Performance

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Abstract and Keywords

Considering moments of theatrical and social performance in narrative is not an obvious way of shedding light on the experience of time. But this chapter suggests that it is a particularly useful theme for consideration because it involves tensions between self and other, between artifice and authenticity. Since we are all always in some sense performing and since performance always involves two distinct yet simultaneous experiences—that of the performer and that of their audience—it poses an interesting challenge for the narration of time. Mann’s *The Confessions of Felix Krull*, *Doctor Faustus*, *Blood of the Walsungs*, and Oscar Wilde’s *The Picture of Dorian Gray* are compared in an exploration of the narration of simultaneity, ways in which the changing prioritization of multiple perspectives affects the overall flow of time in a given scene, and the effect on time of moments of sexual performance and performative sexuality.

*Keywords:* consecutive simultaneity, stages of time, sexual performance, performative sexuality, Oscar Wilde, Erving Goffman, Judith Butler
She parted the curtains; she looked. Oh, but how surprising!—in the room opposite the old lady stared straight at her! She was going to bed [...] It was fascinating to watch her, moving about, that old lady, crossing the room, coming to the window. Could she see her? It was fascinating, with people still laughing and shouting in the drawing-room, to watch that old woman, quite quietly, going to bed alone. She pulled the blind now. The clock began striking.

Virginia Woolf, Mrs Dalloway

We are all always playing roles. On different fronts, in different guises, theatrical, professional, social, we present different selves to different people in different situations. We also shift frequently and fluidly between performing and spectating. Erving Goffman, a seminal sociologist of the twentieth century, indicates in The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life the subtle and multifarious ways in which we all constantly put on acts without necessarily even being aware of it. Goffman’s theories about performance are instructive too for discussions of narrative time. Performance is of particular interest in temporal terms because it firstly raises questions about sincerity and artifice (and the point of subjective experience is its authenticity), and it also inherently involves two distinct perspectives: if someone is performing, then they must, by definition, have an audience. Michael Gamper and Helmut Hühn suggest: ‘If the nineteenth century can be seen as the century of synchronization, then the twentieth century can be seen as that of insight into the plurality of temporalities’ (‘Kann das 19. Jahrhundert so als Jahrhundert der Synchroniesierung gesehen werden, so darf das 20. Jahrhundert als dasjenige der Einsicht in die Vielzahl der Zeitlichkeiten betrachtet werden’).¹ This phenomenon can be seen particularly in the scenes of performance considered here. In ‘real time’ or in terms of story time (erzählte Zeit), the period of time consumed in the performance is technically the same for the performer (p.52) and for their audience. In terms of subjective experience, however, the sense of time may appear to be wildly different. Mann presents different forms of performance in several of his works, ranging from the overtly artificial to the subtle and social. In his novel Confessions of Felix Krull, Confidence Man, Mann’s protagonist toys with the boundary between theatrical and social performance, often playing wholly artificial roles but...
doing so in the guise of everyday social performance, so that his audience is unaware of the depth of his illusion. In *Doctor Faustus*, musical performance lies at the heart of the novel. The protagonist, Adrian Leverkühn, is a composer and a musician, and his life also bears a strong resemblance to a well-known character from myth and theatre: Faust. At the same time, this novel is about storytelling. Adrian’s friend, Serenus Zeitblom, witnesses the events of Adrian’s life and shapes them into biography, thus creating a kind of narrative performance. Mann’s early novella, *The Blood of the Walsungs*, also blurs the boundaries between theatrical and social performance. In this, the protagonists form a mirror to another famous mythic tale, echoing Richard Wagner’s music drama *The Valkyrie*. Not only are the characters named after Wagner’s twins, but they also attend the opera to see the drama, creating a mise en-abyme theatre. One of the works that strongly influenced *Felix Krull* was Oscar Wilde’s *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. This paints one of the most extreme instances of social disguise, where Dorian may be as fake, as extreme, as reckless, or as damaging as he likes in public, but no trace of this will be marked on his face. He can be anyone and do anything, and the ‘truth’ behind the illusion remains hidden in the attic. *Dorian Gray* was first published in 1890 and therefore is situated on the cusp of what Gamper and Hühn describe as the shift from the age of synchronization to a plurality of temporalities (cited above). It thus provides a useful comparison for the plurality of times exhibited in scenes of performance in Mann’s works, particularly in *Felix Krull*, which only appeared in its fullest (though still incomplete) form more than half a century after Wilde’s novel.
In this chapter, I explore the presentations of performance in these works in order to shed light on different aspects of temporality. First, I consider the ways in which the simultaneous but distinct experiences of performer and spectator can be rendered in the inherently consecutive medium of narrative. Second, I suggest that performance creates different ‘stages of time’, whereby the subjective pace of the narrative varies depending on whose perspective is given priority within a given scene. Finally, I discuss the complicated effect of theatricalized sex scenes on temporal experience. In terms of the overall approach of this book, this constitutes a move from the minute analysis of words and sentences in Chapter 1 to a consideration (p.53) of longer moments, exploring the ways in which time fluctuates over a given scene in step with changing character focalization.

Consecutive simultaneity
One of the greatest challenges to narrative time (or indeed any mimetic representation) is the depiction of simultaneity in an intrinsically ordered medium. Narrative time has to follow a chronology and no matter how much this chronology may be disrupted, reversed, sped up, or slowed down, it still has direction. In his engagement with Kant, Johann Gottfried Herder highlighted the plurality of temporalities, none of which may convey an absolute time. Gamper and Hühn observe:

With these reflections, Herder indicates a historical process not only of the individualization, but also of the relativization and the pluralization of conceptions of time. [...] With relativization time loses its character of absoluteness, which it had, albeit in completely different ways, with both Newton and Kant.

(Herder zeigt mit seinen Überlegungen einen geschichtlichen Prozess nicht nur der Individualisierung, sondern auch der Relativierung und Pluralisierung der Zeitvorstellung an. [...] Mit der Relativierung verliert die Zeit ihren Absolutheitscharakter, den sie, wenn auch in ganz unterschiedlicher Weise, bei Newton wie bei Kant besaß.)

As Norbert Elias demonstrates in his Essay on Time, the very notion of ‘measuring’ time is problematic:
Simply by speaking of ‘measuring’ time one makes it appear as if time is actually a physical object like a mountain or a river, the dimensions of which can be measured. Or consider the expression ‘in the course of time’; it almost suggests that people, or perhaps the whole world, were swimming in a river of time.\(^3\)

Literature, however, allows the subtleties and immeasurability of multiple times, and this is particularly palpable in literary scenes of performance. Although an ironic omniscient narrator may convey a character’s sentiment while distancing it from their own, simultaneity poses far more of a challenge with the distinct experiences of two intradiegetic characters. In the case of performance, there are, by definition, two participants (whether collectives or individuals): the performer and the audience. The quantity of ‘clock time’ is the same for everyone involved in the performance. Yet (p.54) the two distinct experiences cannot be straightforwardly narrated concurrently. In both *Felix Krull* and *The Blood of the Walsungs*, Mann plays with different levels of theatricality, role play, and artifice, while his characters fluidly move between performing and perceiving. He does not, therefore, give clear priority to one experience or the other, but frequently indicates the concurrency of both forms of experience through varying modes of consecutive narration.

Mann began working on *Felix Krull* between 1910 and 1913, returned to it between 1950 and 1954, and had not completed it by the time of his death in 1955. He called it a parody of Goethe’s autobiography *Poetry and Truth*, and like Goethe’s work, *Felix Krull* is moulded as an autobiography with an ageing narrator returning to the formative moments of his past. As its title suggests, it is all about performance. Felix, a ‘loveable rogue’, deceives almost everyone he meets. This is not out of malice, but instead is born of the desire to please, which Ernest Schonfield suggests forms his ‘principal aim in life’.\(^4\)
One of Felix’s earliest memories of role playing that merges performance with deception is his feigned musical expertise in the holiday resort of Langenschwalbach. What is somewhat unusual about this scene is that Felix does not function simply as *either* performer *or* audience, but instead shifts between both roles in a single episode. His individual experience therefore combines the distinct strands of both participants. Felix starts as the audience watching the orchestral performances. Making use of two sticks, ‘one long and one short’ (‘eines kurzen und eines längeren’), he attempts to imitate ‘the gestures of the first violinist’ (‘das Gebaren des ersten Violinisten’).5 His father and the conductor then orchestrate a more convincing version of the mime: they procure a small violin, cover the bow with Vaseline, and he enacts the prodigious child violinist all the more realistically and to great acclaim. Having shifted from audience to performer, Felix, as narrator, indicates that there are multiple perspectives combined in the shared experience of his performance.

In chronological terms Felix prioritizes his subjective experience of playing the role of violinist, yet, through nuanced changes in tense and voice, he creates a sense of simultaneity that defies narrative order. Where (p.55) Felix narrated the performance with sticks in the past tense, he then switches to the present tense as he seemingly ‘relives’ his ‘concert’:

> And on a Sunday afternoon at the hour of the promenade I take my place, appropriately dressed up, beside the little conductor on the platform of the musical temple and join in the performance of a Hungarian dance piece, doing with my fiddle and Vaselined bow what I had done before with my two sticks. I make bold to say that my success was complete. (18, adapted)

> (Und eines Sonntagnachmittags, während der Kurpromenade, stehe ich, ansprechend ausstaffiert, zur Seite des kleinen Kapellmeisters an der Rampe des Musiktempels und beteilige mich an der Ausführung einer ungarischen Tanzpièce, indem ich mit meiner Fiedel und mit meinem Vaselinbogen tue, was ich vordem mit meinen beiden Stöcken getan. Ich darf sagen, daß mein Erfolg vollkommen war. (26))
This account is brief, vague, and creates a substantial discrepancy between discourse time and story time. It is an imitation of an imitation; that is, Felix does not repeat the description of his stick performance, but simply suggests that it is the same again. The final sentence, ‘I make bold to say my success was complete’ (‘Ich darf sagen, daß mein Erfolg vollkommen war’), signals the end of the performance. And yet, this is a spurious sense of finality. Felix’s account turns to the audience, initially seeing them in the third-person perspective: ‘The public, both distinguished and more modest, streamed up from all sides and crowded in front of the pavilion’ (18, adapted) (‘Das Publikum, vornehmes und schlichteres, staute sich vor dem Pavillon, es strömte von allen Seiten herbei’ (26)). He effectively rewinds his narrative and repeats the account of his violin playing, but this time he becomes the object rather than the subject: they come ‘to look at the infant prodigy’ (18) (‘Man sah ein Wunderkind’ (26)). Both he and the audience are now combined in the impersonal third-person, as their experience is suggestively intertwined. Because he describes the audience’s view rather than his own, he specifically says what they see (a child prodigy) rather than what he is (a skilful fraudster). Although he then returns to the first-person, it is through his external appearance visible to the onlookers that his performance is narrated:

My complete absorption in my task, the pallor of my hard-working face, the wave of hair falling over one of my eyes, my childish hands, and arms clad in sleeves which were full at the upper arm and tapered towards the wrists. (18)

(Meine Hingebung, die Blässe meiner arbeitenden Miene, eine Welle Haares, die mir über das eine Auge fiel, meine kindlichen Hände, deren Gelenke von den blauen, an den Oberarmen bauschigen und nach unten eng zulaufenden Ärmeln kleidsam umspannt waren. (26))
Where his initial description was in the present tense, this second description is narrated in the past, creating the following formula: past experience is made present and present experience is made past, thus the two time frames blur together. Felix claims that 'my whole touching and astonishing little figure captivated all hearts' (‘meine ganze rührende und wunderbare Erscheinung entzückte die Herzen’). This tellingly echoes his own experience as audience member shortly before. As he listened to the orchestra himself, he says ‘the music captivates me’ (‘die Musik entzückt mich’) and ‘I let my heart be enchanted by the ordered succession of sweet sounds’ (17) (‘ich […] ließ mein Herz von dem anmutig ordnungsvollen Reigen der Töne bezaubern’) (25, my italics, adapted). Through Felix’s oscillating identification with and distancing from the experience of the other participants in the performance, Mann suggests the simultaneity of shared experience despite the unavoidably consecutive order of narrative.

