

Performative Beauty in Gina Kaus' *Die Verliebten*: A Psychological Struggle

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Abstract

The following study analyzes the psychological changes that women underwent during the Weimar Republic while trying to emulate the New Woman's media-driven image. I argue that through the interpretation of Gina Kaus' novel *Die Verliebten*, we can draw the conclusion that the successful adoption of the New Woman image during the 1920s required a compromise from women, who had to balance their emotional predispositions (desires, wishes, wants) against the new mold that the public and media demanded of them, and that this balancing act proved psychologically stressful for them.

Keywords: New Woman, Weimar Republic, Gina Kaus, *Die Verliebten*

Irmgard Keun's character Gilgi in her novel *Gilgi—one of us* and Doris in the *Artificial Silk Girl*, as well as Vicki Baum's chemistry student Helene Willfüer, have dominated the scholarship on the emancipated, fashionable New Woman of the 1920s and early 30s Weimar Republic in the past 40 years.ⁱ German scholars have based their understanding of the transformation of the Wilhelminian woman into the jumper-dress and bob-cut-haired New Woman, her new lifestyle and emancipatory ambitions, to a large extent on the aforementioned two authors. In this article, however, a lesser-known and rarely analyzed author of the day, Gina Kaus, and her novel *Die Verliebten* (1928) (The Lovers) will be the focus, providing what I hope would be a fresh new angle on the subject.ⁱⁱ In this psychologically-charged novel, Kaus investigates, more so than her contemporaries, the transformative aspects of becoming a New Woman. With her main character, the theater actress Gabriele, Kaus challenges the assumption that becoming, and remaining, a New Woman was easy. To the contrary, the author shows that the transformation into a New Woman has repercussions that reverberate in the mind, soul and psyche of the New Woman who has to adjust to an image that was all-encompassing, and defined women wherever they went in public.ⁱⁱⁱ The extensive media attention for the New Woman made many women feel obliged to fit into the new mold, often causing suffering from the strenuous act of performing this role. Torn between a natural disposition and public demands, women pursuing the lifestyle of the New Woman found themselves experiencing feelings of both empowerment and defragmentation.^{iv} Very little attention has been paid so far to this novel by Kaus that offers a clear view of the psychological struggles and modifications of the psyche that the seemingly empowered and emancipated New Woman underwent in her transformation.^v

The publishing history of Gina Kaus' novel *Die Verliebten* is representative of the hybrid personality of the New Woman that I propose. The Austrian author Gina Kaus, who worked for the Ullstein publishing house in Berlin in the 1920s and 30s had to perform the role of the New Woman in public to ensure her success as a female writer. She struggled to integrate this persona into her public as well as private life. Her first attempts at publishing, then under the pseudonym of her husband, indicate that she felt pressure to assume a different persona in order to establish herself in the putatively masculine writer's market.^{vi} The name she later used for her works, Gina Kaus, is a short form of Regina and her first husband's last name "Kaus." Choosing a spunky first name and identifying with her husband's last name demonstrates the identity struggle New Women faced.

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Her struggle rehearses the complex demands of performing a perfect public figure of the New Woman for the press while privately attempting to re-incorporate the traditional values and lifestyles to which she remained attached. Kaus intended to have her novel published in the Propylen section of the Ullstein Verlag, which was geared towards an intellectual audience. Believing her novel to be more than mere popular literature, Kaus wanted to make a contribution to solving the gender issues of her day. However, the Ullstein Verlag decided to publish this psychological study as a light entertainment work among the Ullstein books.^{vii} Kaus was disappointed, but as she needed to make a living she had to bow down to the publisher's taste and quickly followed up with more entertaining novels such as *Luxusdampfer*.^{viii} Hence Kaus falls into a vicious cycle. She wants to contribute to a critical discussion of the image of the New Woman, but has to cater to the demands of the publishing house. While Kaus explores the redefinition of gender roles and the psychological aspects of romantic love by means of her four characters in the novel, her main focus lies with the performative aspects of being the New Woman in the main character Gabriele, who is an aspiring theater actress. Although successful, we witness Gabriele's constant struggles to get the impression of the New Woman right, so much so, that her performance on stage carries over to her private life. She cannot leave the stage behind and become "herself" off-stage. Her private life becomes a practice ground for mastering her art in the portrayal of the New Woman. This constant need to act and perform has also been explored by psychoanalyst Joan Riviere (1929) in her essay "Womanliness as a Masquerade." Riviere presents the case study of a woman who feared being punished for having taken on masculine traits and venturing into male-dominated public spaces, and so she hid behind an over-feminized mask to ensure "safety [from male retribution] by masquerading as guiltless and innocent" (p. 306). Similarly, Gabriele's constant performance in her public as well as private life seems to be an overcompensation for being an independent woman in the public male-dominated world. Her fear of retribution is not overblown: she often incurs the wrath of the press, who puts her performance under scrutiny, and either bashes or celebrates her.

