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Catastrophist/eschatological motifs in German speculative fiction, 1895-1925

Lewis, William S., Ph.D.
Rice University, 1987

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CATASTROPHIST/ESCHATOLOGICAL MOTIFS IN GERMAN SPECULATIVE FICTION,
1895-1925

by

WILLIAM S. LEWIS

A THESIS SUBMITTED
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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Houston, Texas
April, 1987
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Abstract

Catastrophist/Eschatological Themes in German Speculative Fiction, 1895-1925

by

William S. Lewis

The works of speculative fiction with which this study deals employ the motif of large-scale catastrophe, or of the end of the world in either a literal or figurative sense, in imaginative response to the historical situations in which they were written. Though generically and motivically related, these works form an ideologically diverse group and manifest, in their use of catastrophist or eschatological motifs, quite different meanings, motivations, attitudes, and concerns.

In *purpurner Finsternis*, Michael Georg Conrad's apocalyptic fantasy of national regeneration, combines a left-liberal, populist, and nationalist critique of the "Prussified" Reich with a romantic antimodern repudiation of urban-industrial society. Max Haushofer's *Planetensfeuer*, despite its vision of cosmic catastrophe, offers reassurance of the survival of bourgeois society; it also vicariously gratifies the wish for violent release from a present perceived as overcivilized and inauthentic. Haushofer's eschatological sketches in *An des Daseins Grenzen* treat the themes of *Weltuntergang* and the collapse of civilization according to the sensibilities of the genteel bourgeois salon, thus defusing their subversive potential. The survival rather than the destruction of society is also the covert theme of Bernhard Kellermann's *Der Tunnel*. Kellermann avoids the more difficult implications of his vision of disaster, economic collapse, and near revolution and reduces his story to a tale in which blind fate, irrational working-class mobs, and a treacherous Jewish financier nearly ruin the good works of the bourgeois. Theodor Heinrich Mayer's *Rapanui*, the story of the end of a fictitious Polynesian race, is an amoral exercise in the aestheticization of destruction and death. However, this lurid tale of a cosmic *Wende* also gives symbolic expression to the central historical experience of "the generation of 1914," i.e., to the sense of being between two worlds, one dying, the other coming into being. Finally, Johannes R. Becher's *Levisite* offers an orthodox Leninist account of
the coming global war between bourgeoisie and proletariat. Both an anti-Kriegsroman and an exhortation to revolutionary heroism, Becher's novel also served contemporary Party readers as a compensatory fantasy and a consolatory restatement of the Communist millenarian myth.
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Introduction

In the following chapters we shall examine in detail five novels and a collection of ruminative prose sketches written by five different authors over a thirty-year period. Four of the works here under discussion date from the two decades prior to the outbreak of the First World War, from the time when Wilhelmine Germany was at the height of its power and self-esteem. The two remaining novels were written during the mid-twenties, during the last stages of the period of chaos and confusion which followed the collapse of bourgeois Europe in 1914-1918 and from which a new but treacherous stability—"die goldenen Zwanziger"—was in the process of emerging.

The five authors here represented form, in terms of their aesthetic and ideological orientations, quite a variegated group: Michael Georg Conrad, a leading figure in the early naturalist "Literaturevolution," a fervent Wagnerite, and an impassioned critic of the Second Kaiserreich; Max Haushofer, professor of political economics and an amateur writer with strong ties to the conservative literary establishment represented by Paul Heyse and Felix Dahn; Bernhard Kellermann, the best-selling author of the prestigious S. Fischer publishing house, whose novel Der Tunnel was the literary sensation of 1913; Theodor Heinrich Mayer, a right-wing Viennese writer of nationalistic historical fiction as well as of science fiction and fantasy; and Johannes R. Becher, the author of pathos-filled expressionist poems and, since 1923, an active Communist who would become a prominent voice in left-wing literary politics, finally acceding to the position of the Minister of Culture of the German Democratic Republic.

The narratives here under discussion are Conrad's In purpurner Finsternis (1895), Haushofer's Planetenfeuer (1899) and An des Daseins Grenzen (1908), Kellermann's Der Tunnel (1913), Mayer's Rapanui (1923), and Becher's Levisite (1926). Our task in this introductory chapter is to show what these various works by such a diverse group of writers have in common.