The Blood of the Walsungs presents similarly theatrical performances, but the spectacle and spectators appear—initially—more distinct. The novella’s protagonists are named after the twins in Wagner’s music drama The Valkyrie, Siegmund and Sieglinde. In The Valkyrie, Siegmund and Sieglinde are separated as children, meet again as adults, and, having recognized the similarities of their appearances, declare their love for one another, which they then incestuously consummate. In Mann’s novella, the protagonists also act as performers, at times consciously imitating Wagner’s drama: Siegmund and Sieglinde make a theatrical entrance onto the domestic ‘stage’ at dinner time, their concern with their appearances and clothing resembles theatrical make-up and costume, and, as they address Sieglinde’s fiancé, von Beckerath, their brother Kunz ‘drummed the rhythm of the Hunding motif on the tablecloth’ (‘trommelte auf dem Tischtuch den Rythmus des Hunding-Motivs’), referencing Sieglinde’s husband in Wagner’s work. Mann’s protagonists then attend a performance of The Valkyrie. As Mann’s Siegmund and Sieglinde mirror the experience of Wagner’s characters on stage, the two strands of performance—that of performer and that of spectator—blur together. This indicates the simultaneity of their experiences, while also suggesting their divergence in terms of subjective experience.
Mann does not explicitly distinguish between the pairs of twins so context alone locates the characters on stage or in the audience. The narration oscillates between the two pairs, with subtle inflections of voice and perspective creating a fluctuation that intertwines the sets of experience. Initially, the omniscient third-person narrator impersonally describes the actions on stage. These characters then gain more of an explicit voice as Hunding ‘narrates’. But the use of reported speech—signalled by the subjunctive—diminishes this authority:

> With that courtesy that became him so redoubtably, [Hunding] declared that his house was a sanctuary and would protect the fugitive for tonight; but that tomorrow he would have the honour of slaying Siegmund in battle. (307, adapted)

(\textit{Mit jener Gesittung, die ihn fürchterlich kleidete, erklärte [Hunding] wieder, daß sein Haus heilig sei und den Flüchtling für heute schütze, daß er aber morgen die Ehre haben werde, Siegmund im Kampfe zu fällen} (452))

Where Wagner’s Siegmund and Sieglinde on stage sit down, Mann’s Siegmund is described from the sitting position in his chair, blurring the pairs’ movements into cohesive continuity: ‘Then they sat down […] From his armchair Siegmund bent over the velvet ledge and leaned his dark boyish head on his narrow red hand’ (306–7, adapted) (‘Dann saßen sie nieder […] Siegmund aus seinem Fauteuil über die Samtbrüstung gebeugt, stützte den dunklen Knabenkopf in die schmale und rote Hand’ (451–2)). Mann’s Siegmund is now described in the impersonal third-person just as the onstage version was earlier. The same pattern is then repeated as Mann’s characters assume the narrative voice through direct speech, blurring their own experience with the actions on stage:

> ‘The cherry brandy beans are at the bottom,’ she whispered. But he took only a cherry, and as he removed it from the wrapping paper she leaned forwards again to his ear and said:

> ‘She will come back to him again at once.’
‘I am not entirely unaware of the fact’, he said, so loudly that several heads turned angrily towards them. (307, adapted)

(‘Die Marasquino-Bohnen liegen unten’, flüsterte sie. Aber er nahm nur eine Kirsche, und während er die Hülse aus Seidenpapier löste, beugte sie sich nochmals zu seinem Ohr und sagte:

‘Sie kommt gleich wieder zurück zu ihm.’

‘Das ist mir nicht vollständig unbekannt’, sagte er so laut, daß mehrere Köpfe sich gehässig gegen sie kehrten. (452))

Through the present tense of the sweets lying at the bottom of the packet, to the past tense as Siegmund ‘took only a cherry’ (‘nahm nur eine Kirsche’), to the future of the onstage Sieglinde, who ‘will come back to him again at once’ (‘kommt gleich wieder zurück zu ihm’), the distinct temporalities between audience and performer become blended in a concoction of multiple times and indistinct perspectives. Furthermore, Siegmund is so loud in his response that heads turn towards him, thus shifting him from spectator to spectacle, as he effectively upstages the onstage Siegmund. In contrast, Wagner’s Siegmund, ‘the great Siegmund’, was ‘singing to himself alone down in the darkness’ (307, adapted) (‘der große Siegmund sang unten für sich allein im Dunkeln’ (452–3)). This suggests that his performance is no longer any such thing, but has shifted, in Goffman’s terms, from ‘cynical’ to ‘sincere’, in other words from one who ‘has no belief in his own act and no ultimate concern with the beliefs of his audience’ to one who ‘believe[s] in the impression fostered by their own performance’.7 Although the ensuing description of Hunding is told again by the omniscient third-person narrator, it is glossed with erlebte Rede or free indirect discourse, inflecting it with the perspective and language of either, or perhaps both, of the Siegmund–Sieglinde pairs:
Hunding slept like a stone, a deafened, drunken sleep. Together they rejoiced at the outwitting of the clod; they laughed, and their eyes had the same way of narrowing as they laughed. But then Sieglinde stole a look at the conductor, received her cue, formed her lips into position, and sang at length, according to the score.
(307–8, adapted)

(Hunding schlief wie ein Stein, betäubt, betrunken gemacht. Sie freuten sich miteinander, daß der schwere Dummkopf überlistet war,—und ihre Augen hatten dieselbe Art, sich lächelnd zu verkleinern...Aber dann sah Sieglind verstohlen den Kapellmeister an und erhielt ihren Einsatz, stellte formend die Lippen ein und sang ausführlich, wie alles stand und lag  (453))

Thus, even as the narrator concentrates on the onstage performance at this juncture, language such as ‘the clod’ (‘der schwere Dummkopf’) and ‘together they rejoiced’ (‘sie freuten sich miteinander’) indicates the priority given to the shared perspectives of both Siegmunds and Sieglindes. This thereby signals the simultaneity of performer and audience experience without recourse to consecutive narration. The conjunction ‘but’ that opens the next sentence (‘But then Sieglinde stole a look at the conductor’) suggests that the voice belongs to the Siegmund and Sieglinde sitting in the audience, demonstrating the breakdown of the performance as the singer performing as Wagner’s Sieglinde demonstrates the inherent artifice of her role playing. Yet the verb ‘stole’ (in German, the adverb ‘verstohlen’) equally indicates the onstage Sieglinde’s belief in the subtlety of her glance at the conductor. Both perspectives are therefore combined into one.
Felix Krull and The Blood of the Walsungs present scenes of explicit performance where the challenge of simultaneous but distinct strands of experience becomes particularly palpable. In both works, Mann avoids a straightforward shift from one perspective to another, which would merely imply simultaneity without actually creating it. Instead he uses subtle inflections of tense, voice, and perspective to construct a fluid oscillation between points of view. In this way, any given instance of performance presents the interweaving of multiple strands of experience, while the forward flow of time is propelled not only by the ostensible quantity of ‘real time’ it occupies (i.e. story time), but also by the competing tensions of multiple subjectivities, which, as will be discussed below, may occupy various different times of their own.

Stages of time
The different perspectives of the performer and spectator involve different stages of time. In *The Blood of the Walsungs*, the third-person omniscient narrator shifts fluidly between different perspectives. Felix Krull’s first-person narrative allows varied focalization primarily between the older narrating self and the younger experiencing self. *Dorian Gray* presents a subtly varied focalization in the third-person voice, lending greater dominance to different characters over time. One of the formative experiences of Felix Krull’s youth is his first visit to the theatre where he sees a performance by Müller-Rosé, an acclaimed actor and old friend of his father’s. Less overtly theatrical, but also based on social role playing, is the family dinner in *The Blood of the Walsungs*. This potentially mundane scene involves multiple subjectivities combined in the performance of propriety and tradition, and the disclosure of familial tensions. The most palpably theatrical scene in *Dorian Gray* is Sybil Vane’s performance of *Romeo and Juliet*, which Dorian, Lord Henry, and Basil Hallward attend. This scene focuses entirely on the spectators’ point of view before (as will be echoed in *Felix Krull*) taking the reader behind the scenes to Sybil’s dressing room to flesh out her perspective. In these three scenes of explicit or implicit performance, the shared moment nevertheless involves different senses of time. As changes in perspective occur, so too do changes of time. This means that the subjective sense of time going by in these scenes undergoes continuous alterations wholly at odds with the ostensible quantity of discourse time or story time consumed.

The employment of what Genette terms ‘variable’ focalization in the dinner scene of *The Blood of the Walsungs* allows a more straightforward \( \text{(p.60)} \) distinction between different strands of experience. For most of the scene, it is the perspective of Herr Aarenhold (the father of the family) that dominates. It momentarily shifts into Sieglinde’s point of view, and then eventually to that of von Beckerath, Sieglinde’s fiancé and the guest at the meal. The juxtaposition of Herr Aarenhold and von Beckerath’s perspectives indicates that time appears to accelerate from the view of the spectator and slow down for the performer. Where Aarenhold gives lengthy thought to his ‘presentation of self’ (to borrow Goffman’s phrase) and dwells on his monologue to the audience of his family, von Beckerath is far more concerned with watching the performances of others, leaving little space for reflections of his own.
From the beginning of the meal, the narrator makes it clear that Herr Aarenhold’s experience of time takes precedence, and furthermore, that it is the time of a performer who acts to create an impression upon those observing him: ‘They went to table; Herr Aarenhold led the way, eager to let von Beckerath see that he was hungry’ (291) (‘Man ging zu Tische, voran Herr Aarenhold, der Herrn von Beckerath zeigen wollte, daß er Hunger habe’ (432)). Although this opens as the impersonal, general, and collective ‘they went to table’ (implicitly collective in the German, ‘man ging zu Tische’), the narrator then suggests that this is a move orchestrated by Aarenhold in order to give a signal of impatience to von Beckerath. The narrator slows the pace through the description of the setting, creating a ‘pictorial’ image (as discussed in Chapter 1), and then within this description subtly shifts into Aarenhold’s perspective. First, Aarenhold’s actions seemingly form part of the scene-setting, placing him within the sedate depiction of the room, the lighting, the chairs, and the decorations. The inanimate objects of the room are to an extent personified through the attribution of active gestures: the family table ‘with its seven places, was lost in the void’ (‘verlor sich […] mit den sieben Personen’), the ‘silver spray’ (‘Silberstrahl’) of the fountain ‘danced’ (‘tänzelte’), and the window ‘offered’ (‘bot’) a view into the wintery garden (Eng. 291, adapted; Ger. 432); they too form part of what Goffman calls the ‘team performance’, seeking to create a particular impression.9 Amidst these oxymoronic ‘active-inanimate’ objects, Aarenhold’s solemn movements are introduced, appearing wholly commensurate with the measured, almost static pace of the description and the concern for external appearances:

With his thin and careful hand Herr Aarenhold settled the pince-nez half-way down his nose and with a mistrustful air read the menu, three copies of which lay on the table. (292, adapted)

(p.61) (Herr Aarenhold befestigte mit seiner hageren und vorsichtigen Hand das Pincenez auf halber Höhe seiner Nase und las mit argwöhnischer Miene das Menü, das in drei Exemplaren auf dem Tische lag (432))
The specifics of this description also offer an example of the ‘symbolic resources of the practical field’ of the first stage of Ricoeur’s threefold mimesis, which he terms ‘mimesis\textsubscript{1}’.\textsuperscript{10} He says that ‘[i]f, in fact, human action can be narrated, it is because it is always already articulated by signs, rules, and norms. It is always already symbolically mediated.’\textsuperscript{11} William Dowling gives the following example of ‘symbolic resources’:

If I walk out of my house in the morning to see a new Rolls-Royce parked in a neighbour’s driveway, I instantly perceive that I am looking primarily at something meant as a sign of wealth or status, and only incidentally at a mechanical device for transporting its owner from point A to point B.\textsuperscript{12}

The objects setting the stage for Aarenhold’s performance act as the early twentieth-century equivalent of a Rolls-Royce; the ‘pince-nez’, the ‘menu’—both aristocratically appropriating French terms—are props that indicate wealth and status, thus they contribute to the ‘prefiguration of the practical field’ by presenting a socially readable past.\textsuperscript{13} Spatial description thus lays the foundation for Aarenhold’s experience. It reflects his plodding sense of time, while its description also slows the narration, contributing to the weighty pace that dominates subjective time at this juncture.

