conceptualisation of her sexuality in *Der Skorpion*, as she states that she has been stung by a scorpion and can now only be cured by *Skorpionengift* (a scorpion's poison, p. 143).

¹³⁶ 'She was subject to and a slave to Bende, and wanted to provide her with the proof that her love was true.'

the trial, she is depicted as the overbearing lover, who has driven Elli to eliminate the competition for her love and affection, namely her husband Link. It is implied that Elli is reliant on her older companion in committing this egregious offence against the normative order of society and the institution of marriage. In this respect, the depiction of Grete is certainly in keeping with Auerbach's definition of a twentieth-century psychic vampire in her ability to 'poison friendship and turn love into death.'¹³⁷ However, throughout the narrative the dynamic between the women is rather more complex than the trial portion of the account, based predominantly on stereotypical medico-legal perceptions of lesbianism, may suggest.

Vampiric imagery has often centred on the notion of a parasitic dependence, which originates from the folkloric myth of the revenant's reliance on the blood of their victim to rejuvenate them. Nineteenth-century lesbian vampires, such as Christabel and Carmilla, certainly perpetuate this notion of a parasitic existence through their total dependency on their female lover, or victim. Moreover, Gelder notes the perception of female vampires as 'parasites' to whom their victims are 'fatally attracted.'¹³⁸ The vampiric image of the parasite also provides a useful means of articulating the breakdown of the boundaries between self and other that occur within lesbian relationships. As Elli's desire for Grete develops, especially as it becomes increasingly sexual, she begins to assume the characteristics and behaviours initially attributed to her. This metamorphosis is implied as a direct result of the parasitic closeness of their bond. The admission 'du nur allein weißt, daß ich an dir hänge, wie eine Klette' (p. 34) implies both a physical and emotional dependency on her lover.¹³⁹ It also emphasises

¹³⁷ Auerbach, p. 109.

¹³⁸ Ken Gelder, *Reading the Vampire* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), p. 134.

¹³⁹ 'Only you alone know that I cling to you like a limpet.' Translation note: although the direct translation of *Klette* is burr or burdock, the idiomatic phrase is typically translated with this equivalent idiom.

the secrecy surrounding this close intimacy between the two women. Veronika Fuechtner notes that the simile can 'illustrate the character and intensity of a particular relationship.' She also emphasises the 'destructive psychological dependency' suggested by the image.¹⁴⁰ The image of the *Klette* (burr) is cited directly from a letter from Margarete Nebbe to Ella Klein demonstrating the close, even parasitic nature of her desire. By using Nebbe's original description of her love for Klein, Döblin affords a unique insight into her own inter-reliant conceptualisation of her sapphic sexuality and selfhood.

The use of parasitic imagery reflects the intense and interdependent nature of lesbian desire. As the bond between the women grows closer and more intense, Elli's desire is likened to a polyp in the description 'das Gefühl für die Freundin entwickelte sich in der Tiefe weiter und zog wie ein Polyp andere an sich (p. 23).'¹⁴¹ The description of her feelings toward Grete as developing 'deep down' emphasises her acknowledgment of the dangerous desire within. The likening of her desire for Grete to a polyp, which lures, ensnares and then draws in its prey, emphasises its predatory and parasitic nature. The reference to her desire as a creature, which develops in the murky depths of the ocean, implies the notion of sexuality as something dangerous that lies beneath the surface. Polyps also have a tendency to merge and attach themselves to each other, therefore breaking down the boundaries between them as individual entities. The association of Elli's desire for Grete with the creature, therefore, emphasises its parasitic nature. By situating her lesbian love as a polyp, Döblin implies how the boundaries between the self and other begin to break down upon recognition of this desire.

¹⁴⁰ Veronika Fuechtner, *Berlin Psychoanalytic: Psychoanalysis and Culture in Weimar Republic Germany and Beyond* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2011), p. 52.

¹⁴¹ 'The feeling for her friend further developed deep down and lured others toward her like a polyp.'

The notion of transgressing bodily boundaries is further emphasised by the connection of homosexuality with a contagious illness. Vampiric imagery also proves a productive means of representing the commonplace association of deviant or transgressive desire with infectious disease, as has been outlined by Auerbach and Smith.¹⁴² This widespread nineteenth-century myth regarding homosexuality and its association with degeneration and illness provided the basis for the literary portrayal of same-sex desire, particularly in popular anglophone Gothic literature. A great deal of critical attention has been paid to the association of homoerotic vampiric desire with disease, particularly in relation to male homosexuality. However, the precedent for this association arguably lies in Le Fanu's depiction of Carmilla's 'atrocious lusts' (p. 305) and the worsening of Laura's 'strange illness' (p. 281) as her affection for her vampiric lover develops. Gelder notes that 'the Victorian view of lesbianism conventionally saw it as "unnatural", against Nature; the illness that overtakes Laura and the village nearby is an indication of this.'¹⁴³ The depiction of lesbian love in Döblin's narrative in medicalised terms, particularly relating to illness and contagion, is in keeping with this established association of vampiric homoeroticism with disease. Initially, their growing attraction is likened to a fever, which manifests within Grete and then gradually infects her lover:

Da geriet die Bende rasch in ein süßes Fieber, das mit der Elli zusammenhing.

Ganz allmählich, sehr langsam weckt dieses Fieber ein ähnliches in Elli' (p.

22).¹⁴⁴

¹⁴² For an in-depth discussion of vampirism and contagion, see Auerbach's *Our Vampires, Ourselves* and Andrew Smith, *Victorian Demons: Medicine, Masculinity and the Gothic at the Fin-de-Siècle* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004).

¹⁴³ Gelder, p. 61.

¹⁴⁴ 'Then Bende fell into a sweet fever, associated with Elli. Very gradually, very slowly, this fever awoke a similar one in Elli.'

Just as Link's poisoning is repeatedly associated with *Grippe* (flu) Elli's alleged moral corruption is likened to an illness. Whilst Grete's 'sweet fever' provides a catalyst for the development of Elli's desire, it merely awakens her own latent lesbianism. Döblin's medicalised depiction of female homosexuality suggests that the genesis of the sapphic subject's same-sex desire essentially already lies within. This image of infectious illness, therefore, reflects not only fears regarding widespread pathological presumptions about homosexuality, but also the self-shattering potential of recognising the other within the self.

The vampiric association of homoeroticism and disease is a productive means of articulating anxieties regarding the dangers posed by homosexuality to the individual and society more broadly. This is especially significant in the 1920s context, as many nations, including Germany, had been recently crippled by the Spanish flu pandemic. In Prussia alone, the *Spanische Grippe* had killed nearly nine thousand people at its peak between September 1918 and February 1919.¹⁴⁵ The development of this destructive bond in medicalised terms implies the transgression of bodily boundaries, which is so closely linked with the threat of vampiric desire. The medicalised depiction of sapphic sexuality in Döblin's novella also reflected discourse regarding homosexuality and degeneration that was popularised in the late nineteenth century. The clinical construction of the 'homosexual' monster had begun to haunt Gothic literature by the 1890s.¹⁴⁶ Smith notes that the vampire narrative at the *fin de siècle* embodies the contradictions of contemporary medical debates surrounding degeneracy. He emphasises that although vampirism is depicted as a 'blood disease,' it also appears 'to

¹⁴⁵ Hiroshi Nishiura, 'Time Variations in the Transmissibility of Pandemic Influenza in Prussia, Germany, from 1918-19', *Theoretical biology & medical modelling*, 4 (2007), 20. Available at: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/17547753> [Last accessed: 13.12.2013].

¹⁴⁶ Auerbach, p. 83.

provide an awakening rather than merely functioning like a disease.’¹⁴⁷ Like vampirism, sapphic seduction, it would seem, then merely arouses desires that already exist within the self.

Vampiric seduction has long been associated with the erosion of distinction between the self and the other, as both corporeal and ideological boundaries are transgressed. In the earlier depictions of sapphic seduction in ‘Christabel’ and *Carmilla*, the victim is described in terms of hypnosis, suggesting not only their control or possession by the vampire figure, but also the loss of individual agency. Le Fanu’s vampire has her young lover ‘sooth’ her resistance ‘into a trance,’ from which she is unable to recover (p. 264). This notion of vampiric possession in traditional vampiric depictions of sapphic seduction can also clarify Döblin’s depiction of lesbian desire, both in terms of enchantment or obsession, but also the lovers’ mutual desire to possess one another. The repetition of the possessive determiner throughout the narrative in phrases such as ‘Elli war ganz ihr’ (p. 27) emphasises the notion of ownership or possession over her lover.¹⁴⁸ Additionally, Döblin describes that when ‘[Elli] nach der Freundin griff, wusste sie nur eins: sie brauchte sie, sie wollte sie haben, sie musste sie jetzt haben’ (p. 35).¹⁴⁹ This possessive desire mirrors the earlier description of Grete’s consuming love for Elli, suggesting the mutual interdependency within their relationship. Her destructive desire to possess her lover as an extension of her own self emphasises the erosion of boundaries between self and other. Elli’s rapture (*Entzücken*) reflects Coleridge’s depiction of the eponymous victim’s post-seduction trance in ‘Christabel,’ as the rapturous desire engenders an erotic awakening following their encounter:

¹⁴⁷ Smith, *Victorian Demons*, pp. 34–5.

¹⁴⁸ ‘Elli was entirely hers.’

¹⁴⁹ ‘As she reached for her friend, she knew just one thing: she needed her, she wanted her, she had to have her now.’

The touch, the sight, had passed away,
And in its stead that vision blest,
Which comforted her after-rest
While in the lady's arms she lay,
Had put a rapture in her breast,
And on her lips and o'er her eyes
Spread smiles like light! (ll. 463-9)

The rapturous state, which lingers long after the victim has 'gather[ed] herself from out her trance (l. 312),' implies the awakening of a sexual awareness that is fundamentally rooted in her recognition of her desire for the vampire Geraldine. Her own ambivalent conceptualisation of her sexuality and identity becomes intrinsically linked with that of her vampiric lover, as Christabel begins to take on qualities associated with the vampire. Smith notes that Coleridge 'also has the victim, Christabel, begin to assume some of Geraldine's vampiric characteristics.'¹⁵⁰ In Döblin's narrative, the protagonist begins to reflect Grete's initial behaviour and possessive desire. During her enraptured state, Elli feels as if 'sie nur für die Bende lebe' declaring »Laß es kosten, was es wolle, nur glücklich sein und in Liebe aufgehen« (p. 37).¹⁵¹ Elli's admission that she only lives for Grete alludes to the merging of their individual existences. The use of the verb *aufgehen*, which can mean to merge into or to be absorbed into something, also implies this fusion of the lovers' identities. The modification of the psychic vampire metaphor, and especially the possession motif, conveys their gradual merging of Grete and Elli's identities, ultimately suggesting a loss of selfhood.

¹⁵⁰ Smith, *Gothic Literature*, p. 210.

¹⁵¹ 'She was often in a state of rapture and in this rapture, she found that she only lived for Bende: "Let it cost what it will, just to be happy and absorbed in love."'

As in Le Fanu's novella and Döblin's account of self-destructive lesbian love, the subject positions of Weirauch's protagonists become less clearly defined as their individual identities become merged. Olga, initially situated as the dominant maternal figure, begins to display the characteristics originally attributed to Mette. Likewise, the latter also mirrors the qualities associated with her lover. Although Olga is positioned in a dominant role, the dynamic shifts following the discovery that she is being followed during an excursion with Mette. After returning home alone, Mette confronts Olga about her abrupt departure earlier that day. Despite her intention to reprimand her companion for such inconsiderate behaviour, asserting that she is 'kein dummes Kind,' (p. 122) she instead comforts Olga.¹⁵² Whilst she is initially depicted as the more passive of the two women, Mette is empowered by this maternal, caring position over her lover, kissing her tenderly. The linguistic structure of her dialogue throughout the scene also mirrors that of a parent comforting a sobbing child, as she tells her not to cry:

»Nicht weinen Süßes«, bat sie leise, selbst mit den Tränen kämpfend. »Nicht weinen, Liebes, ich frag' ja nicht mehr, ich will ja nichts wissen. Nur nicht mehr traurig sein. Tu mir an, was du willst, aber weine nicht so! Ich kann dich nicht weinen sehen. Hör auf, Liebes, ich bitt' dich, weine nicht mehr! « (p. 125)¹⁵³

The repetition of 'nicht weinen' and 'weine nicht' throughout her dialogue emphasises Mette's position in the maternal role during this pivotal moment in the narrative.

During this scene, Weirauch subverts the established power dynamic between the pair, placing the younger Mette in the motherly role and likening Olga to 'ein unglückliches Kind,' (an unhappy child, p. 125). This comparison of her to an infant emphasises her passivity, as she allows herself to be comforted by her younger companion in this

¹⁵² 'Not a dumb child.'

¹⁵³ "Don't cry sweetheart, she pleaded gently, fighting back the tears herself. Don't cry my love; I won't ask you any more, I don't want to know anything. Just don't be sad any more. Do what you like to me, but don't cry like that! I cannot bear to see you cry. Stop my love, I beg of you, don't cry anymore!"

vulnerable state. The boundaries between their defined roles within their relationship begin to break down, mirroring the erosion of their distinct individual identities.

The transgression of the boundaries between self and other is also implied through the increasing physicality of the relationship between the two women. Whilst attempting to comfort Olga, Mette finally gains the courage to demonstrate her affection for her in a physical capacity. Despite her seemingly more active and dominant position in this exchange, however, Mette relies partly on her companion to guide her in this comforting role:

Olga ließ sich zur Ruhe schmeicheln wie ein unglückliches Kind [...] Sie nahm Mettens Hand und legt sie auf ihre heiße Stirn. »Gutes! « sagte sie leise und dankbar. »Mein Gutes!« Und dann, immer noch mit geschlossenen Augen, hob sie Mettens willenlose Hand von der Stirn und legt die Innenfläche der kühlen Finger auf ihren Mund (p. 125-6).¹⁵⁴

Although the power dynamic shifts throughout the narrative, Weirauch suggests that neither woman assumes an entirely active or passive role within their relationship. This representational model, therefore, rejects typical assumptions regarding the centrality of gender inversion in female homosexuality, as well as the stereotypical butch/femme model. The subversion of the maternal homoerotic dynamic established at the start of the narrative implies the mutually dependent nature of the bond between the two women. Additionally, this dependency is reflected by the use of the possession motif, as in Döblin's portrayal of lesbian desire, evident by the repeated use of the possessive determiner, such as 'mein liebes Kind' (p. 150) and 'mein Gutes' (p. 126 and p. 166), especially juxtaposed with scenes of affection. In this respect, Weirauch's depiction of sapphic sexuality is also in keeping with Sage's notion of the vampiric possession motif,

¹⁵⁴ 'Olga let herself be caressed back to a state of calm like an unhappy child [...] She took Mette's hand and laid it on her warm forehead. "Dear girl," she said softly and gratefully, "my dear girl!" Then, with her eyes still shut, she raised Mette's passive hand from her forehead and laid the inner surface of her cool fingers on her lips.'

as the sapphic seduction in the narrative is closely linked with the notion of ownership. The emphasis on this dependency, however, also alludes to the loss of individual agency and identity, as both women ultimately define their own lesbian identity and sense of selfhood through the subject position of the other.

Through the use of the possession motif and the transgression of the boundaries between self and other, the depiction of lesbian love in *Der Skorpion* builds on the vampiric model for seduction established in nineteenth-century narratives like 'Christabel' and *Carmilla*. Döblin and Weirauch's sapphic subjects, like Le Fanu's lesbian lovers, demonstrate a consuming desire to possess 'another half' that 'enables the completion of the self,' reflecting what Sage terms the 'authenticating presence of the other.'¹⁵⁵ Despite the attempt at self-authentication, this established Gothic model for sapphic self-conceptualisation established in *Carmilla* is ultimately flawed by its reliance on the other, and especially the recognition of the other in the self. The erosion of individual identity and the notion of a merged existence is emphasised in the vampire's haunting statement 'I live in your warm life, and you shall die – die, sweetly die – into mine' (p. 263). This notion of lesbian lovers' merged existence is reflected in Weirauch's description 'für sie war Olga Radó das Leben [...] alles andere war eine dumpfe Qual oder Vorfreude auf die Stunden, die sie mit ihr zusammen sein durfte, oder Erinnerung an die Stunden, die sie mit ihr verbracht hatte' (p. 118).¹⁵⁶ The suggestion that Mette cannot live without Olga implies her conceptualisation of the pair as a single entity. After their relationship becomes sexual and the bond between them intensifies,

¹⁵⁵ Sage, p. 178.