Most readers will, first, perceive these texts as related in some way generically, although there might be some disagreement about precisely what genre or subgenre they exemplify or at
least about how they should be classified. Manfred Nagl, for example, includes all but one of them—Levisite—in the bibliography of his *Science Fiction in Deutschland*. In *Die literarische Utopie*, Wolfgang Biesterfeld lists three of them—In purpurner Finsternis, Planetenfeuer, and Rapanui—as examples of the modern German literary utopia. *Der Tunnel*—which Biesterfeld omits from his bibliography—and In purpurner Finsternis are among the eight German utopian novels chosen by Hans-Jürgen Krysmanski (*Die utopische Methode*) to illustrate the "utopian method" in literature; and both novels are discussed, too, in Martin Schwonke's *Vom Staatsroman zur Science Fiction*. While the German scholarship on science fiction or the literary utopia has not taken any notice of Levisite, the English historian of futuristic fiction, I. F. Clarke, cites it in *Voices Prophesying War* as an example of the future war novel, a sub-genre of the *Zukunftsträume*, which also includes the science fiction novel and literary utopia. Michael Rohrwasser notes the presence in it of science fiction elements. Becher's novel itself seems self-consciously aware of its generic affinities with the science-fiction-oriented future war novels of the popular press.¹

These narratives, in other words, have been categorized as either science-fiction stories or literary utopias. And for our purposes little more than this need be said about their generic identity or identities. To be sure, the terms *science fiction* and *utopia* are not unproblematic: the definition of the two genres in their own rights as well as in relation to allied genres such as *fantasy* and to the various sub-genres are topics of an on-going debate among both literary scholars and students of popular culture. They have been treated extensively and insightfully in a number of books and essays by Darko Suvin and others.² Thus there are a number of genetical questions to which our selection of texts gives rise and which we could legitimately address here as a prolegomenon to the discussion of our main topic. We might ask, first of all, whether either of the terms, science fiction or utopian fiction, can be appropriately applied to any of our six texts. If so, then which term best describes which texts? Further, are we dealing with two distinct but related genres or narrative classes or with one genre and its subset? For example: does science fiction subsume utopian fiction as its "sociopolitical subset," as Suvin believes, or is it the other way around?³

More concretely, we might ask, for example, whether, on the basis of its strong thematic
parallels with certain acknowledged science-fiction stories, *Rapanui* can, despite its primitive technology and its mythicized pre-historic setting, meaningfully be classed as science fiction. Can it be assigned to that class of narratives whose setting is the future—a point on which most definitions agree—and which features a science and technology more, not less, advanced than that of the author's day? Or is *Rapanui* perhaps best considered an example of heroic fantasy—which, however, everyday usage frequently groups together with SF? Or again, if we define the literary utopia in the broadest possible sense as a narrative which describes an imaginary society whose manifest social, political, and economic arrangements differ from those of the writer's present and which is explicitly or implicitly social-critical in intent, then can we really categorize *Der Tunnel* as a utopian novel? The imaginary world that Kellermann projects differs from the world of 1913 only in minor detail and degree, while it preserves unchanged the fundamental institutions and practices of industrial capitalism. Instead of projecting an alternative to existing society, that is, *Der Tunnel* offers a series of enriched, amplified, larger-than-life images of it, images which are in both intention and effect celebratory rather than critical.

As interesting as such questions of classification and definition may be, however, it would take us too far afield to attempt to answer them here. We shall therefore simply accept the classifications—however lacking perhaps in genological rigor—of Nagl, Biesterfeld et al. and, leaving unexplored the problematical relationship between SF and utopia, group our texts together under the inclusive rubric "German science-fiction and utopian literature from the period 1895-1925." Since, moreover, both science fiction and utopian fiction have in common what Raymond Williams calls the projection of "otherness" or the "element of discontinuity from ordinary 'realism'," there are really only two distinctions which bear on our selection of texts: 1) that between SF/utopian literature and "fantastic" fiction, for which the category "otherness" is likewise constitutive; and 2) that between narratives characterized by a "discontinuity from ordinary 'realism'" and those written in a "realistic" mode. It is easier to deal with the first distinction.

Although the definition of *le fantastique* is no less problematic and controversial than that of science fiction or utopian fiction, for our purposes the fantastic may be distinguished from its kindred genres by the dominant role which occult and supernatural forces play in it. The
fantastic thus defined is not represented in this study, although there are two fantastic narratives from our period--Alfred Kubin's *Die andere Seite* (1909) and Karl Hans Strobl's *Gespender im Sumpf* (1920)--which, from a thematic standpoint, could well have been included here. Both works, however, have been adequately--and in the case of the Kubin, extensively--treated elsewhere. Regarding the second distinction, that between "non-realistic" and "realistic" fiction, we are interested here principally in the former, i. e., in narratives which project a world discontinuous with the empirical world of the reader. It should be noted, however, that two of our texts, *Der Tunnel* and *Levisite*, both novels of the future, depend for their effect precisely on the blurring of the boundary between empirical and imaginary, between present and future, and strive to eliminate or minimize the reader's sense of discontinuity and otherness.

