Queer Multilingualism and Self-Translating the Queer Subject in Klaus Mann's *The Turning Point* (1942) and *Der Wendepunkt* (1952)

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ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on the study of queer multilingualism and self-translation and seeks to explore the role of language in the experiences of queer migrants and self-translation as a form of queer expression. Through an analysis of Klaus Mann and his autobiographies *The Turning Point* (1942) and *Der Wendepunkt* (1952)*,* the paper will show that in self-translating himself into English and back into German, Mann articulates the multiplicity and instability of his queer self, and reveals the inconsistency and contradictive nature of the categories that dictate identity. This analysis will focus on the differences between the English and German versions – what is translated and what is not, what is added and what is removed – and the multilingualism, the switching between languages, in each text. Both are considered as strategies for destabilizing and multiplying the autobiographical self and expressing its inherent plurality. This paper uses a queer, poststructuralist framework to investigate the strategic unsettling of language as a form of resistance against normative convention and ideology, and builds on recent research in the fields of migration studies, linguistics and translation studies, which stresses the need to queer such scholarship.

KEYWORDS: Forced displacement; Klaus Mann; multilingualism; queer identities; self-translation

KURZFASSUNG

In einer Auseinandersetzung mit queerem Multilingualismus und Selbstübersetzung, erarbeitet dieser Artikel die Funktion von Sprache in den Erfahrungen und Erlebnissen queerer Migranten und erkennt damit Selbstübersetzung als eine queere Ausdrucksform. Durch eine Analyse von Klaus Manns Autobiographien *The Turning Point* (1942) und *Der Wendepunkt* (1952), wird dieser Artikel zeigen, dass Mann, durch das Selbstübersetzen seines autobiographischen Ichs ins Englische und zurück ins Deutsche, die Vielfalt und Instabilität seines queeren Ichs ausdrückt, und zugleich die Uneinheitlichkeit und sich wiedersprechende Natur der Kategorien offenlegt, die Identität vorgeben. Im Fokus der Analyse stehen die Unterschiede zwischen der englischen und der deutschen Version – das was übersetzt ist und was nicht, was hinzugefügt und was entfernt wurde – und die Mehrsprachigkeit, das Wechseln zwischen Sprachen, in den einzelnen Texten. Diese werden als Strategien bedacht, mit welchen

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sich das autobiographische Ich destabilisieren und multiplieren lässt und seine innere Pluralität geäußert werden kann. Angewendet wird ein queerer, poststrukturalistischer Denkansatz, um das strategische Durcheinanderbringen von Sprache als Form von Wiederstand gegen normative Konventionen und Ideologie zu ermitteln. Dabei bezieht sich diese Arbeit auf die jüngste Literatur der Migrationsstudien, Linguistik, und Übersetzungswissenschaften, welche eine neue, queere Herangehensweise an diese Fachgebiete bietet.

STICHWORTE: Heimvertreibung; Klaus Mann; Multilingualismus; queere Identitäten; Selbstübersetzung

Introduction

Recent political events such as the European refugee crisis and Brexit have brought heightened attention to the meaning and implications of shared history, culture and language. As it becomes easier for many to connect with others from around the world, it is necessary to rethink notions of belonging, identification and communication. Reacting to this increase in global interconnectedness, scholarship from recent years has begun exploring the intersection between linguistics, migration studies and translation studies (Englund and Olsson 2013; Goebel and Weigel 2012; Vidal and Perteghella 2018). In the Humanities, this intersectional debate engages with questions of identity and the self: personal and autobiographical writings are receiving particular attention and increasing scholarly interest has been directed toward self-translation and bilingual identity in the context of migration (Atunes 2017; Evangelista 2013; Klimkiewicz 2013). Within the field of migration studies, recent publications explore intersections between migration and social justice movements and shed light on the varying experiences of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants. LGBTQIAP+[1] refugees, asylum seekers and migrants face particular complications in their search for a new place of belonging (Güler, Shevtsova and Venturi 2019; Shakhsari 2014; Wimark 2019).Within the legal processes of many immigration systems, LGBTQIAP+ refugees and asylum seekers often find themselves required and pressured to identify positively with a sexual orientation so that they can be categorized and judged according to homonormative[2], Western visions (Wimark 2019:11; 15). Such manifestations of homonormativity (Martell et al 2011:563) can be harmful to a migrant

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[1] LGBTQIAP+ stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual, Pansexual and other marginalized orientations and/or identities.
[2] By homonormative, I refer to a phenomenon that has impacted immigration of queer people in recent years: the experience of a migrant entering a culture that claims to have achieved gay liberation due to queer people being granted the right to form same-sex relationships that mimic heterosexual relationships and celebrate their identity in form of Pride and 'gay' marriage amongst other practices (cf. Shakhsari 2014:1001-1002; Wimark 2019:11).

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not identifying with this singular concept in that they are likely to experience discrimination based on their "divergent" homosexuality or queerness on legal as well as social levels. As a queer migrant at times categorized on this one idea of homosexuality, they may find the "accuracy" of their homosexuality judged on how they conform to this idea (cf. Shakhsari 2014:1001-1002; Wimark 2019:11). According to Sima Shakhsari, such notions of homonormativity invoke the essentialist assumption that the individual must have a "fixed, timeless, and universally homogenous identity" (2014:1002). The problem is not with homonormativity *per se*, but the fact that a culture seeing itself as the most progressive in LGBTQIAP+ matters continues to deny the complexity and multiplicity of gender and sexuality. This is one of the reasons why scholars have stressed the importance of lesbian and gay studies in migration studies.

To challenge this supposed universality, scholars such as Farhang Rouhani (2016), Larry Knopp (2004) and Thomas Wimark (2019) have worked to link the role of sexuality in migration studies and refugee and forced migration studies to notions of nationhood, language and identity. Traditional concepts of home, family and community are deconstructed on the basis of their inherent heteronormative (and homonormative) structures. By engaging with the experience of queer refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants to highlight that these concepts are insufficient, such research indicates that this assumed universality can harm individuals in their self-development and search for belonging. In Germany, LGBTQIAP+ refugees and asylum seekers for example continue to be refused asylum as a result of inadequate support and advice from the Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge [Federal Office for Migration and Refugees] throughout the asylum procedure (Dörr and Raza, online, undated). The German Lesben- und Schwulenverband [Lesbian and Gay Association] has reported that many queer refugees encounter disbelief and doubt regarding their sexuality and gender identity by immigration authorities, and have been asked to reveal intimate details about their sexual behavior or have faced discrimination by staff in accommodation facilities (Lesben- und Schwulenverband, 2020). When refusing asylum to queer refugees, a common response by the responsible authorities is that queer refugees could "im Herkunftsland ja sicher im Verborgenen leben" [surely live in secret in their country of origin] (Lesben- und Schwulenverband, 2020). In reaction to such cases, the aforementioned academic scholarship focuses on the abstract notions and ideological foundations that underlie the legal processes around migration and forced displacement in countries like Germany. Yet there is a need to

develop this scholarship further as to advocate inclusivity and intersectionality in both the academic and public debate.