¹⁵⁶ 'Olga Rado was her life, Mette knew that much. Everything else was a dull torment or pleasant anticipation of the hours that she was allowed to be together with her, or a memory of the hours that she had spent with her.'

their individual identities become increasingly merged. This is especially evident in the hotel scene, throughout Weirauch's depiction of their sexual encounter:

Sie drängten sich aneinander, als wollten sie ineinander übergehen, verschmelzen, eins werden. Ihre schlanken, geschmeidigen Glieder flochten sich ineinander, wie Bäume des Urwalds unlöslich sich ineinander verschlingen (p. 165).¹⁵⁷

The repetition of *ineinander* emphasises the transgression of the boundaries between self and other. Additionally, the end-focus of the verbs *eins werden* and *verschlingen*, meaning to intertwine or to engulf, also implies the fusion of individual identities. This merging of self and other persists even after the enforced separation of the pair. Mette's futile written correspondence to Olga outlines her enduring dependency on her:

Sie schrieb, daß sie nicht mehr leben und nicht mehr atmen könne ohne sie. Daß sie nichts von ihr wolle, keine Liebe, keine Zärtlichkeit, keine Freundschaft. Daß sie nur um sie sein wolle, wie ein Magd, wie ein Hund, daß sie nichts wolle, als ihr aus allen Kräften dienen und zum Lohn dafür sich schlagen und treten lassen (211).¹⁵⁸

Mette's desire to serve Olga and to subject herself to physical punishment indicates her total subservience and surrender to her lover. This total vulnerability and willing subjection to total humiliation implies a complete loss of selfhood and sacrifice of individual agency, therefore emphasising anxieties surrounding the self-annihilating potential of sapphic sexuality.

¹⁵⁷ 'They pressed into each other, as if they wanted to merge into one another, to fuse, to become one. Their slender, supple limbs wove into one another like trees of the jungle insolubly intertwine into each other.'

¹⁵⁸ 'She wrote that she could no longer live and no longer breathe without her. That she wanted nothing from her, neither love, tenderness, nor friendship. That she only wanted to be around her, like a maid or dog and that she wanted nothing, but to serve her with her every effort and as payment would let herself be beaten and kicked.'

V. Beyond the Carmilla Complex: Reconciling the Stranger within the Self

In Weirauch's *Der Skorpion*, the protagonist Mette Rudloff's sense of selfhood is depicted as wholly reliant on that of her lover. Despite the closeness of their bond, however, her realisation that Olga is 'ein unlösliches Rätsel, ein unergründliches Geheimnis, mir ewig fremd und fern, nie zu erfassen und nie zu begreifen' (p. 208),¹⁵⁹ threatens to shatter her fragile, interdependent sense of self. Following her enforced separation from her love, after having been pressured into an engagement by her family, Mette is unable to reconcile her sapphic self with the identity to which she is expected to conform. In an emblematic moment during a family celebration for her engagement, particularly illustrative of her fractured sense of selfhood, she is unable to recognise herself in a mirror:

Sie suchte sich selbst und konnte sich nicht darauf besinnen, wo sie wohl sein könne. Aber ihr war, als sähe sie sich selbst, schmal und schwarz wie ein Gespenst, durch große, dunkle leere Räume wandern. Dann war es wieder, als sei sie doch diese hier, und die andere Mette, die so deutlich ihre Züge trug, sei eine Fremde (p. 216).¹⁶⁰

In this gothicised scene, which threatens the familiarity of both the domestic and interior space, Weirauch's lesbian subject experiences the self-shattering recognition of the stranger within the self. The description of her as a spectral, wandering figure, moving through the empty rooms of the house, emphasises her alienation from the domestic ideal of the family home. The emptiness of the rooms reflects not only her sense of isolation, but also the lack of fulfilment she feels in this domestic space usually associated with warmth and comfort. The likening of herself to a restless spirit implies

¹⁵⁹ 'This woman is an unsolvable riddle, and unfathomable mystery, forever strange and distant to me, never to be grasped, nor to be understood.'

¹⁶⁰ 'She looked for herself and could not imagine where she could be. But to her it was as if she saw herself, slim and dark, like a spectre, wandering through great, dark, empty rooms. Then it seemed to her once more as if she were really this one here and that the other Mette, who so clearly bore her features, were the stranger.'

her unease in both this familiar space and the conforming role that she has assumed. This self-annihilating acknowledgement not only conveys Mette's internalised anxieties about the position of the sapphic subject within this heteronormative social ideal, but also her fears regarding her inability to conform to it. Furthermore, the reference to the spectral lesbian selfhood lurking below this heteronormative façade challenges the established notion of a unified subject position and emphasises the existence of the split subject.

Conclusion

In their analysis of Barnes's later Sapphic Modernist narrative *Nightwood*, Horner and Zlosnik note that the reluctance to acknowledge its 'strong Gothic legacy' by contemporary critics 'derives from a too limited conception of the Gothic genre.'¹⁶¹ I would argue that the same applies to the oversight of the gothicised elements in earlier lesbian narratives in interwar Germany, despite their apparent centrality to the portrayal of sapphic selfhood. With this in mind, my analysis has sought to outline not only the appropriation and modification of the psychic vampire metaphor in both Döblin and Weirauch's representation of lesbianism, but also less obvious vampiric characteristics and signifiers, including the image of the urban wanderer, the possession motif, maternal homoerotic desire and the transgression of boundaries. Whilst the reimagining of the vampiric figure throughout both texts enables the depiction of sapphic sexuality, this representational model is arguably too reliant on the established tropes of the nineteenth-century vampire narrative. In their modification of gothicised literary tropes, however, Weirauch and Döblin draw from both *fin de siècle* and

¹⁶¹ Horner and Zlosnik, p. 91.

Modernist configurations of lesbian sexuality and experience. This complex commingling of the modern and the atavistic is emblematic of the fears surrounding the unstable fractured state of the sapphic subject.

The vampiric figures that haunt the lesbian narratives of the interwar period reflect not only the remains of fears surrounding otherness and difference from the nineteenth century, but also the internalised anxieties present within the sapphic subject herself. The reimagining of the psychic vampire metaphor in both portrayals of lesbian sexuality therefore reflects the shift from fears of the foreign, homosexual other in the previous century, to modern anxieties surrounding the recognition of the 'other' within the self. In this respect, both *Der Skorpion* and *Die beiden Freundinnen und ihr Giftmord* afford a unique insight into internalised hostility, fears surrounding sapphic sexuality and the loss of individual identity in lesbian relationships. This unstable lesbian subject position, apparently prone to self-annihilating tendencies following the recognition of her destructive same-sex desires, is also illustrative of the vulnerability of the sapphic subject during the interwar period owing to the internalisation of hostile social attitudes and negative stereotypes. Through the appropriation and modification of vampiric sapphic signifiers, the depiction of lesbian sexuality as self-annihilation reflects the persistence of hostility and lack of understanding in modern society and even within the sapphic self. Despite their progressive portrayals of lesbian sexuality, both Weirauch and Döblin's protagonists appear unable to reconcile their sense of self with the sapphic stranger within. Yet, though unable to transcend the confines of the Carmilla complex, these sapphic Gothic modifications of the vampiric figure facilitate the articulation of lesbian desire and the haunting anxieties that accompanied it.

Chapter II

Haunted by Her: The Sapphic Uncanny in Anna Elisabet Weirauch's *Der Skorpion* (1931) and Annemarie Schwarzenbach's *Eine Frau zu sehen* (2008)

I. The Stranger Within: The Sapphic Split Subject

In lesbian narratives, sapphic desire is commonly depicted through images of haunting, as is evident in popular contemporary anglophone lesbian fiction, such as Emma Donoghue's *Hood* (1995) and Sarah Waters' *Affinity* (1999). The appropriation and subversion of established Gothic motifs associated with haunting, such as the *Doppelgänger*, uncanny repetition and memories of the dead, became a typical model for articulating sapphic sexuality during the interwar period in Europe. The creation of an uncanny aesthetic, centred on the notion of forbidden or dangerous desire that had previously been repressed resurfacing, provided a productive means of portraying lesbian desire. In interwar lesbian-authored narratives, such as Anna Elisabet Weirauch's *Der Skorpion* trilogy and Annemarie Schwarzenbach's *Eine Frau zu sehen*, a sapphic uncanny aesthetic is established through the adoption and reimagining of Gothic tropes, such as doubling, spectrality and uncanny repetition, as the respective protagonists are haunted by the women that they desire. A body of criticism is emerging on the subject of haunting in anglophone lesbian fiction; noteworthy examples include Castle's *The Apparitional Lesbian* and Palmer's *Lesbian Gothic*. However, little critical attention has been paid to the use of such tropes in German lesbian-authored narratives, such as Weirauch's *Der Skorpion* and Schwarzenbach's *Eine Frau zu sehen*.

Despite the centrality of these uncanny motifs, any Gothic readings of these lesbian-authored narratives have been overlooked in favour of Lesbian and Gender Studies or autofictional approaches. This chapter will argue, however, that through the appropriation of these established Gothic tropes associated with haunting, both Weirauch and Schwarzenbach create a sapphic uncanny aesthetic in their respective

narratives. The sapphic Gothic model facilitates the depiction of lesbian desire and affords an insight into the complex sapphic self-conceptualisation during the interwar period. This chapter outlines the creation of a gothicised uncanny aesthetic in Schwarzenbach's novella of sapphic self-discovery and Weirauch's narrative of lesbian love and loss. My analysis engages primarily with the Freudian theory of the Uncanny, and especially the return of the repressed, in order to identify the possibility of a lesbian, or sapphic, uncanny. The chapter also aims to broaden Nicholas Royle's notion of the uncanny effect surrounding the realisation of the 'foreign body within oneself.'¹⁶² It will then consider the extent to which the reimagining of Gothic tropes, such as repetition, doubling and haunting, provides a productive aesthetic for the representation of lesbian desire.

In both *Der Skorpion* and *Eine Frau zu sehen*, the protagonists are haunted by vivid images of their desired love interests. In Schwarzenbach's early autofictional novella, written in 1929, the traditional Gothic haunting narrative is subverted, as the haunting figure Ena Bernstein is actually the living object of the narrator's desire. The novella documents the moment in which the young narrator becomes enamoured with a mysterious older woman following a fleeting encounter in the lift of a luxury hotel in a familiar ski-resort in the Swiss Alps. This unsettling moment not only creates an internalised conflict that challenges her previous perceptions of identity and desire, but also alienates her from her family. The uncanny encounter between the two women, which takes place in the opening passage, recurs throughout the narrative, as the experience is relived in attempts to fathom it. Whilst Ena is very much alive, the recurrent haunting images of her and the initial encounter between them throughout the narrative contribute to its uncanny aesthetic. The third volume of *Der Skorpion*,

¹⁶² Nicholas Royle, *The Uncanny* (Manchester University Press, 2003), p. 2.

however, is rather more in keeping with a traditional haunting narrative of loss, mourning and melancholia. In the final instalment of Weirauch's trilogy, published in 1931, the young protagonist Mette Rudloff is unable to escape the memory of her dead lover Olga Radó following the latter's suicide. After an alcohol-fuelled, decadent detour into Berlin's gay subculture to numb the pain, which is documented in the second volume of *Der Skorpion* (1921), she attempts to find solace by establishing a home in a more peaceful, rural environment. Nevertheless, despite her repeated attempts to overcome her grief and melancholy, Mette is repeatedly confronted with vivid recollections of her first love. This haunting is engendered not only by her recurrent memories of her dead lover, but also by the advances of Corona von Gjellerstrom, a woman who bears an uncanny resemblance and connection to Olga.

The Freudian notion of the Uncanny hinges primarily on the phenomenon of experiencing something as simultaneously foreign and familiar, which results in an unsettling feeling. The theory was popularised by Freud's essay 'Das Unheimliche', which like the first volume of Anna Elisabet Weirauch's *Der Skorpion* was published in 1919. Whilst Freud's study developed the theory, it was not the first psychoanalytical paper on the uncanny aesthetic in literature, but rather provided a response to Ernst Jentsch's 1906 paper 'Zur Psychologie des Unheimlichen' ('On the Psychology of the Uncanny'). In his brief essay on the subject, Jentsch defines the uncanny primarily as a product of uncertainty or unfamiliarity, citing the ambiguity surrounding Olympia, the life-like automaton, in Hoffmann's short story 'Der Sandmann.'¹⁶³ In his study, which blends literary and psychoanalytical approaches to the uncanny experience, Freud expands on this brief existing medico-psychological paper on the subject. He attempts to

¹⁶³ Ernst Jentsch, 'Zur Psychologie Des Unheimlichen', *Psychiatrisch-Neurologische Wochenschrift*, 8.22 (25 Aug. 1906): 195-98 and 8.23 (1 Sept. 1906): 203-05.

move beyond Jentsch's earlier equation of the uncanny with the unfamiliar, stating 'Wir haben es leicht zu urteilen, dass diese Kennzeichnung nicht erschöpfend ist, und versuchen darum, über die Gleichung unheimlich = nicht vertraut hinauszugehen.'¹⁶⁴ Moreover, Freud emphasises that something must be added to the novel and unfamiliar in order to render it uncanny, such as an unsettling or distorted sense of recognition. This simultaneous sense of strangeness and familiarity subsequently engenders paradoxical feelings of repulsion and attraction within the subject, therefore threatening the previously accepted Enlightenment concept of a unified self. The notion of the sapphic split subject, as well as her conflicting feelings of fear and desire, can provide a particularly productive point of reference for the examination of sapphic self-conceptualisation during the interwar period.

In his essay, Freud creates a dialogue between the psychoanalytic and aesthetic approaches to the uncanny, which is established by his attempt to outline a definition of the term. His lexical study begins by situating the term *unheimlich* an opposite to the term *heimlich*:

Das deutsche Wort »unheimlich« ist offenbar der Gegensatz zu heimlich, heimisch, vertraut und der Schluss liegt nahe, es sei etwas eben darum schreckhaft, weil es *nicht* bekannt und vertraut ist (p. 47).¹⁶⁵

The use of the subjunctive, however, would suggest that defining the precise reason for the anxiety-producing nature of the uncanny is rather more complex than first implied.

The subsequent semantic study of the adjectives *unheimlich*, and especially *heimlich* emphasises the tension and duality within the terms. Whilst the focus on the

¹⁶⁴ Sigmund Freud, 'Das Unheimliche', in *Das Unheimliche: Aufsätze zur Literatur* (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag, 1963), pp. 45–84 (p. 47). All further references to the text are to this edition and given parenthetically in the body of the chapter. Translation: 'It is easy for us to judge this definition as incomplete and will therefore try to transcend this equation uncanny = unfamiliar.'

¹⁶⁵ 'The German Word 'unheimlich' is obviously the opposite to heimlich (homely or secretive), heimisch (native), vertraut (familiar) and it is easy to conclude that the uncanny is supposedly scary because it is not known and familiar.'

etymological association of the *Unheimliche* with *heimlich* in the sense of 'homely or 'belonging to the home' is often cited in anglophone and francophone studies on the subject, any assumed antonymic association relies on a signification of the term *heimlich* that is somewhat antiquated. In the 1860 *Sanders' Wörterbuch* entry cited by Freud in his essay, it states that the term *heimlich* in the context of 'belonging to the home' is *veraltet* (archaic or obsolete). This linguistic clarification of course refers to the cultural context, in which Freud writes. The second definition listed in the *Sanders' Wörterbuch* provides the terms *versteckt* (concealed) and *verborgen gehalten* (kept from sight), therefore strengthening the association of the term *heimlich* with secrecy and concealment.¹⁶⁶ According to the *Duden Rechtschreibung*, this association of the word *heimlich* in the sense of 'concealed' or 'secret' had been in consistent use from the development of *Mittelhochdeutsch*. With this in mind, the significance of the connotations of secrecy and concealment are arguably of greater significance in a modern German context, particularly in relation to the split subject or unconscious.

The close link with the uncanny and concealment or secrecy is a particularly productive framework for the creation of a sapphic uncanny aesthetic. The *Sanders Dictionary* entry cited in the study concludes with Schelling's notion of the phenomenon as 'Alles, was im Geheimnis, im Verborgenen...bleiben sollte und hervorgetreten ist' (p. 51).¹⁶⁷ It also affirms that *unheimlich* is not typically used as an antonym of this signification of the word *heimlich*. Freud stresses that the term has two meanings, which though not contradictory are certainly distinct:

¹⁶⁶ The Sanders entry also specifically references *heimlich* in relation to 'Liebe, Liebshaft, Sünde' (p. 50) or 'love, love affairs and sin,' therefore alluding to secret or repressed desires. The juxtaposition of love and sin is perhaps particularly significant when considering the possibility of a sapphic uncanny.