Not only are the narratives we shall discuss related generically. They are linked thematically, or at least, motivically, as well, by the motif of large-scale catastrophe. Disasters, cataclysms, and catastrophes of all sorts--both man-made and natural and usually of global dimensions--figure significantly in each of them, although the degree of narrative elaboration which this motif enjoys varies somewhat from text to text. We are, in other words, dealing with what the secondary literature variously calls "apocalyptic," "eschatological," "end-of-the-world," or "catastrophist" fiction. Such fiction shares certain basic patterns, concepts, and motifs with older religious and mythological eschatologies and often explicitly borrows from or alludes to them: it is, however, quite secular in character and represents a relatively recent narrative tradition. We shall sketch below the development of this tradition from the latter part of the eighteenth century through the first quarter of the twentieth century. First, however, it is necessary to take a closer look at the two adjectives--"end-of-the-world" and "apocalyptic"--which are most often used to describe the kind of narratives with which we are concerned.

The phrase "end of the world" is applied by critics to fictitious catastrophes of varying scope and character. It may, of course, refer quite literally to the physical death of the planet or solar system or at least to the total annihilation or disappearance of the human race. As examples of end-of-the-world stories in this strict sense we might mention Grainville's *Le dernier homme*, Mary Shelley's *The Last Man*, Flammarion's *La fin du monde*, H. G. Wells' *The
Time Machine, and, from our selection of texts, the eschatological fantasies in Max Haushofer's An des Daseins Grenzen. But while some eschatological fiction does indeed envision a literal end of the "World," many such stories depict the end of the world only in a figurative sense. The world these stories project and then whose end they invite their readers to imagine is the "world" of a particular race, society, nation, or civilization—not the planet and mankind as a whole. The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries produced a good many apocalyptic visions of this sort—novels like Richard Jeffries' After London, Ignatius Donnelly's Caesar's Column, H. G. Wells' The War in the Air and a host of other now-forgotten fantasies of endings, wrought for good as well as for evil by natural disaster, by anarchist or socialist revolution, or by enemy invasion and global war. To this class of end-of-the-world stories belong three of the novels which we shall examine here—Conrad's In purpurner Finsterniß, Mayer's Rapanui, and Becher's Levisite.

In two of our other texts, however, Planetenfeuer and Der Tunnel, the world does not in fact "end" at all. However devastating the depicted cataclysms may be, the world emerges from them damaged but essentially intact and unchanged. Such narratives, which are perhaps best considered simply "catastrophist" fictions, exemplify what Gary K. Wolfe has, in an insightful recent essay, called the "mythic power" of the end-of-the-world story to provide the reader "some reassurance of survival." Wolfe advances the highly suggestive notion that the theme of many so-called end of the world stories is the reassuring one of survival rather than destruction; and although he is principally concerned with species or race survival, his idea can, as he himself intimates, refer to the survival of socio-political and cultural institutions as well. This furnishes us with a useful key to understanding the two novels just mentioned. We must, as we shall see, look beyond the manifest theme of Planetenfeuer and Der Tunnel, which is the vulnerability of modern civilization, to their covert theme: the essential permanence and survivability of the bourgeois world.

Some end-of-the-world stories attempt to satisfy the reader's need for continuity and stability by reassuring him of the permanence of his world. Others play on his frustrations and dissatisfactions and attempt to gratify, on the level of fantasy at least, his desire for change, for thorough-going transformation. Those which fulfill this desire most successfully are the ones
which exploit the oft-noted ambivalence of endings--each end is at the same time a
beginning--and afford the reader the double pleasure of imagining both the destruction of the
deficient old world and the creation of a new, more satisfying one. Thus, in much eschatological
fiction (as indeed in most religious and mythological eschatologies), balancing and in some cases
outweighing the end-of-the-world theme is the theme of the world's re-creation, of its
regeneration and renovation. This aspect of the end-of-the-world tale is well illustrated by three
of our texts, In purpurner Finsterniß, Levisite, and Rapanui. In the first two especially, the idea
of the world's radical transformation occupies a central place.