The narrator gives context to Aarenhold’s internal reflections (combining the psychic and the somatic interior with irony) by explaining, ‘He suffered from a weakness of the solar plexus, that nerve centre which lies at the pit of the stomach and may give rise to serious distress’ (292) (‘Er litt an einer Schwäche des Sonnengeflechts, jenes Nervenkomplexes, der sich unterhalb des Magens befindet und die Quelle schwerer Mißhelligkeiten werden kann’ (432)). This tactic of filling in contextual details is repeated throughout the dinner scene, but—notably—only with reference to Aarenhold, and never to von Beckerath. As Aarenhold sees his children exchange a mocking look in response to his address to the table, the narrator explains:
He knew that they were united against him, that they despised him: for his background, for the blood which flowed in his veins and through him in theirs; for the way he had earned his wealth; for his hobbies, which in their eyes did not befit him; for the care he took over himself, to which he equally should have no right; for his weak and whimsical loquacity, which was lacking in the restraint of good taste. (293, adapted)

(Er wußte, daß sie einig gegen ihn waren und daß sie ihn verachteten: für seine Herkunft, für das Blut, das in ihm floß und das sie von ihm empfangen, für die Art, in der er seinen Reichtum erworben, für seine Liebhabereien, die ihm in ihren Augen nicht zukamen, für seine Selbstpflege, auf die er ebenfalls kein Recht haben sollte, für seine weiche und dichterische Geschwätzigkeit, der die Hemmungen des Geschmackes fehlten. (434))

Both instances of contextualization are what Genette terms ‘mixed analepses’.¹⁴ They fill in additional details about a character through reference to a time passed earlier than that of the main narrative time frame, while also linking to the main time frame. These digressions into Aarenhold’s past temporarily interrupt the narration of active events and thus slow the temporal flow. This means not only that Aarenhold experiences time at a more leisurely pace than von Beckerath, but also that the narrator colludes in the creation of this slowed pace through focalized narrative digressions.

Where Aarenhold’s identification with the role of performer slows his subjective temporal flow, von Beckerath’s position as audience accelerates his personal sense of time. Aarenhold ‘takes time’ to prepare his performance:

Herr Aarenhold felt himself moved to expand a little in the comfortable warmth thus purveyed. With cautious fingers he conveyed his napkin to his mouth and searched for a mode of expression for what was stirring in his soul. (292, adapted)

(Herr Aarenhold fand sich durch die Erwärmung angeregt, ein wenig Luft aufzubringen. Mit behutsamen Fingern führte er die Serviette zum Munde und suchte nach einer Ausdrucksmöglichkeit für das, was ihm den Geist bewegte. (433))
After his monologue has then been narrated at length, as the narrative prioritizes his performance, Aarenhold pays very little attention to the discussions that follow between those around him. The only external details that puncture Aarenhold’s inner musings are those that have a direct impact on him in psychic or somatic terms: the refrain ‘von Beckerath smile.’ (‘Von Beckerath lächelte’) is twice repeated and placed in parentheses as the polite (and apparently appeasing) response to Aarenhold’s monologue (Eng., 293; Ger. 433, 434); as the food is brought or cleared, Aarenhold becomes aware of the servants’ movements; and, as the family discusses the upcoming wedding of Sieglinde and von Beckerath, the narrator dwells on Aarenhold’s embarrassment and thoughts about the (p.63) participants. The effect of this is that much time appears to elapse during the depictions of Aarenhold’s interiority as he fluidly moves in and out of concentration on the changing topics of conversation and the flow of dishes that are placed before him and cleared away again.

Von Beckerath, by contrast, appears to have only fleeting moments of interiority. Instead, his focus is directed towards whomever is in the proverbial spotlight at any given moment. Where Aarenhold concentrates predominantly on his own inner musings and impressions, and is only occasionally punctured by the events around him, von Beckerath’s concentration on the family’s performance is only occasionally punctured by his own private responses. As the others act, he reacts, simply responding to their performances. But these responses indicate that he too is attempting to put on an (albeit unsuccessful) show. Sieglinde scornfully mocks the habit of appearing in ‘Dinner jackets in the afternoon!’ (‘Nachmittags im Smoking’), pinpointing the very artifice that Goffman highlights in The Performance of Self by suggesting ‘It isn’t even human!’ (295) (‘Das tun doch sonst nur die Tiere’ (437)). Von Beckerath quickly presents a self to the family, in an effort to hide his private discomfort: ‘Von Beckerath laughed eagerly, although his conscience warned him that he himself had on occasion worn a dinner jacket to tea parties’ (295, adapted) (‘Von Beckerath lachte eifrig, zumal sein Gewissen ihn mahnte, daß er selbst schon zu Tees im Smoking gegangen sei’ (437)). Rather than pausing to give further space to von Beckerath’s thoughts, the narrative shifts back immediately to the group discussion:
And with the game course they passed on from matters of more general cultural interest to art: to the visual arts, of which von Beckerath was a connoisseur and enthusiast, to literature and the theatre, which in the Aarenhold house was the preferred form—although Siegmund did devote some of his leisure to painting. (295–6, adapted)

(Man kam so, beim Geflügel, von Fragen allgemein kultureller Natur auf Kunst zu sprechen: auf bildende Kunst, in der von Beckerath Kenner und Liebhaber war, auf Literatur und Theater, wofür im Hause Aarenhold die Neigung vorherrschte, obgleich sich Siegmund mit Malerei beschäftigte. (437))

Several important narrative occurrences here affect the subjective sense of time and in particular distinguish this moment from those told from Aarenhold’s perspective. The narrator moves briskly between talk of general questions of a cultural nature to ‘art’, progressing from ‘the visual arts’ to ‘literature and the theatre’, but notably there is no pause or interruption, grammatical or narratological. Furthermore, this swift method of précis means that there is no attempt at mimicry; the narrator does not repeat every word of the discussion (as with Aarenhold’s (p.64) monologue), but offers instead only a vague overview. Also in contrast to the Aarenhold periods, this passage almost lacks any obvious focalization. Almost, but not quite. Free indirect discourse subtly creeps into the end of the description, illustrating—barely palpably—that it is indeed told from von Beckerath’s perspective. The narrator asserts that von Beckerath was a ‘connoisseur and enthusiast’ of visual art, but the conversation moves on to literature and theatre, and there is slight incomprehension in the appendage ‘although Siegmund did devote some of his leisure to painting’. The compliment paid to von Beckerath concerning his cultural expertise, and the evident nonplussed annoyance that the conversation shifts all too soon, offer a tacit indication of von Beckerath’s individual view, while being characteristic of his sense of time as always coming ‘too late’.

Von Beckerath to an extent lacks extensive interiority because he is too quick to attempt to externalize a given front. This is mirrored in the swift narration of his reactions: ‘Von Beckerath, overcome at anybody asking his permission about
anything, answered eagerly'; ‘Von Beckerath, excluded and blinking in his struggle for orientation, sought as best he could to participate in their mirth’ (297, adapted) (‘Von Beckerath, bestürzt, daß man in irgendeiner Sache nach seiner Erlaubnis verlangte, antwortete eifrig’; ‘Von Beckerath, ausgeschlossen und blinzelnd nach Orientierung ringend, versuchte, so gut es ging, sich an ihrer Heiterkeit zu beteiligen’ (439)). In both instances (in the German original) his feelings are summarized in a single word (‘overcome’, ‘excluded’) rather than narrated at length. His performances are only ever in reaction to the performances of others as he desperately strives to become part of the ‘team’. The dinner party as a whole forms a kind of ‘team performance’ in Goffman’s terms: ‘In so far as they cooperate in maintaining a given impression, using this device as a means of achieving their ends, they constitute what has been called a team.’

But because the others present fail ‘to protect this impression of reality’ by repeatedly preventing von Beckerath from playing the part of esteemed and welcome guest, he is left on the outside looking in. As he strives more and more to become a player in the domestic performance, rather than to remain on the margins as the audience, his actions happen almost at the same time as his emotional response, giving him a swift and erratic sense of time. The opposite is true of the self-assured, long-rehearsed act of Aarenhold. At the end of the dinner scene, a cruel trick is played at von Beckerath’s expense: having asked von Beckerath for permission to go to the opera with Sieglinde, Siegmund then informs the table that he booked the tickets long ago, (p.65) thereby demonstrating that his apparent courtesy in asking permission was merely an act. Upon this disclosure, the children (or perhaps the whole family) laugh, ‘as they were all staring at the bridegroom’ (298) (‘indem sie dem Bräutigam in die Augen sahen’ (440)). The family here form what Goffman calls a ‘clique’, ‘in the sense of a small number of persons who join together for informal amusements’, thus disrupting any pretence at an inclusive team performance, and this is reflected in the subjective temporal emphasis.

Instead of any narrative space given to von Beckerath’s inner response to this deceitful performance, in which, as it turned out, he was unwittingly playing the part of the dupe, the narrator returns to Aarenhold and time slows once more:
Herr Aarenhold unfolded with his finger-tips the paper of a belladonna powder and shook it carefully into his mouth. Then he lit a fat cigarette, which presently spread around a delectable fragrance. (298, adapted)

(Herr Aarenhold entfaltete mit spitzen Fingern die Hülse eines Belladonna-Pulvers und schüttete es sich behutsam in den Mund. Er zündete sich hierauf eine breite Zigarette an, die alsbald einen köstlichen Duft verbreitete. (440))

The pattern of ellipsis for von Beckerath’s subjective experience and detailed description of both action and interiority for Aarenhold again prevails. The narrator repeats their collusion in the creation of a heavier sense of temporal movement for Aarenhold, with, for example, the repetition of ‘breite’ (translated here as ‘fat’) in the German ‘eine breite Zigarette’ (‘a fat cigarette’) which then ‘einen köstlichen Duft verbreitete’ (‘spread around a delectable fragrance’), thus creating an aural breadth to the action as well, thereby slowing the pace. In constructing an oscillation between two distinct strands of experience, Mann not only suggests that there exist many competing subjectivities occurring simultaneously, but also creates an erratic tempo that flows in accordance with the shifting focalization rather than with the commands of ‘real’ time.