A queer approach to migration and translation, as Brian James Baer and Klaus Kaindl have suggested, enables scholars "to sharpen their analytical view on identity-formation processes, to unmask essentialist ideas, and utilize the subversive potential inherent in the fluid concepts of translation and sexuality in order to understand the practices and discourses involved in negotiating identities" (2017:4). Annmarie Jagose claims moreover that queer theory's aim to destabilise the social categories of identity "develops out of a specifically lesbian and gay reworking of the post-structuralist figuring of identity as a constellation of multiple and unstable positions" (qtd. in Baer and Kaindl 2017:3). The study of queer migration suggests that for queer people, self-belonging is often not found in a place, but that queer individuals instead search for ways to deconstruct the traditional notions of home and identity by experimenting with forms of placelessness (Bryant 2015; Cant 1997; Knopp 2004). The methodology of close reading in relation to migration and translation, which I use in this paper, recognizes these positions as partly linguistic, geographical and national.

Queer translation studies contributes to the study of migration by adding that certain queer migrants similarly play with the intersections of language (and languages) to effectively express themselves. Self-translation is one such practice. Literary works by authors like Stefan Heym, Rudolf Arnheim, Hannah Arendt and Klaus Mann are particularly iconoclastic examples of self-translating German authors, who were – among many exiled writers in the twentieth century – continuing their work in another language upon leaving Germany (cf. Jung 2004). The twentieth century, which Edward Said calls "the age of the refugee, the displaced person, mass immigration" (2012[2001]:174), is thus an important historical period for the discipline of migration and translation studies: the radical increase in an intermingling of people that followed two world wars and general global political unrest redefined what it meant to be a refugee or exile (Stonebridge 2018:2; Englund and Olsson 2013:6). Authors such as Heym, Arendt and Mann are key figures to the study of migration and exile for that period in particular in their directing the focus towards multilingualism in crucial ways. Mann's *The Turning Point* and *Der Wendepunkt* highlight the predominance of language in the experience of forced displacement, and add another layer to multilingualism in both versions. By considering Mann not only as a self-translating and exiled but also as a queer author, the multilingual writing of that time period can be approached in ways that expand the study of

self-translation in exile. This paper explores the multiple spheres of identity that Mann expresses in his autobiographical project by a close reading of the two texts, and so links its historical context with new scholarship from translation and queer studies.

Recent scholarship on contemporary queer, multilingual writers has often focused on the defamiliarizing, disorienting and disordering effect of their work, which represents life between cultures and languages, often tied to migration (Jones 2018; Naef 2019; Popovich 2012; Sacks 2018; Zarif Keyrouz 2020). The multilingualism of writers such as Etel Adnan, Giannina Braschi, Francisco X. Alarcón, Magaly Alabau or Nicole Brossard takes different forms when embedded into their writing, Adnan, for example, writes in either French, English and Arabic to recount her experiences of migration and, in her more recent works, her lesbian identity; Braschi and Alarcón use multiple languages in the same text or poem, in the form of self-translation or code-switching, the alternating between multiple languages in a single text or conversation. Crafting realities in multiple languages, these writers transgress social norms and categories that are built on the notion of a stable, unitary and monolingual subject, which exists comfortably in well-defined categories of national belonging, gender and sexuality (Jones 2018:3; Rivera 2010:98). As Juan Pablo Rivera, analyzing the poetry of Alarcón, summarizes, "when taken together, multilingualism and queerness further destabilize the notion that each national subject should speak one language well just as he 'speaks' only one gender, or performs within the ranges of only one sexuality" (2010:98). In the artistic process of multilingual writing, a queer writer can express multiple, unstable positions to disrupt the notion that identity is singular, predetermined and easily comprehensible. The study of Mann's autobiographical writing contributes to this scholarship in that Mann not only expresses the queer experiences of a migrant, but also those of a political refugee. He used his multilingualism to destabilize social categories, and to enact a linguistic crossing of borders as a form of escape from forced placelessness.

This research aims to bring together the field of queer translation (see Baer and Kaindl 2017; Lacayo 2014; Spurlin 2014) and self-translation, and also to queer[3] notions of multilingualism,

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[3] In this project, the term *queer* follows Jack Halberstam's definition of queer as "nonnormative logics and organizations of community, sexual identity, embodiment, and activity in space and time" (2005:20); rather than reducing queerness to sexual identity, it will be understood as "an outcome of strange temporalities, imaginative life schedules, and eccentric economic practices" (Halberstam 2005:12). In other words, *queer* refers to all that which does not fit within the structures of dominant institutions, practices, positions and identities; rather than appearing as one unified, opposing force it is characterized by its anti-structure and multiplicity.

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translation and migration by exploring Klaus Mann's autobiographies *The Turning Point* (*TP*) and its self-translation *Der Wendepunkt* (*WP*) as an example of a multilingual, self-translated text written by a queer refugee. The close reading of both texts offers an important contribution to this area of research: the study of self-translated autobiography proposes a new angle to the ambiguous identity of a queer migrant and refugee in terms of identity construction in autobiographical writing in the context of exile and language acquisition. As Inés García de la Puente has suggested, autobiography and self-translation "are both ambiguous categories of literary expression" (2014:215): they are both original and translation, both life and fiction. Maria Alice Atunes similarly argues that for that reason, self-translated autobiography allows exiled writers to express their "lives in-between" (2017:85), in constructing autobiographical selves "that are torn between countries, cultures, languages, or someone whose identity is inevitably built upon at least two different worlds' (Atunes 2017:87). Self-translating authors of autobiography, like Gustavo Pérez Firmat, Ariel Dorfman, or Esmeralda Santiago, who write their memories in English first and self-translate them into their native language, translate this autobiographical self into their second language, which creates a distance between them and their memories (Atunes 2017:90). This allows them to cast a different perspective on their past experiences and past self, but also puts the author's culture of origin into a new linguistic context. By playing with self-translation, these authors can recreate their experience of living "in-between" languages and cultures in their autobiographies. In the example of Esmeralda Santiago, the author includes untranslatable Spanish words and phrases in her English autobiography to signify important elements of her Puerto Rican culture and life (García de la Puente 2014:219-220). This creates continuity between both texts and "a diagolism" occurs (Wilson 2012:51), which invites the reader to participate in an unfamiliar culture and language. The reader is asked to explore the discomfort and disorienting experience of border-crossing – linguistic and cultural (Atunes 2017; García de la Puente 2014). Considering the ambiguous, combined categories of self-translation and autobiography, this study will look further into how this continuity between texts disrupts the notions of original and translation, life and fiction, as well as the categories determining the author's identity beyond the text.

 As a first point of departure, it is important to note that *The Turning Point* and *Der Wendepunkt* were not written with the intention to be 'equivalent' as Mann writes in the "Nachbemerkung" [postscript] of the German text:

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> Es wäre falsch, den Zusammenhang zwischen den beiden Büchern, *The Turning Point* und *Der Wendepunkt* leugnen zu wollen; aber es wäre ebenso unrichtig, oder sogar noch irrtümlicher, die deutsche Version als eine 'Übersetzung aus dem Amerikanischen' zu präsentieren. Denn es verhält sich nicht etwa so, daß ich meinen englischen Text einfach ins Deutsche übertragen hätte; vielmehr habe ich ein neues deutsches Buch geschrieben, wobei ich einiges Material aus der ursprünglichen amerikanischen Fassung verwenden konnte (*WP* 544).