The notion of transformation--or, to choose a less neutral term, of renovation and
regeneration--brings us to the second epithet commonly, and somewhat problematically, applied
to fictions of the kind with which we are concerned: "apocalyptic." "Apocalypse" comes from the
Greek word meaning "revelation" (apokalupsis < apokaluptein = "to disclose, reveal"). Used
generically to refer to certain ancient Jewish and Christian visionary accounts of the final days
(Isaiah, Daniel, Ezra), it also refers, as a proper noun, to one particular work within the
Judeo-Christian eschatological tradition, the Apocalypse or Revelation of John. Drawing on the
older Jewish apocalyptic, John offered his Jewish and Christian audience of the first century
A.D. a vision of the creation of "a new heaven and a new earth." This divine act of renovation,
which marks the end of history and the recovery of paradise, was, in keeping with the traditional
apocalyptic scheme, to be preceded by a series of terrible disasters--the wars, famine, pestilence,
plagues, and natural catastrophes which are described in chapters 6, 8, 9, and 16 of Revelation
and which climax, after the interlude of the millenium, in the final battle between the forces of
Good and Evil.

John's account of the last things has exercised a powerful hold on the Western literary and
artistic imagination, secular as well as religious; and how one uses the term "apocalypse," and
which secular narratives one applies it to, depends on which contents of this prototypical
revelation one chooses to emphasize--the Terrors of the End or the New Creation. For those who
stress the former, "apocalyptic" is roughly synonymous with "catastrophist" and an "apocalypse"
is simply a vision of the imminent "cataclysmic demise of a hitherto ordered society." So
defined, the term enjoys widespread use by both scholarly and popular writers and serves
commonly as the natural antonym of "utopian."

For those students of the modern secular apocalyptic imagination who emphasize the "new heavens and new earth" theme of Revelation, however, apocalypse is not principally a gloomy prophecy of impending cataclysm and doom but a compelling vision of rebirth, renovation, and re-creation. M. H. Abrams, for example, in his magisterial study of apocalyptic images, themes, and patterns in the writings of the English and German Romantics, rejects the "loose" use of the term. He argues for a more precise definition of "apocalypse" as "a vision in which the old world is destroyed and replaced by a new and better world."¹⁸ For Abrams, as well as for Frank Kermode and others,¹⁹ the emphasis is on "the New." When used in this sense, "apocalyptic" is hardly antithetical to "utopian." On the contrary, as a revelation of "a new and better world" to come, apocalypse embraces utopia. This means that the visions of a new order of things in modern utopian thought and fiction are, along with the various reformistic or revolutionary cultural, artistic, social, and political movements which may accompany them,²⁰ unmistakably apocalyptic in character, certainly implicitly so and often, in their rhetoric of innovation/renovation, explicitly so as well.

In the following chapters we shall follow Abrams' usage and only consider as "apocalypses" those narratives which envision the regenerative transformation of the world. Stories of disasters which, however large-scale and devastating, do not effect such a transformation we shall refer to simply as "catastrophist" or "end-of-the-world" stories. As we shall see, three of our texts can appropriately be termed apocalyptic—two (In purpurmer Finsternis and Levisite) in the fullest sense of the word, one (Rapanui) in only a quite abstract and formal sense.

According to one of the genre's most prolific students, W. Warren Wagar, the secular end-of-the-world story first appeared at the beginning of the nineteenth century with Cousin de Grainville's Le dernier homme (1805), a work which introduced the Last Man theme into Western literature and which inspired, directly or indirectly, a number of imitations during the nineteenth century.²¹ Although the first of its kind, Grainville's account of the Last Man and the world's ruin was not, of course, conceived in vacuo. He and other early-nineteenth-century writers of eschatological fiction could find numerous sources of inspiration in the art, literature,
and scientific, historical, and philosophical writings of the eighteenth century. Dark themes and images of death, ruin, decay, and disaster were not uncommon in the Age of Enlightenment, the official optimism and meliorism notwithstanding; indeed, one scholar even refers to a "pre-romantic end-of-the-world myth" which begins to emerge in France during the late eighteenth century and which manifests itself in such eschatological images as that of the ruined Louvre in Hubert Robert's painting *La grande galerie du Louvre en ruines* or that of the end of the world in L.-S. Mercier's *Mon Bonnet de Nuit*.22

The fact that the secular end-of-the-world story first appears as a distinct literary genre around 1800 is not, according to Wagar, fortuitous. He sees in this early eschatological fiction the romantics' attempt to "relieve" a profound anxiety. It was through "the imaginative reenactment of the end of the old Europe as the end of the world" that they sought to come to terms with the radical transformations and upheavals wrought in Europe and North America by the "dual revolution" of the 1780s, i.e., by the political revolution in France and the industrial revolution in England.23 Besides Grainville's novel, the best known examples of this romantic *fin du globe* literature are Byron's "Darkness" (1816) and Mary Shelley's *The Last Man* (1826). Although both works were occasioned by personal tragedy, they express a more general sense of ending as well.24 Such visions of a future end of the world and the human race, moreover, represent but one version of a theme which was extraordinarily popular as a literary and artistic subject during the first half of the nineteenth century. It is the theme of catastrophe on a grand scale. So common, in fact, were treatments of especially Biblical and ancient disasters in both painting and literature that one modern scholar refers to a "school of catastrophe" which existed from the 1820s through the 1840s.25 This "school" is exemplified by Bulwer-Lytton's *The Last Days of Pompeii* (1834) and by the catastrophist paintings of John Martin (*The Last Man, The Destruction of Pompeii, and The Fall of Nineveh*), which have been likened to today's cinematic science-fiction disaster spectacles.26