The simultaneous construction of the multiple times of performance is a more complicated endeavour in Felix Krull’s first-person narrative, where, inevitably, Felix’s voice is the only one given undiluted precedence. There is no straightforward employment of varied focalization. As Schonfield indicates, however:

Right from the start, we are dealing with two fictional Krulls, who inhabit two different fictional time zones. There is the younger Krull whose story is being told, and the older Krull who narrates the story. The former is known (p.66) as the narrated or experiencing self (erzähltes or erlebendes Ich), and the latter is known as the narrating self (erzählendes Ich).18
In the narration of his first theatre visit, Felix attains a varied focalization by constructing a dialogue between his distinct selves. This occurs, furthermore, in conjunction with a fluctuating identification with and distancing from Müller-Rosé, the talented actor, whose performance he witnesses. As in *The Blood of the Walsungs*, time varies according to changing roles in the performance. The younger Felix is obviously a member of the audience in this scene, but even after the theatre performance has ended, his attention to the appearances and actions of others means that he continues to spectate rather than perform. The same cannot be said of the older narrating Felix. As he competes with his younger self, his focus frequently turns to his own interiority or mode of expression, prioritizing the entertainment value of his description above accuracy. In such moments, he becomes distant from his past as it extends far beyond the time of ‘back then’. Similarly to *The Blood of the Walsungs*, the oscillation between different perspectives means that subjective time appears to speed up or slow down within a single, fixed episode.
Felix’s own attempt at performance comes to the fore through the trope of painting. But this functions in a very different way from the literary paintings in *The Magic Mountain* and *Death in Venice* discussed in Chapter 1. Felix as the narrator promises ‘to set down my still vivid recollections of Müller-Rosé’s effect on me’ (24), where the German original ‘nachzumalen’ suggests *painting* the recollections (‘die Bühnenerscheinung Müller-Rosés aus lebhafter Erinnerung nachzumalen’ (33, my italics)). This transforms the act of recollection into the creative act of mimicry for the benefit of an implicit viewer (namely, the reader). This creates a pseudo-ekphrastic image, whereby he presents the real, moving figure of Müller-Rosé almost as a painting in words. He asserts that ‘the picture of this man will remain forever in my memory’ (‘sein Bild wird ewig in meinem Gedächtnis fortleben’ (my italics)), suggesting there is a second layer of mimicry (i.e. he repaints the picture of a picture). Felix then describes Müller-Rosé’s appearance in an emphatically artificial way: during the play, Müller-Rosé’s top hat is the ‘the ideal and model of what a top hat should be, without a particle of dust or roughness and with the most beautiful reflections, just as in a picture’ (‘Traum- und Musterbild seiner Art’), his moustache looks ‘as if it had been drawn with a paintbrush’ (25) (‘wie mit dem Pinsel gezogen’ (34)), and, as he meets Müller-Rosé in his dressing room after the performance, Felix notes, ‘half of his countenance still had that rosy coating’ and ‘one of his eyes was still painted around with black’ (28, adapted) (‘die eine Hälfte seines Gesichtes war noch bedeckt mit jener rosigen Schicht’ and ‘Noch war sein eines Auge schwarz ummalt’ (38)). The narrating Felix interjects with his own musings, disrupting the telling of the younger Felix’s experience. In so doing, he shifts from audience to performer as time shifts from ‘then’ to ‘now’:

I […] looked about—but I can add nothing to this description of our visit to Müller-Rosé’s dressing room. Indeed, I would have had to reproach myself for having reported nothing and again nothing so extensive about my first visit to a theatre, if I were not writing primarily for my own amusement and only secondarily for the public. (28–9, adapted)
At the beginning of this paragraph, Felix is still observing the performer Müller-Rosé and his dressing room (‘I […] looked about’ (‘ich […] schaute’)). But as the narrator purports to have forgotten any further details about Müller-Rosé and his dressing room, he effectively usurps the actor and becomes himself the object of observation, also shifting to the present tense, which Genette terms the ‘extradiegetic mode’. His assertion that he reconstructs memory first and foremost ‘for my own amusement’ (‘zu meiner eigenen Unterhaltung’) and secondarily for that of the ‘public’ (‘Publikum’) is telling; the German word ‘Publikum’ encapsulates the ‘public’ in general (including the reader), while simultaneously being overtly theatrical in its second meaning as ‘audience’. The claim that he prioritizes his own entertainment indicates his uneasy location between performing and spectating. So much for the narrator’s emphasis on performance, but what of his experience of time?

The ‘autobiographical’ form of *Felix Krull* means that the dichotomy between the time of performer and the time of audience does not work directly in the same way as in the dinner scene of *The Blood of the Walsungs*, where Aarenhold adopts the position of performer, while von Beckerath acts as his audience. Although *The Blood of the Walsungs* is told predominantly in the past tense, the omniscient narrator effectively experiences events at the same time as the characters, and therefore assumes their senses of time. He makes digressions into the past, but does not use prolepsis, which would disrupt the time frame by casting it into an as yet unexperienced future. The same, however, is not true of *Felix Krull*. As a fictional autobiography, it is in effect a ‘work of memory’. The younger Felix of recollected experience no longer exists, and, almost unavoidable, the older narrating Felix and his sense of time dominate and filter. Indeed, the narrator asserts his command over temporality and over his past self:
I dwell on those experiences and encounters to which I owe particular understanding and illumination about myself and the world, painting every detail with a fine brush, while I easily pass more quickly over other things that are less dear to me. (29, adapted)

(Bei Erfahrungen und Begegnissen, denen ich eine besondere Belehrung und Aufklärung über mich und die Welt verdanke, verweile ich lange und führe jede Einzelheit mit spitzem Pinsel aus, während ich über anderes, was mir weniger teuer ist, leicht hinweggleite. (39))

In the German original, Feliz uses the phrase ‘jede Einzelheit mit spitzem Pinsel ausführen’, which continues the painting metaphor with the image of executing every detail with a fine brush. This passage indicates that Felix as the narrator stretches or contracts narrative time in accordance with the importance of the given memory. The younger Felix’s sense of time is therefore inevitably slower and more emphatically narrated. This, however, is also symbiotically bound up with the importance of sensory experience for the younger self.
Although the older narrator purports to have control over time and its subjective narration, he is also, in a sense, at the mercy of his younger self. Whether or not the older Felix remembers the incidents he narrates depends on the impression they made on the young Felix. This is particularly central with regard to sensory experience. The narrator explains: ‘it is undoubtedly true that we receive stronger impressions through the senses than through words’ (29) (‘die Bewegung, die unserem Geist durch die Sinne mitgeteilt wird, ist unzweifelhaft viel stärker als die, welche das Wort darin erzeugt’ (39)); the narrator also ironically highlights his own impotence as far as the transmission of sensory experience is concerned. Due to the importance of sensory perception in memory, the young Felix’s voice and experience come to the fore in passages of heightened sensuality. For example, as he first enters the theatre, he is almost overwhelmed by the sight that greets him. His description of the audience and stage consumes almost three-quarters of a page, but is divided into only two sentences. It has almost no grammatical or narratological caesurae, apparently cascading over the limits of language as the sensations hit him once more. As in The Blood of the Walsungs, this description of space slows time dramatically. Felix views the audience, inhales the smell emanating from their hair, their clothes, the gas lamps, hears the tangled noise of their chatter, and then sees ‘the voluptuous frescoes on the ceiling and the curtain’ (23) (‘die üppigen Malereien an der Saaldecke und auf dem Vorhang’ (32)). We get the impression that these opulent paintings are simply a mirror of the opulent image of the audience. Even before the play has begun, Felix assumes the role of spectator, viewing the audience as a kind of performance. He tells time through a series of still images rather than action, dialogue, or events.
Throughout this passage, the young Felix’s depth of sensory experience dictates the narrative structure. He forgets the name of the play, but remembers the setting and the various views of Müller-Rosé appearing in different guises and disguises on stage. He cannot recall the details of the conversation between Müller-Rosé and his father in the dressing room post-performance, but is full of the sensory intricacies of the sight and smell as he first enters. In contrast to the time of spectating in *The Blood of the Walsungs*, where von Beckerath concentrates on the actions, gestures, and dialogue of the implicit performers, Felix here slows time by viewing his memories as still images rather than active scenes. The distinction between the presentations of performing time in these two works lies predominantly in the different narrative voices. The omniscient narrator in *The Blood of the Walsungs* narrates in step with the characters’ experiences, whereas *Felix Krull* is narrated through the distant retrospection of an ageing narrator. The split perspectives and times of performer and spectator are both found in Felix, one as a young man experiencing events, and the other as an old man narrating them. And in this instance, the younger Felix’s recollected experience serves to slow subjective time through a series of almost frozen images, while the older narrating Felix boasts about his ability to skip over boring or insignificant details, thus having the power to accelerate time when his memory fails him.