I would like, then, to suggest that Gabriele's perception of herself is less an internal viewpoint, but a reflection on external viewpoints that she had adopted as her own. It is as if she is always acting for an unseen camera. She sees herself as a director who stages her own actions with one goal in mind -- pleasing her audience, whether real or imaginary. Due to the fact that the Weimar Republic's image of the New Woman was superficial, it was supposedly easy to replicate this ideal by following the fashion guidelines from the illustrated magazines. Consequently, we see Gabriele's laboring, in the form of strenuous exercise, to achieve and maintain the ideal body of the period. Gabriele's fight for the right body is marked by the demands of the public and her job, but at the same time it is a break from the expectations of the previous generation. While Gabriele's counterpart in the novel, Terese, who is at the same time a friend and a rival for the love of the same men, has a naturally well-built body by the standards of the day's ideal. Gabriele has to struggle to create and maintain this figure, dramatizing the psychological effort through the physical. "Gabriele fought like every modern actress for the outmost thinness and flexibility and had to keep this fight up against her disposition towards bodily idleness" (Kaus, 1928, p.83).^{ix} Popular emphasis on a healthy and beautiful body during the Kaiserreich and the Weimar Republic arose with the belief of the members of the "life reform movement" (Lebensreformbewegung) that "modern civilization, urbanization, and industrialization had alienated human beings from their 'natural' living conditions, leading them down a path of progressive degeneration [...]" (Hau, 2003, p.1).^x The New Woman's idea of an ideal body went beyond what is healthy, stressing an aesthetic of absolute thinness. The self-perception of the New Woman and her separation from the traditional woman is concentrated foremost on the body, which emerges as a complex social and psychological signifier. Gabriele must work hard to remain in the exclusive club of New Women because idleness would automatically throw her back into being a normal woman with curves.^{xi} Even in her profession, there is a distinction between modern actresses ("like every modern actress") and "regular" actresses based on looks, implying that emphasis on the body image exceeds self-reliance through work.

Mastering the look of the New Woman entails not only the correct body shape, but also complete control over one's movements, gestures and expressions. For Gabriele, living up to the image of the New Woman means to engage in a constant cultural pantomime. In her movements and gestures, Gabriele always keeps the visual consequences of her actions in mind, and models her behavior on static and moving representations from the illustrated magazines and movies. Gabriele portrays the perfect New Woman on stage as well as in the public aspects of her private life; nothing she does is natural. Her life as a New Woman is performative labor—flawlessly executed, but alienated from her inherent, private disposition.