¹⁶⁷ 'Everything that should have remained secret and hidden but has surfaced'

dies Wort heimlich [ist] nicht eindeutig, sondern zwei Vorstellungskreisen zugehört, die ohne gegensätzlich zu sein, einander doch recht fremd sind, dem des Vertrauten, Behaglichen und dem des Versteckten, Verborgengehaltenen (p. 51).¹⁶⁸

By outlining the two differing meanings of the adjective, Freud emphasises the tension within the term, suggesting that *unheimlich* may be used antonymically in respect of the first definition. He reasserts that ‘Unheimlich sei nur als Gegensatz zur ersten Bedeutung, nicht auch zur zweiten gebräuchlich’ (p. 51). Despite their distinct meanings, it is implied that owing to their mutual association with secrecy and concealment, the two terms actually intersect to a certain degree. That is to say, *heimlich* refers to something that has been hidden from sight, whereas *unheimlich* implies something that was once concealed but has come to light. Freud’s citation of the 1877 edition of Grimm’s *Deutsches Wörterbuch*, originally published in 1854, also outlines the association of the term *heimlich* with the hidden or concealed:

4. aus dem heimatlichen, häuslichen entwickelt sich weiter der Begriff des fremden Augen entzogen, verborgenen, geheimen, eben auch in mehrfacher beziehung [sic] ausgebildet (p. 52).¹⁶⁹

The emphasis placed on this shift in signification from the notion of ‘belonging to the home’ to ‘withdrawn from the eyes of others’ prioritises the clear link with secrecy.

Both the *Sanders Wörterbuch* entry and the fragments taken from the Grimm dictionary entry certainly emphasise this connection of the uncanny effect with concealment. However, the latter also develops this association of the term *heimlich* with secrecy to include connotations of the repressed, unconscious or unknown. Freud actually omits the Grimm reference to the synonym *verschwiegen* (secretive) but with

¹⁶⁸ ‘This word *heimlich* is not unambiguous, but rather belongs to two sets of ideas that, without being contradictory, are indeed very different from one another: that of the familiar and comfortable and that of the hidden or concealed.’

¹⁶⁹ ‘4. From the notion of ‘homelike’ or ‘belonging to the home’ the further idea is developed of something withdrawn from strange eyes, concealed or secret and this idea is developed in many ways.’

particular connotations of withholding or failing to disclose something. Rather, his use of Grimm's clarification seems to gesture more towards something that is repressed or withdrawn from the subject's knowledge, rather than something that is merely withheld. The statement 'anders ist heimlich [...] der erkenntnis entzogen, unbewusst'¹⁷⁰ (p. 52) clearly outlines the link with the unknown or unconscious, therefore challenging the concept of the unified self. Additionally, this link is strengthened by the Grimm reference to the term 'verschlossen' (unknowable or locked) and 'undurchdringlich in bezug auf erforschung' (p. 52), which is translated as 'inaccessible to knowledge' in the English edition of 'The Uncanny' in *Writings on Art and Literature* (1997), edited by James Strachey.¹⁷¹ Moreover, the connotation of being impenetrable or impervious, especially in relation to *Erforschung* (exploration or investigation), is perhaps particularly relevant when considering the depiction of sapphic desire in an interwar context. Equally significant is the implied subsequent stigma and presumed threat that becomes attached to the hidden impulse, evident in the definition 'die bedeutung des verstecken, gefährlichen [...], so dasz heimlich den sinn empfängt, den sonst unheimlich hat' (p. 52-3).¹⁷² Freud stresses that this notion of 'something hidden and dangerous' (p. 53) is where *heimlich* and *unheimlich* coincide, blurring the boundaries of the binary opposition of the familiar and the foreign. The idea of forbidden feelings or dangerous desires that were unable to be explored and were consequently repressed or deferred is central to the sapphic uncanny aesthetic created in both Weirauch and Schwarzenbach's narratives.

¹⁷⁰ 'In a different sense, *heimlich* is withdrawn from knowledge, unconscious.'

¹⁷¹ Sigmund Freud, 'The Uncanny', in *Writings on Art and Literature*, trans. by James Strachey (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), pp. 193-233 (p. 200).

¹⁷² 'The sense of something hidden and dangerous [...] so that *heimlich* assumes the meaning of the *unheimlich*.'

Despite his earlier focus on the association of the uncanny with the concealed or secret, following his semantic study Freud focuses his initial analysis of 'Der Sandmann' on the recurrent eye motif and its association with the castration complex.¹⁷³ I would argue, however, that the surfacing of previously unknown or repressed information also contributes significantly to the uncanny aesthetic of the narrative. Freud directly, albeit briefly, acknowledges the unsettling effect of revealing secret information, which was outlined at length in his linguistic analysis:

Zu Ende des Buches, wenn die dem Leser bisher vorenthaltenen Voraussetzungen der Handlung nachgetragen werden, ist das Ergebnis nicht die Aufklärung des Lesers, sondern eine volle Verwirrung desselben (p. 62).¹⁷⁴

The alliterative end focus of the state of complete bewilderment, suggests the centrality to this revelation of secret facts in the creation of an uncanny aesthetic. Furthermore, this reductive statement about previously concealed facts arguably provides a far greater insight into the use of uncanny effects in Gothic narratives than the lengthy examination of the castration complex. He notes briefly that the subject, in this case the reader, is not enlightened by the resurfacing of these concealed facts, but rather further confused. The uncanny effect in gothicised narratives centres on the articulation or resurfacing of repressed, and often dangerous or threatening, secrets, which undermine or challenge our previous perceptions of a situation or experience. This uncanny effect is particularly useful in depicting the confusion and ambivalence for the sapphic subject following the resurfacing of previously concealed or unarticulated desires. Not to deny the importance of the repeated allusion to eyes in Hoffmann's narrative, the use of

¹⁷³ Freud equates Nathaniel's fear of losing his eyes in Hoffmann's narrative with castration anxiety and the fear of emasculation, stating that 'the study of dreams, fantasies and myths' teaches that anxiety surrounding the eyes can be read as a substitute for castration anxiety (p. 59). This focus undermines Jentsch's previous assertions about the uncanny effect produced by the feminised figure of the doll.

¹⁷⁴ 'At the end of the book, as the reader is given the facts central to plot that were previously withheld from him, the result is not enlightenment of the reader, but rather complete bewilderment.'

haunting, primarily through the use of the gothic double and repeated patterns of imagery, is arguably more significant in the creation of an uncanny aesthetic more broadly.

Freud states that uncanny effects are all concerned with *Doppelgängertum* in each of its forms and nuances (p. 62). The use of the double motif in all its guises threatens the breakdown of the established binary distinction between self and other, which manifests in

die Identifizierung mit einer anderen Person, so daß man an seinem Ich irre wird oder das fremde Ich an die Stelle des einigen versetzt, also Ich-Verdopplung, Ich-Teilung, Ich-Vertauschung (p. 62).¹⁷⁵

Whilst he references the original association of the double with self-preservation prior to surmounting the primary narcissistic stage, he also stresses its shift in signification as the 'unheimliche Vorboten des Todes,' (uncanny portent of death, p. 63). To consider this shift to be absolute, however, would be rather reductive. The ghostly double of Olga, Mette's dead lover in *Der Skorpion*, for example represents not only a reminder of the assumed tragic fate for many lesbian individuals, but is also a reminder of their love, which endures long after her death in the first volume of the novel. With this in mind, the association of the double motif with unfulfilled possibilities or repressed volition can provide a useful point of reference:

Aber nicht nur dieser der Ich-Kritik anstößige Inhalt kann dem Doppelgänger einverleibt werden, sondern ebenso alle unterbliebenen Möglichkeiten der Geschicksgestaltung, an denen die Phantasie noch festhalten will, und alle Ich-Strebungen, die sich infolge äußerer Ungunst nicht durchsetzen konnten, sowie

¹⁷⁵ 'The identification with another person, so that the subject loses faith in his own sense of self or substitutes the foreign self for his own. That is to say a doubling, dividing or transposition of the self.'

alle die unterdrückten Willensentscheidungen, die die Illusion des freien Willens ergeben haben (p. 64).¹⁷⁶

Freud ascribes the double with an ego-disturbing function, as one's own failures and repressed desires are projected onto the alter ego, thus engendering an uncanny quality or effect. In both narratives, the uncanny double serves not only as a reminder of the self-annihilating potential of sapphic desire, but also of its potential as a viable alternative to the accepted social norm.

Repetition and its haunting function can be considered as another central component in the creation of an uncanny aesthetic. Freud notes, although the recurrence of a situation or image alone is not the source of uncanny experience, it can certainly arouse such feelings. More precisely he notes that it is the phenomenon of 'unbeabsichtigt[e] Wiederholung,' or involuntary repetition, which evokes 'die Idee des Verhängnisvollen, Unentrinnbaren' (p. 66). This 'idea of the fateful or inescapable' thus renders the previously innocuous image or memory uncanny. Additionally, Freud argues that the involuntary repetition of gestures toward an internalised *Wiederholungszwang* (compulsion to repeat) harbours the power to overrule the *Lustprinzip* (pleasure principle, p. 67). He notes that any phenomenon, such as the recurrence of a situation or memory, is reminiscent of this compulsion and can therefore be perceived as evoking the uncanny. It is possible to read instances of uncanny repetition as the recurrence of repressed emotional impulses, the resurfacing of which causes anxiety. This notion of repression can also be linked to ideas of secrecy and unarticulated feeling:

¹⁷⁶ 'But it is not only this content, offensive to the criticism of the self, which can be incorporated into the double. The same is true for missed opportunities of influencing one's fortune, which our imagination still wants, and all strivings of the ego that owing to external circumstances could not be accomplished, as well as all repressed acts of volition, which have been combined to form the illusion of free will.'

wenn dies wirklich die geheime Natur des Unheimlichen ist, so verstehen wir, dass Sprachgebrauch das Heimliche in seinen Gegensatz, das Unheimliche übergehen lässt, denn dies Unheimliche ist wirklich nichts Neues oder Fremdes, sondern etwas dem Seelenleben von alters her Vertrautes, das ihm nur durch den Prozeß der Verdrängung entfremdet worden ist (p. 70).¹⁷⁷

This idea of repression suggests a duality or fracture between the social self, which has repressed previously firmly established impulses or feelings, and the true or private self where these remain suppressed. Freud stresses the centrality of secrecy and concealment in this process of repression. The anxiety or uncanny feeling is then experienced as these repressed, defamiliarised emotional impulses resurface, therefore challenging the notion of a unified self. This concept of the uncanny is particularly useful in reading and understanding the depictions of sapphic sexuality in Weirauch and Schwarzenbach's narratives.

Despite the problematic nature of Freud's androcentric focus owing to the significance placed on castration anxiety in Hoffmann's tale, I would argue that his concept of the uncanny can usefully illuminate the depiction of desire in my chosen sapphic Gothic narratives. Royle notes that the uncanny can provide a useful insight into the representation of identity in modern culture:

Freud's 'The Uncanny' is a crucial text for an understanding of contemporary culture in general, as well as for the unfolding tale of psychoanalysis. It has become a key reference-point in discussions of art and literature, philosophy, film, cultural studies and sexual difference.¹⁷⁸

Sexual identity, as he suggests, is no exception. Royle defines the uncanny as a 'crisis of the proper,' destabilising the subject's understanding of identity or sexuality for

¹⁷⁷ 'If this is truly the secret nature of the uncanny, we can understand why language use has allowed *das Heimliche* to merge into its opposite, *das Unheimliche*. For this uncanny is really nothing new or foreign, but rather something familiar and long-established in the psyche, which has only become alienated from it by the process of repression.'

¹⁷⁸ Royle, p. 12.

example.¹⁷⁹ His notion of the uncanny primarily hinges on uncertainty, particularly with regards to self-conceptualisation and the relationship between the self and other. The identification of the self with the foreign or strange other results in a lack of confidence in the previously established sense of selfhood. Owing to its emphasis on the effects of uncertainty, defamiliarisation and strangeness on the self, particularly with regards to desire and sexual identity, the theory can provide a useful insight into the depiction of these uncanny elements in *Der Skorpion* and *Eine Frau zu sehen*. In both of these narratives, the sapphic subject is haunted by her desire for another woman, ultimately destabilising her sense of selfhood and provoking what Royle terms an uncanny crisis of the proper.

At the turn of the century, the emerging discourse of psychoanalysis was largely reliant on the established language of the Gothic, which provided a surprising precursor to this modern development in scientific understanding of human nature. Andrew Smith and Jeff Wallace note that psychoanalytical discourse at the turn of the century has ‘an aura of the Gothic about it.’¹⁸⁰ The atavistic and often sensational conventions of the Romantic Gothic or *fin de siècle* horror narrative seem rather incongruous with the innovative new approach to the science of the mind. Nevertheless, both Jentsch and Freud draw heavily from Hoffmann’s tale of desire and terror in their analyses of the uncanny, which engage closely with the tropes and conventions of Gothic literature. In fact, Smith and Wallace stress that the Freudian theory of the Uncanny does not merely create a dialogue with ‘Der Sandmann,’ but rather is ‘generated’ by it.¹⁸¹ In ‘The Uncanny,’ for example, literary characters become case studies, and scientific discourse

¹⁷⁹ Royle, p. 1.

¹⁸⁰ Andrew Smith and Jeff Wallace, ‘Introduction’, in *Gothic Modernisms*, ed. by Andrew Smith and Jeff Wallace (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), pp. 1–10 (p. 4).

¹⁸¹ Smith and Wallace, p. 4.

becomes a labyrinthine gothicised narrative as the boundaries between the disciplines become blurred. In fact, the 'symptoms' outlined in the study of the uncanny can be considered as a list of established Gothic tropes and motifs, such as repetition, secrecy and haunting. Owing to its reliance on typical conventions of the genre, such as haunting, and especially repetition, as well as defamiliarisation, the sense of the uncanny contributes to a Gothic aesthetic. The appropriation and subversion of these tropes, particularly those pertaining to haunting, in the German lesbian-authored narratives of the interwar period, enables the creation of a sapphic uncanny aesthetic. This gothicised representational model facilitates the articulation of the simultaneous fear and longing faced by the lesbian subject, following the resurfacing of transgressive desires, which ought to have remained repressed.

In both *Der Skorpion* and *Eine Frau zu sehen*, the so-called crises of the proper are provoked by the recognition that desires, which the respective protagonists had initially attempted to repress or conceal, have resurfaced. Royle examines the return of the repressed in his analysis of the uncanny:

[it] has to do with the sense of a secret encounter: it is perhaps inseparable from an apprehension, however fleeting, of something that should have remained secret and hidden but has come to light.¹⁸²

The fear of secret or concealed desires returning from the private realm of the unconscious, perhaps to be exposed at any time is particularly significant in the context of a lesbian uncanny model. This return or repetition of desires, which social convention dictates ought to remain repressed, destabilises the sense of selfhood, particularly throwing into question the relationship between the self and the other. Whilst images associated with desire and the beloved objects are repeated in both narratives, they

¹⁸² Royle, p. 2.

primarily appear to evoke fear or suffering in the protagonists. In his analysis of haunting and uncanny repetition, Colin Davis also suggests that the compulsion to repeat 'overrides' the pleasure principle,

since what is repeated is not associated with past or present pleasure. [...] The death drives tend towards the destruction of the organism in which they are lodged, of the bonds it creates, of other organisms, and of the external world more generally.¹⁸³

The recognition of such transgressive, destructive desires, as well as their inability to remain repressed, also destabilises the role of the sapphic subject in society, as the repetition of them undermines any attempt at conforming or belonging to the normative social order. Although the lesbian uncanny model in both texts does portray the repeated desire as a threat to the 'bonds' created with others and the 'external world,' it is important to note that there is no such 'destruction' of the subject itself, at least in terms of narrative trajectory.

In typical Gothic narratives, such as Hoffmann's short story, uncanny repetition or haunting is often associated with death and destruction. Royle suggests that the uncanny compulsion to repeat is often linked to the death drive:

It would appear to be indissociably bound up with a sense of repetition or 'coming back' – the return of the repressed, the constant or eternal recurrence of the same thing, a compulsion to repeat. At some level the feeling of the uncanny may be bound up with the most extreme nostalgia or 'homesickness', in other words a compulsion to return to an inorganic state, a desire (perhaps unconscious) to die, a death drive.¹⁸⁴

Davis also considers the significance of this concept, stating that 'the Freudian theory of the death drive describes the entanglement of life and death, and the haunting of the

¹⁸³ Colin Davis, *Haunted Subjects: Deconstruction, Psychoanalysis and the Return of the Dead* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. 24.