One other aspect of ‘performing time’ is worth considering in the episode with Müller-Rosé. In a further temporal complication, Müller-Rosé also acts as a mirror to Felix, but one that reflects his future rather than his present. Indeed, we could go as far to say that, if *Felix Krull* is a parody of Goethe’s autobiography *Poetry and Truth*, then the Müller-Rosé episode is a parody of *Felix Krull*—but in miniature. It is in effect a mise en abyme of the plot as a whole. Because Müller-Rosé performs the story of a ‘a fascinating rogue and lady-killer’ (24) (‘Müßiggänger’, a charmer, a lothario (33)) and, what’s more, since the play is set in Paris, it clearly anticipates Felix’s own future experiences. Furthermore, Felix suggests that their distinct temporalities will eventually coincide. Upon introducing Müller-Rosé, Felix notes: ‘he is probably old and worn-out by now. (p.70) like me’ (24) (‘[e]s ist anzunehmen, daß er jetzt alt und abgenutzt ist, gleich mir selbst’ (33)).
Müller-Rosé also mirrors Felix in other, more unsettling respects. The visit to the actor’s dressing room has strong literary resonance with one of Mann’s main influences, Oscar Wilde’s *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. Wilde’s protagonist, much like Felix, is blessed with incredible beauty and has a great impact on everyone he meets. But where Felix is shaped as a lovable rogue, Dorian becomes poisoned by the influence of a manipulative acquaintance. He makes a Faustian plea that all of the signs of sin and ageing will not mark his good looks, but will instead disfigure a striking portrait of him. With this caveat, Dorian is free to live life as he pleases, dividing the performance of self in public with the secret, hideous truth marked in the painting. He hides the painting in an old attic room and occasionally visits it to observe the difference between the performing front and the ‘backstage’ deceit. As Felix enters Müller-Rosé’s dressing room, we are reminded of *Dorian Gray*. The front presented on stage was simply an act in more than a straightforwardly theatrical sense. Felix actually feels duped and disillusioned, even disgusted, as he views the disfigured wreck of Müller-Rosé ‘unmasked’. His back is covered in grotesque pustules and is shiny with sweat, his hair was not his own, but an attractive wig, his face was painted with deceptive make-up, he is no longer suave and charming, but in actuality vulgar and insecure. As he sits before a mirror and symbolically anticipates Felix’s future, this hideous sight forms an allegory of the disfigured inner view of the performer, offering a caricatured warning to Felix about the dangers of role playing.
There are therefore several strands of temporal movement intertwined in this theatrical performance in *Felix Krull*. Time moves simultaneously in multiple directions, subject to competing tensions. And it does not simply move backwards and forward in accordance with oscillating priority given to the younger or older Felix, but changes dramatically in subjective terms depending on whose perspective is foregrounded. While the older Felix exploits the retrospective narrator’s privilege to play with time in an omnipotent fashion, the younger Felix experiences only the details that were most impressive to him at the time, which dwell heavily on sensory perception and lose the intricacies of words or events. As a further complication, the younger Felix confronts in Müller-Rosé’s play a parodic anticipation of his own future, and in Müller-Rosé’s appearance an allegorical warning about potential future exposure. The older narrating Felix concedes certain temporal parallels between himself and Müller-Rosé, teasing the reader about the possible outcomes of his own fate.
(p.71) Performance operates in many different guises in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. Most obviously, there exists a stark disjuncture between the front Dorian presents to the world and the darker side of his character visible only in the painting hidden in the locked attic room. But Dorian’s Faustian fall also begins with performance: he falls in love with the actress Sybil Vane, precisely because of her ability to act. When she realizes her love for Dorian, she loses her talent for playing the roles of others, and so Dorian—disillusioned by the loss of Sybil’s artifice—spurns her, which prompts Sybil to kill herself. In the case of deliberate theatrical performance, Oscar Wilde does indeed give overt priority to one time over the other. When Dorian takes Lord Henry and Basil Hallward to see Sybil perform in *Romeo and Juliet*, Sybil’s subjective experience is almost entirely absent from the text. At most, it might be gleaned from Dorian, Lord Henry, and Basil’s reactions in the box watching the performance. Time here is used also to prioritize one subjectivity over another, as a form of dominance and repression. It is telling that this scene forms the catalyst for Sybil’s suicide—in a sense even her final act of agency (that of taking her own life) has already been rendered innocuous by Dorian’s temporal dominance; removing her subjective experience even during her own performance at the theatre, the narrator prefigures the way in which Dorian’s ‘time’ will overpower Sybil’s to the most extreme degree because—in dying and moreover for his sake—she of course loses all conception of temporal movement as time for her stops.
Unlike the creation of ‘consecutive simultaneity’ visible in *Felix Krull* and *The Blood of the Walsungs*, Wilde’s depiction of theatrical performance does not to any significant degree conjure a sense of the performer’s subjective experience onstage, but instead concentrates only on that of the spectators in the box. In conjunction with the scene immediately following the performance of *Romeo and Juliet*, this episode does however demonstrate that there are different ‘stages of time’ created by the fluctuating priority given to one character or another. As Dorian, Lord Henry, and Basil arrive at the theatre, time slows in anticipation of the performance. The narrator has time to describe the ‘fat Jew manager’ and the repulsed reaction he elicits from Dorian, Lord Henry’s difference of opinion and interchange with the manager, Basil’s perusal of the pit; the narrator depicts the heat, ‘the youths in the gallery’ and ‘the tawdry girls who sat beside them’, before moving on to the dialogue between the three men, which allows narrative time and narrated time to fall into step. This builds a sense of expectation, furthered by the observation that ([p.72]) ‘[f]or some reason or other, the house was crowded that night’ and ‘[t]he heat was terribly oppressive’, suggesting a storm cloud waiting to break with particular pressure on the performers on this occasion (75). But then as the show begins, Sybil is afforded no interiority at all. ‘Sybil Vane stepped onto the stage’, but her appearance is filtered through Lord Henry’s eyes:

Yes, she was certainly lovely to look at—one of the loveliest creatures, Lord Henry thought, that he had ever seen. There was something of the fawn in her shy grace and startled eyes. A faint blush, like the shadow of a rose in a mirror of silver, came to her cheeks as she glanced at the crowded, enthusiastic house. She stepped back a few paces, and her lips seemed to tremble. Basil Hallward leapt to his feet and began to applaud. Motionless, and as one in a dream, sat Dorian Gray, gazing at her. Lord Henry peered through his glasses, murmuring, ‘Charming! Charming!’  (76–7)
The entrance of Sybil is framed by Henry’s thoughts and words, starting with the ‘Yes, she was certainly lovely to look at’—a sentence inwardly articulated—and ends with the externalization of his thoughts, now ‘murmuring, “Charming! Charming!”’. Where the superficial emphasis seems to be placed on the external aspect of Sybil Vane, the paragraph in fact exhibits the externalization of Henry’s thoughts. Not only does the narrator give voice to Henry’s inner experience, but Henry too comes to articulate it, thus displacing Sybil onstage. Besides Henry, Basil is described only briefly and through his action of jumping up and applauding, and Dorian is depicted through the simile ‘as one in a dream’. Basil and Dorian therefore at this moment are on a par with Sybil in temporal terms as they are ‘read’ by Henry, but are afforded no narrative space for their internal thoughts.

Even when the narrator shifts their focus to the stage rather than the audience, Sybil’s temporal experience continues to be secondary to that of the spectators. The narrator repeats Juliet’s words performed by Sybil:

The few words she had to speak:

Good Pilgrim, you do wrong your hand too much,
Which mannerly devotion shows in this;
For saints have hands that pilgrims’ hands do touch,
And palm to palm is holy palmers’ kiss—

with the brief dialogue that follows, were spoken in a thoroughly artificial manner. The voice was exquisite, but from the point of view of tone it was absolutely false. It was wrong in colour. It took away all the life from the verse. It made the passion unreal.  (77)
Wilde follows this pattern throughout much of the performance, citing lines from the play before describing Sybil’s delivery of them. First then, (p.73) we hear the lines as though coming straight from Juliet. Then attention turns to Sybil’s performance, thus placing her out of step with the character she plays. The disjuncture between Juliet as she should appear and Sybil as she plays her is made starker through the temporal disjuncture. Were we to hear Sybil’s wooden voice, unemotional gestures, lack of love or joy in her eyes as she looks at Romeo, and then, with this in mind, read Juliet’s lines, then we would read the lines in Sybil’s voice. As it is, we first hear unadulterated Shakespeare and then hear how lacking in passion the lines were spoken, meaning that we retroactively have to imbue the words with leaden lifelessness. This also subtly prioritizes the temporal experience of the spectators: they of course know the lines, know what is to come, know the significance of every look and every sigh, and the ordering of description signals the disappointment that follows the expectation of every line. Indeed, Wilde makes this pattern explicit when the narrator says of the men in the box: ‘they felt that the true test of any Juliet is the balcony scene of the second act. They waited for that. If she failed there, there was nothing in her’ (77).
In a shift subsequently echoed by Mann in the Müller-Rosé episode of *Felix Krull*, Wilde takes us behind the scenes to Sybil Vane’s dressing room to flesh out the performance that we have just witnessed in step with the spectators. This affords Sybil the opportunity to give her view about what occurred on stage. Throughout the dressing-room scene, words of eternity are associated with Sybil. First, an ‘infinite joy’ comes over her face, then she ‘linger[s]’ over Dorian’s name, thus drawing time out; she speaks of ‘always’ and ‘never’; Dorian’s love becomes a rebirth for her (‘Tonight, for the first time in my life, I saw through the hollowness, the sham’), while her loss of acting skill represents a death for Dorian (‘you have killed my love’); she flitters from stories of gods (‘the common people who acted with me seemed to me to be godlike’) to the land of fairy tale (‘My love! Prince Charming! Prince of life!’); this moment forms the decisive caesura in her life, becoming the catalyst for her death as well as Dorian’s downfall (79–80). What we witnessed in the performance of *Romeo and Juliet*, where the spectators’ temporal experience repeatedly comes before the description of Sybil’s delivery, occurs on a larger scale across these two scenes: during the play, the spectators’ view is prioritized, and only subsequently in the changing room does the narrator reveal Sybil’s subjective experience. This is, however, presented almost as a second performance to Dorian, with Sybil delivering an impassioned monologue, plucking names and images from literature, myth, and fairy tale, offering hyperbole and rhetoric as though finally giving a performance in the role of herself.
For Lord Henry, Dorian, and Basil, time is focused into small moments, where famous lines and particular scenes from the play are used to stand in (p.74) for the wider whole. Much like the time Mann later echoes in the Müller-Rosé episode of Felix Krull, time in Dorian Gray becomes episodic during the play as discourse time and story time intermittently correspond for short bursts before departing ways once more through temporal ellipses (the narrator does not, after all, repeat the whole of Romeo and Juliet as witnessed by Dorian and friends). In the dressing room (the space representing Sybil’s time), something very different occurs. The dialogic nature of the scene means that discourse time and story time coincide entirely because we read the conversation between Sybil and Dorian in more or less the same amount of time as it takes for them to have it. But here Sybil’s temporal experience assumes mythological proportions, making constant recourse to the realm of eternity rather than the iterative, episodic time experienced by the men in the theatre. This scene does not quite illustrate the idea of ‘consecutive simultaneity’ that is visible in Felix Krull or The Blood of the Walsungs, because Sybil’s subjective experience of the show is only expressed retroactively as a kind of reminiscence rather than the narrator conveying Sybil’s experience in step with that of her audience. But it does suggest that Dorian Gray also presents distinct ‘stages of time’, where the subjective temporal experience created for the reader changes depending on whose perspective is focalized at any given moment. In this particular instance, moreover, the fluctuating temporal experience indicates Lord Henry’s dominance over Dorian (as the play is told predominantly from Lord Henry’s perspective) and Dorian’s dominance over Sybil (whose time and experience consistently comes second to Dorian’s).
Varied focalization is a less straightforward undertaking in *Felix Krull* than in *The Blood of the Walsungs* or *Dorian Gray* due to the difference between third- and first-person perspectives, and between contemporaneous and retrospective narration. But, in terms of the dichotomy between performer and audience, there are notable similarities. Both *Felix Krull* and *The Blood of the Walsungs* illustrate that when multiple experiences are conjoined through participation in a performance, the subjective sense of time differs between performer and spectator. The different participants emphasize opposing aspects of the performance, either stressing action and dialogue, thus seemingly moving time forward, or else dwelling on their own internal responses and sensory perception, thereby slowing time almost to a halt. In *Dorian Gray*, the prioritization of the spectator’s experience of time also acts thematically as a mode of furthering the Faustian dominance of the male characters over the helpless and passive victim, Sybil. The effect of the splits in these works is that we can no longer speak simply of the distinction between discourse time and story time. These scenes of performance obviously occupy a discrete quantity of narrative time, but the sense of temporal flow accelerates and decelerates, and anticipates and recalls, in accordance with the different perspectives of different characters. This creates a complex temporal rollercoaster for the reader, while enhancing the presentation of varied subjective experiences for multiple characters and multiple times.

Sexual performance and performative sexuality
In many of Mann’s works, sex is intricately bound up with performance. This is particularly the case in Doctor Faustus and Felix Krull. The former work is about the creation of musical performance, and the latter offers an ironic parody of social role playing. Sex is central in both novels, forming the catalyst of Adrian Leverkühn’s physical decline in Doctor Faustus and heavily contributing to Felix’s social ascent in Felix Krull. What is interesting for questions of temporality is the way in which Mann unsettles presentations of performative sexuality through theatricality. These two works present apparently empowered women who ‘put on performances’ for their (albeit ultimately willing) ‘victims’, but who are, at the same time, still defined by their sexuality. In the theatricalized sex scenes, performative gestures are destabilized: Mann creates gendered senses of subjective time, which are then disrupted by role reversal. Mann thereby shows gender to be a fluid concept reliant on social performance, while concurrently complicating the subjective experience of individual time. Indeed, his construction of gender and sexuality seems to anticipate aspects of Judith Butler’s influential theories of performativity as Andrew Webber suggests. Not only that, but Butler also notes of her interpretation in Gender Trouble:

My theory sometimes waffles between understanding performativity as linguistic and casting it as theatrical. I have come to think that the two are invariably related, chiasmatically so, and that a reconsideration of the speech act as an instance of power invariably draws attention to both its theatrical and linguistic dimensions.