Gabriele has acquired the outside shell of the New Woman, studied and internalized her looks, actions and behaviors, but she has not evolved into the New Woman from internal ambitions. Terese, on the other hand, is very emotional and lets her soul shine through for everyone to see. These distinct approaches demonstrate the discrepancy between the behaviors of the two women and leave Gabriele puzzled. She adheres to a correct code of behavior, and, consequently, is both troubled by and disapproves of Terese's interaction with others. „I am so happy like I have never been before in my life and would have never believed that one can be as happy as that.” [Terese] didn't say these words like Gabriele would have done on stage, with lowered eyes and in a muted voice, as if not to infuriate the gods, but instead [Terese] said it provokingly. It seemed like it was her main concern to convince Gabriele of her happiness. “Really! “, she added and put – as an affirmation -- her large, shapely boy's hand on Gabriele's knee (Kaus, 1928, p.221).^{xii} Terese's spontaneous behavior stands in contrast to Gabriele's tenuous control of her own image. She has learned how to express such a feeling in the "correct" way, which is more modest, characterized “with lowered eyes and a muted voice”— not to infuriate the gods. Gabriele does not accept Terese's transparency as an expression of a genuine feeling, but labels her utterance as a line from a play. Even Terese sees through Gabriele's artificial behavior, and recognizes when she becomes untrue to her performance. “I [Terese] know the secret laws of her limbs better than she herself does. When she makes one ‘false’ move, because she has seen it somewhere or made it up, then I recognize this immediately”(Kaus, 1928, p.99).^{xiii} Terese emphasizes the artificiality of Gabriele's movements, the ones that she has copied from someone. She might allude to the illustrated magazine *Die Dame*, which featured fashion drawings that tried to represent the New Woman in natural poses. The ‘natural poses’ usually consisted of women entering or leaving a car or a night club, while stretching their limbs in a way that would accentuate the cut of the clothes or the delicateness of the accessories. We can assume that the imitation of the newest fashion of the New Woman also entailed certain hand gestures or postures that looked good in pictures, but did not translate into a natural gesture in real life. Perhaps that is the reason why Gabriele's gestures seem wrong at times.

Gabriele's “masculinity” is demonstrated through her rational thinking, her lack of feelings for others and self-centeredness, and thus she is the complete opposite of Terese. Gabriele is a cold person with a smooth exterior that protects her from harm, as well as from feelings of love and inadequacy. Gabriele wakes up like a child, with too much determination and joy for her own person and an immaculate complexion. She has the most trustworthy skin, one is allowed to look at it from up close, neither makeup nor tears nor a party life have harmed her. This skin is armored with indestructible health, from which inner and outer life just slides off without leaving any traces (Kaus, 1928, p.99).^{xiv} But experience and sensation just pass her by without harming her. She has the strongest degree of hardness, like a diamond, and cuts everything into two pieces that comes her way – without even knowing it (Kaus, 1928, p.100).^{xv} The author describes Gabriele as the product of a magazine. Gabriele seems static like a photograph. Neither tears, nor make-up, nor partying all night leave any traces on her perfect skin. She wakes up already with a flawless complexion, and thus is the personification of the artificial New Woman from the covers of the illustrated magazine. Remarkably, the author labels Gabriele's skin as “trustworthy” (vertrauenswürdig). This might be another allusion to the New Woman of the illustrated magazine. The professional shiny cover — or skin — of the magazines that feature the New Woman promises women that they can rely on what's inside — on the image the press promotes. Following the advice from the magazines helps to become a New Woman, and in turn allows her to take on this persona as armor to shield herself from harm, which can be seen as “womanliness as masquerade”. Women, therefore, gain more trust in themselves (and also in the magazines, which increases their circulation). In this respect, the outer shell of the New Woman has positive effects: it helps her find work and sustain herself, as well as to gain the confidence to engage in love relationships for pleasure without the economic trappings of marriage. Gabriele resembles this ideal, the woman-image who always smiles from the photographs on the magazine pages—free from worry and free from the complexities of character that defines real people. The illustrated magazine and the image of the New Woman provide for women in need in a time full of turmoil and economic distress.

The New Woman refers to the media for lifestyle and relationship advice, because all pre-war constants such as the function of women in society, as well as her relationship with men are lost or have changed. The lifestyle magazines step up to fill a void caused by the lack of a well-organized and predictable life. However, Kaus argues that if people adopt a lifestyle from manufactured, exterior fashion trends rather than interior drives, a discrepancy would emerge between what one is and what one tries to be. That is not to say that traditional women did not feel the same pressure of having to live up to being good housewives and mothers in a patriarchal system.