With the end of the romantic era, eschatological fiction enters a period of relative quiescence lasting from about 1830 until 1880. This was, Wagar reminds us, "the era of positivist ascendency," an era which saw the triumph of industrial capitalism and the establishment of liberal bourgeois hegemony and which was characterized by an unshakeable
faith in reason, science, liberalism, and progress. It was, especially after mid-century, a period of unprecedented economic expansion and industrial growth; and the very real and visible progress which occurred during this time—in science and technology, in transportation and communication, in medicine, public health, and education—seemed to more than justify the bourgeoisie's faith in Progress and indeed to invite a certain complacency and facile optimism ill-suited to the production of visions of doom and disaster. The symbol of the dominant spirit of the age, to its critics as well as its celebrants, was the Crystal Palace built for the Great Exhibition of 1851—the apotheosis, according to Dostoevskii's Underground Man, of "prosperity" and the enemy of 'suffering,' of "destruction and chaos." Dostoevskii, to be sure, reverses the usual polarity: he embraces "suffering" and rejects the comfortable prosperity and rationality of the bourgeois world.

As Dostoevskii's repudiation of modern industrial civilization in The Notes from Underground shows, there were, even during this period of stunning progress and prosperity, doubters, dissenters, and skeptics. But it was during the last third of the nineteenth century, especially during the 1880s and 90s, as well as in the opening decades of the twentieth century that such voices became, in counterpoint to the rapid rise of the modern rationalized, mechanized, and centralized world, ever louder and ever more numerous. It is in this period as well that there is—with works like After London, Caesar's Column, The War of the Worlds, and La fin du monde—a re-emergence, indeed, a flowering of end-of-the-world, catastrophic, and apocalyptic narrative, which now establishes itself as a permanent part of the repertory of modern speculative fiction. This burgeoning of eschatological fiction around 1900 did not mean that the official doctrine of Progress had been abandoned: on the contrary, progress remained the dominant creed as well as a demonstrable reality in Europe and the United States during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Nonetheless, despite the retrospective stylizations of Stefan Zweig and others, the thirty years before the outbreak of the First World War were not, for most people, unambiguously a "golden age of security" or an "age of reason" when "no one believed in wars, in revolutions and upheavals." These years were in fact a period of profound change, of radical re-structuring in all areas of human activity and thought, and hence a period of uneasiness, confusion, fear, and unrest. Thus the official optimism was challenged by strong countercurrents
of pessimism and discontent and itself often took on a strident, "brittle" quality which, as Blackbourn points out, betrayed an underlying anxiety and uncertainty.\textsuperscript{32}

Pessimism about the present existed in all the industrial(izing) countries at the turn of the century.\textsuperscript{33} This pessimism had various causes; some were national or regional, while some were common to all modern industrial countries. The former had to do principally with shifts and disturbances in the international balance of power. For example, Germany's stunning defeat of France in 1870-71 and her subsequent unification and emergence as the leading industrial power in Europe contributed to a sense of national decline in both France and Great Britain. Depending on the momentary political situation, these factors even provoked French and British fears of German invasion.\textsuperscript{34} Similarly, the rising power of the United States and Russia after 1890 seemed to some European intellectuals to confirm the pessimistic prophecies of de Tocqueville and Constantin Frantz concerning the future of Europe and to signal the approaching end of European ascendancy in world affairs.\textsuperscript{35}

But late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century pessimism involved much more than merely a sense of national or regional decline or imperilment. It was also a response to the revolutionary transformation of society, politics, economics, and culture which occurred in Europe and North America between 1890 and 1900 as a result of industrialization. The material benefits of this transformation were undeniable. But so, too, was its dark side. Modernization had eroded older "organic" social relations, structures, and patterns and replaced them with ones which were impersonal, abstract, and opaque; it had polarized society into a tiny plutocracy and a large, impoverished, and potentially revolutionary working class; it had created huge, ugly, noisy cities, rife with vice, alcoholism, and unrest; it had substituted naked commercial interests for traditional values and ideals; it had alienated man from nature and from himself; it had, with its new comforts and conveniences, led to overcivilization, flabbiness, and enervation, on the one hand, and, with its hectic pace and sensory overload, to nervous exhaustion and neurasthenia, on the other.