It is precisely the theatrical and linguistic dimensions that converge in Mann’s presentation of sex and sexuality, and these in turn disclose further complicating factors in the narration of subjective temporality. Kavaloski argues that, in The Magic Mountain, the narration of time is performative because ‘[t]he storyteller regulates the pace of narrative in order to enact the protagonist’s subjective perceptions of time’. And the same could be said of these scenes here.
In *Doctor Faustus*, Adrian’s first encounter with the prostitute Esmeralda, who will go on to play such a crucial role in his fate, presents several overlapping layers of performance: Esmeralda essentially stages a performance for Adrian in order to sell herself; when he realizes that he is in a brothel, Adrian attempts to cover his embarrassment by striding over to the piano, which appears as ‘a friend’ (‘einen Freund’), and hitting out several chords, merging social disguise with musical performance; he relates this event, furthermore, in a letter to his friend Serenus Zeitblom, and to Zeitblom the account appears disingenuous, forced, and artificially delayed; finally, Zeitblom too effectively recreates the episode as a literary performance by framing it within his ‘biographical’ narrative of Adrian’s life. Felix’s night with the older, experienced Madame Houpflé in *Felix Krull* is also theatrical in multiple senses: both Felix and Houpflé use assumed names; both act as narrators as Felix recreates the story of his past and Houpflé is a writer by profession; despite Felix’s initial reluctance with Houpflé, the two share a passion for role play and disguise, as Houpflé encourages Felix to call her debasing names and subject her to erotic punishment, and Felix eventually gives into her demands by re-enacting the theft of her jewellery. In neither novel is sex straightforwardly sincere.
Time, in general terms, operates in contrasting ways in these two scenes of seduction. Serenus, the narrator in *Doctor Faustus*, is upset by Adrian’s delay in relating the incident. This also, as we later discover, forms only the prologue to Adrian’s relationship with Esmeralda; the caress that so disturbs and allures him here is followed several months later by the encounter that leaves him with syphilis. The scene and its ramifications are therefore protracted. Serenus reads about the event several months after it occurred, the event itself anticipates what will happen several months in the future, and Serenus then recalls it in his narrative several decades later. Time becomes disconcertingly elongated and obscure at this pivotal moment. And Mann plays with temporality in Felix’s adventures with Houpflé in rather a different way. Felix and Houpflé’s flirtatious contract happens merely hours before their night together when she gives (p.77) him a kiss as ‘an unusually binding pledge’ (170) to secure her subsequent seduction (the German ‘Pfand’ (200) can also be translated as a deposit). The flirtatious ‘prelude’ and the sexual ‘performance’ therefore occur at a far smaller remove than in *Doctor Faustus*. Although Felix, like Serenus in *Doctor Faustus*, narrates events from a distant past, his narrative interventions in this scene are kept to a surprising minimum. The effect of this is that for the reader too, the experience appears swift and immediate. Indeed, in comparison with Felix’s vague recollection of details about his theatre visit to see Müller-Rosé, he is astonishingly detailed and precise in the account of his time with Houpflé.
Because these scenes in Doctor Faustus and Felix Krull both disrupt gendered presentations of time, it is worth first considering a more ‘balanced’ presentation of gendered temporality, where there is no clearly dominant partner in the pair of lovers. Butler says that ‘[t]he notion of gender parody defended [in Gender Trouble] does not assume that there is an original which such parodic identities imitate. Indeed, the parody is of the very notion of an original.’

Mann repeatedly appears to parody the notion of an original gender identity, and it is therefore in a somewhat ironic vein that I posit The Blood of the Walsungs as the most ‘balanced’ partnership visible in the works discussed here. The novella’s depiction of sex and gender is emphatically symmetrical. The protagonists, Siegmund and Sieglinde, superficially act as mirror images of Wagner’s twins in the music drama. But the differences between these two sets of twins also serve to emphasize the similarities that the Aarenhold twins share with each other. In the final scene where Siegmund and Sieglinde repeat the incestuous intercourse enacted at the opera, the two characters blur increasingly together. This is not initially true, however, of their conceptions of time. Siegmund is something of a temporal rarity in Mannian literature. Unlike Hans Castorp in The Magic Mountain, Tonio in Tonio Kröger, Aschenbach and Friedemann’s hopeless experiences in Death in Venice and Little Herr Friedemann, or indeed Adrian and Felix in the two novels discussed here, Siegmund does not seek out his ‘lover’, but instead waits for her to arrive. He is unusual as a relatively dominant male protagonist in Mann’s works when it comes to love.
In this closing scene, Siegmund echoes his father’s weighty sense of time from the beginning of the novella. As discussed above, the narrator prioritized Herr Aarenhold’s slow pace in the assertion: ‘They went to table; Herr Aarenhold led the way, eager to let von Beckerath see that he was hungry’ (291) (‘Man ging zu Tische, voran Herr Aarenhold, der (p.78) Herrn von Beckerath zeigen wollte, daß er Hunger habe’ (432)). Siegmund similarly tells his sister: ‘I was waiting for you’ (314) (‘Ich habe auf dich gewartet’ (462)), echoing his father’s sentiment but removing his theatricality. Also resembling his father’s temporal experience in the novella’s opening, Siegmund merges with the setting, making time appear to grind almost to a halt. After Sieglinde’s first abrupt goodnight, Siegmund awaits her return: although Sieglinde later asserts, ‘I didn’t want to come at all anymore’ (314, adapted) (‘Ich wollte gar nicht mehr kommen’ (462)), Siegmund’s conception of time and his internal reflections are shown to be more accurate and assured as he believes, ‘She would still come [to his room], that much was certain’ (313, adapted) (‘Sie würde noch kommen, das war sicher’ (460)). He prepares his posture and then ‘remained lying like this awhile, with his hands under his head’ (313, adapted) (‘blieb, die Hände unter dem Kopf, eine Weile so liegen’ (460)). The narrator does not describe the action of Siegmund smoking, but instead concentrates on the smell and atmosphere the smoke creates:

The subtle, bitterish scent of the tobacco mingled with that of the cosmetics, the soaps, and the toilet waters; their combined perfume hung in the tepid air of the room and Siegmund breathed it in with conscious pleasure, finding it sweeter than ever. Closing his eyes he surrendered to this atmosphere, as a man will console himself with some delicate pleasure of the senses for the extraordinary harshness of his lot. (313)

(Der feine und herbe Duft des Tabaks vermischte sich mit dem der Kosmetiken, der Seife, der aromatischen Wasser. Siegmund atmete diese Wohlgerüche, die in der laulich erwärmten Luft des Zimmers schwammen; er war sich ihrer bewußt und fand sie süßer, als sonst. Die Augen schließend, gab er sich ihnen hin wie jemand, der schmerzlich ein wenig Wonne und zartes Glück der Sinne genießt in der Strenge und Außergewöhnlichkeit seines Schicksals. (460))
His eyes remain closed almost as though he is sleeping, and his senses become heightened. The lengthy description given to sensory details, with sentences constructed with multiple clauses, linguistically slows the pace. As the narrator concentrates on space, perception, and posture at this moment, rather than action or dialogue, time slows significantly. Even as the next paragraph signals a change of pace with 'suddenly', Siegmund makes only short, erratic movements before becoming static once more:

Then suddenly he started up again, tossed away his cigarette and stood in front of the white wardrobe, which had long mirrors let into each of its three divisions. He stood in front of the middle one, very close up, eye to eye with himself, and studied his face. With care and curiosity he considered every feature in detail, opened the two side wings and saw himself, standing (p.79) between three mirrors, in profile as well [...] In the mirror he saw the bearskin lying behind him, spreading out its claws beside the bed. He turned round, went with tragically dragging steps towards it and after a moment of hesitation he let himself fall along the full length of the skin, laying his head on his arms. (313–14, adapted)

(Plötzlich erhob er sich, warf die Zigarette fort und trat vor den weißen Schrank, in dessen drei Teile enorme Spiegel eingelassen waren. Er stand vor dem Mittelstück, ganz dicht, Aug in Aug mit sich selbst, und betrachtete sein Gesicht. Sorgfältig und neugierig prüfte er jeden Zug, öffnete die beiden Flügel des Schrankes und sah sich, zwischen drei Spiegeln stehend, auch im Profil. [...] Hinter sich gewahrte er im Spiegel das Eisbärfell, das vor dem Bette seine Tatzen ausstreckte. Er wandte sich, ging mit tragisch schleppenden Schritten hinüber und nach einem Augenblick des Zögerns ließ er sich der Länge nach auf das Fell sinken, den Kopf auf den Arm gebettet. (460–1))
Siegmund’s movements are repeatedly characterized in this vein, with sudden action followed by slow, weighty stillness. At the start of this paragraph, his three movements (rising, throwing the cigarette away, and walking towards the wardrobe) are told in one sentence, quickening the pace. The sentences that follow are of a similar length, but concentrate on minute details of appearance rather than action, thereby slowing the pace again. When juxtaposed, his movements appear swift and his stasis prolonged. He thus appears to dominate time and space, speeding up and slowing down erratically.

Just as Sieglinde mirrors Siegmund’s appearance, so too does she apparently mirror his temporal experience. But although her conception of time resembles Siegmund’s, it is less erratic, the shifts between movement and stasis are subtler, and it is also largely dictated by Siegmund’s pace. As Sieglinde enters the room, her pace is slowed by Siegmund’s stasis and posture on the floor. At first she is unable to see him: ‘Sieglinde entered. Her eyes searched the room, without finding him at once. Finally she noticed him on the rug and was shocked’ (314) (‘Sieglind trat ein. Ihre Augen suchten nach ihm im Zimmer, ohne ihn gleich zu finden. Schließlich gewahrte sie ihn auf dem Bärenfell und entsetzte sich’ (461)). Having been slowed down in her search for him by his ‘invisibility’, Sieglinde then rushes towards her brother and ‘bent over him’ (314, adapted) (‘beugte sich über ihn’). Several lines later, she is ‘still standing bent over’ (314) (‘noch immer im Stehen gebückt’ (462)). In the same vein, her clothes also bear witness to the way in which her brother commands her tempo: ‘Half ready for bed, she had come over in slippers from her bedroom’ (314, adapted) (‘Sie war, halb fertig für die Nacht, auf Pantöffelchen aus ihren Schlafzimmer gekommen’ (461)). She has been (p.80) delayed by Siegmund’s bad mood, which upset her to that extent that she did not say her usual goodnight nor get fully changed for bed.