¹⁸⁴ Royle, p. 2.

subject by its drive to self-annihilation.’¹⁸⁵ Whilst the notion of the death drive is significant in the sense of a metaphoric death of any previous assumptions of selfhood or identity, in these interwar sapphic narratives the repetition is also bound up with loss. Owing to the necessity to conform to social convention, Weirauch and Schwarzenbach imply that the sapphic subject is haunted primarily by images associated with lost opportunities for the fulfilment of persisting desires. This is evident both literally in *Der Skorpion* through Mette’s recurrent fantasies of how her life could have been, had Olga survived, and in a more abstract sense in Schwarzenbach’s narrator’s musings on unrequited love. Despite the centrality of Gothic tropes of haunting and repetition, I would argue that the association of uncanny repetition with death, and especially the death drive, is modified in the creation of this lesbian representational model. In the third volume of her novel, Weirauch rejects the typical narrative trajectory of tragic destiny, implying that Mette merely undergoes a symbolic death of selfhood following the loss of her lover. Similarly, in *Eine Frau zu sehen*, the narrator loses only previous assumptions of identity and opportunities to act on her desires, as opposed to her life. This symbolic crisis of the self, following the recognition and acknowledgment of these recurrent desires, reflects the internalisation of nineteenth-century anxieties regarding transgressive or forbidden sexualities within interwar society.

In addition to the influence of Gothic literature, the post-war context of Freud’s essay also contributes to its uncanny aesthetic. Owing to its references to destructive returns and repetitions, the theory is often considered a precursor to the concept of the *Todestrieb* (death drive), which was examined at greater length in *Jenseits des*

¹⁸⁵ Davis, p. 43.

Lustprinzip (1920). Sarah Kofman argues that 'The Uncanny' and its gesture toward the notion of a death drive emerge from a background of war and death:

The uncanny can also give rise to a masochistic type of pleasure, a satisfaction (*jouissance*) arising from the very source of anxiety itself; a pleasure which also leads back to the death instinct since it is linked to return and repetition.¹⁸⁶

This close association of repetition with destruction manifests on numerous occasions in post-war literature and culture of German-speaking Europe, which was haunted with the violent memories of the First World War. This was particularly true of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire and its ally Germany, which had both suffered heavy losses in terms of human life and capital following defeat, leading to an increasingly volatile socio-political situation. Moreover, as a result of the loss of political agency and national identity following the Treaty of Versailles, the boundaries and borders of national identity had begun to shift, both literally and metaphorically. Many European states, especially the German-speaking nations, were experiencing their own 'crisis of the proper'. This was reflected in the cultural and ideological production of the interwar period, especially in literary narratives. Royle notes the place of the literature of the time in examining both the uncanny and its connection with the death drive. He suggests that 'Psychoanalysis and surrealism are not alone in elaborating the uncanny logic of a death drive in the shattered Europe left in the wake of the so-called Great War.'¹⁸⁷ Following the horrors of war, modern German literature gestured toward the dark and decadent aesthetic of its Gothic predecessors, as well as its preoccupation with human nature and transgressive sexuality.

¹⁸⁶ Sarah Kofman, 'The Double Is/and the Devil: The Uncanniness of "The Sandman"', in *Literature in Psychoanalysis: A Reader*, ed. by Steve Vine, trans. by S. Wykes (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pp. 68–83 (p. 68).

¹⁸⁷ Royle, p. 98.

The cultural repetition of established Gothic tropes in interwar narratives, such as haunting and the uncanny double, suggests that the darker side of the human mind remained a preoccupation for the modern writer. Smith and Wallace note the shared ‘interest in the amoral’ in nineteenth-century and Modernist texts, which stemmed from fears of degeneration and atavistic regression. They argue that Gothic and modern texts are ‘joined [...] by their fascination with the potential erosion of moral value, and with the forms that immorality can take.’¹⁸⁸ One such fascination was with forbidden and transgressive desires, particularly same-sex desire. Despite the criminalisation of sexual acts between men in Germany under § 175 dStGB in 1871, homosexuality continued to have a marginal presence, especially the decadent modern metropolis of Berlin. Interwar discourse on sexuality and sexual identity, pioneered in German-language sexological and psychoanalytical studies, had largely shifted its focus from the homosexual body to the queer psyche. Prior to the emergence of psychoanalysis, medical and scientific studies on lesbian sexuality had relied almost entirely on anatomical approaches and assumptions of physical defects. This change was also reflected in lesbian-authored narratives of the time, such as *Der Skorpion* and *Eine Frau zu sehen*. Contrary to their nineteenth-century predecessors, these sapphic Gothic narratives no longer relied on the repeated threat of the transgressive, foreign figure in the creation of an uncanny aesthetic. Additionally, the signification of established haunting motifs had begun to shift from moral panic surrounding the queer other, to internalised anxieties regarding one’s own deviant desires. In modern lesbian narratives, the protagonist is haunted by images representing the repeated recognition of the stranger within the self. In this respect, the creation of a sapphic uncanny

¹⁸⁸ Smith and Wallace, p. 3.

representational model facilitates the articulation of internalised anxieties following this recognition of same-sex desire.

The uncanny phenomenon of recognising the stranger within ourselves is not only in keeping with the psychoanalytical theory of unconscious desires, but also with the Modernist notion of the split subject. Julia Kristeva argues that uncanny foreignness can arise within the self, which results in the feeling that ‘we are our own foreigners,’ emphasising this notion of the ‘divided’ self.¹⁸⁹ Similarly, Royle explains that the sense of the uncanny is not merely an ‘experience of strangeness or unfamiliarity,’ but rather a complex mingling of the two:

More specifically, it is a peculiar commingling of the familiar and unfamiliar. It can take the form of something familiar unexpectedly arising in a strange and unfamiliar context, or of something strange and unfamiliar unexpectedly arising in a familiar context. It can consist in a sense of homeliness uprooted, the revelation of something unhomely at the heart of hearth and home.¹⁹⁰

With this in mind, it is not the recognition of something unfamiliar which threatens to destabilise the sense of self or identity in the uncanny narratives examined in this chapter, but rather the recognition that the boundaries between the two states have been – repeatedly - transgressed. The recognition of unfamiliar desire arising within the familiar context, and vice versa, is arguably what is most unsettling about the depiction of sapphic sexuality in *Der Skorpion* and *Eine Frau zu sehen*. In the process of coming to terms with lesbian desire, portrayed in both narratives, that which should have remained unfamiliar begins to adopt the position of the familiar. The familiarisation of these previously unfamiliar desires contributes to what Royle terms ‘a sense of

¹⁸⁹ Julia Kristeva, *Strangers to Ourselves*, trans. by Leon S. Roudiez (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991), p. 181.

¹⁹⁰ Royle, p. 1.

strangeness given to dissolving all assurances about the identity of a self.’¹⁹¹Both Weirauch and Schwarzenbach convey the repeated threat of transgressive or forbidden desires to normative presumptions surrounding the subject’s identity and role within society in their respective narratives.

II. Repetition and the Return of the Repressed: Schwarzenbach’s Uncanny Aesthetic

Schwarzenbach’s writings on the subject of sapphic sexuality, including her early novella *Eine Frau zu sehen*, not only establish a confessional narrative about repression, but were also repressed for decades. Following her death in 1942, many of Schwarzenbach’s letters and documents were destroyed by her mother. Written in 1929, the manuscript for *Eine Frau zu sehen* was not rediscovered until 2007, when her great-nephew Alexis Schwarzenbach undertook the task of reordering its series of unnumbered and incorrectly sequenced pages. Its origins are relatively uncertain, aside from the date given on the manuscript: 24th December 1929. Having originally been catalogued simply as *Fragment ohne Titel* (Untitled Fragment) in the Schweizerische Literaturarchiv in Bern, the text was only published decades after her death in 2008.¹⁹² This initial description of the manuscript was particularly fitting, as the piece offers merely a sequence of fragments, reflecting on the young *Ich*-narrator’s chance encounter with a compelling and beautiful woman, whose image haunts her. Despite its typical classification as fiction, the fictionalised narrative commingles typical travel writing and autobiographical conventions in its conflicted portrayal of lesbian desire. Unlike much of her oeuvre, the narrative unfolds in her adopted home of Engadin in

¹⁹¹ Royle, p. 16.

¹⁹² Alexis Schwarzenbach, ‘Nachwort’, in *Eine Frau zu sehen*, ed. by Alexis Schwarzenbach (Zürich: Kein & Aber, 2008), pp. 67–77 (p. 67).

Switzerland, allowing the strange and unsettling feelings described throughout to take place in familiar territory. Whilst the text is not typically considered to be Gothic in terms of genre or style, I would argue that Schwarzenbach deploys typical tropes of the Freudian uncanny, therefore creating a sapphic Gothic aesthetic, which facilitates her ambivalent depiction of lesbian desire. The sapphic subject is haunted not by the memory of a lost loved one, but rather by the living object of her desire. Nevertheless, the idea of loss, and especially unfulfilled love or lost opportunity, is still central to the narrative and its depiction of sapphic sexuality.

Although *Eine Frau zu sehen* is set in a location typically associated with comfort and familiarity, an unexpected, unsettling encounter establishes an uncanny aesthetic. The young narrator's realisation of a strange and unfamiliar desire for another woman serves to defamiliarise this familiar and homely space. The description of this chance encounter in the opening passage of the novella establishes Schwarzenbach's Gothic aesthetic:

Eine Frau zu sehen: nur eine Sekunde lang, nur im kurzem Raum eines Blickes, um sie dann wieder zu verlieren, irgendwo im Dunkel eines Ganges, hinter einer Türe, die ich nicht öffnen darf –¹⁹³

The familiar setting of the narrative is rendered unknowable in this initial passage by the creation of a gothicised space. Following this unsettling encounter, lasting just a second, the comfortable luxury hotel becomes a dark, strange uncanny place.¹⁹⁴ The end-focus of the door emphasises not only the notion of forbidden or unattainable

¹⁹³ Annemarie Schwarzenbach, *Eine Frau zu sehen*, ed. by Alexis Schwarzenbach (Zürich: Kein & Aber, 2008), p. 5. All translations from the original German are my own. These will be given in footnotes, rather than in the body of the text. Translation: 'To see a woman: only for the length of a second, only in the short space of a glance, to then lose her again somewhere in the darkness of a passage, behind a door that I am not allowed to open.'

¹⁹⁴ For an in-depth discussion of the hotel as an uncanny space in Modernist literature, see Charlotte Bates, 'Hotel Histories: Modern Tourists, Modern Nomads and the Culture of Hotel-Consciousness', *Literature and History*, 12 (2003), 62–75.

desire, but also reflects the protagonist's subsequent attempts at the concealment or repression of it. The notion of the closed door is particularly in keeping with an uncanny aesthetic owing to these associations with what is hidden or repressed. The image is significant as it represents a threshold or boundary to the unknown or unconscious:

aber eine Frau zu sehen, und im selben Augenblick zu fühlen, dass auch sie mich gesehen hat, dass ihre Augen fragend an mir hängen, als müssten wir uns begegnen auf der Schwelle des Fremden, dieser dunkeln und schwermütigen Grenze des Bewusstseins... (p. 5)¹⁹⁵

This recurrent image of the border or threshold implies that prior to the chance encounter in this liminal space, the protagonist's desire is uncharted territory that had until this moment remained repressed. The use of the ellipsis, typically used to indicate an omission, also reflects this notion of repression or concealment.

Schwarzenbach's creation of a sapphic uncanny aesthetic is facilitated by the foregrounding of secrecy and repression of lesbian desire. Royle notes that the uncanny is often associated with 'the sense of a secret encounter' and the apprehension 'of something that should have remained secret' coming to light.¹⁹⁶ In *Eine Frau zu sehen*, it is implied that the narrator's desire is largely unsettling and incomprehensible owing to her concealment and attempted repression of it. Her 'longing' is described as 'noch ungeklärt und nicht in Worte zu fassen, aber unumstößlich im heimlichsten meiner Gefühle, -' (p. 16).¹⁹⁷ Whilst the reference to the inability to articulate her longing may be in part owing to still incomplete understanding of this surfaced sapphic desire, I would argue that the element of secrecy is rather more significant. The use of the

¹⁹⁵ 'But to see a woman and in the same moment to feel that she had also seen me, that her eyes hang on me questioningly as if we have to meet on the threshold of the unknown, this dark and melancholy border of consciousness...'

¹⁹⁶ Royle, p. 2.

¹⁹⁷ 'A desire, still unknown and unable to be put into words, but permanently in the most secret of my feelings-'

superlative emphasises the notion of concealment and hidden turmoil. This internal conflict is also evident in the following passage:

Die Tage sind voll heimlicher Spannung, die Nächte vergehen in einer Glut der Erwartung, die einem Brande gleicht, der sich aus winterlicher Weiße erhebt, oft lauscht man stumm [...] man lauscht auf Antworten, nach denen man nicht zu fragen wagte, und man ist preisgegeben einer stillen und doch zutiefst aufrührerischen Verwirrung, die zuerst den Körper ergreift wie Krankheit, während die Seele davor zurückschreckt, um dann umso heftiger derselben Erschütterung zu verfallen (p. 23-4) ¹⁹⁸

The foregrounding of the secret tension caused by this futile internalised search for understanding emphasises the repression and concealment of her sapphic desire. The repeated references to silence also highlight the narrator's inability to disclose her feelings to others following the recognition of her feelings toward Ena. Moreover, the subsequent uncertainty, which plagues the protagonist, destabilises the notion of a unified subject. This Modernist preoccupation of the split subject is further conveyed through the reference to the separation of body and soul in this process of acknowledging and attempting to understand this conflicting desire.

The repression of lesbian desire throughout the narrative also contributes to the depiction of the split sapphic self. By attempting to deny the memories of the encounter, as well as the feelings of desire and emotions stirred by them, the narrator aims to maintain a facade of normality largely owing to the fear of being watched by others (p. 64). Throughout the narrative, the sapphic subject is portrayed as conflicted by the perceived necessity of conforming to established social conventions and by her true longing to pursue her feelings for Ena. It is implied, however, that the attempts at repression are ultimately futile, as the thoughts of her persist regardless:

¹⁹⁸ 'The days are full of secret tension, the nights pass in a blaze of anticipation, like a fire which rises out of the wintry whiteness. Often you listen silently [...] You listen to answers, which you dared not ask for and are exposed to a silent yet deeply inflammatory confusion, which first takes hold of the body like an illness, whilst the soul recoils from it only to then crumble more intensely from the same shock.'

nach den langen Wochen der Strenge und Zurückhaltung waren nun meine Gedanken in ihr Recht getreten, ohne sich weiter in Träumen verbergen zu müssen, die jede Nacht wiederkehrten mit denselben Bildern der sonnenbeschiedenen Schneelandschaft, mit welcher sich Enas Bild in unmerklicher Harmonie vermischte - (p. 55).¹⁹⁹

The description of the 'long weeks of strictness and restraint' contribute to the Modernist notion of the split subject, as the desire for Ena is relegated to the realms of the narrator's unconscious. Additionally, the statement 'Ich versuchte, mir auch die Gedanken zu versagen, sie zurückzuhalten' (p. 57)²⁰⁰ outlines the conscious attempt to repress her feelings toward Ena. The desiring thoughts, which must be hidden in dreams, are merely internalised, further intensifying the conflict between the need to maintain appearances in public and the private longing for another woman:

Was soll ich sagen von einer Sehnsucht, die so heimlich und so gewaltig war, weil ich nie von ihr sprechen durfte und mich doch nicht eine Stunde von ihrer süßen und lockenden Gegenwart trennen konnte- (p. 57).²⁰¹

Schwarzenbach's use of the modal verb *dürfen* implies that the attempts to conform are obligations, which appear to be at odds with the reality of her realisation that she is ultimately unable to maintain this separation between public duty and private desire.

Despite any attempt to repress the image of the unknown woman or the feelings and desires that are associated with the memory of her, the account of this encounter is reiterated throughout the narrative. The repetition conveys the protagonist's repressed desire coming to light in the form of haunting memories:

eine Frau steht mir gegenüber, sie trägt einen weißen Mantel, ihr Gesicht ist braun unter dunkelm [sic], männlich herb aus dem Gesicht gekämmten Haar, ich

¹⁹⁹ 'after the long weeks of strictness and restraint, my thoughts had claimed their rights, no longer to have to hide away in dreams, which repeated every night with the same pictures of the sunlit, snowy landscape, with which Ena's image became blended in indistinguishable harmony-'

²⁰⁰ 'I also tried to deny myself the thoughts, to repress them.'