We just have to think of Theodor Fontane's Effi Briest or Sigmund Freud's studies on female hysteria to see that women before the explosion of the illustrated press had problems harmonizing what they were and what society wanted them to be. I would like to maintain that this balancing act caused a psychological distortion in Gabriele regarding self and representation of the self. While she assumes the persona of the New Woman in public, she has to face a different Gabriele in her mirror image. Gabriele monitors her interactions with others based on her ideal image of the New Woman, which works well in public, but when she finds herself alone in front of her mirror she has to face what lies beneath the mask.^{xvi} Gabriele's split personality shows in the fact that she and her reflection in the mirror (which is referred to as "the experienced woman") do not match. She does not recognize herself in the mirror image. Hartmut Vollmer (1999) calls this divergence "the experiments of finding oneself in the you, the other (while the I itself is split into two, which is represented in the novel by Gabriele's encounters with the experienced woman in her mirror reflection); [...] [in these attempts] the problem of intellect and emotion is articulated" (p. 252).^{xvii} Instead of calling Gabriele's encounters with the mirror „intellect and emotion“, I would like to suggest a reading that splits Gabriele's personality into Gabriele—the actress, and Gabriele—the woman.^{xviii} At the beginning of the novel, Gabriele's mirror image assumes the role of a critical mother figure. Gabriele's parents died when she was a young girl and therefore, she did not have a female role model to emulate. Nobody taught her right from wrong, and guided her towards adulthood. "In sum, she describes herself less as her parents' child, but as the child of her times" (Walter, 2000, p. 69).^{xix} The narrative intimates that Gabriele relies primarily on movies and magazines to constitute her idea of being a woman. Nevertheless, she requires a confidante with whom she can privately drop the masquerade of being a New Woman. Her mirror image keeps her company, and reflects with her on the turns she has taken in life. The experienced woman in the mirror is much older than Gabriele, because she is a representation of Gabriele's soul, her knowledge, her history, her dreams, and her feelings. Gabriele herself is the personification of the timeless and ageless New Woman. She has to stay young and conform to this image, and so she projects the evidence of time passed, experiences, hardships and even the first wrinkles onto her mirror image.

She looked at her mirror image like at a woman she had known for many years, who had accompanied her as would a loyal wet-nurse who knows everything about her, and the corners of her mouth had drooped down because of this knowledge and she had acquired wrinkles on her forehead. Gabriele will step away from the image and will laugh, but that woman will remain there, in this secret invisible space behind the glass, and her forehead will not become relaxed and smooth again (Kaus, 1928, p.10).^{xx} Gabriele's past cannot be undone. Hence, this part of Gabriele is trapped in the mirror ("but that woman will stay there"), and remain worried and thinking about the choices Gabriele makes ("her forehead will not become relaxed and smooth again"), while Gabriele herself can shed the weight of her past by stepping away from the mirror and breaking into laughter. The New Woman lives in the here and now, concentrating only on the near future. This contrast is also expressed in the language. In referring to the old woman in the mirror Kaus uses the past tense "had known" and "had gained", while the New Woman Gabriele acts out future events "will step away". The former represents a static captivity inside the mirror, while the latter exemplifies action and life.^{xxi} Deep thoughts will cause wrinkles, and destroy the image of the New Woman Gabriele wants to project to the outside world. Gabriele is caught between the end of the relationship with history student Christian and the beginning of one with theater critic Hartmann, whom she likes but who does not conform to the type of man a New Woman would consider a mate. Gabriele now realizes that her New Woman status keeps her in an emotional void. Her unfulfilled wish for a "happy ideal of a union with the other (Dualunion) (Vollmer, 1999, p. 251)^{xxii}, makes her face the experienced woman in the mirror again, and she realizes that her current lifestyle will lead to loneliness and unhappiness. The experienced woman, who is the personification of Gabriele's feelings and her soul, has progressed towards being an old woman ("hundertjährige Frau") with tired eyes.