> [It would be wrong to deny the relation between the two books, *The Turning Point* and *Der Wendepunkt*; but it would be just as incorrect, or even more erroneous, to present the German version as a 'translation from the American'. For it is not as if I had simply translated my English text into German; rather I wrote a new German book, whereby I was able to use some material from the original American version.][4]

Mann did not hire a translator for his autobiography[5] as he expressly intended to retain the individualism of each text. His self-translation unsettles the idea of fixed identity – of author and translator, original and translation, as well as of Mann himself as 'monological' subject. There is, consequently, a curious divergence in Mann's autobiographical project: the English, 'original' version, read on its own, suggests an attempted restructuring of Mann's life. Its chronological order and normative succession of events – beginning with childhood, continuing into adolescence, finishing in adulthood – allow for narrative coherence. Yet, in self-translating this version into German, Mann seemingly undoes the very same structure. Parts of his life are repeated as they appear in both texts; some parts are changed or left out. The chronological model of autobiographical writing – childhood to adolescence to adulthood to writing his childhood, adolescence and adulthood – is disrupted. Similarly, conversations in the English version – allegedly based on real-life exchanges – are translated from the original German into English and back into German. Consequently, the translation is at times both original and a translation of a translation: the translation of conversations, diary entries, memories from German into English, which is then re-translated into German, the language in which they first occurred. The multilingualism of the entire project reveals the ambiguity and multiplicity of Mann's identity. Self-translation in this case can hence be understood as an inherently queer practice, disrupting assumed notions of fixed identity and, when paired with the genre of autobiography, offers insight into the instability and variability of the self.

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[4] My own translations of German quotations will appear in square brackets following the original citation.
[5] However, Klaus Mann's sister Monika was the first to begin translating the English version. She translated the first six chapters before Klaus took over the project himself.

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To understand Mann as a multilingual, queer writer in exile, this paper focuses on the second part of each autobiography, set after 1933. The development of Mann's bilingual identity is considered with regard to differences in both versions and the construction of his autobiographical, queer self. Through a close textual analysis of the English and German texts, this paper investigates how the queer subject of Mann's autobiography is revealed and characterized through narrative strategies of repetition, alteration and disruption. Employed stylistically and aesthetically, multilingualism, memory and identity construction characterize Mann's autobiographical and self-translated writing as a queer praxis that allows him to discover, express and reclaim his self, not as a fixed identity but rather as an unstable, non-normative and inherently non-conforming plurality that challenges notions of nationality, language and sexuality. The chosen methodology of close textual analysis allows for emphasis on the particular, rather than the general. By paying close attention to the details that construct the autobiographical self captured in two versions, in two languages, this analysis will indicate the ambiguity of the self, the many gaps, inconsistencies and contradictions that make up a seemingly complete, stable structure. Striving to develop this area of queer migration studies and queer multilingualism, this approach to Mann's autobiographical writing offers valuable insights into queer subjectivity in the context of language acquisition, multilingualism and migration. The following section will first provide an overview of Mann's life to introduce the background of the two autobiographies.

Klaus Mann: A Brief Overview of his Life

Klaus Mann was born in Munich in 1906, where he grew up during World War I and reached his teenage years just as the war ended. He spent his youth in Bavaria, travelling only between Munich and Tölz (*TP* 57). His social position allowed him to experience an education that surpassed German culture and borders. As a child, his parents introduced him to English and Russian literature (*TP* 55-58). The writers he would come to admire were Socrates, Nietzsche, Novalis and Whitman (*WP* 110) as well as Wilde, Verlaine, Rilke and Heine (*WP* 115-119). He was, however, unable to read these authors in a language other than German. Before his eventual migration to America, the only languages he actively studied, though never passionately, were Ancient Greek, Latin and French[6] at the *Gymnasium* [secondary school]

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[6] Mann's knowledge of French was the most developed out of the three. At age seventeen, he claims, he was able to read French authors in their original language; later, he wrote simple letters in French, yet never reached a level of language sufficiency beyond basic, everyday communication (Utsch 2007:168).

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(*TP* 85; Utsch 2007:167). Nevertheless, it was through art and literature that Mann developed his international identity until his first travel outside of Germany in 1925. This journey took him to the South of Europe, the Mediterranean region. Between October 1927 and July 1928, Mann and his sister Erika left Europe on a *Weltreise* [world tour] around the USA, Japan, Korea and the Soviet Union (Utsch 2077:39-44). These months away from home would strengthen Mann's hatred for nationalism as well as his identification with Europe (*WP* 220).

Mann's writing at the time largely circled around themes of homosexuality, most notably in his earliest autobiography *Kind dieser Zeit* (1932)*,* the play *Anja und Esther* (1925)*,* and the novels *Alexander: Roman der Utopie* (1929) and *Der fromme Tanz* (1926), which is known as the first German homosexual novel (Strohmeyr 2000:31-34). Many of Mann's contemporary critics focused, almost exclusively, on the sexual content of his publications (Huneke 2013:91) and hence Mann was publically regarded an openly gay writer, one of the first in Germany at that time (Chamberlin 2005:616). Yet Samuel Clowes Huneke points out that Mann rejected this sexual identity by refusing to present his characters as "different" from the rest of the public and showing the wide-range of "Typen" [types] of men and women living out same-sex desire (2013:96,95). Notably, homosexuality was received in only two ways at the time of publication: as something scandalous or as a secret, two tropes neither of which Mann identified with (2013:95). Brian James Baer, analyzing translated interviews with foreigners surrounding the subject of homosexuality published in the Russian gay journal *Kvir* (founded in 2005), notes that the interviewees – Western individuals like Stephen Fry, Pierre Guyotat and Daniel Defert – can be classified in two ways: as those that identify as part of a gay minority, and those that reject the label "gay" (2017:47-53). The latter group, he finds, reject the concept of gay or gay culture because it reinforces "gay" as a rigid social category (Baer 2017:51-52). He defines the first group according to what Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, in *Epistemology of the Closet* (1990), describes as the minoritizing perspective of homosexuality in Western culture, which is the idea that a part of the population is born gay, and that their homosexuality exists as a stable, distinguishable identity based on which people can come together as a minority group to demand rights and protection by the law (Sedgwick 1990:85). Baer summarizes that "social identities both constitute the individual as subject while subjecting him or her to social strictures – which constructs 'coming out' not as the liberation of an autonomous liberal subject but also as its subjection" (2017:51).

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Mann was ambivalent towards such subjection of his writing in any language. He opposed the public's stereotyping and generalizations of homosexuality in his writing and instead, as Huneke suggests, aimed to show the "humanity" of his characters, without subjecting the characters or himself to a single, predetermined identity of sexuality (2013:95). In his study of Mann's sexual and political identity, Keller concludes that although Mann was "sexually gay and politically socialist and antifascist, Mann still never felt completely at home in either of those identities" (2001:17). Keller and Rick Chamberlin also argue that Mann's writing thus shifts from gay and lesbian themes to writing politically motivated texts that engage more explicitly with political developments in Germany and Europe, specifically on the subject of fascism and National Socialism. Such texts, however, encompass his sexuality due to homosexuality being criminalized, not only by the Nazis, and also due to many exiled Germans claiming that there was a connection between homosexuality and fascism, what they would describe as the homoerotic, degenerate 'Männerbund' [male society] of the Nazis (Keller 2001:16; Chamberlin 2005:626). In *Der Wendepunkt,* Mann also alludes to this connection when he writes, "ein Schriftsteller, der politische Gegenstände in sein künstlerisches Schaffen einbeziehen will, muß in der Politik gelitten haben, ebenso tief und bitter, wie er an der Liebe gelitten haben muß, um über sie zu schreiben' [a writer, who wants to include political subjects in his artistic work, must have suffered in politics, just as deeply and bitterly, as he must have suffered in love, in order to write about it] (209).