As they build up to and have sex, Siegmund and Sieglinde lose much of their gender distinction and blur together to a discomforting degree:
She kissed him on his closed eyelids; he kissed her on her throat, beneath the lace she wore. They kissed each other’s hands. They loved each other with all the sweetness of the senses, each for the other’s spoilt and exquisite well-being and delicious fragrance. They breathed it in, this fragrance, with voluptuous and careless abandon, like self-centred invalids, becoming intoxicated like those who have lost all hope, they lost themselves in caresses, which became dominant, becoming a hasty tumult [of passion], and finally were only a sobbing — — (315, adapted)

(Sie küßte ihn auf seine geschlossenen Augen; er küßte sie auf den Hals unter den Spitzen des Mieders. Sie küßten einander die Hände. Mit einer süßen Sinnlichkeit liebte jedes das andere um seiner verwöhnten und köstlichen Gepflegtheit und seines guten Duftes willen. Sie atmeten diesen Duft mit einer wollüstigen und fahrlässigen Hingabe, pflegten sich damit wie egoistische Kranke, berauschten sich wie Hoffnungslose, verloren sich in Liebkosungen, die übergriffen und ein hastiges Getümmel wurden und zuletzt nur ein Schluchzen waren — — (463))
At the start of this paragraph, Sieglinde and Siegmund are two distinct entities, respectively referred to by the pronouns ‘she’ and ‘he’. The semicolon indicates the minimal separation between them however, and after the imbalanced experiences of time and space in the preceding moments, the equal weight given to their movements at this juncture marks a shift to increasing temporal ‘equilibrium’. They then become more intertwined, but still relatively distinct, as ‘the one’ and ‘the other’ more directly translated from the German (both referring to both of them). This merges in the next sentence into the collective ‘they’ as their distinction increasingly disappears. In the same sentence, they lose their individual collective (that includes only the two of them) and are described only in terms of comparison with anonymous groups of similar people: ‘like self-centred invalids, [...] like those who have lost all hope’. Finally, they are ‘lost’ and dissolve entirely into the visual lacunae ‘— —’. This indicates not merely that their experience is simultaneous at this juncture, as analysed in the first section of this chapter on ‘consecutive simultaneity’, but also, more crucially, that their experiences are the same. This further highlights the temporal difference with the preceding scene, in which Siegmund embodied a weightier, more dominant conception of time through space with static postures juxtaposed with sudden movements, while he simultaneously rules Sieglinde’s experience of time and space as she responds to his performance rather than playing a role in isolation. (p.81) Their performative relations to time and space initially emphasize Siegmund as dominant and Sieglinde as subservient. But in their final ‘sexual performance’, such gendered gestures lose their distinction as their repetition of Wagner’s plot merges them together.
In the scenes of sexualized performance in *Doctor Faustus* and *Felix Krull*, the male protagonists are ostensibly in positions of narrative authority. Felix obviously narrates his story throughout, and Adrian is given unexpected narrative agency through his letter to Zeitblom. In both instances though, the authority of the focalized first-person perspective is destabilized. Felix is effectively usurped as narrator by Diane Houplé’s verbose and almost constant monologue, and Adrian in his changing use of tense, and in descriptions of space and movement, repeatedly prioritizes the subjective experience of the women he meets in the brothel over his own sensations. In terms of narrative perspective, then, the imbalanced gender dynamics are already palpable. Both male protagonists make initial attempts to readdress the imbalance, but the ‘performances’ staged by their lovers unsettle performative gestures of masculinity, which is in turn reflected in their unequal experiences of time. Butler asserts that

acts and gestures, articulated and enacted desires create the illusion of an interior and organizing gender core, an illusion discursively maintained for the purposes of the regulation of sexuality within the obligatory frame of reproductive heterosexuality.\(^{26}\)

What is notable about these scenes is that time also assumes a performative role, effectively enacting and supporting the constructions of sexuality and gender identity. The role reversal through performance is further emphasized through allusions to Goethean works. While the tribute to Goethe’s *Faust* may be overt in *Doctor Faustus*, it is complicated in this scene, and also appears in inverted form in the sex scene of *Felix Krull*, adding to the sense that sexualized performance unsettles performative gender gestures.
As Adrian unwittingly enters the brothel in *Doctor Faustus*, and Felix has his rendezvous with Diane Houpflé in her hotel bedroom in *Felix Krull*, both characters already exhibit senses of time that echo that of Sieglinde in *The Blood of the Walsungs*. They react to the performances of others, prioritizing descriptions of their lovers’ gestures, movements, and relations to space rather than their own. Outside the brothel, Adrian recalls his experience in the imperfect tense, setting the scene but confining it to the past. Upon entry, he switches to the present tense and, throughout the scene, the women repeatedly recall him to the present when he momentarily slips into the past tense, demonstrating the strength (p.82) of the impression they made upon him.

Kavaloski says of Hans Castorp’s first evening at the sanatorium in *The Magic Mountain* that it ‘is reproduced at such a pace that it could arguably be asserted that the protagonist’s temporal experience of events roughly approximates the narrative retelling of them.’ Arguably many of the scenes discussed here exhibit a performative enactment of temporal experience, but it is particularly notable in Adrian’s recollection of his visit to the brothel. His use of the present tense in this scene conveys his sense of time at the time of the event rather than in his retrospective retelling. Resembling the slowing of time for Hans in *The Magic Mountain*, as Kavaloski observes, Adrian’s narration at this moment is therefore temporally performative because it enacts the temporal experience it tells. Furthermore, the theatricalized act that the prostitutes stage for Adrian infiltrates his retrospective reconstruction of subjective temporal experience. This suggests that, in spite of his narrative authority, his sense of time is constructed by the women’s occupation of space, while Adrian (as with Sieglinde) appears submissive and secondary:
through the entry a dame in gaudy dress approaches, with rosy-hued cheeks, a rosary of waxy-hued pearls across her bulk, and greets me with almost coy demeanour, piping high sweet pleasure and dallying with me as one long awaited, escorts me then through portieres into a shimmering chamber with walls panelled in cloth, a crystal chandelier, sconces at mirrors, and silken couches, upon which there sit waiting for you the nymphs and daughters of the wilderness, six or seven—how shall I put it—morphos, clearwings, esmeraldas, scantly clad, transparently clad, in tulle, gossamer, and glister; their long hair falling free, hair with lovelocks; powdered demiglobes, arms with bracelets, and gazing at you with eyes expectant and asparkle with chandelier light.  (151–2)

(auf dem Flur kommt mir eine geputzte Madam entgegen, mit rosinfarbenen Backen, einen Rosenkranz wachsfarbener Perlen auf ihrem Speck, und begrüßt mich fast züchtiger berden [sic], hocherfreut flötend und scharmutzierung, wie einen Langerwarteten, komplimentiert mich danach durch Portièren in ein schimmernd Gemach mit eingefaßter Bespannung, einem Kristall-Lüster, Wandleuchtern vor Spiegeln, und seidnen Gautschen, darauf sitzen dir Nymphen und Töchter der Wüste, sechs oder sieben, wie soll ich sagen, Morphos, Glasflügler, Esmeralden, wenig gekleidet, durchsichtig gekleidet, in Tüll, Gaze und Glitzerwerk, das Haar lang offen, kurzlockig das Haar, gepuderte Halbkugeln, Arme mit Spangen, und sehen dich mit erwartungsvollen, vom Lüster gleißenden Augen an.  (208–9)
The whole passage is not only in the present tense, but is also formed of one particularly lengthy sentence, stretching the period beyond that of a (p.83) short instant confined to the past. Just as Herr Aarenhold’s heavy sense of time was supported by his relationship to space and setting, the women here also blend seamlessly (and there are indeed no grammatical seams) into their environment. As the madam comes down the corridor, Adrian does not narrate his movement, but only her occupation of space. In *The Blood of the Walsungs*, Siegmund’s subjective sense of time appeared to slow through his concentration on details of external appearance. At this juncture, Adrian employs a similar technique, concentrating on his first view of the women, as he tries to take in the sight in fragments of images, suggesting that it at once bombards the senses and imposes a kind of stasis as he enters the room.

Similarly, in *Felix Krull*, it is Diane Houpflé who dictates the subjective flow of time despite Felix’s narrative authority. Felix narrates, but his concentration on Houpflé’s movement, location in space, and appearance to the detriment of the description of his own experience indicates that he is subservient to her. Even before their assignation, Felix is already at the mercy of Houpflé’s sense of time. He says, ‘at what hour she returned to her room I did not learn’ (171) (‘Zu welcher Stunde sie in ihrer Zimmer zurückkehrte, blieb mir verborgen’ (201)); he knocks on her door, but receives no answer; when Felix finally enters, Diane’s theatrical command of time and space resembles that of Siegmund in *The Blood of the Walsungs*. Like Siegmund, Diane is lying down, ‘her arms crossed behind her head’ (172) (‘die Arme hinter dem Kopf verschränkt’ (202)), and like Sieglinde, Felix must search for her, so his pace is dictated by her positioning:

The daring occupant—it is with justification and pleasure that I return to her the epithet she had bestowed on me—was discovered by my rapid, inquiring survey in bed under the purple satin cover—in the splendid brass bed that stood with its head against the wall and the chaise-longue at its feet, standing separately quite close to the heavily curtained window. (171–2, adapted)
Like Adrian, Felix opens the scene with one lengthy sentence. Although Houpflé at this juncture remains the object of Felix’s gaze, he places her at the grammatical forefront of the sentence, indicating that her location dictates the movement of his gaze. Unlike Adrian, Felix indicates narrative gestures of dominance through the written reconstruction of the experience. He interrupts his perusal of the room—one that is clearly orchestrated by Houpflé—with a retroactively imposed analysis of his language: ‘it is with justification and pleasure that I return to her the epithet she had bestowed on me’ (‘gern und mit Recht übertrage ich auf sie das Beiwort, das sie mir verliehen’), visually and aurally disrupting the flow of the sentence with the separating dashes. The past Felix of youthful experience is constructed as the spectator of Houpflé’s act, while the older Felix, recollecting and narrating, attempts to distance himself from this passivity and presents himself also as a performer. Three degrees of temporality are visible at this juncture, that of the older narrating Felix, that of the younger experiencing Felix, and that of the choreographing Madame Houpflé. For now at least, the older narrating Felix manages to maintain temporal dominance by derailing Houpflé’s scene-setting stasis, pregnant with theatricality.
Similarly to Felix, Adrian in *Doctor Faustus* attempts to use his position as narrator to regain dominance, and this attempt is reflected in his narration of temporality. As the women continue to hold power over Adrian’s thoughts, even his memory of them, as discussed above, is in the present tense. But then his retrospective narrating self readdresses the temporal imbalance and attempts to regain his own possession of the present and thereby confine the brothel visit to the past. As he strides to the piano, he assumes the position of dominant performer and abandons that of passive and powerless spectator. His description of the chord progression itself is in fact very brief: ‘Modulation from B major to C major’ (152) (‘Modulation von H- nach C-dur’ (209)). This, however, creates a significant discrepancy between discourse time and story time. But in order to give a sense of the chord, Adrian resorts to comparison: ‘a brightening by one half-step, as in the hermit’s prayer in the finale of the *Freischütz*, when timpani, trumpets, and oboes enter on the fourth and sixth intervals of C’ (152, adapted) (‘aufhellender Halbton-Abstand wie im Gebet des Eremiten im Freischütz-Finale, bei dem Eintritt von Pauke, Trompeten und Oboen auf dem Quartsextakkord von C’ (209)). But although this comparison allows Serenus and the reader mentally to hear the specific notes Adrian bangs out on the piano, it does not accurately convey the solitude and lightness of Adrian’s ‘performance’. Instead, it leaves us with an orchestral multitude of tones. Adrian thereby converts his meek musical performance into a fortified narrative performance, retroactively imbuing it with a consistency that did not exist at the time. In temporal terms, he also uses this moment to add to his performative gesture of dominance and to usurp the women. Where they had occupied with disconcerting immediacy the time of ‘now’, Adrian’s description of his piano playing realigns the temporal boundaries and returns him—now (p.85) as retroactive narrator—to the temporal dominance of ‘now’ and the subjective dominance of performing. But this is soon upset once more by the performance of one woman in particular:
There steps to my side a nut-brown lass, in a Spanish jacket, with large mouth, stubnose, and almond eyes—Esmeralda, who strokes my cheek with her arm. I turn about, thrust the bench aside with my knee, and stride back across the carpet, through this hell-hole of lusts, past the vaunting bawdstrot, through the entry hall, and down the steps into the street, without even touching the brass railing. (152, adapted)