²⁰¹ 'What ought I to say of a desire that was so secret and so powerful because I was never allowed to speak of her and yet I could not part with her sweet and alluring presence for even an hour-'

erstaune vor der schönen und leuchtenden Kraft ihres Blickes, und nun begegnen wir uns, eine Sekunde lang, und ich fühle unwiderstehlich den Drang, mir ihr zu nähern, herber, schmerzlicher noch, dem ungeheuren Unbekannten zu folgen, das sich wie Sehnsucht und Aufforderung in mir regt - (p. 8-9).²⁰²

The shift to the present tense when describing the encounter in the elevator reflects the vividness of the recollections. Similarly, the use of the adjective *leuchtend* (glowing or radiant) highlights the intensity not only of the woman's returned gaze, but also the memory of it. Following this first encounter with the initially unnamed woman in the lift of the also unidentified luxury hotel, the narrator is unable to escape or fully repress the vivid memory of this fleeting moment and subsequent recognition of desire. The anonymity associated with the place contributes to this uncanny effect, as does the tension arising from its dualisms. The hotel's location is both fixed and unfixed; it is also simultaneously considered a public and private space. The alliterative reference to 'dem ungeheuren Unbekannten' (the immense unknown) stirring within emphasises the unfamiliar and unsettling nature of this desire that has been awakened by the experience. This depiction is in keeping with Royle's notion of the uncanny, as the subject experiences the unknown and the unfamiliar from within the self. The narrator's inability to articulate this feeling of the unknown in a precise or exact manner, only to attribute it as being like a longing or a demand, suggests the unfamiliar nature of the desire. Similarly, the repeated use of the alliterative 'fremde Frau' in statements such as (p. 9) 'die fremde Frau [geht] an mir vorüber' (p. 9)²⁰³ emphasises not only the foreignness or strangeness of the woman she encounters, but also of her desire for her.

²⁰² 'A woman stands opposite me; she is wearing a white coat. Her face is tanned under her dark hair, which is combed away from her face in a harsh and masculine fashion. I am astonished by the beautiful and radiant power of her gaze and now we meet just for a second and I feel the irresistible urge to approach her, harsher and more distressing still, to pursue the immense unknown, which is stirring like a longing or demand within me.'

²⁰³ 'The strange woman walks past me.'

The longing, which persists long after the brief encounter has passed, does not become any more familiar or normalised, despite the reference to its frequent repetition throughout the novella. The memories, which continue to haunt the narrator, only become more vivid and lifelike in nature, evident in the following description:

so erschien Ena Bernstein hier auf einmal bloßgestellt, in schreckliche Nähe gerückt, als könnte sie vor uns auftauchen, sich neben mich setzen, mich zwingen, ihre Gegenwart zu ertragen (p. 16).²⁰⁴

The recollection of Ena is described in terms, which initially suggest her actual presence rather than just a memory. The image is depicted as being so vivid that it is as if it could become reality. The use of the verbs *erscheinen* and *auftauchen* (to appear and to surface) mirror the discourse of psychoanalysis, and especially the Freudian notion of the repressed image or desire resurfacing. Similarly, the description 'Da war Ena wiedergekommen. Ich weiß nicht, wie es geschehen konnte, aber jene Nacht des vergangenen Winters wiederholte sich nun immer von neuem' (p. 56)²⁰⁵ emphasises the incessant nature of the repetition. As the narrative progresses, the recollections of Ena intensify, as do the emotions and feelings linked with them:

Und in diesem Augenblick ergriff mich jäh der Gedanke an Ena Bernstein. Zum ersten Mal war sie für wenige Stunden meinem Bewusstsein entglitten, jetzt aber erfüllte sie mich wieder mit schmerzvoller Spannung, mein ganzes Leid drängte sich in den Namen zusammen, dem eine unsichtbare Kraft innezuwohnen schien (p. 46).²⁰⁶

The memory of the unrequited love for Ena has the power to evoke pain and tension in the protagonist, who is still unable to escape the recurrent images of the past for

²⁰⁴ 'so Ena Bernstein suddenly appeared here, drawn terribly close, as if she could have surfaced before us, sit beside me and force me to bear her presence.'

²⁰⁵ 'There Ena had returned. I do not know how it could happen but that night from the previous winter now continuously repeated itself anew.'

²⁰⁶ 'And in this moment the thoughts of Ena Bernstein suddenly took hold of me. For the first time she had slipped from my consciousness for a few hours, but now she filled me once again with painful suspense. All of my suffering was condensed into the name, to which a hidden power appeared to be inherent.'

prolonged periods of time. The use of the sibilant 'schmerzvoller Spannung' particularly emphasises the suffering inflicted by these powerful haunting memories.

The final passage of the narrative mirrors the opening description of the initial encounter between the two women. In a scene reminiscent of Freud's return to the site of the uncanny in his essay on the subject, the narrator decides to revisit the 'innig vertrauten Landschaft' (p. 55),²⁰⁷ which has become intrinsically linked with her 'passionate love' (p. 28). Having arrived in the *vertraut* (familiar, p. 61) landscape of the area, which she associates with the object of her desire, the protagonist returns to the location of this unsettling experience. In the hotel, they meet once again by chance at the lift, as an initially unidentified woman wearing a white coat rushes past the porter. The narrator, however, recalls recognising Ena's 'clear and harsh' features, as well as the 'radiant power of her eyes' (p. 65). The cyclical form of the narrative mirrors its repetitive content, also contributing to its uncanny effect. In this final encounter, however, it is Ena, who seems somewhat unsettled and surprised at her recognition of the protagonist. Nevertheless, this scene, which may be read as a reversed uncanny repetition of the novella's opening, culminates in her acting on the desire, rather than the repression of it:

Ena hatte inzwischen dem wartenden Boy gewinkt, sie schob mich in den Lift, und bevor ich zur Besinnung kam, waren wir, ich weiß nicht wie, in ihrem Zimmer angelangt (p. 65).²⁰⁸

Although the reader is left to surmise what occurs in the hotel room, the active rather than passive reaction to this mutual recognition of desire implies a fulfilment of the desire, which had been deferred throughout the narrative. That said, the physical

²⁰⁷ 'Intimately familiar landscape'

²⁰⁸ 'Meanwhile Ena had waved to the waiting porter. She pushed me into the lift and before I could come to my senses, we had – I do not know how – reached her room.'

manifestation of this previously repressed desire takes place behind closed doors, merely adding to the association of sapphic sexuality with secrecy and concealment. As in Mann's earlier novella *Der Tod in Venedig*, the uncanny hotel space facilitates Schwarzenbach's representation of homosexuality, even implying the perceived necessity of keeping such desires secret. Like Mann's portrayal, *Eine Frau zu sehen* plays on the duality of the hotel as a simultaneously public and private space.

III. Double Trouble: The Uncanny Doppelgänger in *Der Skorpion*

Duality and the *Doppelgänger* trope have long been associated with the Gothic mode, and especially the uncanny aesthetic, in both the German and anglophone literary canons. Gothic narratives, deeply preoccupied with issues of identity and duality, relied heavily on the motif of the double in their depiction of the unconscious. Linda Dryden notes that duality 'becomes a central trope of the Gothic in the late nineteenth century' in an anglophone context, especially evident in the works of Robert Louis Stevenson and Oscar Wilde.²⁰⁹ In a German context, however, the motif is grounded in the Romantic tradition and is credited to Jean Paul Richter's *Siebenkäs* (1796-7).²¹⁰ The literary double was arguably popularised by the gothicised works of Hoffmann, such as the short story 'Der Sandmann' and the 1815 novel *Die Elixiere des Teufels*, which was significantly influenced by Lewis's *The Monk*. Hoffmann's haunting doubles established a dark and unsettling uncanny aesthetic, strengthening the association between the *Doppelgänger* and the Gothic mode. Karl Miller argues that the 'craze for duality' then 'spread from Germany to the rest of Europe' in the nineteenth century, as literary

²⁰⁹ Linda Dryden, *The Modern Gothic and Literary Doubles: Stevenson, Wilde and Wells* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), p. 37.

²¹⁰ Weirauch was evidently aware of Jean Paul's works, as Mette reads an extract from his earlier narrative *Hesperus oder 45 Hundposttage: Eine Lebensbeschreibung* (1795) to Olga in the first volume of *Der Skorpion* (p. 61).

accounts of the double and pseudo-sciences like hypnotism exposed the notion of the 'second self.'²¹¹ Whilst the *Schauerroman* and its gothicised tropes fell out of favour in Germany following the popularity of Hoffmann's works, doubles continued to haunt the anglophone Gothic canon. The subsequent adoption of the term *Doppelgänger* to describe the experience of the double in an English context arguably emphasises its German roots and its association with blurring the familiar and the foreign.²¹² The double motif, which connotes this transgression of the boundaries between self and other, therefore provides a useful means of examining the notion of the foreigner or stranger within the self.

The double has often also been linked with transgressive or forbidden sexual identities and especially homosexuality. The association of the *Doppelgänger* with the double life and secret, repressed desires also strengthened the queer connotations of the motif in the modern Gothic context. Any such queer readings of Gothic double have, however, typically focused on late nineteenth-century anglophone narratives, such as Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886) or Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890). Elaine Showalter and Wayne Koestenbaum make compelling cases for homoerotic readings of the double in Stevenson's novella.²¹³ Dryden also argues that Jekyll's doubling in the form of Hyde may indeed represent 'the conflict between his outward heterosexual self and his repressed homosexual self.'²¹⁴ Additionally, the overt homoerotic suggestions of Wilde's original serialisation strengthened the link between the double and homosexuality. The gothicised trope continued to haunt gay and lesbian

²¹¹ Karl Miller, *Doubles: Studies in Literary History* (Oxford University Press, 1985), p. 49.

²¹² The Oxford English dictionary states that the anglicised version of the term, 'doppelganger,' has been in usage in the English language since 1851, crediting M.A. Denham's series of writings on folklore, *The Denham Tracts* (1846-59), with introducing the term.

²¹³ For a more in-depth discussion of Stevenson's homoerotic use of doubling, see Wayne Koestenbaum, *Double Talk: The Erotics of Male Literary Collaboration* (London: Routledge, 1989) and Elaine Showalter, *Sexual Anarchy: Gender and Culture at the Fin de Siècle* (London: Bloomsbury, 1991).

²¹⁴ Dryden, p. 99.

narratives in both English and German during the interwar period, enabling depictions of same-sex desire and the double life led by many gay individuals. Not to deny the centrality of these *fin de siècle* narratives in the depiction of queer desire, I would argue that the use of the double in interwar narratives provides a greater understanding of homosexual identity or self-conceptualisation. The use of this established Gothic motif to connote sapphic sexuality contributed to a gothicised representational model, which allowed an insight into the internalised anxieties surrounding the discovery of the other within. Lesbian-authored narratives, such as Weirauch's *Der Skorpion*, employ the *Doppelgänger* trope by positioning the protagonist's lover as an uncanny double figure, thereby representing the repressed sapphic self.

Following the death of Olga in the first volume of Weirauch's novel, Mette is haunted not only by vivid memories of her dead lover but also a series of romantic interests that are situated as her doubles. The precedent for the projection of her lasting desire for the deceased Olga is established from the opening of the second volume of the novel, as the protagonist is drawn to the melancholic figure Gisela Werkenthin, whom she feels would understand her 'struggle, love and suffering.'²¹⁵ Her affinity to the young woman is also intensified through the discovery of their mutual experiences of loss, as Mette struggles to navigate life after the death of Olga, while Gisela pines for the lover that abandoned her. Additionally, a connection is established between her lost lover and Gisela, who shares Olga's preoccupation with death and suicide.²¹⁶ Despite Gisela's

²¹⁵ Anna Elisabet Weirauch, *Der Skorpion: Band II* (Wiesbaden: Feministischer Buchverlag, 1993), p. 47.

²¹⁶ During a visit to Mette's room, Gisela begins a morbid discussion about her weariness with life and sense of impending death (p. 189-93). She also mentions her resemblance to her father, who committed suicide after her mother left him, and references how she was presumed to be 'hereditarily tainted' owing to this likeness, suggesting a predisposition to such impulses. Moreover, she reiterates her desire for 'ewige Ruhe' (eternal rest) following her abandonment by her lover. She then later finds Gisela searching for Olga's revolver and stating her desire to shoot herself in the temple (p. 245). This situation is reminiscent of Olga's melancholy and subsequent suicide following her presumed abandonment by Mette in the first volume of the novel.

infatuation with Mette, her desire remains largely unrequited save for a few brief and ambivalent encounters, as the protagonist appears to be unable to overcome her longing for her lost love. Later in the narrative, this longing is also briefly projected onto the motherly figure of Sophie Degebrodts, who shares her former companion's passion for literature and the arts. Following a discussion of Goethe, which is reminiscent of Olga's likening of literary figures to old friends, Mette remarks 'Wie du mich manchmal an Olga erinnerst' (II, p. 279).²¹⁷ Following this discussion they share a brief kiss, before parting ways for good, as Sophie reflects on her need to remain with her partner Nora. Both Gisela and Sophie, who share characteristics Mette associates strongly with her dead companion, are portrayed as emotionally unavailable and therefore it is implied that any pursuit of a romantic attachment would ultimately be futile. These uncanny doubles are depicted not as viable companions with whom she can form a lasting and fulfilling relationship, but rather merely as embodiments or manifestations of her enduring desire for Olga.

In the third volume of the narrative, the exotic figure of Corona von Gjellerstrom is directly situated as another double of the protagonist's dead lover. Even prior to the development of the passionate yet ultimately doomed relationship between her and Mette, Corona is depicted using imagery and terms reminiscent of the portrayal of Olga in the first volume of the novel. It is worth noting, for example, the introduction of Corona by her nickname Fiamma, which means flame in Italian. This name is particularly significant in Weirauch's use of doubling, as it extends the pattern of fire imagery that was associated with the portrayal of Mette's desire for Olga in the first volume of the narrative. Additionally, the apt nickname, which reflects her fiery and passionate personality, emphasises her and Olga's shared qualities – characteristics that

²¹⁷ 'How you remind me of Olga sometimes.'

had attracted the protagonist to her initially. Their chance initial encounter in the third volume of the novel is depicted as a moment of uncanny recognition, as Corona immediately recognises Olga's prized gold cigarette case that was gifted to Mette following her death. The two women develop a bond over their shared romantic history with Olga, as Mette comes to realise that it was in fact Corona that had gifted the cigarette case initially. Weirauch also uses mirror imagery to strengthen this doubling effect, as Corona and the case are both described in this manner. The reference to 'das spiegelnde Gold' (the reflective gold, p. 75) of the emblematic *Etui* situates it as a vivid reminder of Olga's memory, as well as emphasising the close connection between the two women. Moreover, the description '[Corona] sah nach den Sternen, deren stiller, schimmernder Glanz sich in ihren großen, tiefen Augen zu spiegeln schien' (p. 76-7),²¹⁸ suggests that Olga's interests are reflected in her. The shared interest in the stars and astrology, as well as the significance of the cigarette case, which is designed on the basis of these mutual passions, establishes the uncanny doubling of Olga and Corona.

Following this revelation about the previous relationship between the pair, Mette tries to rationalise her attempts to transpose her own lasting desire for Olga onto Corona. In her attempted justification, Mette tries to shift her association of the cigarette case, which until this point in the narrative had been situated as a relic to her dead lover, onto her new romantic interest:

Ich habe Fiamma geliebt – immer und immer. Ich habe sie geliebt, als ich das Etui in den Händen hielt und ihre Handschrift zum erstenmal sah. Ich habe sie geliebt, wenn Olga von ihr sprach wieviel hundertmal hat sie gewiß von ihr gesprochen, ohne ihren Namen zu nennen!²¹⁹

²¹⁸ 'Corona looked to the stars, whose silent shimmering appeared to be reflected in her large, deep eyes.'

²¹⁹ Weirauch, *Skorpion III*, p. 92. 'I have always, always loved Fiamma. I loved her, when I held the case in my hands and saw her handwriting for the first time. I loved her when Olga spoke of her. How many hundreds of times had she surely spoken of her without mentioning her name!'

Although she attempts to shift the significance of the *Etui*, the end focus on past conversations with Olga ensures that the focus remains on her memory. Additionally, this recollection of Olga's voice is described in concrete terms, whereas there is no certainty that the conversations had revolved around Corona, as her name goes unmentioned. In this respect, the transference of the token's signification reflects Mette's attempt to repress her enduring feelings toward Olga despite the vivid nature of her memory. Weirauch implies, however, that her efforts are ultimately futile, owing not only to the recurrent memories of Olga, but also to Corona's position as her double. This is particularly evident in the admission of Mette's compulsion 'Menschen treffen zu müssen, die Olga gleichen, oder die von Olga wußten – oder die Olga geliebt hatten' (p. 92-3).²²⁰ With this in mind, the use of the double merely renders the memory of her dead lover more vivid and continues to haunt the protagonist, therefore contributing to the sapphic uncanny aesthetic of the narrative.