Another aspect relating to Mann's identification with different, increasingly more international and political movements is his relationship with Berlin, which he first visited in 1923. In his autobiography*,* he describes the city as 'Sodom and Gomorrah in a Prussian tempo' (*TP* 86-87). He writes that he was "magnetized by the scum" and thought it "gorgeously corrupt" (*TP* 87-88). From the late nineteenth century, Berlin had grown into a homosexual centre (Spotts 2016:26) and was known and sought out for its open homosexual culture, its homosexual cafés, balls and nightlife, sex tourism and homosexual rights movement (Beachy 2014:58-62; 188). Bored by his life in Munich and the city's conservatism, Mann identified with Berlin and expressed the wish in his youth to leave Munich to move and start a life away from his family in Bavaria (*TP* 62). Yet his fascination with Berlin did not last long. As soon as he had enough money he left Berlin to leave Germany and explore Europe and the world (*TP* 106; *WP* 163) and continue his search for belonging as part of different movements – such as the German Youth Movement (*WP* 104; *TP* 76) – and also seemed to adopt different identities: that of a "junger Deutscher" [young German] (*WP* 156), "a young European intellectual" (*TP* 122; cf.

WP 180), a European (*WP* 210; *TP* 153), or a "citizen of the world" (*TP* 164). Embracing these identities, he claims, was essentially a "protest against German nationalism" (*TP* 122).

Mann asserted his role as political writer and opponent of fascism in the years leading up to Hitler's election as Chancellor of Germany. He became increasingly outspoken about his distaste for the National Socialists, who were quick to declare him an enemy of the Nazi state once they came to power in 1933 (*TP* 238; *WP* 277). Many of Mann's books were burned publicly in the same year (Spotts 2016:71). With the threat of persecution by the Nazis becoming more imminent, Mann finally left Germany, going first to Paris and then later to Amsterdam and Switzerland (Strohmeyr 2000:66). In Amsterdam he founded a literary magazine called *Die Sammlung* [The Collection]*,* an anti-Nazi journal, which published writings by many known German exiles (Strohmeyr 2000:73-76). Due to the time of its publication, along with the aims and political position of its publishers and contributors, this journal inevitably became an open denunciation and challenge against the Nazis (Spotts 2016:79). As a result of this journal, Mann was stripped of his German citizenship in 1934 (Strohmeyr 2000:68), a strategy often employed by the Nazis to cut ties between the exiles and Germany to make them officially stateless. This was "the so-called 'expatriation'" (*TP* 272), or, as Mann writes in German, "die drollige 'Ausbürgerungs'-Idee" [the droll 'expatriation'-idea](*WP* 314). Without German citizenship, he – and others – faced this problem of obtaining a passport. Mann was granted a "holländischer 'Fremdenpaß'" [Dutch certificate of identity], which gave "dem Staatenlosen einige Bewegungsfreiheit" [the stateless person some mobility] (*WP* 321) and was given Czech citizenship (*TP* 302). Through becoming exiled while dependent on the kindness of other nations, Mann in effect had to become part of different countries, temporarily, to be able to move freely across different geo-political boundaries between 1934 and 1938. During these years, he would travel frequently before leaving Europe for good. In 1936, he stayed in America for a few months before returning to Europe in the same year. He made the decision to return to the US if the situation in Europe did not improve, which he did, a year before the official outbreak of World War Two (*WP* 384; *TP* 293).

His arrival in the USA in 1938 marked a change in his chosen language and genre of writing. His last fictional book written in German, *Der Vulkan,* was published in Amsterdam in 1939. After 1939, he began writing and publishing in English only, producing mainly non-fictional, autobiographical and journalistic texts (Behrmann 2012:355). In 1940 he founded another magazine called *Decision* (Strohmeyr 2000:121-123). As well as indicating his increasing

confidence in his own English language abilities, this journal reflected Mann's sense of need to address his American audience directly. He felt that the purpose of this publication and others in the years following his arrival in the US was firstly to educate Americans on the subject of Nazism, and secondly to defend the "other" Germany, characterized, as Mann claimed, by respectability, culture and civilization (Frisch 2014[1984]:9). *The Turning Point,* on which he begun working in 1941, had a similar political agenda. As Keller writes, Mann, "in this most self-oriented of literary genres" felt paradoxically that "he had to serve the broader collective, and [that] his writing had to contain a socio-politically relevant aspect" (2001:71). At the time, the US had just entered the war and Mann himself was preparing "to exchange his pen for a sword" (Frisch 2014[1984]:10) to join the US army. He was aware that his writing would impact the decision for his admission to the army (Frisch 2014[1984]:10). The tone in *The Turning Point* seems more analytical and less emotive compared to the German version of the same text (Keller 2001:71; Utsch 2007:345).[7] Another notable factor is that at the time of writing, the US army did not accept homosexuals, and so Mann excluded many overt references to his sexuality (Keller 2001:21). An example for this can be found when Mann describes how his 'mania' (*TP* 118) and 'fear of anticlimactic developments' (*TP* 118) or 'Angst vor Wiederholung, Monotonie and Überdruß' [fear of repetition, monotony and weariness] (*WP* 175) are expressed in his novel *Der fromme Tanz*. He does not summarise the plot of the novel in *Der Wendepunkt* in English. Rather he writes:

> What was the novel about? About a young man, of course, and his adventures; his restlessness, his sorrows, his elations; a young man, and this time – the anarchy and promise of the twentieth century. He was a child during the great war, and in adolescence finds himself confronted with a messed up, but colourful world. So he plunges right into the mess and the splendour (*TP* 114).

In *The Turning Point,* Mann instead shifts the emphasis towards the period of history in which the character and he grew up – the reason for their restlessness and need for adventure. Another example is when he writes of early experiences of same-sex desire – watching younger boys exercise. When describing his admiration for a boy named Uto, he uses the word "hero-

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[7] An example for this can be found when Mann and his sister Erika first visited in America in 1927, where they were invited to give lectures at different universities and pretended to be twins (*TP* 134; *WP* 192): In *The Turning Point,* he writes that they embarked on their lecture tour as 'an adventurous double-being' (134). In *Der Wendepunkt*, he writes more vividly and descriptive: "ein spaßhaftes Doppelwesen, ein drollig-impressives Wunderkind mit zwei Köpfen, vier Beinen und einem Hirn voll europäischer Kapricen und ausgefallenem Wissen – 'full of Continental wit and sophistication'", [a jocular double-being, a droll-impressive child prodigy with two heads, four legs and a brain full of European caprice and unusual knowledge – 'full of Continental wit and sophistication'] (192).

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worship" in English (*TP* 83), in contrast to the German word he uses at the same juncture: "Leidenschaft" [passion] (*WP* 129). Mann writes in English further that he "called him by the names of Hellenic champions and demi-gods" (*TP* 84). In German, he had explained: "Ich redete ihn mit Namen an, die er komisch fand: Ganymed, Narziß, Phaidros, Antinous" [I called him by names that he found strange: Ganymede, Narcissus, Phaedros, Antinous] (*WP* 128). Here he is much more explicit about the type of admiration he feels for Uto by referencing characters from antiquity: Ganymede, a beautiful Trojan hero with whom Zeus falls in love and who is representative of romantic love between a younger and an older man; Narcissus, who is known for his beauty; Phaedros, a demi-god who appears in two of Plato's most homoerotic dialogues, *Symposium* and *Phaedrus*; and Antinous, who was loved and worshiped by the Roman emperor Hadrian.