Thus despite its spectacular achievements, the industrial-capitalist system provoked strong opposition and criticism and inspired a search for redemption from the evils of the modern age through politics, art, or cultural reform.\textsuperscript{36} This critical reaction to industrial capitalism and to
liberal culture generally constituted a key element in the political and ideological climate of the period 1870-1914 and established the terms of the post-war debate on society, politics, and culture. It reflected a number of different social and class interests and embraced a variety of sometimes mutually exclusive ideological positions, ranging from political radicalism to aristocratic aestheticism, from anarchism to state socialism. In general, however, two main critical stances may be distinguished, the democratic socialist and the romantic antimodern. Both were anti-capitalist and on occasion both described the evils of industrial capitalism in strikingly similar terms. But there the similarities ended. Socialism represented the interests of a class created by industrialization, the urban proletariat. Like liberalism, socialism was rooted in Enlightenment ideas and values; it was rationalistic, materialistic, secular, and libertarian. And significantly, though its extreme spokesmen sought the (violent) transformation of the capitalist system and its accompanying social and political formations, it was enthusiastic in its affirmation of technology and industrialism.\(^{37}\) Romantic antimodernism, on the other hand, was profoundly anti-technological and anti-industrial as well as anti-capitalist; it tended to be politically conservative, though it existed in left-wing as well as right-wing versions.\(^{38}\) It was the ideology of various pre-industrial groups whose way of life and economic existence were being undermined by industrialization; it was also the ideology of those members of the intelligentsia who identified with these pre-industrial groups.\(^{39}\) Reviving Romantic rather than Enlightenment traditions, romantic antimodernism repudiated political as well as economic liberalism; it held up against the "atomized" and "artificial" Gesellschaft of urban, industrial modernity the ideal of an "organic" pre-industrial, pre-capitalist Gemeinschaft; and it sought alternatives to "soulless" bourgeois rationality, positivism, and materialism in various forms of irrationalism, vitalism, activism, and mysticism.

The pessimism of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was not in all cases absolute. It frequently coexisted with optimistic expectations of imminent rejuvenation or regeneration. Indeed, far from being passive, resigned lamentations, many of the period's jeremiadic denunciations of contemporary degeneration were activistic summons to and programs for artistic, cultural, social, or political renewal and revitalization. "Erst beides zusammen," writes Wolfdietrich Rasch of the period around 1900, "Endzeitstimmung und Aufbruchswille
macht die innere Struktur des Fin de siècle aus. It is precisely this Aufbruchswille—or rather one manifestation of it—to which Gerhart Hauptmann alludes in his oft-cited characterization of the febrile utopianism of turn-of-the-century Germany: "Über vielen Biertischen politisierender Volkskreise schwebte damals, verquickt mit dem Bier- und Zigarrendunst, gleich einer bunten narkotischen Wolke, die Utopie. Was bei dem einen diesen, bei dem andern jenen Namen hatte, war im Grunde aus der gleichen Kraft und Sehnsucht der Seele nach Erlösung, Reinheit, Befreiung, Glück und überhaupt Vollkommenheit hervorgegangen: das gleiche nannten diese Sozialstaat, andere Freiheit, wieder andere Paradies, Tausendjähriges Reich oder Himmelreich." But utopia was not just a matter of the socialistic transformation of industrial society à la Karl Marx or Edward Bellamy. The "yearning of the contemporary soul for redemption" also manifested itself in communalistic ventures, in arts and crafts movements, in a cult of youth, in an enthusiasm for sport and physical culture, in a fascination with theosophy and occultism, in garden city projects—in short, in a variety of attempts to recover a more authentic, more natural existence. So rich, in fact, was the period 1870-1914 in utopian fantasies and programs for social and cultural renewal that Abrams' characterization of the decades after the French Revolution as possibly "the most apocalyptic cultural era since the century and a half in Hebrew civilization which preceded and followed the birth of Christ" is perhaps more appropriately applied to the decades around 1900.

