



# **The World as Metaphor in Robert Musil's The Man without Qualities: Possibility as Reality (Studies in German Literature Linguistics and Culture)**

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Robert Musil, known to be a scientific and philosophical thinker, was committed to aesthetics as a process of experimental creation of an ever-shifting reality. Musil wanted, above all, to be a creative writer, and obsessively engaged in almost endless deferral via variations and metaphoric possibilities in his novel project, *The Man without Qualities*. This lifelong process of writing is embodied in the unfinished novel by a recurring metaphor of self-generating de-centered circle worlds. The present study analyzes this structure with reference to Musil's concepts of the utopia of the Other Condition, Living and Dead Words, Specific and Non-Specific Emotions, Word Magic, and the Still Life. In contrast to most recent studies of Musil, it concludes that the extratemporal metaphoric experience of the Other Condition does not fail, but rather constitutes the formal and ethical core of Musil's novel. The first study to utilize the newly published Klagenfurt Edition of Musil's literary remains (a searchable annotated text), *The World as Metaphor* offers a close reading of variations and text genesis, shedding light not only on Musil's novel, but also on larger questions about the modernist artist's role and responsibility in consciously re-creating the world.

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