In the third volume of *Der Skorpion*, it is not only Corona's resemblance but also her connection to Olga that is uncanny. In the description of the chance reintroduction of her and Mette, the initially unidentified Corona is described using references to characteristics that were originally attributed to Olga's allure throughout the first volume of the novel. The description of her is particularly reminiscent of the initial depiction of Olga, particularly the focus on qualities such as her hair, her walk, the way she carries herself and her voice. Additionally, the deferral of her name implies the secondary association of Corona with these characteristics, primarily evoking images or memories of Olga. This is evident by the admission that Mette had initially mistaken her for her dead lover:

²²⁰ 'To meet people that resembled Olga, or that knew of Olga – or that had loved Olga.'

„Wissen Sie auch, daß ich Sie für Olga gehalten habe – am ersten Abend, als Sie ins Speisezimmer kamen? Es war so seltsam – ich dachte immerfort an Olga, ich wartete auf sie oder auf ein Zeichen von ihr. Und als Sie hereinkamen, wußte ich nur, dass ich Sie kenne Ihren Gang, Ihre Stimme, jede Bewegung – aber ich wußte nichts von Ihnen sonst, nicht Ihren Namen, nicht wo ich Sie gesehen hatte – und Sie hatten dies Parfüm an sich“ (p. 80).²²¹

The initial uncertainty surrounding the identities of the two women in this wraithlike description of Corona emphasises the likeness, situating her primarily as a ‘Zeichen’ (sign) of Olga rather than affording her a distinct identity. The end focus on the perfume, which Mette associates instantly with Olga, referring to the memories evoked by the fragrance, strengthens this link (p. 81). The uncanny connection established between the two objects of Mette’s desire in this ethereal description further situates Corona as a double of the dead Olga.

The figure of Corona is also depicted in terms of physical attributes and qualities associated with Olga throughout the narrative, therefore directly positioning her as a *Doppelgänger*. Weirauch suggests through her repetition of shared characteristics with Olga, notably her repeated use of corporeal imagery, that the resemblance between the two women is uncanny. The description of her as ‘Groß und schlank und elegant, ein wenig blaß, ein wenig gereizt (p.291)²²² mirrors the initial depiction of Olga, who is also initially described as *groß* und *schlank* in her first meeting with Mette.²²³ Moreover, her build and pallor are also reiterated throughout the narrative, as well as her characteristic impatience and irascibility. The frequent portrayals of her beauty juxtaposed with references to her fiery, haughty disposition are also echoed in descriptions of Corona throughout the third volume of *Der Skorpion*. The statement ‘Sie

²²¹ “Did you also know that I had taken you for Olga – on the first night that you came into the dining hall? It was so strange – I thought of Olga constantly, I was waiting for her, or for a sign from her. When you entered, I knew only that I knew you, your walk, your voice, every move – but I did not know anything else about you, neither your name, not where I had seen you – and you were wearing this perfume.”

²²² ‘Tall, slender and elegant, a little pale and a little annoyed.’

²²³ Weirauch, *Skorpion I*, p. 32.

war sehr groß und schlank in ihrem weißen Sommerkleid, und ihr schönes Gesicht trug den kalten und gelangweilten und hochmütigen Ausdruck, den es meistens hatte' (p. 86)

evokes recollections not only of Olga's build, but also of her characteristic haughtiness.

²²⁴ Moreover, the focus on Corona's 'reiches, dunkles Haar' (p. 81) mirrors the

romanticised description of Olga's 'rich, dark hair' in the initial description of her.²²⁵

More striking still is the direct repetition of the eroticised image of the hands. The

reference to Corona's 'schmalen, kraftvollen Hände' (p. 90) suggests a direct association

of Corona's hands with Olga's, which are repeatedly described as *schmal* and *kraftvoll*,

suggesting that her unfulfilled desire for Olga is projected onto her. With this in mind,

Mette forms a romantic attachment not to Corona the individual, but rather to her as an

uncanny double of her dead lover. In this respect, rather than forming an emotional

bond with her new romantic interest, the protagonist projects her lasting, unfulfilled

desire for Olga onto a living, or 'undead,' representative. The transference of Mette's

sexual desire onto Corona, however, is unable to replicate the close emotional and

spiritual bond developed between her and her lost lover, therefore implying that the

memories evoked merely emphasise her loss.

Although Corona is situated as a *Doppelgänger* of Olga, Weirauch implies that Mette's projection of her desire for the latter onto her new companion is ultimately futile. Despite the uncanny resemblance between the two women, Mette's attempt at replicating the bond she shared with Olga is doomed to failure, as her new love interest is positioned as a flawed signifier for her lost lover. When questioning how Mette views her, after her admission that she had been thinking about Olga, Corona defines herself

²²⁴ 'She was very tall and slender in her white summer dress and her beautiful face wore the cold, blasé and arrogant expression that it usually had.'

²²⁵ Weirauch, *Skorpion I*, p. 32.

using the same pattern of imagery used to describe the dead woman throughout the hotel scene in the first volume of the narrative:

„Was bin ich denn für Sie, he? Ein wildes Tier, dem man aus dem Wege geht, ja? Ein Aussätziger, vor dem man davonläuft? Ein böser Geist, vor dem man sich bekreuzigt? Was bin ich denn für Sie?“ (p. 90).²²⁶

This description reflects the question posed by Mette to Olga in the hotel room after the sex scene, as she asks her lover ‘Was bist du nur? Bist du ein wildes Tier...oder ein Gott...oder der Geist einer weißen Orchidee?’²²⁷ Olga responds that prior to their lovemaking she had considered herself to be ‘ein armes gepeinigtes Tier’ (a poor, tortured creature).²²⁸ The reference to Corona as ‘ein wildes Tier’ mirrors this description of Olga in animalistic terms throughout the hotel extract. Unlike Corona, who is positioned as a wild and dangerous animal, Mette’s first love is likened to a vulnerable, ‘hunted’ or ‘wounded’ animal that had been tamed, even saved by her companion.²²⁹ Additionally, the reference to both Olga and Corona as a ‘Geist’ strengthens the association of sapphic desire with haunting, as their allure is described in spectral terms. Whereas Mette likens Olga to the spirit of a white orchid, implying her beauty, elegance and virtue, Corona refers to herself as an evil or wicked spirit. This semantic association between the two women contributes to the use of uncanny repetition, as the living Corona is again merely positioned as an undead representative for Mette’s lost love in this reimagining of the Gothic double. Weirauch suggests the destructive nature of forming a romantic attachment with this uncanny double, as her

²²⁶ ‘With two steps Corona was before her and slammed her small but powerful hands into her shoulder like paws: “Well, what am I to you then? A wild animal to be avoided, is that it? A leper to flee from? An evil spirit, before which one must make the sign of the cross? What am I to you?”’

²²⁷ ‘What are you? Are you a wild animal...or a god...or the spirit of a white orchid?’

²²⁸ Weirauch, *Skorpion I*, p. 166.

²²⁹ Weirauch, *Skorpion I*, pp. 162–3.

lasting love for Olga is projected onto Corona and therefore the *Doppelgänger* merely serves as a haunting reminder of her loss.

IV. Memory and the Metropolis: (Un)Dead Representatives

Weirauch suggests that Mette, despite repeated attempts to repress her love for Olga and establish a relationship with Corona, is ultimately unable to separate her feelings toward her living companion from her enduring love of her dead beloved. In this respect, the protagonist's desire for Corona can be read merely as a resurfacing or manifestation of her love for Olga. In her essay on the uncanny double in Hoffmann's 'Der Sandmann,' Sarah Kofman also considers the problematic tendency of reliance on dead representatives in the place of exposure to the living. She argues that the 'bad mimesis' in the form of the double makes the protagonist turn to 'dead' representatives rather than the presence of a living lover:

Nathaniel's perversion is illustrated by his indifference to Clara's charms, the fact that he prefers his [lifeless] fiancée to his flesh and blood one, and his failure to distinguish between the living and the dead.²³⁰

In *Der Skorpion*, despite her efforts to redirect her affections for Olga onto Corona, who is positioned as the living double of her deceased lover, Mette is unable to break this association and develop a similar bond with her in her own right. Weirauch's protagonist blurs the distinctions between the living double and the true object of her desire. Throughout the narrative, Mette attributes characteristics or memories of Olga to Corona:

²³⁰ Kofman, p. 78.

Mette schloß die Augen und lauschte in sich hinein. Sie rief sich Worte zurück, die Olga ihr gesagt hatte- aber sie konnte sich die Stimme, den Tonfall nicht zurückrufen. Immer war es eine andere Stimme, die um eine Schattierung heller und süße und weicher war...immer war es Coronas Stimme... (p. 85)²³¹

Her attempt to recall Olga's voice, although Corona's begins to overshadow it, emphasises her desire to retain of her memory of her dead lover. The attempt to render their voices distinguishable through the use of rhetorical questions, such as 'hatte das Olga nicht gesagt?' juxtaposed with realisations like 'Ach nein, das war wohl Fiamma gewesen'(p. 107)²³² contributes to the uncanny aesthetic. The recurrent attempts to remember Olga imply the extent to which Mette continues, and even desires, to be haunted by the memory of her lost love.

Despite her attempts at repression or transference throughout the narrative, Weirauch suggests that the pain of Olga's loss still persists for Mette. The memory is intensified by the realisation that in order to visit their mutual friend Peterchen for advice on building a home, the protagonist must return to Berlin:

Sie fürchtete die Straßen, als müssten sie jetzt noch widerhallen von all dem Leid, das Mette durch sie hingetragen hatte. Alles, was sie seitdem erduldet hatte – Qual und Reue und Scham und Angst und Ekel – schrumpfte zu einem wesenlosen Nichts zusammen, wenn die Erinnerung an den einzigen großen Schmerz ihres Lebens sie fasste. (p. 34)²³³

The direct association of the intense emotions with the city streets suggests how the return to the location where the two women fell in love has the power to cause previously concealed or repressed feelings to resurface. Additionally, the end-focus on

²³¹ 'Mette closed her eyes and listened to herself. She recalled the words that Olga had said to her - but she could not recall the voice or the tone. It was always another voice, a voice just a shade higher in pitch, a shade sweeter and softer—it was always Corona's voice.'

²³² 'Did Olga not say that? Oh, no of course that had been Fiamma.'

²³³ 'She feared the streets, as if they still ought to echo with all the misery that she had had to bear through them. All that she had suffered since, all the torture, repentance, shame, fear and disgust shrivelled into an unanimated nothing as the recollection of the single greatest grief of her life came over her.'

the great pain emphasises the suffering linked with the city, in which Olga had lived and died, as does the statement 'so untrennbar war die Stadt mit diesem Schmerz verbunden'(p. 34).²³⁴ The reiterated references to this pain highlights the intensity of emotion still felt by the surviving partner, despite the time that has elapsed since her loss. On returning to the city, however, the protagonist is confronted with pleasant recollections of the living Olga, rather than the feared memories of her death:

Wie lange war es her, daß sie hier angekommen war – und aus dem Gewimmel von Menschen auf dem Bahnsteig ragte Olgas Gestalt? Und sie saß mit Olga im Wartesaal, in einer eiskalten Dezembarnacht und wartete auf den nächsten Zug (p. 36)²³⁵

Instead of the anticipated feelings of sadness and loss, it is the vivid image of her lost lover that is evoked by her return to Berlin, prompting Mette to recall the first night they had spent together.

Mette's persistent memories of Olga, which are depicted in detail throughout the narrative, convey the intensity of the desire still felt by the former toward the latter. The vividness of these repeated recollections affords the dead woman an uncanny, almost living presence, both in Mette's imagination and the narrative structure itself. In addition to the repeated memories of Olga, the description of the protagonist's returns to Berlin reflect Mette's initial visits to the object of her desire in the first volume of *Der Skorpion*:

Ein erlösendes Gefühl tiefer Ruhe kam über Mette. Sie ging langsam die Motzstraße hinunter, die sie bisher immer vermieden hatte. [...] Sie blieb ein paar

²³⁴ 'The city was so inseparably linked with this pain.'

²³⁵ 'How long ago had it been that she had arrived here, and had seen Olga's figure standing out from the teeming masses on the station platform. And she had sat with Olga in the waiting room on that freezing December night and had waited for the next train.'

Sekunden vor dem Schaufenster stehen, in dessen Spiegeln sie früher Olgas Haustür beobachtet hatte (p. 123-4).²³⁶

This cyclical narrative structure also contributes to the effect of uncanny repetition and subsequently to the sapphic Gothic aesthetic of the novel. The image of the mirror is especially significant, as Mette's present becomes a reflection of her past, suggesting her inability to overcome her enduring emotional bond with Olga. Additionally, the boundaries between the protagonist's 're-animated' past and the present reality of her loss are repeatedly blurred. In the scene of the protagonist's return to Motzstraße and subsequent imagined visit to the opera with Olga, for example, Weirauch implies that whilst reminiscing about their past together, Mette attempts to forget about her lover's death, describing her almost in living terms. This temporal slippage, evident by the phrases 'Sie waren ja frei für den Abend – Olga und sie' and 'Ja, nun war Olga da, und Olga hatte Zeit für sie' (p. 124),²³⁷ implies Mette's lasting reliance on the dead other in her conceptualisation of the self and her place in the world. The use of dark humour, in which Mette momentarily forgets that 'Olga Radó brauchte keine Einlaßkarte!' (p. 125)²³⁸ further contributes to this uncanny sense of temporal dislocation. These reiterated memories of the living Olga imply the enduring intensity of the protagonist's desire for her lover, despite the time elapsed since her death.

Weirauch also suggests the enduring nature of Mette's longing to retain a physical connection with Olga, portraying the recurrent recollections of her in a sensual, and even eroticised, manner. In the confessional statement 'Ich fühle Olga in allen

²³⁶ 'A redeeming feeling of deep calm came over Mette. She walked slowly along Motzstraße, which until now she had always avoided. [...] For a few seconds she remained standing in front of the shop window, in the reflections of which she used to watch the entrance to Olga's house.'

²³⁷ 'They were indeed free for the evening – she and Olga... Yes, now Olga was there and Olga had time for her.'

²³⁸ 'Olga Radó did not need a ticket.'

Nervenenden' (p. 48),²³⁹ the use of the present tense, which seems inconsistent with the depiction of her dead lover, also suggests the intensity of this lasting physical desire.

Similarly, the use of the present continuous 'Sie erinnerte sich mit brennender Sehnsucht der Zeit,' (p. 122)²⁴⁰ contributes to the sense of temporal dislocation in the narrative. The detailed description of Olga's corporeal characteristics also conveys an enduring physical desire:

Sie sah Olgas Gestalt groß und schlank und dunkel – mit ihren raschen Schritten schräg über den Damm kommen. [...] Sie kam auf Mette zu, und Mette glaubte zu fühlen, wie die schmale, kräftige Hand sich leicht in ihren Arm schob (p. 124).²⁴¹

The foregrounding of her physical attributes in this passage seems incongruous with the description of a dead woman. Contemporary critics, such as Castle and Palmer, argue that in early twentieth-century narratives sapphic sexuality was typically depicted in spectral terms, in an attempt to 'decarnalise lesbian desire.'²⁴² I would argue, however, that although Weirauch does employ the haunting motif, her depiction of Mette's sapphic desire is far from ghostly in nature. The focus on Olga's 'schmale, kräftige Hand,' for example, suggests the eroticised nature of her desire, therefore emphasising the physical nature of the bond between them. This is reinforced by Mette's affectionate attempt to reach out to touch Olga's hand: 'Sie reckte ein wenig die Fingerspitzen, wie um nach Olgas Hand zu tasten' (p. 129).²⁴³ The implied inability to distinguish between the haunting memory of the past and the present reality is in keeping with the Modernist notion of the split subject, therefore destabilising the notion of any unified

²³⁹ 'I feel Olga in every nerve ending.'

²⁴⁰ 'She remembered the time with a burning desire.'

²⁴¹ 'She saw Olga's figure, tall, slender and dark, crossing the embankment obliquely with her usual hurried walk [...] She came up to Mette and Mette thought that she could feel her slender, yet strong hand lightly push itself under her arm.'

²⁴² For an in-depth examination of the implications of the spectral representational model in early twentieth-century depictions of lesbianism, see Castle, *The Apparitional Lesbian* (1993) and Palmer, *Lesbian Gothic: Transgressive Fictions* (1999).

²⁴³ 'She spread her finger tips a little, as if fumbling for Olga's hand.'

sense of selfhood following Olga's death. Whilst Mette outwardly demonstrates a conscious effort to establish a new life and future, rather than to continue to mourn her loss, Weirauch implies that she retains an unconscious desire to hold on to her romantic attachment to Olga.