The manuscript of *Der Wendepunkt* was submitted to Mann's publisher in 1949, months before his suicide in the same year, but was only published posthumously in 1952. At the time of writing the German version, Mann had been admitted to the US army (in 1941) and been granted US citizenship (in 1943). World War Two had also ended. After the war, Mann would visit Germany, physically and linguistically, although never with the intention to return there permanently. According to Keller, Mann felt that his own identity had to be revaluated, considered again after the fall of Hitler and the Nazis (2001:75), which is why it is not surprising to find more reflections on the nature of German identity in the German version. Verena Jung argues, moreover, that Mann tends to "fictionalize" Germany in the English version to make it more accessible to the American readership (2004:530; 534). In turn, *Der Wendepunkt* undoes that same fictionalization, addressing a readership that is familiar with Germany. While writing in English, Mann stated that he felt it "became nonsensical to produce a German book for which there would be no readers" (*TP* 351). When writing in German, Mann was returning to his mother tongue to write for a German audience to share his own feelings and open discussions about what had happened in Germany and thus explore how events had changed Germany and German identity. Writing in German was thus an act of retrospection entailing an element of mourning communicated in German. *The Turning Point* followed the purpose of explaining Nazi domination in Germany to those who had not lived it. *Der Wendepunkt* instead addresses many who had. The German version is thus not about explaining, or defending the 'other' Germany, but considering what both Nazi domination and the 'other' Germany could mean for German-speaking readers retrospectively.

In many ways then, *The Turning Point* and *Der Wendepunkt* should be read as two separate autobiographies: experiences and reflections written at different times with different purposes, and yet sharing the attempted constructing of an identity. The following textual analysis will investigate how this constructing in two languages and two versions disrupts the cohesion of the self, rendering it fluid, unstable and plural. The expression of a linguistically unsettled self in exile, the experience of migration and partial assimilation, contribute to the destabilizing of social categories and norms, paralleling the variability and multiplicity of the queer self, as shall be investigated in the following close textual analysis.

Self-Translation, Placelessness & Queer Multilingualism

While migration among queer people often results from a wish to escape an unsupportive, negative environment, this need for movement is not exclusive to those who seek life in a new place and community (Knopp 2004:123). Knopp points out that the act of movement for those individuals, regardless of whether their sexuality and identity is accepted by their families and communities, is about "testing, exploring, and experimenting with alternative ways of *being*, in contexts that are unencumbered by the expectations of tight-knit family, kinship, or community relationships" (2004:123). Jason Bryant also calls for a queering of the home, so as to "[deconstruct] home ideology as a set of particular, heteronormative social constructs that disallow wider conceptual possibilities for spaces and sexualities" (2015:262). Deconstructing the tradition of home by exploring placelessness while reclaiming this non-place as home, if temporarily, is one way for queer individuals to reevaluate places that undermine their identities. Placelessness, in-betweenness and other non-normative spaces are spaces that oppose essentialist models of identity and place as they disrupt "neat and tidy binaries of spatial belonging" (Bryant 2015:269; Wright 2010:59). Queering migration allows a rethinking of processes of migration and ideas of identity and belonging – going beyond these notions and rediscovering them outside of the context of family and kinship (Rouhani 2016:236).

Queerness, as a theoretical project, follows poststructuralist thinkers like Jacques Derrida, Judith Butler and Michel Foucault, who challenged the limitations inherent to the conceptual structures that dominate our thinking as they are reinforced continuously by language, discourse and law (Moore 2013:258). Therefore, Darnell L. Moore summarizes, "queerness implies a theoretical process of deconstruction or, rather, a move to interrogate and unknot rigid hegemonic sexual logics and representations perpetuated by and sustained through

discourse and state regulation" (2013:258). In this poststructuralist framework, language is understood as a system that limits thought, expression and identity simply by nature of its inability to grasp the world in its entirety (Margel 2014:254; Rorty 1977:676). Consequently, multilingualism and the movement between languages can become a way to break out of this structure. Beyond the confinements of monolingualism, the semantic multiplicity of singular concepts allows for play within the structure; sexualities and identities no longer appear fixed within this semiotic and syntactic diversity. Klaus Mann's self-translated writing is one example of the destabilizing and multiplying effect multilingualism can have on the autobiographical self.

In his autobiographies, Mann states very openly his need for self-expression (*TP* 114). His life was, as he describes, nothing but "schleifende Unrast, Suchen, unstillbare Sehnsucht des Herzens, kurzes sinnliches Glück" [grinding restlessness, searching, insatiable longing of the heart, short sensual happiness] (*WP* 171), a continuous need for movement that led him to ruin "human relations, professional opportunities, studies and pleasures, by rushing away, just in order to move, to change, to remain alive" (*TP* 118) because of his "nervös-irrationalen Bedürfnis nach Wechsel und Bewegung" [nervous-irrational need for change and movement] (*WP* 175). The expression "to remain alive" also highlights movement as an essential part of Mann's identity and existence. Similarly, traveling and moving he saw as something that freed him from obligation and monotony (*TP* 118). At the same time, these passages already suggest that this placelessness could only offer him happiness temporarily and was always followed by the same restlessness that kept him on the move for most of his youth. Before 1933, he was experimenting with placelessness by traveling, yet would return to his parents' house in Munich whenever he ran out of money. Placelessness, dominated by statelessness, would become a harsh reality only after 1933, when his family was forced to leave Germany (*TP* 238; *WP* 277). Aware of the foreshadowing of his eventual displacement, Mann describes his travels as a "dress rehearsal of exile" (*TP* 132). He could 'try on' the foreign language and culture like a costume and practice its enactment but did not yet have to perform them in front of an audience. Rehearsals, he writes further, are "more thrilling than the performance" as "actors may anticipate all the fun and excitement, yet without suffering from the painful suspense of the opening night or the bleak monotony of the repetitions" (*TP* 133). Mann summarizes, "it can be fairly amusing to play the uprooted vagabond, as long as you do have a home to return to" (*TP* 133). Making placelessness liberating for him was also the knowledge that it was freely chosen and that he could choose to leave it again if he wanted to.

Mann writes later on in his autobiography that he did not however quite understand the seriousness of the situation until the Mann family was declared enemy of Nazism in 1934 (*TP* 238; *WP* 277). It was no longer his decision to what extent he was to identify as a German citizen or not: now it was Germany deciding for him. The years that followed would thus turn what he had configured as a "rehearsal" of exile and placelessness into a harsh reality. He was "driven away" (*TP* 260) and so for the first time found himself unable to choose movement freely as he had felt in the past. His geographical displacement then also entailed a forced linguistic displacement which complicated his previous notions of the liberating potential of migration and multilingualism and further unsettled the self in a struggle to break free from outside influence. Here language emerged as a site of place and displacement, which called into question what Mann had understood this "rehearsal" to be.

Language as Exile, Linguistic Migration and Queer Multilingualism

Language, before 1933, drove Mann to travel. He describes leaving Germany as follows:

> What a sensation when we crossed the frontier and I found myself, for the first time, on foreign soil, surrounded by people who spoke in a foreign tongue! (*TP* 109).

> Welch erregender Moment, der erste Grenzübertritt! Dies war also das Ausland! Man sprach nicht mehr deutsch (*WP* 164).

> [What an exciting moment, the first border crossing! So this was the foreign land! One no longer spoke German.]