Mechanically, Gabriele picks up a cotton ball, dips it in the pot of fat, bends her face towards the mirror, lifts her hand to take off her makeup... and lets her hand sink again. Across from her sits the one-hundred-year-old woman, who knows everything about her, her flashy made-up face hangs like a mask in front of two tired, dead eyes. When these eyes meet Gabriele, the conversational smile around her full lips freezes, so that it looks like a fresh wound between old scars. "This is you," the old woman says to Gabriele. That is not a mirror image; that is the portrait of a cruel unmasking of the soul. It is as if the artificial paint of the theater makeup has removed the natural complexion of youth from this face and has exposed this age-old, stone-like loneliness; this ossified human being who isn't connected with anyone and anything (Kaus, 1928, p.201).^{xxiii} It is significant that Gabriele finally recognizes herself in the mirror image, and identifies with the old woman who clarifies: "This is you."

The only barrier between the two is the theater makeup, which represents Gabriele's lifestyle of artificial performances that personifies the norms and ideals of the New Woman. For the longest time, theater makeup prohibited Gabriele from breaking through the artificial boundaries of her existence and from resonating authentically with her inner being. "Gabriele's conversational smile around her full lips freezes, so that it looks like a fresh wound between old scars." Gabriele's conversational smile is an artificial tool of social exchange, not a genuine expression of feelings. Her smile metaphorically encapsulates her lifestyle—always directed towards creating a positive impression on others. But now the smile freezes because Gabriele sees that she will end up alone. People will move on, and no one will stay with Gabriele if she does not open up and let someone have a look behind the public mask. The social commentary of the novel suggests that men surround themselves with women like Gabriele in public because they are pleasant, predictable, and "in fashion," but it also poses the question: who will want to stay with an image? When the makeup, a persistent metaphor for the New Woman's fashionable lifestyle, is wiped away, there is nothing left but an old, lonely lady. It is a signal for Gabriele that she will not be able to act out the New Woman forever, and increasing age will make her current lifestyle impossible. Throughout the novel, Gabriele gradually learns that her life as a New Woman is one of hermetic solitude from which feelings cannot emerge. Just portraying the superficial happiness and enjoyment of one's body and looks is not enough to feel truly balanced and fulfilled—indeed; it is only a simulation of feeling where feeling itself is absent. Hence, the successful adoption of the New Woman image requires much more from the women of the Weimar Republic than following the surface-driven advice from the media.

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ⁱ All translations, except where noted otherwise, are my own. Please find the original German wording from the novel *Die Verliebten* here in the notes section.

Just to name a few scholarly works on Irmgard Keun: Katharina von Ankum's "Gendered Urban Spaces in Irmgard Keun's *Das kunstseidene Mädchen*;" Patricia McBride, "Learning to See in Irmgard Keun's *Das kunstseidene Mädchen*;" Kerstin Barndt's "Aesthetics of Crisis: Motherhood, Abortion, and Melodrama in Irmgard Keun and Friedrich Wolf;" and Sharon Boak's "The Perceptions of Women in Weimar Germany: A Reading of Erich Kästner's *Fabian-The Story of a Moralist*, Hans Fallada's *Little Man-What Now*, and Irmgard Keun's *The Artificial Silk Girl*." Prominent scholarly work on Vicki Baum: Katharina von Ankum's "Motherhood and the 'New Woman': Vicki Baum's stud. chem. Helene Willfüer and Irmgard Keun's *Gilgi-eine von uns*;" Lynda King's book *Best-Sellers by Design: Vicki Baum and the House of Ullstein*; and Lynda King's article "The Image of Fame: Vicki Baum in Weimar Germany."

ⁱⁱ Recently, Regina Christiane Range has written her dissertation on Gina Kaus with a specific new focus on Gina Kaus as a scriptwriter in her Hollywood exile.

ⁱⁱⁱ Please refer to Katharina von Ankum's anthology *Women in the Metropolis* that features some excellent discussions of the New Woman in the public space of the city.