In the third volume of *Der Skorpion*, it is not only the city, which conjures images and memories of the protagonist's lost love, but also her house in the countryside. In the narrative, Mette's attempt to acquire property is in a sense an attempt to overcome her 'crisis of the proper.' Nenko notes that the house becomes a symbol of her recognition of self-sufficiency, stating that '[a]fter years of chasing phantasms – whether the absent mother or Olga – Mette withdraws into herself to find comfort and to nurture her melancholic desire.'²⁴⁴ I would argue, however, that the house is rather more significant through its clear association with Olga, representing lost opportunity and a symbol of the life that she had aspired to with her companion. Weirauch establishes this connection of the house with Olga from the opening of the volume, as the memories of her resurface on Mette's return to Berlin for property advice from Peterchen. The link is further developed by the vivid fantasy of Olga that is sparked by the arrival of her blueprints for the house. Mette muses '[w]ie schön müsste es sein, so auf jemanden zu warten, den man liebte,' before clarifying 'auf Olga zu warten' (p. 84).²⁴⁵ The scene that follows, in which Mette pictures sharing the house with her, once again blurs the boundaries between imagination and reality, as the dead woman is depicted in a lifelike fashion:

²⁴⁴ Nancy P. Nenko, 'Bildung and Desire: Anna Elisabet Weirauch's *Der Skorpion*', in *Queering the Canon: Defying Sights in German Literature and Culture*, ed. by Christoph Lorey and John L. Plews (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 1998), pp. 205–21 (p. 218).

²⁴⁵ 'How lovely it must be to wait for somebody that you love like that. To wait for Olga.'

Olga [sprang]heraus und nahm Mette ganz fest in die Arme und sagte mit ihrer schönen klingenden Stimme: „Mette, kleine Mette, mein Mädelchen, nun bin ich da...hast du denn so lange auf mich gewartet?“ (p. 85)²⁴⁶

Weirauch even attributes dialogue to Olga in the form of the question, allowing an exchange to take place between the living protagonist and her dead love, re-animating her momentarily. The house, therefore, becomes a crypt or a relic for her partner, as opposed to a celebration of independence or autonomy. Whilst the property could be considered a symbol of self-sufficiency, the repeated references to Olga would suggest that the house, like Mette's unconscious, is haunted by the persistent presence of her lost love.

Through the reiterated association with Olga, Weirauch also further situates the house as a sapphic space, which may be considered reflective of Mette's own identity. The connection between the space and her love is reinforced by the modification of imagery used to convey her desire in the first volume of the novel. Weirauch adopts the fire imagery, initially used to depict the passion between the two women, to describe the location surrounding her adopted home:

Es kamen Novembertage, an denen der Himmel so unwirklich leuchtete, wie eine blaubrennende Flamme. Immer noch waren Blätter an den Kastanien, aber sie waren so zart, wie ganz dünne gelbe Seide (p. 207-8)²⁴⁷

The description of the blue-burning flame, as well as references to the 'flammende Herrlichkeit' (flaming grandeur) of the forest location, evokes the depiction of desire through fire imagery in the first volume of the trilogy. The images of the silk, and especially of the blue flame, are especially reminiscent of the description of the room in

²⁴⁶ 'Olga jumped out, took Mette into her arms and said with her beautiful, ringing voice: "Mette, my little Mette, my girl, I am here now... have you really waited for me for that long?"'

²⁴⁷ 'There were November days, on which the sky gleamed in such an unworldly manner, like a flame burning blue. Leaves still clung to the chestnut trees, but they were so frail, like fine yellow silk.'

the hotel scene of the narrative, in which the pair act on their desires for the first time. By associating this space with Olga and the memory of the love they shared, Weirauch creates another sapphic space, which becomes increasingly central to Mette's self-conceptualisation toward the close of the narrative. The repeated references to the symbolic association of the house with the life that Mette had hoped to share with her lover situate the property as another form of uncanny repetition, as the house serves as a constant reminder of her loss and lost opportunity. With this in mind, Olga continues to play a significant role in the development of Mette's sense of selfhood and sapphic identity despite her early demise. To deny these memories would be to deny a significant part of Mette's own lesbian identity, which was shaped primarily through her recognition of her desire for Olga.

V. Conclusion: The Female Uncanny and the Lesbian 'Problem'

The notion of a lesbian uncanny may at first appear to be a problematic and inadequate framework for the portrayal of sapphic sexuality, largely owing to the androcentric focus of Freud's theory. Nevertheless, the uncanny has provided a useful reference point for the Female Gothic, particularly the ghost story. In her examination of the 'female uncanny,' Tania Modleski explains that the source of the uncanny for the feminine subject stems primarily from the fear of repetition and castration – namely in relation to the mother figure.²⁴⁸ Women, she suggests, harbour uncanny anxieties regarding the repetition of the life and fate of the mother, as well as the fear of failing to separate themselves from the mother, both in terms of identity and the state of motherhood.

²⁴⁸ Tania Modleski, *Loving with a Vengeance: Mass Produced Fantasies for Women* (New York: Routledge, 2007), p. 63.

She argues that owing to the closer bond between women and their mothers, they may actually have a 'stronger' sense of the uncanny than their male counterparts. Whilst the figure of the mother also plays a role in the construction of lesbian identity, I would argue that the sapphic uncanny hinges rather more on unconscious or hidden desires and the anxieties surrounding them, than fears regarding the mother. In fact, in lesbian narratives, the sapphic subject typically desires to retain, or else mimic, the bond with the mother figure, usually represented by the object of their desire, as the previous chapter illustrated. In this respect, the lesbian subject is the stranger within the contemporary construct of the female uncanny.

Whilst the female uncanny considers the significance of the Freudian notion of the original *Heim* as a site of the uncanny in terms of fears surrounding the mother figure, it is arguably inadequate in representing the simultaneous desire experienced by the lesbian subject. The Freudian theory of the uncanny is, therefore, perhaps a more productive framework for the portrayal of sapphic sexuality despite its androcentric limitations. However, owing to its reliance on the discourse of sexual difference, it can certainly be argued that the psychoanalytical approach to the uncanny does not provide adequate provision for the lesbian subject. Although neither Freud nor Jentsch directly considered the possibility of a queer uncanny in their analyses of the aesthetic, certain tropes or effects associated with the phenomenon can provide a useful reference point in the articulation of same-sex desire. Royle's notion of recognising a foreign body within the self is particularly significant to any potential readings of a sapphic uncanny. The process of coming to terms with one's sexuality and the subsequent re-evaluation of one's position within the normative social order can be read as experiencing the self as a foreign body. For the sapphic subject, the recognition of the self as the other, as well as

their marginal position within society is in keeping with the notion of recognising the strange within the familiar, leading to what Royle terms 'the very estrangement of inner silence and solitude.'²⁴⁹ In *The Queer Uncanny* (2012), Palmer notes that queer literary narratives and theoretical texts alike are 'infiltrated' by tropes and images with 'uncanny resonance.' She argues that this permeation, coupled with the 'inflow of queer perspectives into Gothic critical writing,' create 'fertile ground' for the discussion and analysis of the uncanny in contemporary fiction.²⁵⁰ It is, therefore, also timely to broaden the critical discussion on the topic to encompass the possibility of a lesbian uncanny, as well as to consider what early twentieth-century depictions of sapphic sexuality bring to bear on these debates.

Whilst Palmer's notion of the 'Queer Uncanny' can usefully illuminate the subversion and modification of Gothic tropes in interwar German lesbian narratives, it should be noted that equating female homosexuality with gay male desire also has limitations. The literary depiction of lesbian desire, and especially the interwar construction of sapphic sexuality, is distinct from representations of male homosexuality. Despite some common motifs and conventions, particularly in nineteenth-century Gothic literature, gay narratives rely on different tropes and significations in their depiction of desire and identity. This is particularly true following the emergence of lesbian-authored narratives during the interwar period. The appropriation of established Gothic tropes associated with deviant desires began to take on new significations for the portrayal of the sapphic subject. Royle's notion of recognising the self as the other is relevant to the representation of the queer subject, particularly in depictions of male homosexuality, such as Mann's *Der Tod in Venedig* and

²⁴⁹ Royle, p. 2.

²⁵⁰ Palmer, *The Queer Uncanny*, p. 13.

Marcel Proust's *Sodome et Gomorrhe* (1922). In female-authored narratives, however, the uncanny aesthetic typically stems from the commingling of self and other. In *Der Skorpion* and *Eine Frau zu sehen*, the resurfacing of repressed images of the desired other from within disrupts the previously secure self-conceptualisation of the lesbian subject. More significantly, it is the reliance on the other in the formation of sapphic selfhood, which distinguishes the literary portrayal of lesbian sexuality from its gay male counterpart. Weirauch's protagonist, for example, is described as 'ein leeres Gefäß' (an empty vessel) until Olga had given her substance (p. 316). The lesbian uncanny relies not just on a notion of sexual sameness, but rather oneness, destabilising the conceptualisation of the self in relation to the desired other. Mette's own sapphic selfhood is intrinsically linked with that of her lover and is, therefore, haunted not only by memories of her lost love, but also with manifestations of her own repressed desires. Ultimately, the creation of a sapphic uncanny aesthetic emphasises internalised anxieties surrounding the problematic and unstable conceptualisation of sapphic identity, particularly with regards to its reliance on the definition of - and by - the other.

Julia Kristeva states that 'to worry or to smile, such is the choice when we are assailed by the strange; our decision depends on how familiar we are with our own ghosts.'²⁵¹ This observation on the relationship of the self with the spectral other can illuminate lesbian-authored depictions of the process of coming to terms with the ghosts of girlfriends past. The purpose of my analysis has not been to situate either of the chosen texts solely as Gothic narratives, but rather to outline their use of an uncanny aesthetic to facilitate the portrayal of lesbian desire. As I have argued, however, both Weirauch and Schwarzenbach adopt tropes typically associated with the

²⁵¹ Kristeva, p. 191.

uncanny, to illustrate the complex and ambivalent construction of sapphic sexuality during the interwar period. With this in mind, my analysis sought to illustrate not only the significance of haunting motifs in these narratives, but also the centrality of Gothic tropes and conventions, including the double, apparitional memories and uncanny repetition, in depictions of lesbianism during the interwar period. Weirauch and Schwarzenbach's reimagining of the uncanny in their respective literary representations of lesbian sexuality allow a useful insight into the complex and contradictory conceptualisation of sapphic selfhood at the time of writing. *Der Skorpion* and *Eine Frau zu sehen* are particularly significant in shaping this sapphic Gothic uncanny model. These gothicised narratives invite new understandings of sapphic selfhood at this critical moment in the imagining of modern lesbian identity.

Conclusion

Tracing the Spectres of Sapphism

Conclusion

The limited conceptualisation of the Gothic in German scholarship has been addressed by recent studies like Andrew Cusack and Barry Murnane's volume *Popular Revenants* (2012) and Patrick Bridgewater's *The German Gothic Novel in Anglo-German Perspective* (2013). These important studies dispel the widespread myth regarding the disappearance of German Gothicism following 1820, gesturing towards the possibility of a continuing Gothic tradition in German literature. Nevertheless, despite its significance in the development of the modern Gothic mode – as my analysis has sought to demonstrate - existing scholarship on the subject has largely neglected German literature in favour of its anglophone counterparts. However, as I have argued, there is a strong tradition of appropriating and reimagining established Gothic tropes in modern German literary narratives, particularly those that convey deviant or forbidden desires. The adaptation of popular nineteenth-century anglophone narratives like *Dracula* and *Carmilla* in early twentieth-century Expressionist horror films, like *Nosferatu: Eine Symphonie des Grauens* and *Vampyr - Der Traum des Allan Grey*, suggests the relevancy of these tropes in modern German culture. This process of reimagining established Gothic tropes, like the vampire, to reflect contemporary fears demonstrates their enduring cultural currency. The rapid changes in society following the *fin de siècle* required a mode of representation that conveyed their complexities and contradictions. The established Gothic mode, which had come to simultaneously embody the fears regarding progressive modernity and atavistic regression experienced throughout the nineteenth century, provided a productive aesthetic in which to do so. After all, surely what renders the Gothic monster so terrifying is its ability to resurface under different guises. Although their signifiers had begun to shift to reflect modern twentieth-century

contexts, these traditional tropes and motifs, like haunting and vampirism, remained remarkably relevant.

This was especially true for gay and lesbian narratives whose depiction of homoerotic desire or the homosexual other was largely reliant on Gothic tropes of monstrosity or marginality, in order to connote the deviancy and difference typically associated with non-normative sexuality. Literary depictions of lesbianism, including the narratives by Weirauch, Döblin and Schwarzenbach examined at length in my analysis, undoubtedly belong to the emerging conceptualisation of an LGBT literary canon. Despite the reliance of the chosen narratives on typically Gothic motifs and aesthetics in their portrayals of sapphic sexuality, however, any Gothic readings of them have typically been overlooked in favour of the historicist or Modernist approaches with which my analysis has engaged. Nevertheless, I would argue that it would be negligent not to locate such narratives within the German Gothic tradition outlined by recent criticism. My analysis has demonstrated that sapphic Gothic narratives, such as Weirauch's *Der Skorpion* and Schwarzenbach's *Eine Frau zu sehen*, challenge the accepted notion of what constitutes Gothic literature through their use of a gothicised aesthetic in order to articulate internalised anxieties regarding sapphic sexuality. The creation of a modern Gothic aesthetic, through the appropriation and subversion of established nineteenth-century tropes, is central to the depiction of lesbianism in these texts. The modification of typical motifs associated with the tradition, such as the vampire, the double and the spectre, contribute to a distinctly gothicised representation of the lesbian subject and the darker side of her deviant desires. Whilst the reliance on such typically monstrous and abject figures could be considered an inadequate means of depicting lesbian identity, the gothicised portrayals provide an understanding of the

prevalent ambivalent attitudes towards sapphic sexuality during the interwar period. The reimagining of Gothic tropes, like vampirism and haunting, especially in lesbian-authored depictions of the sapphic subject, exposes the internalisation of lesbian panic and hostility that contributed to the complex conceptualisation of selfhood for many women.

My analysis has sought to demonstrate that the sapphic Gothic remains a fruitful area for further exploration, evident in the persistence of the outlined anxieties and ambivalent attitudes. The paradigm also invites future examination of other commonly modified gothicised tropes in interwar lesbian narratives, most notably transgressive figures embodying the duality of the sacred and profane. Such personas haunt both German and anglophone portrayals of lesbianism, such as Weirauch's *Der Skorpion* and Barnes's *Nightwood*. The tropes that have formed the basis for my discussion are also present in other significant sapphic narratives from the period, which have typically been overlooked by lesbian literary criticism. Schwarzenbach's coming out narrative is not unique in its examination of sapphic selfhood or desire. *Lyrische Novelle* (1933) is a thinly veiled autofictional novel documenting her time in Berlin during the early 1930s, which arguably belongs to the popular interwar strategy of crosswriting.²⁵² The text also modifies decadent imagery in its depiction of the city space, reminiscent of the gothicised urban aesthetic employed in Döblin's portrayal of deviant sexuality.

Additionally, the sapphic Gothic aesthetic established in *Eine Frau zu sehen* manifests in other interwar narratives by Schwarzenbach, which have received little attention for

²⁵²During the interwar period, the crosswriting strategy became a common means of articulating sapphic sexuality without encountering the hostility faced by more overtly lesbian narratives, such as Radclyffe Hall's 1928 novel *The Well of Loneliness*. Crosswriting is the transposition of lesbian desire, considered by many to be 'unrepresentable,' onto a more accepted model by situating the protagonist as a male character. Schwarzenbach later admitted that the desire depicted in *Lyrische Novelle* was, in fact, lesbian desire. The strategy was popularised by writers, such as Virginia Woolf and Sylvia Townsend Warner. For further discussion of crosswriting in interwar anglophone narratives, see Gay Wachman, *Lesbian Empire: Radical Crosswriting in the Twenties* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2001).

either their sapphic overtones or their distinctly gothicised style. The preoccupation with lesbian desire and loss in her account *Tod in Persien*, written during a trip to Persia in the mid-1930s but first published in 1995, is reminiscent of that in Weirauch's third volume of *Der Skorpion*. Schwarzenbach situates the bleak and alienating landscape as a distinctly gothicised space, in which the narrator's love and loss of Jalé, the daughter of a Turkish diplomat, can be articulated. The oriental Gothic aesthetic in her account enables the portrayal of lesbian love and affords an insight into her conceptualisation of sapphic sexuality. With this in mind, I would argue that the sapphic Gothic model can also usefully illuminate other largely overlooked interwar lesbian narratives, including instances of female homoeroticism in modern American fiction.