The German version emphasizes that for Mann the "Ausland" [foreign land] is precisely a place where one does not speak German, language the identifying factor of what characterizes a foreign place. During these first travels he showed little interest in learning a foreign language. He did not speak English when first travelling to America with his sister Erika (*TP* 132). While trying to arrange a lecture tour through the entire country, his agent complained: "'If only your English were a little better!'" (*TP* 139). When Mann and his sister finally gave a lecture in New York, Erika did give a speech in English, which she memorized and recited to the audience (*TP* 149). In exile, however, Mann needed to learn a language in order to communicate with the people of this new, potential home. After returning to the US in 1936 before his immigration there in 1938 (*TP* 293), America's attitude towards Europe had changed drastically which meant that Mann, too, was received differently (*TP* 294-295; *WP* 370). Americans, he

describes, blamed the "hopeless mess" (*TP* 294) that was Europe on "traditional German wickedness" (*TP* 295). Mann thus wished to mediate and share the European situation with America (*WP* 383-384). In German, he describes the problems he faced:

> als Redner litt ich unter dem Handicap des fremden Idioms; so kümmerlich stand es damals noch um mein Englisch, daß ich selbst den kürzesten 'speech' zunächst in der lieben Muttersprache aufsetzen mußte, um dann die Übersetzung auswendig zu lernen und mit mühsam gespielter Nonchalance vorzutragen (*WP* 383).

> [as a speaker I suffered under the handicap of the strange idiom; my English was then so poor that even the shortest 'speech' I had to write in my mother tongue, to then memorize its translation and recite it with painstakingly played nonchalance.]

He worried that he might never be able to express himself properly and accurately in the English language beyond simple exchanges – that is "des 'small talk', der Umgangssprache" [of 'small talk', the vernacular] (*WP* 383). When it came to his career, he also worried that he would never acquire the same "Vertrautheit mit der idiomatischer Nuance, jener vollkommenen Kenntnis des Vokabulars, jenem Fingerspitzengefühl für rhythmische und klangliche Valeurs, kurz, [...] jener unbedingten und intuitiven sprachlichen Sicherheit" [familiarity with the idiomatic nuance, this absolute knowledge of vocabulary, this instinctive feeling for rhythmic and tonal sounds, in short, this unconditional and intuitive linguistic certainty] (*WP* 383-384). The idea of writing English prose or becoming an American writer seemed absurd to him, unrealistic (*WP* 384) although his English was improving – enough that he was now able to read American novels in their original (*TP* 296). Despite his fear of this potential, future "sprachliche Umstellung" [linguistic conversion], he "verließ Amerika doch mit dem Gefühl, ein neues Wirkungsfeld und einen neuen Hafen, vielleicht gar eine neue Heimat gefunden zu haben" [left America with the sense of having discovered a new sphere of activity and a new harbor, perhaps even a new home] (*WP* 384). In the following two years which Mann would spend in Europe until he returned to the US in 1938, Mann prepared himself not only to migrate across geographical borders, but also linguistic ones (*TP* 328).

By 1940, Mann's relationship with the German language had grown increasingly troubled. He writes – in the English version – that "an odd inhibition prevents me from concentrating on anything written in the idiom of which I know every shade and potentiality" (*TP* 331). And he asks, bitterly, "can it be that Hitler has polluted the language of Nietzsche and Hölderlin?" (*TP*

331). He also found that people reacted violently in the US when hearing Mann and others speaking German in public. For some people in the US, the German language was linked to Nazism. Mann recalls how, when sitting in a restaurant 'mit deutschen Freunden – Emigranten natürlich' [with German friends – emigrants of course] (*WP* 305) in 1939, an American lady stood up and loudly rebuked them in German with a strong American accent. Mann also remembers that she spat at them, assuming that they were Nazis (*TP* 266; *WP* 305). Similarly, in 1941, Mann remembers a man shouting at him and his sister in a bar: "'I can't stand it! […] That damned Nazi talk! That filthy gibberish! Stop it! Shut up! Or speak English!'" (*TP* 350). It was as if Hitler had, as Mann feared, polluted the German language – and all of its associations – thoroughly. He documents his increasingly frequent interactions with English-speakers in *Der Wendepunkt* and interplay of languages in his life and writing following his immigration to America. For example, he writes: "Eine fascistische [sic] Gefahr in den Vereinigten Staaten, im Lande Washingtons und Lincolns? *Impossible!* 'Das ist bei uns nicht möglich…' *It can't happen here…*" [Danger of fascism in the United States, the land of Washingtons and Lincolns? *Impossible!* 'That is not possible with us…' *It can't happen here…*] (*WP* 371). Erika's "Pfeffermühle" [pepper mill] cabaret in New York, he writes, was received as "zu 'outlandish' für die Masse, nicht 'continental', nicht 'exotic' genug für die verwöhnten Snobs" [too 'outlandish' for the masses, not 'continental', not 'exotic' enough for the spoiled snobs] (*WP* 381). Perhaps the most revealing passage of Mann's transitions between languages is when he cites the American author Sinclair Lewis:

> 'The theatre is fun […] Das Theater ist lustig [the theatre is fun] – team-work, if you know what I mean: Man arbeitet zusammen, als Gruppe, mit Kameraden, wie es sich gehört. Immer allein am Schreibtisch, mit dem Manuskript als einzige Gesellschaft [one works together, as group, with comrades, as one should. Always alone at the desk, with only a manuscript for company] – it's getting on my nerves! After all, man is a sociable animal, ein Herdentier, wie man im Deutschen sagt [a herd animal, as one says in German] …Don't you agree? Well, anyhow, have another drink!' (*WP* 373)

In this passage, we can read Mann switching between German and English in ways which indicate a growing fluency in these two languages. The smooth transitions between languages are evidence for his growing fluency in the English language as well as his bilingual identity.

In other junctures in his autobiography, Mann frequently switches between other languages, with which he was not familiar: "'Voilà un homme!' Sternheim crows" (*TP* 186); "'Did he

really?' chuckles the Baroness. 'Total übergeschnappt!'" [totally mental] (*TP* 186); "'Sei pazzo?' grins the gondolier" (*TP* 188). These are examples of what Juan Pablo Rivera (2010) describes as the "syncretic practices" of queerness, the ability "to switch between the sacred and the profane, to step in and out of the closet, to code-switch and to dance between cultures" of queer, multilingual writers (2010:109). Mann switches between his first and second language and then destabilizes these systems further by expanding the language corpus with phrases and expressions from Italian and French. Ellen Jones has suggested that translingual writing can be understood as "queer literary praxis" (2018:6) as it strategically employs the plurality of bilingualism to express the parallel plurality of queer identity (cf. 2018:6).The text is queered by the multiplicity of its meaning and interpretation, which are heightened by the varying linguistic competences of the readers (Jones 2018:5). She also writes that the queer bilingual author challenges dominant linguistic norms – monolingualism – as well as social norms, and that there follows a similar parallel between feeling shame for being queer and shame for not speaking perfect English (Jones 2018:6). One can understand the praxis of translingual writing as one way of overcoming shame through turning one's personal "open mesh of possibilities, gaps, overlaps, dissonances and resonances, lapses and excesses of meaning" (Kosofsky Sedgwick 2005:8) into that of the text and experience for a reader (Jones 2018:6). Mann's self-translation has similar effect: the repetitions, transitions, fine differences in meaning, gaps in one language that are filled by signs of another, disrupting the order of syntax. The two versions are not two monolingual texts, separate from one another, but can be read as a multilingual project that seems to be working to disturb the bounds of the monolingual system and mobilizing the subject in the process. The identity that these autobiographies construct is pluralized and characterized by fluidity and variability.