^{iv} Hofeneder's (2013) recent study "Der produktive Kosmos der Gina Kaus," analyses in one chapter, how the then popular *Individual psychologie* (Psychology of the Individual) influenced Kaus to write this psychologically-laden novel. The *Individual psychologie* claims that people are born with an inferiority complex, which serves as an incentive to grow and mature and overcome the complex. However, people with neuroses have not managed to compensate this inferiority complex with their life plans, and are stuck with this mental instability (p.71-2).

^v For Information about the idea that sparked Kaus' interest in writing *Die Verliebten*, please see Capovilla (2004). Capovilla (2004) describes that the idea to the novel stems from the fact that Kaus' friend, Milena Jesenska and Kaus herself, had a relationship with the same man, but would not recognize the man in the accounts of the other woman. Kaus was struck by the fact that two women could have a completely different impression of the same man, and started her psychological investigation into this circumstance in the form of her novel.

"Als Kaus Wien Richtung Berlin verliess, besuchte sie Milena Jesenska in Prag. Während dieses Aufenthalts unterhielten sie sich über die jeweiligen Beziehungen zu Franz Xaver Schaffgotsch, und erkannten ihn jeweils in der Erzählung der anderen nicht wieder. Aus der Anregung dieses Gesprächs heraus konzipierte Kaus *Die Verliebten*. [...] Die beiden Frauenfiguren Gabriele und Terese sind fiktive Komposita von Anteilen und Lebensbruchstücken von Milena Jesenska, Gina Kaus und Ella Frischauer. Die Figur des Literaturkritikers Hartmann weist einige Parallelen zu Ernst Polak auf, während die Person Franz Xaver Schaffgotschs, dessen Rolle im Leben von Kaus und Jesenska ursprünglich Kaus zur Konzeption des Romans anregte, dann im Roman für die Figur des Christian keine wesentliche Rolle spielt" (Capovilla, 2004, p.43).

^{vi} Vollmer (1999) explains that Kaus published previously to her marriage under a man's pseudonym: Andreas Eckbrecht (p. 246).

Also Marie-Louise Roth (2003) mentions this fact. “Under the pseudonym Andreas Eckbrecht, the comedy *Thieves in the House* appeared in 1919.” “Unter dem Pseudonym Andreas Eckbrecht erschien 1919 die Komödie *Diebe im Haus*“ (p.168).

^{vii} Please compare Atzinger’s (2008) account of the publication history of *Die Verliebten* as well as Vollmer’s (1999): „Ein ‚Schlag‘ sei es für sie gewesen, erinnerte sich Gina Kaus in ihrer Autobiographie, ‚als der Roman ‚Die Verliebten‘ nicht im Propyläen Verlag erschien, wo er sich an eine literarisch gebildete Leserschaft gewandt hätte, sondern in den Ullsteinbüchern, die ausschließlich zur Unterhaltung gedacht waren. Hier paßte dieses Buch nun wirklich nicht hin, und so fand es ein entsprechend geringes Echo“ (Kaus ctd. In Vollmer, 1999, p.247).

Mulot expresses that the Ullstein Verlag actually held Kaus back from becoming a more serious writer by forcing her into writing popular literature. “Sie [Kaus] wurde auf einen Platz verwiesen, den sie mit ihrem literarischen Ehrgeiz verlassen wollte. Man drängte sie unerbittlich auf ein bestimmtes Gleis zurück. Sie sollte Unterhaltungsliteratur schreiben. Was wäre geschehen, wenn man sie zu einer ‚literarischen‘ Karriere ermutigt hätte?“ (Kaus and Mulot, 1990, p.246). I would like to argue that restricting Kaus’ creativity in such a way is again another way of opening up an „emancipation space“ for her, but at the same time the borders of this space are clearly set by the primarily male-run Ullstein Verlag.

^{viii} Kaus, Gina.(1937). *Luxusdampfer. Roman einer Überfahrt*. Allert de Lange. Amsterdam.

^{ix} „Gabriele kämpfte, wie jede moderne Schauspielerin, um äußerste Schlankheit und Gelenkigkeit und hatte diesen Kampf gegen eine große Neigung zu körperlicher Untätigkeit zu führen“ (Kaus, 1929, p.83).