Nella Larsen's 1929 novel *Passing*, published the same year that Schwarzenbach's *Eine Frau zu sehen* was written, is equally noteworthy in its use of a Gothic Modernist aesthetic in order to articulate sapphic sexuality. Johanna M. Wagner has outlined the Gothic elements in Larsen's narrative, which contemporary criticism has largely situated within either an African-American or a Modernist tradition. The sapphic Gothic paradigms identified in this thesis, however, can build on Wagner's analysis, particularly the notion of a sapphic uncanny model for representing repressed lesbian desire. Like Schwarzenbach's account, the gothicised aesthetic in Larsen's novel stems from her modification of the double trope. Claire Kendry, a childhood friend of the protagonist Irene Redfield, is the source of this uncanny doubling, as well as the subsequent return of both Irene's repressed sapphic sexuality and their shared secret of her biracial background. As in the sapphic Gothic German narratives examined in the second chapter of my analysis, the protagonist's uncertainty toward her double throughout *Passing* is used to convey her own ambivalence toward her feelings for her

childhood friend. In this respect, Larsen also modifies the Gothic double trope to articulate her protagonist's internalised hostility toward the sapphic subject's sexuality. Another significant African-American narrative in its depiction of female homoeroticism is Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937), which charts the protagonist Janie's attempt at self-conceptualisation and erotic fulfilment through her friendship with her 'kissin'- friend' Pheoby.²⁵³ The novel is also noteworthy in its modification of the Gothic doubling trope. Hurston positions the protagonist as a double of the vodou loa associated with sapphic sexuality, situating the narrative in debates on the Gothic duality of the sacred and profane. The novel, however, is more subversive in its depiction of homoerotic desire, which is foregrounded in the opening of the narrative. The memories that resurface are those of Janie's earlier repression, therefore subverting the model outlined previously. Later gothicised sapphic narratives, such as Shirley Jackson's *The Haunting of Hill House* (1959), can also broaden the paradigm outlined in this thesis, gesturing toward its continuity and adaptability in modern lesbian narratives.

Sapphic Gothic tropes recur in later German lesbian narratives, although the gothicised model is typically adapted to reflect a contemporary context and emerging socio-political anxieties during the 1980s and 1990s. The appropriation of these motifs is evident in cultural productions from both lesbian and heterosexual-identified writers. A noteworthy example of the recurrent vampire trope to signify sapphic sexuality is in the works of Elfriede Jelinek, such as her 1992 play *Krankheit oder Moderne Frauen* (Illness or Modern Women). Her writings subvert the sapphic sucker motif to convey not only lesbian sexuality and conceptualisation, but also female desire and artistic production more broadly. Jelinek adopts the modern lesbian vampire trope and its

²⁵³ Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (London: Virago, 1986), p. 19.

association with illness, sterility and perversion to interrogate the roles typically ascribed to women within social and literary structures. The sapphic Gothic motifs associated with haunting and memory also characteristically repeat themselves in contemporary lesbian narratives. One such example, preoccupied with lesbian love and loss, is Luise F. Pusch's 1980 account of the loss of her partner *Sonja. Eine Melancholie für Fortgeschrittene* (Sonja. Melancholy for the Advanced), published under the pseudonym Judith Offenbach. The subtitle of the text arguably even exposes sapphic Gothic sensibilities and directly cites Djuna Barnes, whose vampiric sapphists in *Nightwood* are the quintessential Gothic Modernist lesbian figures. The fragmented account, which is comprised of a series of diary entries, juxtaposes memories of their relationship with reflections on the position of the lesbian subject in society. Like Schwarzenbach and Weirauch's depictions, the narrative model also enables the portrayal of concerns, such as social hostility, self-hate and suicidal thought. Pusch's modified model of memory and loss can therefore usefully illuminate the shifting anxieties about the place of the lesbian subject in contemporary society. In recent years, the tropes have also resurfaced in cinematic narratives, such as the 2010 vampire film *Wir sind die Nacht* (We are the Night) and Monika Treut's 2008 German-Taiwanese transnational production *Ghosted*. Gothicised lesbian figures keep resurfacing in cultural productions, therefore revealing the persistence of a number of fears faced by the lesbian subject about her place in today's world.

The sapphic Gothic is distinct in its articulation of this ambivalence and especially internalised hostility, as well as subsequent anxieties regarding the recognition of the stranger within the self. Whilst studies, such as Castle's *The Apparitional Lesbian* and Palmer's *Lesbian Gothic*, provide an important survey of

gothicised lesbian literature, they omit significant European narratives, which provide valuable insights into early conceptualisations of modern lesbian identity. Despite the pioneering representations of sapphic sexuality in narratives, such as Weirauch's trilogy, German texts have received at best a fleeting recognition in anglophone scholarship on lesbian literature. Moreover, no critical attention has been paid to their Gothicism, which provided a noteworthy precedent to the appropriation of Gothic tropes, like the vampire or the double, in anglophone Sapphic Modernist narratives like Barnes's *Nightwood*. Unlike the patriarchal paranoia associated with nineteenth-century portrayals of lesbianism in Gothic literature, the internalised hostility depicted in these sapphic Gothic narratives provides an invaluable understanding of concerns and anxieties faced by the sapphic subject during the early twentieth century. Lesbian-authored texts, such as *Der Skorpion* and *Eine Frau zu sehen*, allow an important insight into the self-conceptualisation of sapphic sexuality at this critical juncture in the imagining of modern lesbian identity. By identifying anxieties and instances of internalised homophobia, my analysis has sought to emphasise the relevancy of such narratives for contemporary society, as the place of the lesbian subject is largely still undergoing debate. The prevalence of discourses positioning homosexuality as immoral in current debates surrounding the place of same-sex marriage and the modern family in European society continue to locate the lesbian subject as a marginal or threatening figure. Moreover, the prevalence of Gothic motifs in popular anglophone lesbian-authored representations by the likes of Sarah Waters and Emma Donoghue implies that many of the internalised anxieties regarding the recognition of the stranger within the self persist. Although the signifiers may have shifted to reflect current concerns regarding the place of the lesbian subject in our society, sapphic spectres continue to haunt contemporary depictions of lesbianism in literature and popular culture.

Bibliography

- Auerbach, Nina, *Our Vampires, Ourselves* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995)
- Barkhoff, Jürgen, “‘The Echo of the Question, as If It Had Merely Resounded in a Tomb’: The Dark Anthropology of the Schauerroman in Schiller’s *Der Geisterseher*”, in *Popular Revenants: The German Gothic and Its International Reception, 1800-2000*, ed. by Andrew Cusack and Barry Murnane (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2012), pp. 44–59
- Bates, Charlotte, ‘Hotel Histories: Modern Tourists, Modern Nomads and the Culture of Hotel-Consciousness’, *Literature and History*, 12 (2003), 62–75
- Bauer, Heike, ‘Theorizing Female Inversion: Sexology, Discipline, and Gender at the Fin de Siècle’, *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 18 (2009), 84–102
- Botting, Fred, *Gothic: The New Critical Idiom* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996)
- Butler, Erik, *Metamorphoses of the Vampire in Literature and Film: Cultural Transformations in Europe, 1732 - 1933* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2011)
- Castle, Terry, *The Apparitional Lesbian: Female Homosexuality and Modern Culture* (Columbia University Press, 1993)
- Coleridge, Samuel Taylor, ‘Christabel’, in *Samuel Taylor Coleridge - The Major Works*, ed. by H. J. Jackson, Reprint edition (Oxford and New York: Oxford Paperbacks, 2008), pp. 68–86
- Craft, Christopher, “‘Kiss Me with Those Red Lips’: Gender and Inversion in Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*”, *Representations*, 1984, 107–33
- Cusack, Andrew, ‘Introduction’, in *Popular Revenants: The German Gothic and Its International Reception, 1800-2000*, ed. by Andrew Cusack and Barry Murnane (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2012), pp. 1–9
- Davis, Colin, *Haunted Subjects: Deconstruction, Psychoanalysis and the Return of the Dead* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2007)
- Davison, Carol Margaret, *Gothic Literature 1764-1824* (University of Wales Press, 2009)
- Dijkstra, Bram, *Idols of Perversity: Fantasies of Feminine Evil in Fin-de-Siècle Culture* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988)
- Doan, Laura, and Jane Garrity, ‘Introduction’, in *Sapphic Modernities: Sexuality, Women and National Culture*, ed. by Laura Doan and Jane Garrity (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), pp. 1–13
- Döblin, Alfred, *Die beiden Freundinnen und ihr Giftmord* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Verlag, 2013)

- Dryden, Linda, *The Modern Gothic and Literary Doubles: Stevenson, Wilde and Wells* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003)
- Faderman, Lilian, *Surpassing the Love of Men: Romantic Friendship and Love between Women from the Renaissance* (London: The Women's Press, 1985)
- Le Fanu, J. Sheridan, 'Carmilla', in *In a Glass Darkly* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 243–319
- Fleenor, Juliann E., 'Introduction', in *The Female Gothic*, ed. by Juliann E. Fleenor (Montreal and London: Eden, 1983), pp. 3–28
- Freud, Sigmund, 'Das Unheimliche', in *Das Unheimliche: Aufsätze zur Literatur* (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag, 1963), pp. 45–84
- , 'The Uncanny', in *Writings on Art and Literature*, trans. by James Strachey (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), pp. 193–233
- Fuechtner, Veronika, *Berlin Psychoanalytic: Psychoanalysis and Culture in Weimar Republic Germany and Beyond* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2011)
- Gelder, Ken, *Reading the Vampire* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994)
- Gordon, Liahna E., 'Bringing the U-Haul: Embracing and Resisting Sexual Stereotypes in a Lesbian Community', *Sexualities*, 9 (2006), 171–92
<<http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1363460706063118>>
- Haggerty, George E., *Queer Gothic* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2006)
- Halberstam, Judith, *Skin Shows: Gothic Horror and the Technology of Monsters* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995)
- Heiland, Donna, *Gothic & Gender: An Introduction* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004)
- Heller, Tamar, *Dead Secrets: Wilkie Collins and the Female Gothic* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992)
- Horner, Avril, and Sue Zlosnik, 'Strolling in the Dark: Gothic Flânerie in Djuna Barnes's Nightwood', in *Gothic Modernisms*, ed. by Andrew Smith and Jeff Wallace (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), pp. 78–94
- Hughes, William, and Andrew Smith, 'Introduction: Queering the Gothic', in *Queering the Gothic*, ed. by William Hughes and Andrew Smith (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2009), pp. 1–10
- Hurston, Zora Neale, *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (London: Virago, 1986)
- Jentsch, Ernst, 'Zur Psychologie Des Unheimlichen', *Psychiatrisch-Neurologische Wochenschrift*, 8.22 (25 Aug. 1906): 195-98 and 8.23 (1 Sept. 1906): 203-05.

- Kofman, Sarah, 'The Double Is/and the Devil: The Uncanniness of "The Sandman"', in *Literature in Psychoanalysis: A Reader*, ed. by Steve Vine, trans. by S. Wykes (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pp. 68–83
- Kristeva, Julia, *Strangers to Ourselves*, trans. by Leon S. Roudiez (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991)
- Mighall, Robert, *A Geography of Victorian Gothic Fiction: Mapping History's Nightmares* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999)
- Miller, Karl, *Doubles: Studies in Literary History* (Oxford University Press, 1985)
- Modleski, Tania, *Loving with a Vengeance: Mass Produced Fantasies for Women* (New York: Routledge, 2007)
- Moers, Ellen, *Literary Women: The Great Writers* (New York: Doubleday, 1976)
- Munt, Sally, *Heroic Desire: Lesbian Identity and Cultural Space* (London and Washington: Cassell, 1998)
- Murgopci, Agnes, 'The Vampire in Roumania', in *The Vampire: A Casebook*, ed. by Alan Dundes (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1998), pp. 12–34
- Nenno, Nancy P., 'Bildung and Desire: Anna Elisabeth Weirauch's Der Skorpion', in *Queering the Canon: Defying Sights in German Literature and Culture*, ed. by Christoph Lorey and John L. Plews (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 1998), pp. 207–21
- , 'Bildung and Desire: Anna Elisabeth Weirauch's Der Skorpion', in *Queering the Canon: Defying Sights in German Literature and Culture*, ed. by Christoph Lorey and John L. Plews (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 1998), pp. 205–21
- Nishiura, Hiroshi, 'Time Variations in the Transmissibility of Pandemic Influenza in Prussia, Germany, from 1918-19', *Theoretical biology & medical modelling*, 4 (2007), 20
- Palmer, Paulina, *Lesbian Gothic: Transgressive Fictions* (London: Cassell, 1999)
- , *The Queer Uncanny: New Perspectives on the Gothic* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2012)
- Parsons, Deborah L., *Streetwalking the Metropolis: Women, the City and Modernity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000)
- Perkowski, Jan L., 'The Romanian Folkloric Vampire', *East European Quarterly*, 16 (1982), 311–22
- Pollock, Griselda, *Vision and Difference: Femininity, Feminism and Histories of Art* (London: Routledge, 1988)
- Rice, Anne, *The Queen of the Damned* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1997)

- , *The Vampire Armand* (London: Arrow Books, 1999)
- Rich, Adrienne, *Of Woman Born: Motherhood As Experience and Institution* (New York: W W Norton & Company, 1976)
- Rowe, Dorothy, *Representing Berlin: Sexuality and the City in Imperial and Weimar Germany* (Aldershot ; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2003)
- Royle, Nicholas, *The Uncanny* (Manchester University Press, 2003)
- Sage, Victor, *Le Fanu's Gothic: The Rhetoric of Darkness* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004)
- Schaffer, Talia, "A Wilde Desire Took Me": The Homoerotic History of Dracula', *ELH*, 61 (1994), 381–425
- Schoppmann, Claudia, *'Der Skorpion': Frauenliebe in der Weimarer Republik* (Hamburg: Verlag Frühlings Erwachen, 1991)
- Schwarzenbach, Alexis, 'Nachwort', in *Eine Frau zu sehen*, ed. by Alexis Schwarzenbach (Zürich: Kein & Aber, 2008), pp. 67–77
- Schwarzenbach, Annemarie, *Eine Frau zu sehen*, ed. by Alexis Schwarzenbach (Zürich: Kein & Aber, 2008)
- Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York and Chichester: Columbia University Press, 1985)
- Simmel, Georg, 'Soziologie des Raumes', *Jahrbuch für Gesetzgebung, Verwaltung und Volkswirtschaft im Deutschen Reich*, 27 (1903), 27–71
- Smith, Andrew, *Gothic Literature* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013)
- , *Victorian Demons: Medicine, Masculinity and the Gothic at the Fin-de-Siècle* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004)
- Smith, Andrew, and Jeff Wallace, 'Introduction', in *Gothic Modernisms*, ed. by Andrew Smith and Jeff Wallace (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), pp. 1–10
- Sutton, Katie, 'Bridging the Rural/Urban Divide: Representations of Queer Female Experience in 1920s Germany', in *From Weimar to Christiana: German and Scandinavian Studies in Context*, ed. by Florence Feiereisen and Kyle Frackman (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007), pp. 37–53
- , *The Masculine Woman in Weimar Germany* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn, 2011)
- Tamagne, Florence, *A History of Homosexuality in Europe, Berlin, London, Paris 1919-1939: Vol. I & II*. (Algora Publishing, 2006)

- Tester, Keith, 'Introduction', in *The Flâneur*, ed. by Keith Tester (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), pp. 1–21
- Tichelaar, Tyler R., *The Gothic Wanderer: From Transgression to Redemption, Gothic Literature from 1794 - Present* (Modern History Press, 2012)
- Ulrichs, Karl Heinrich, *Incubus: Urningsliebe und Blutgier*, Forschungen über das Räthsel der mann männlichen Liebe, XII vols. (Leipzig: A. Serbe's Verlag, 1869)
- , 'Manor', in *Matrosengeschichten und Gedichte: Ein Lesebuch*. (Verlag Rosa Winkel, 1998), xviii, 73–84
- Vicinus, Martha, *Intimate Friends: Women Who Loved Women, 1778-1928* (University of Chicago Press, 2004)
- Wachman, Gay, *Lesbian Empire: Radical Crosswriting in the Twenties* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2001)
- Wallace, Diana, and Andrew Smith, 'Introduction: Defining the Female Gothic', in *The Female Gothic: New Directions* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pp. 1–12
- Weirauch, Anna Elisabet, *Der Skorpion: Band II* (Wiesbaden: Feministischer Buchverlag, 1993)
- , *Der Skorpion: Band III* (Wiesbaden: Feministischer Buchverlag, 1993)
- , *Der Skorpion: Roman* (Berlin and Frankfurt am Main: Ullstein Verlag, 1993)
- Wilson, Elizabeth, 'The Invisible Flâneur', *New Left Review*, I, 191 (1992), 90–110
- Wolff, Janet, *Feminine Sentences: Essays on Women and Culture* (University of California Press, 1990)
- Woolf, Virginia, *Street Haunting* (Toronto: Penguin Group Canada, 2005)
- Zelle, Carsten, 'Angenehmes Grauen': *Literarhistorische Beiträge zur Ästhetik des Schrecklichen im achtzehnten Jahrhundert* (Hamburg: F. Meiner, 1987)