Multiplicity: Placelessness, Self-Translation and Constructing the Queer Self

After emigrating to America, Mann's autobiography is dominated by the theme of multiplicity. In *Der Wendepunkt*, he describes the process of autobiographical writing in English, the "Beschwörung frühesten Erlebens, in fremder Zunge…" [invocation of earliest experiences, in a strange tongue] (*WP* 457), as "[m]erkwürdig" [strange] (*WP* 457). He had planned by then, to translate this autobiography into German, knowing that no one would be able to do it but himself: "Ich könnte nicht mein Leben von einem anderen *auf deutsch* erzählen lassen. Ich muß es selber tun" [I could not let someone else write my life *in German*. I have to do it myself] (*WP* 457). Everything, he writes, would be "von meinem 'alter ego', meinem deutschen Ich zu

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übertragen sein" [translated by my 'alter ego', my German self] (*WP* 457). Here he describes his bilingual identity as made up of two separate identities. It could better be understood however as one *blurred* identity, as Mann felt secure in either (*WP* 457-458). He describes the "Sprachproblem" [language problem] as "höchst quälend, höchst verwirrend" [most torturous, most confusing] and a "linguistische Metamorphose" [linguistic metamorphosis] (*WP* 457-458). On September 17th, 1941, he writes:

> Je tiefer ich ins Englische eindringe, desto stärker empfinde ich die eigene Unzulänglichkeit. Wie unendlich reich ist diese Sprache, die Sprache Shakespeares und Burkes, Melvilles und Whitmans! Und wie verschieden ist sie von der unseren! Der *unseren*? Bin ich dem Deutschen nicht schon halb entfremdet? Vielleicht läuft es darauf hinaus, daß man die Muttersprache verlernt, ohne mit der neuen Zunge jemals ganz vertraut zu werden… Aber wenn ich keine Sprache mehr hätte, was bliebe mir…? (*WP* 457-458)

> [The deeper I enter the English, the stronger I experience my own shortcoming. How infinitely rich is this language, the language of Shakespeares and Burkes, Melvilles and Whitmans! And how different is it from ours! *Ours*? Am I not half-estranged from the German? Perhaps what it comes down to is that one unlearns the mother tongue without ever becoming entirely familiar with the new tongue… But if I had no language anymore, what would I have left…?]

This passage in German suggests that Mann was experiencing the phenomenon of first language attrition and of losing fluency in his mother tongue (Barrera 2018:187). In the English version, Mann is more optimistic. He describes how once he would have thought writing in a language other than German "more of a sacrifice than I could possibly bear" (*TP* 341) and how he came to realize that "man is always inclined to underestimate his own adaptability and alertness" (*TP* 351). To sacrifice one's fluency in the mother tongue is different when one has no choice, as Mann asks: "how about the author who happens to have no home? An uprooted vagabond whose name has been forgotten in the country from which he comes, and is not established as yet in the land that shelters him now?" (*TP* 351). The homeless author "must not cling with stubborn nostalgia to his mother-tongue" but he is "to learn a new idiom to communicate a new identity" (*TP* 351). Mann realized that if he wanted to be heard, to speak, to express himself in his own way, he had to make this choice before someone made it for him and took that freedom; only this way would he be able to realize that his "linguistic fixation" is "nothing but another prejudice" (*TP* 351). Mann's ambition to become fluent in English results from his need for his voice to be heard by the people in his new home: he wanted to tell his story and yet struggled to write as he felt that "[t]here is no invented scheme intimate and

comprehensive enough to communicate my faith and anguish" (*TP* 347). Moreover, he feared that his new linguistic home would be taken from him. First, there was the threat that Hitler might win the war against America; in 1940 Mann wrote:

> Will it be possible to stay here if the Fascist currents increase as they undoubtedly would under those circumstances? But where could one go from here? What refuge would remain intact and accessible if the enemy conquers or corrupts this hemisphere? In what language shall we have to formulate our protests and hopes? In Chinese? I am told that's a tricky idiom to learn… (*TP* 328)

Notable here is that his concern of having to learn another, much more difficult language accompanies the concern of being forced to leave once again. The English language was now something that could be taken from him – just as the German language was taken from him by the Nazis: "Whatever I may have owned has been taken from me – even the language I used to consider mine" (*TP* 348). In *Der Wendepunkt,* he does not translate this passage so these concerns do not appear in the German version. Having written *Der Wendepunkt* after the end of World War Two, Mann already knew that Hitler would not win the war against America. He had by then returned to the German language for this self-translation and felt he could reclaim it now that Hitler no longer "polluted the language of Nietzsche and Hölderlin" (*TP* 331). So instead of having "keine Sprache mehr" [no language anymore] (*WP* 458), which had worried him in 1941, Mann finds that he now has achieved fluency in both. These two languages do not exist as two separate, stable spheres for expression – they are fluid and exist in dialogue with each other, as his autobiographical project indicates. Mann had felt that Nazis had taken the German language from him just as they had driven him out of Germany. Mann's particular experience of multilingualism – the frequent and continuous movement between languages, rather than the abandoning of one language for another – had emerged as a place of linguistic exile, similar to his displacement and forced placelessness.

Before his exile from Germany in 1934, Mann had engaged with notions of placelessness as liberating, believing that he could always escape it again and return to a fixed place (*TP* 133). Mann's first experiences of exile are thus dominated by moments of feeling anguish at being categorized by others, forced into the identity of a political refugee that took away his sense of agency and autonomy. He writes that "the majority of people looked askance at us – not because we were Germans, but because we were refugees" (*TP* 266), "weil wir Deutschland verlassen hatten" [because we had left Germany] (*WP* 306). People saw them as as "exilierte

deutsche Intellektuelle" [exiled German intellectuals] (*WP* 305), "Exilanten" [exiles] (*WP* 319), "'freiwillige' Emigranten" ['voluntary' emigrants] (*WP* 308) and "[d]eutsche Antifascisten [sic] im Ausland" [German anti-fascists in exile] (*WP* 312). For Mann, such junctures represented a violent shift into the sudden confinement in forced mobility. While he was spared from many material discomforts of forced displacement, his autobiography represents the sudden reality of homelessness as a psychic state of discomfort. Movement and placelessness could no longer be chosen freely by him before 1933; instead, Mann now felt trapped. On March 3rd, 1942, he writes:

> Shall I ever live in Germany again? I don't think so. Or rather, the question as such has lost its relevance as far as I am concerned. I have gone far – too far, indeed, to go back. I must go further, forward – or else I shall go astray (*TP* 357).