^x Hau (2003) explains that the life standards and life expectancy increased in the second half of the 19th century. While the medical and life sciences improved and saw a positive development in the growing urbanization, industrialization and civilization, the “life reform movement” tried to promote natural remedies (such as preventive exercise) to enforce the healing process of society (p.1).

^{xi} Renate Bridenthal, Atina Grossmann and Marion Kaplan’s argument that all aspects of a women’s life were supposed to be rationalized seems to be another reason for women’s efforts to reach the ideal body. The athletic body allows women to walk around in simplified clothes, which provide more freedom of movement, instead of old-fashioned corsets and long skirts. Also, a strong body is a healthy body and helps women to cope better with the double burden of work and family life. Thus, the New Woman’s body image adhered to a new fashion statement as well as to practicality needs of the time. “Rationalization was supposed to help women better manage the double burden of work and family through new labor- and time-saving devices and through the introduction of efficient time-and-motion-coordinated patterns of work organization. Even sexual techniques and birth control were not spared from attempts to ‘rationalize’ the most private of human activities” (Bridenthal et. al, 1984, p.11).

^{xii} „Ich bin so glücklich, wie ich es nie im Leben war und wie ich nie geglaubt hätte, daß man glücklich sein kann.“ [Terese] sprach diese Worte nicht, wie Gabriele auf der Bühne getan hätte, mit gesenktem Blick und gedämpfter Stimme, wie um den Zorn der Götter nicht zu wecken, sondern geradezu herausfordernd. Es war, als läge ihr vor allem daran, Gabriele von ihrem Glück zu überzeugen. ‚Wirklich!‘ fügte sie noch hinzu und legte zur Bekräftigung ihre große, stattliche Knabenhand auf Gabrieles Knie“ (Kaus, 1928, p.221).

^{xiii} „Ich [Terese] kenne die geheimen Gesetze ihrer Glieder besser als sie selbst. Wenn sie irgendeine ‘falsche’ Bewegung macht, weil sie sie irgendwo gesehen oder sich ausgedacht hat, ich bemerke es sofort“ (Kaus, 1928, p.99).

^{xiv} „Gabriele erwacht wie ein Kind, mit viel zu großen Entschlüssen, Freude an der eigenen Person und einem tadellosen Teint. Sie hat die vertrauenswürdigste Haut, man darf sie aus allernächster Nähe ansehen, weder Schminke noch Tränen noch gelegentliches Luderleben haben ihr geschadet. Diese Haut ist wie mit unzerstörbarer Gesundheit gefirnißt, das äußere und das innere Leben gleiten daran ab, ohne Spuren zu hinterlassen“ (Kaus, 1928, p.99).

^{xv} „Aber Erleben und Empfinden gehen an ihr vorbei, ohne sie zu beschädigen. Sie hat den letzten Härtegrad, wie der Diamant, und schneidet alles, was sich ihr entgegenstellt, entzwei – ohne es auch nur zu wissen“ (Kaus, 1928, p.100).

^{xvi} Sibylle Mulot characterizes Gina Kaus’ literature as „psychological character- and society novels“ (psychologische Charakter- und Gesellschaftsromane). *Die Verliebten* in particular gives such insight into the psychological dispositions of characters (Mulot, 1989, p.294).

^{xvii} Please see Hartmut Vollmer’s afterword to the 1999 edition of *Die Verliebten*: „Die Versuche einer Ichfindung im Du (wobei das Ich jedoch in sich selbst gespalten ist – sinnfällig dargestellt in der wiederholten Begegnung Gabrieles

mit der ‚erfahrenen Frau‘ ihres Spiegelbildes); [...] in ihnen artikuliert sich die Problematik zwischen Intellekt und Emotion“ (p.252).