This late-nineteenth/early-twentieth-century duality of Endzeitstimmung and Aufbruchswille, of pessimism and cultural despair on the one hand and utopianism and apocalypticism on the other, found imaginative form and expression in the non-realistic speculative literature which began to flourish around 1870. In the form of the social utopia, the science fiction story, and the tale of the future war, such literature provided contemporary writers and readers a repertory of images, settings, plots, and themes with which to articulate the fears, anxieties, discontents, hopes, and expectations to which various profound historical changes but especially modernization had given rise. Some of this writing was simply an exercise in imagination, escapist entertainment on fashionable themes for the new mass readership of the developing popular press; some of it, however, was propagandistic and engagée and sought to continue by other, fictional means the public debate on pressing social and political issues such as
the "Social Question," the "Woman Question," or various questions of foreign and military policy.

The two decades before 1900 were the golden age of the modern social utopia: Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward* (1888), William Morris' *News from Nowhere* (1890), and Theodor Hertzka's *Freiland* (1890) all date from this time.45 But in addition to such well-known, "canonical" works, there were published during this period literally hundreds of other utopian novels, stories, and sketches which are deservedly forgotten today. All of these fictions of future societies, however, employed one of two basic strategies.46 They either projected, like *Looking Backward*, an ideal society which was conceived of as a desirable and perhaps even realizable alternative to the authors' own; or they envisioned a society which was less desirable that the existing one. The latter strategy allowed an author to expose, criticize, satirize, or warn against current trends and practices; alternatively, and during this period more commonly, it enabled him to use the utopian's own means to attack the proposals advanced by others for the transformation of society. Such dystopian or anti-utopian visions were a natural weapon in the ideological struggle against socialism, e. g., Richard Michaelis' anti-Bellamy *Looking Further Forward* (1890) or Eugen Richter's notorious attack on the German Social Democratic *Zukunftstaat, Sozialdemokratische Zukunftsbilder* (1891).47 But the anti-utopia could be used by critics of capitalism as well, such as the American populist Ignatius Donnelly, whose *Caesar's Column* (1890) offered a lurid vision of the cataclysmic class war to which the injustices of the industrial-capitalist system could lead.48

Another popular sub-genre of speculative literature during the period 1870-1914 was the future war story.49 The prototypical work of this type was George T. Chesney's *The Battle of Dorking* (1871), an account of a successful German invasion written under the immediate impression of the Franco-Prussian War as a call for the reform of Britain's military. Chesney's story inspired a number of imitations both in England and on the continent, and by the late 1880s and early 90s, the *Zukunftsrieg, the guerre imaginaire* had become a stock theme of European futuristic fiction. Most of these future war stories were set in Europe and reflected the enmities and rivalries which existed among the European powers; some writers, however, entertained their readers with visions of global war, typically one which pitted the "civilized" white races of
Europe and North America against the "barbarous" yellow races of the Orient, e. g., W. D. Hay's *Three Hundred Years Hence* (1881), George Griffith's *The Angel of Revolution* (1893), and M. P. Shiel's *The Yellow Danger* (1895) and *The Yellow Wave* (1905). In the majority of cases, the authors of these future war stories thought of war in conventional terms—as a heroic adventure, as a glorious, patriotic undertaking, as a legitimate instrument of foreign policy. Some even believed in the possibility of "a war to end war." But like their readers and contemporary politicians and military men, most were simply unable to anticipate the horror of modern mechanized warfare as it was revealed in 1914-1918. A few, however, were able to imagine "the carnival of destruction" which would occur; among these were Griffith, Wilhelm Lamszus (Das Menschenschlachthaus [1912]), and H. G. Wells (The War in the Air [1908]).

The boundaries between the scientific romance and the two genres just discussed are difficult to draw. Social utopias and future war stories frequently feature futuristic inventions and technology, while scientific romances sometimes contain descriptions of alternative social systems or accounts of future wars. In the final analysis, generic assignment is perhaps simply a matter of thematic emphasis. The variety of scientific romances produced during the years 1870-1914 was so great that it is impossible to attempt even a summary sketch of the genre here; its representatives range from the "nuts and bolts" technological adventures of Jules Verne to the panpsychic fantasies of Kurd Laßwitz to the eschatological fictions of Camille Flammarion and H. G. Wells. Instead let us simply note that, in the scientific romances of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as in modern science fiction, cosmic disaster was a popular theme. Cometary collision seems to have enjoyed an especially privileged position in the catastrophic imagination of the time; but nineteenth-century geology, biology, astronomy, and physics (the Second Law of Thermodynamics) provided rich material for fantasies of other forms of catastrophe as well. These sources were exploited with unsurpassed virtuosity by H. G. Wells, who intended his visions (in *The Time Machine*) of human "devolution" and of the heat death of the solar system as "an assault on human self-satisfaction" and anthropocentrism. Other writers of scientific romance, however, treated the possibility of the ultimate extinction of the human race and the earth less pessimistically. For Flammarion, for instance, the death of the solar system was simply part of a grand cosmic process of destruction and creation, a process
which served the French astronomer as a kind of vitalistic immortality-ersatz. "The stars will rise from their ashes," he writes. "Universal death will never reign."55