He claims further that "[e]xile has reached its end" (*TP* 357). This succinct sentence raises important questions of when exile becomes home and when one's second language potentially replaces the first. Mann experiences this period in his life with "furchtbarer Traurigkeit" [terrible sadness] (*WP* 441) and more often the "Todeswunsch" [death wish] (*WP* 441), "[e]isiger Trost des Nichts" [icy comfort of nothingness] (*WP* 441). Only in German does Mann explicitly write about his suicidal thoughts and growing sadness and hopelessness: "Ich wünsche mir den Tod. Der Tod wäre mir sehr erwünscht. Ich möchte gerne sterben" [I wish for death. Death would be most desirable for me. I would like to die] (*WP* 468). The potential "turning point" in his life, as he writes weeks later, was the possibility to be admitted to the US Army (*TP* 362): "For the first time in my life, I want to belong to the rank and file. I am avid for subordination – hankering for anonymity" (*TP* 362). In German he writes: "Überdrüssig der Freiheit; überdrüssig der Einsamkeit. Sehnsucht nach Gemeinschaft. Der Wunsch, mich einzuordnen, *zu dienen!*" [Tired of freedom; tired of loneliness. Longing for community. The wish to align myself, *to serve!*] (*WP* 466). The German version here indicates Mann's growing hopelessness in the years before his suicide. In the English version, he describes "subordination" and "anonymity" as his motivations for joining the army. He seems to see new hope in the idea of companionship and writes that perhaps "this time I do not need to exclude myself" (*TP* 362). The German version, however, shows that he was tired of never belonging anywhere completely – a state of being which only led him to "Einsamkeit", loneliness. In seeking this stability, the army, ironically, would allow him to travel again, even to return to Germany just before the end of the war.

Mann returned to Munich, as an American soldier in 1945. But when he returned, he

> felt a stranger in my former fatherland. There was an abyss separating me from those who used to be my countrymen. Wherever I went in Germany, the melancholy tune and nostalgic leitmotiv followed me: YOU CAN'T GO HOME AGAIN… (*TP* 372).[8]

He had betrayed his homeland and all that is customarily associated with it – traditions, norms, family, kinship – for another nation and its military. Similarly, he betrayed his native tongue. In 1945, he no longer wrote in German, apart from a few letters to friends and family. He recalls seeing a girl in his old house and speaking "in German, but with a slight American accent" (*TP* 369) and so enacting how Mann felt that he occupied both languages, neither completely, in a way that exceeds and yet encompasses them both. This return to his childhood home as an American soldier, with an American accent, thus completes Mann's journey of breaking out from the constraints of the traditional home, culture and language that this house represented and his partially executed arrival in a new culture and language.

When he writes *Der Wendepunkt* in German, after the war, Mann seems to want to return, once more, to his German self for this project alone. Rather than bringing about closure, however, he undoes once more the new identity he has built for himself: as an American citizen, he leaves America for Europe, though not Germany. He writes in German a text that is not identical to the English version, and yet not entirely unique. He revisits his memories, rewrites and translates a text that was already a translation and rewriting of experiences in a different tongue. What Mann rewrites and alters is, essentially, a version of his own life. The product is a different presentation of his experiences, thoughts, feelings and passions. His identity is multiplied. The overlaps and distinctions create multiple different versions that are masked as one: his life as he lived it, as he remembers it in German and English, as he writes in English, and as he writes and translates it into German. What the reader is left with are two separate texts, which neatly contain a disruption of his biography. Translating the self means writing it twice, showing its instability and multiplicity as it is transformed by the varying linguistic and cultural context. Mann thus undoes the coherence of his life, his memories and, ultimately, himself. One text cannot be more 'accurate' than the other. And neither is one autobiographical self more accurate or 'real' than the other. They are equally true, equally imprecise and equally

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[8] This chapter was added to the revised edition of *The Turning Point,* written by Mann in 1947 and first published as final chapter of the book in 1970. The chapter does not appear in the German text.

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constructed. Through the act of self-translation, Mann is able to express, finally, the plurality and inconceivability of his queer self.

Conclusion

Elizabeth Richmond-Garza refers to translation as linguistic and cultural cross-dressing – an embracing and disrupting of norms (2014:284). Mann's self-translation queers this act of self/translation further: the 'original' language of his work already echoes the literary, cultural and linguistic norms of another. In translating this 'original' self/translation into his native tongue, the language and culture of origin, he unsettles these notions of 'original' and translation by circling back to original experiences that precede the original publication: his life and experiences occurring in a German linguistic context, which appear in the 'original' version in a different language and are translated back into their original linguistic context – both versions' 'original' and 'self/translation'. The crossings and continuous traversing alongside overlapping movement is what characterizes this autobiography and its autobiographical "I" as plural, multiple and fictional.

When undertaking this autobiographical project, Mann seems to occupy multiple identities and yet none completely. In the last chapter of *Der Wendepunkt,* which contains personal notes and journal entries from the years in which Mann had already begun writing this text, he writes: "Ich bin kein Deutscher mehr. Bin ich noch Emigrant?" [I am no longer German. Am I still an emigrant?] (*WP* 424). This question captures a moment in which Mann senses that categories have become nonsensical: he has been in exile for so long that he can no longer call it exile. He has found refuge, gained citizenship in a foreign state and feels that his second language is almost more comfortable than his native tongue, German. His multilingualism is an indicator for the many spheres that he has occupied – cultural, geographical, linguistic and beyond – and his struggle to mediate between them. Mann's narrative strategy is that of repetition, alteration and disruption to reveal the inconsistency and contradictory nature of these categories in the process. The two accounts of his life should not be read as if one version is more accurate than the other. Rather, they should be read together as a fluid representation of inconsistent, contradictory and shifting experiences and memories. When turned into an aesthetic and literary praxis, multilingualism can be controlled, manipulated and neutralized to a point where it hides the underlying concern of being misunderstood or of not fitting in. It can become a strategy for self-presentation and, simultaneously, more revealing than the content itself. From

this perspective and close reading, *The Turning Point* and *Der Wendepunkt* reveal the multiplicity and implicit queerness and displacements of Mann's identity.

Reading Mann's autobiography as an iconic example of national and queer displacement enacted through self/translation from a poststructural, queer perspective adds to ongoing debates on what it could mean to strengthen an intercultural and interlinguistic discussion of gender and sexuality. Such debates, in my view, allow us to broaden our understanding of how identities are shaped by culture and language and how queerness, beyond restrictive concepts of sexuality and gender, could be approached from a transcultural, transnational and translinguistic perspective. Many sections of 'Western' societies promote and assume themselves as progressive in matters related to LGBTQIAP+ rights in ways which enshrine the absolute universality of its model of same-sex relationships and desire. Denying or glossing the complexity of (queer) identity is not a problem that exclusively affects LGBTQIAP+ migrants, but it certainly affects these groups in particular ways now. Including a more nuanced consideration of multilingualism can broaden and help us explore the potential, aesthetic and beyond, of linguistic failure: mispronunciation, misspellings, grammar mistakes, accents and vague translations. We must queer language itself, push it to its limits by resisting its rigid structures, lest we lose ourselves in the restrictive system of impeccable, monolingual speech. A close reading of Mann's autobiography written across languages reveals that multilingualism – as self/translation or code-switching – can challenge readers to question categories of identity – cultural, national, sexual, linguistic – and to engage with the structures of language. It reveals that identity can be approached beyond definitions and labels of a single linguistic system, and confronted in its complexity and fluidity across multiple systems and contexts. What Mann describes as "the genius", the one "who can afford to live without a label" (*TP* 298), can perhaps be understood as a writer who disregards absolute comprehensibility and consistency for the sake of multifarious self-expression. As he writes in *The Turning Point*:

> Instinctively assured of his identity, [the genius] is in a position to dismiss all traditional patterns and poses. He repeats or transforms himself according to his unpredictable and inescapable vagaries. No real genius is afraid of being underrated or misunderstood. He improvises his own idiom whether it is intelligible or not to his listeners. He delivers his message – that is all that matters (298).

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