^{xviii} Andrea Capovilla (2000) suggests that Kaus' female protagonists are influenced by the author's own experiences and also are an attempt to play out different versions of her life as it could have been. I agree with Capovilla but would like to add that in the novel *Die Verliebten* Kaus does not only explore the life of the New Woman in two opposite protagonists (Gabriele and Terese) but also explores in the figure of Gabriele what happens if the self of a person (das Ich) does not match up with society's ideal of a woman in a particular time period. "Gina Kaus's particular combination of 'Unterhaltung' and autobiography is experimental in terms of content. The autobiographical 'Ich' is split among several characters, alternative versions of the life that has been lived are enacted" (Capovilla, 2000, p.157).

^{xix} „Insgesamt beschreibt sie sich weniger als das Kind ihrer Eltern, sondern eher als ein Kind ihrer Zeit“ (Walter, 2000, p. 69). Ingrid Walter analyses Kaus' autobiography as a story by an exile author. She expresses that Kaus establishes herself as a child of her time rather than a child of her parents. Comparing this to Capovilla's (2000) point that *Die Verliebten* has biographical connections to Kaus' life and her friends and lovers, Gabriele can be read as an alter ego to Kaus herself. Just like Kaus defines her personality based on the *Zeitgeist*, Gabriele has to produce her persona based on the media of the time and the reviews she gets in the newspaper.

^{xx} „Sie sah auf ihr Spiegelbild wie auf eine Frau, die sie seit einer Unzahl von Jahren kannte, die sie wie eine treue Amme seit jeher begleitet hatte, die alles von ihr wußte und die von diesem Wissen schwere Mundwinkel bekommen hatte und Falten auf der Stirne. Gabriele wird vom Spiegel forttreten und lachen, jene Frau aber wird dort bleiben, in dem geheimnisvollen unsichtbaren Raum hinter dem Glas, und ihre Stirne wird sich nicht entwölken“ (Kaus, 1928, p.10).

^{xxi} The verbs "wird bleiben" and "wird sich nicht entwölken" are also in the future tense and refer to the old woman. However, I would like to suggest that these are static and inactive verb meanings that are ascribed to the old woman, while Gabriele is able to move and act actively "wird forttreten" and "wird lachen". It is significant though that Kaus uses the future tense for Gabriele's actions and not the present tense. She seems to imply that Gabriele has to give herself instructions (similar to stage directions) to be able to act at all, which speaks for Gabriele's performative life that requires her to adhere to her ideal of the New Woman, and carefully plan every move she makes.

^{xxii} „glückliche[s] Ideal einer 'Dualunion'" (Kaus and Vollmer, 1999, p. 251).

^{xxiii} „Dann nimmt Gabriele mechanisch ein Stück Watte, taucht es in den Fettopf, neigt ihr Gesicht zum Spiegel, hebt die Hand, um sich abzuschminken ... Und läßt sie wieder sinken. Ihr gegenüber sitzt die hundertjährige Frau, die alles von ihr weiß, ihr grell geschminktes Gesicht hängt wie eine Maske vor zwei müden, erloschenen Augen. Als diese Augen Gabriele erblicken, gefriert das Konversationslächeln um den vollen Mund, daß es aussieht wie eine junge Wunde zwischen alten Narben. „Das bist du“, sagt die alte Frau zu Gabriele. Das ist kein Spiegelbild, das ist das Porträt eines grausamen Seelenentlarvers. Es ist, als habe die künstliche Tünche der Theaterschminke die natürliche Tünche der Jugend von diesem Antlitz fortgewischt und diese uralte, steinerne Einsamkeit bloßgelegt, diese Verhärtung des mit nichts und niemandem verbundenen Menschen“ (Kaus, 1928, p.201).

Abstract The following study analyzes the psychological changes that women underwent during the Weimar Republic while trying to emulate the New Woman's media-driven image. I argue that through the interpretation of Gina Kaus's novel *Die Verliebten*, we can draw the conclusion that the successful adoption of the New Woman image during the 1920s required a compromise from women, who had to balance their emotional predispositions (desires, wishes, wants) against the new mold that the public and media demanded of them, and that this balancing act proved psychologically stressful for them. Full Text