(Neben mich stellt sich dabei eine Bräunliche, in spanischem Jäckchen, mit großem Mund, Stumpfnase und Mandelaugen, Esmeralda, die streichelt mir mit dem Arm die Wange. Kehr ich mich um, stoß mit dem Knie die Sitzbank bei Seite und schlage mich über den Teppich zurück durch die Lusthölle, an der schwadronierenden Zatzenmutter vorbei, durch den Flur und die Stufen hinab auf die Straße, ohne das Messinggeländer nur anzufassen. (209))
Adrian shifts once again into the present tense, which he had just regained in his retrospective description of the musical chord. Esmeralda continues to occupy his thoughts as powerfully as she did at the time. Although he opens with the accusative in the German original ‘there steps to my side a nut-brown lass’ (‘neben mich stellt sich dabei eine Bräunliche’), suggesting movement, the German verb ‘sich stellen’ meaning ‘to go and stand’ itself suggests a firm kind of positioning, implying stasis. Adrian describes her dress and appearance, and then, in the same sentence, the way she strokes his cheek. The physical description serves to pause the narrative momentarily. As he then shifts back to his own actions, the pace once more picks up, but as with Sieglinde in The Blood of the Walsungs, Adrian’s movement is in response to Esmeralda’s. He depicts space and objects not in sedate descriptions for their own sake, but only incidentally in terms of his movement. The action of ‘hitting’ the piano is echoed as he ‘hits’ the carpet. Upon entry to the brothel, Adrian concentrated predominantly on the movement of the madam and her location in space, giving her a weightier sense of time than himself. But now, as he escapes the ‘hell-hole of lusts’ (‘Lusthölle’), he depicts the ‘bawdstrot’ (‘Zatzenmutter’) as another object within the room, past which he must run. Where he originally described space in great detail around the slow movement of the brothel owner, he now mentions it only in passing. Adrian not only toys with tense in this account, demonstrating the disorienting effect of the experience, but also variably stresses movement through space, space around movement, appearance, and music in a way that simultaneously reflects his unsettled emotions and suggests a retrospective attempt to regain a lost sense of dominance.
In Felix Krull, Houpflé’s attempted control over Felix’s subjective temporal experience is more transparent than Esmeralda’s in Doctor Faustus. This is in part due to Houpflé’s assumption of narrative authority. Where she places the young Felix in the position of supporting actor, a foil in her erotic drama, the older Felix recalling the event still has power of expression. But even he appears to be silenced simply by the memory of Houpflé’s verbosity. Houpflé explicitly imbues Felix with a mythically elongated temporality. In her repeated appellations to him as a god and as a ‘lovely youth’ (173) (‘holde Jugend’ (203)), she immortalizes him—through her romanticized rhetoric—in the figure of Hermes. She, by contrast, claims that she can love a man ‘only when he is quite, quite young, when he is a boy’ (‘nur ganz, ganz jung, als Knaben’) and ‘C’est un amour tragique [it is a tragic love], inadmissible, not practical, not for life, not for marriage’ (176–7) (‘C’est un amour tragique, irraisonnable, nicht anerkannt, nicht praktisch, nichts fürs Leben, nichts für die Heirat’ (207 )), creating for herself a fleeting, tragically brief sense of time. Felix soon internalizes this temporal attribution. After minimal interruption to Houpflé’s chatter, he depicts his reaction:

Abashed, like a small boy, I shook my head. She did not on that account cease her endearments, and I must admit that so much praise and adulation, finally even expressed in poetry, had greatly excited me. Although my offering in our first embrace had, as was usual with me, been my utmost, she found me once more in manly state [in good form for love]—found me so with that combination of compassion and delight that I had already noted in her. We were united together again. (177–8, adapted)

(Beschämt, wie ein kleiner Junge, schüttelte ich den Kopf. Sie wußte sich darob nicht zu lassen vor Zärtlichkeit, und ich muß gestehen, daß so viel Lob und Preis, in Verse ausartend zuletzt sogar, mich stark erregt hatte. Obgleich das Opfer, das ich bei unserer ersten Umarmung gebracht, nach meiner Art der äußersten Verausgabung gleichgekommen war, fand sie mich wieder in großer Liebesform,—fand mich so mit jener Mischung aus Rührung und Entzücken, das ich schon an ihr kannte. Wir einten uns aufs neue. (208–9))
Where Houpflé desires Felix both for his youthfulness and for his ‘godly’ qualities as a lover, Felix here reflects this in this rare narrative interlude. At first he is ‘like a small boy’ (‘wie ein kleiner Junge’) and the next moment he is emphatically manly as he finds himself once more, at accelerated speed, ‘in manly state’ (‘in großer Liebesform’). This apparently allows Felix to regain dominance in Houpflé’s staged performance as she becomes his ‘slave’ (178) (‘Sklavin’ (209)). He prolongs his own time in narrative form by posing the question (to which his older self obviously knows the answer): ‘But did she on that account desist from what she (p.87) called the self-abnegation of the spirit, from this nonsense about degradation?’ (‘Ließ sie aber von dem, was sie die Selbstentäußerung des Geistes nannte, von dieser Erniedrigungsnarretei wohl ab?’) His answer indicates that his attempt to regain dominance has failed: ‘She did not’ (‘Sie tat es nicht’). Diane continues with her scheme for sadomasochistic role play, which suggests that she orchestrates Felix’s momentary sexual ‘agency’, becoming the ultimate director of this performance. Having refused Houpflé’s instructions to debase her, thereby performatively acting the ‘gentleman’ (at once asserting and enacting his respect for her), Felix then finally concedes to her role play and admits that he is a thief. He presents this both as a concession to her and as an indication of his agency: he gives in to her desires, but only on his own terms. Or so he thinks. In fact, Felix and Houpflé embody another degree of theatrical performance and it is one that further undermines Felix’s attempts at assertiveness.
Both of these scenes in *Doctor Faustus* and *Felix Krull* intertwine presentations of gender and staged role play through their allusions to Goethe’s *Faust I*. This allusion is made clear in the very title of *Doctor Faustus*, but is also palpable in Felix’s relationship with Diane Houpflé. In both instances, however, Mann’s characters exhibit a role reversal that further blurs gender boundaries, as the male protagonists can be identified with the passive, younger, female victim of Goethe’s play. In *Faust*, Mephistopheles leaves a ‘pretty box/case’?('schöne[s]?Kästchen') for Gretchen?’as?security/a deposit’?('als ein Pfand')?to lay the foundations for her seduction. Because Gretchen tells her mother about the jewellery, who promptly donates it to the church, Mephistopheles is forced to orchestrate a re-enactment of the temptation. This second time, he ensures Gretchen’s acceptance of the jewels and thereby secures her corruption. This pattern is repeated in both *Felix Krull* and *Doctor Faustus*. Felix is also tempted with a ‘casket’ (‘Kästchen’) full of jewels, while Adrian is tempted by Esmeralda, whose name (meaning emerald) also connotes jewellery. Houpflé explicitly gives Felix a ‘pledge’ or ‘deposit’ (170) (‘Pfand’ (200)) in the form of a kiss, and Esmeralda’s sensuous stroke stirs Adrian deeply. Like Gretchen, both men confess their first temptations. And like Gretchen, both must confront the temptation for a second time, and this time it involves complete seduction, in Adrian’s case also leading to his ruin. This thus moulds Esmeralda and Diane Houpflé into Mephistophelean figures, who connive behind the scenes to secure the seductions of their chosen victims. As Felix appropriates his first theft into a gesture of agency, apparently giving into Houpflé’s erotic (p.88) fantasy only on *his* terms, and Adrian ‘hits’ the floor as he flees, reclaiming his experience of time and space over that of the women in the brothel, both characters are in fact simply repeating the prescribed script and enacting the carefully directed scene, playing the part of helpless female victim. But if Adrian is not the Faustian protagonist he appears to be, then who is Doctor Faustus? I will return to this question in Chapter 4 on Myth. Through echoes of Goethe’s *Faust* in these two novels, Mann constructs Adrian and Felix as passive, feminized characters, and this is reflected in their experiences of time, which more closely resemble that of Sieglinde in *The Blood of the Walsungs* rather than of her more dominant, male counterpart, Siegmund.
Conclusion

Performance may not seem to be an obvious thematic choice for an analysis of time in narrative. But the questions at stake in moments of acknowledged or tacit role play relate intricately to wider presentations of subjective experience, and thus also to temporal experience. Performances necessarily involve at least two distinct strands of experience which are nevertheless held together in a single time period. The oscillating degrees of artifice and authenticity help illuminate questions of subjectivity. Felix Krull, *The Blood of the Walsungs*, *Doctor Faustus*, and Wilde’s *Dorian Gray* all present characters who overtly and explicitly put on disguises and play roles. But disguises and role play are an integral part of all social interaction, and thus also of all literary characterization. What literature offers is a chance to go behind the scenes and juxtapose the social or theatrical front with the authentic lived experience hidden from public view. We may then see how temporal experience differs for different characters within a shared, measured moment. Or indeed, how time may speed up or slow down according to which character is given narrative priority at a given moment. This changing perspective, which is all the subtler when it is signalled simply through a barely palpable change of pace, offers a general insight into the ways in which characters are formed in literature and how literature reflects human experience. What is particularly interesting in the analysis of performance for the question of time is how we may simultaneously become aware of a given character’s fluctuating temporal experience and, as readers, share the temporal experiences of several different characters over the course of one scene. Our own experience of narrative time is then informed by many, all oscillating themselves and amongst each other. This links back to the long-held philosophical tradition, as will be discussed further in Chapter 3, about the infinitely numerous senses of time relating to people, objects, and places. Literary construction of performance brings together the intricate multiplicities of times that in life we may take for granted.

While this chapter explored the ways in which time speeds up and slows down over the limited time of a given scene, we now turn to the wider dialogues created across whole narratives through the use of symbolic images and repeated motifs. This then takes us closer to the reader sense of narrative time. (p. 89)
Notes:
(2) Gamper and Hühn, pp. 27–8.
(3) Elias, p. 38.
(7) Goffman, p. 28.
(8) Genette, p. 189.
(9) Goffman, pp. 83–108.
(10) Ricoeur, i. 57.
(11) Ricoeur, i. 57.
(13) Ricoeur, i. 53.
(14) Genette, p. 49.
(15) Goffman, p. 90.
(16) Goffman, p. 91.
(17) Goffman, p. 89.
(18) Schonfield, p. 131.

(19) Genette, p. 228.

(20) Oscar Wilde, The Picture of Dorian Gray (Surrey: Oneworld Classics, 2011), pp. 75–6;


(23) Kavaloski, p. 323.

(24) Thomas Mann, Doctor Faustus, trans. by John E. Woods (New York: Vintage, 1999), p. 152; Thomas Mann, Doktor Faustus, GkFA (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag, 2007), p. 209; all subsequent citations refer to these editions.

(25) Butler, p. 188.

(26) Butler, pp. 185–6.

(27) Kavaloski, p. 323.

(28) Johann Wolfgang Goethe, Faust, ed. by Albrecht Schöne, Frankfurter Ausgabe (Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag,?1994), pp. 145–6, 118.

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