Two major changes occurred in European speculative fiction after 1918. The first resulted from the experience of the modern technological warfare. As one scholar puts it, "Utopia became dystopia, and the once self-confident accounts of future wars changed to fearful visions of a planetary conflict in which poison gas, or giant bombing planes, or biological weapons wipe out the human race."56 In addition to such grim anticipations of coming conflagrations, the post-war period also saw the proliferation of "post-holocaust" stories as well. The second change had to do with the progressive centralization, bureaucratization, and rationalization of industrial society. While the pre-1914 anti-utopian or dystopian novel had thematized the inefficiency, corruption, and demoralization allegedly endemic to the over-regulated socialist state or had played on middle-class fears of social chaos and revolution, the dystopian novel of the post-war era--exemplified by Zamyatin's We, Harbou's Metropolis, and Huxley's Brave New World--took for its principal theme the dehumanization of man in an efficiently run, scientifically managed clockwork world.57

With this we have sketched, with broad strokes, the general historical background against which our six end-of-the-world or catastrophist narratives are to be read; and we have outlined, with equally broad strokes, the literary traditions within which they were written. The specifically German or Austrian context within which each work originated will be discussed in the individual interpretive chapters. There the particular historical background information necessary for an understanding of each narrative as a stylized, symbolic response to a specific set of historical circumstances will be supplied. But in bringing out the peculiarly German background to a work such as Conrad's In purpurnem Finsternis, it is important that we not underestimate the degree to which the German historical circumstances paralleled those in other industrial nations. We must also recognize the extent to which similar historical situations provoked similar ideological responses in each of the industrialized countries. Recognizing this, we will be less inclined to view every 'suspect' ideology for which we may find evidence in our texts--cultural pessimism, vitalism, agrarian romanticism, or reactionary modernism--as a uniquely German phenomenon, as further evidence of a German Sonderweg, which led inevitably to National
Socialism.  

As far as a peculiarly German tradition of speculative fiction is concerned, there is, at least for the pre-war period and for the genres with which we are dealing here, little which can or needs to be said. To be sure, social utopias, tales of future wars, and scientific romances were being written in Germany during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. However, for a number of reasons such as the destruction of library collections during the Second World War and scholarly prejudice against popular literature, these writings have never been systematically collected or studied. The few studies which have been attempted—e.g., Manfred Nagl's *Science Fiction in Deutschland* or William B. Fischer's recent *The Empire Strikes Out*—are not very satisfactory. Their inadequacies—the predominance of ideology over historical sensitivity, too narrow a focus—become clear when they are compared with recent studies of American utopian fiction or of Victorian science fiction such as those by Kenneth Roemer, Jean Pfaelzer, and Darko Suvin. In the absence of a rich collection of texts and of solid historical studies, it is difficult to generalize about characteristically German themes, motifs, plots, and character constellations within the tradition of speculative fiction which was taking shape internationally during the decades around 1900. The evidence which is available, however, tends to support the impression that, as regards utopian fiction and the scientific romance, prior to 1914 Germany was largely receptive, appropriating through translation and imitation forms and conventions which had originated elsewhere. It is significant, for example, that an 1891 essay entitled "Die meistgelesenen Bücher" lists Bellamy's *Rückblick* and not a comparable work by a German author or that the most popular writer of scientific romances among German workers around 1900 was Jules Verne.

In the following chapters we shall examine how five German authors, writing within the conventions of science-fiction and utopian literature, employed the theme of large-scale catastrophe, of *Weltuntergang* in the figurative and sometimes the literal sense, as part of their symbolic response to their historical situation(s). Setting aside the advantages of retrospect, we shall recognize the prophetic stance and gesture of futuristic fiction for what it in the majority of cases is: a literary convention. We shall therefore resist the temptation to read our four pre-war texts as "visionary anticipations" of the European collapse in 1914. Likewise, we shall resist
the temptation to explain the catastrophist fantasies with which we are dealing in terms of some "pervasive fin du globe feeling" which existed around 1900. While there are definite connections between the cultural pessimism and social anxiety of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and the literary and artistic catastrophism of the time, reference to vague feelings of decline and ending explains too little. Instead, we must seek to establish the function(s) and valence of catastrophist themes and motifs within the individual narratives and attempt to relate these to the authors' ideologies and historical experiences.

By no means do the six works we shall discuss constitute a scientific sample. Nor is there—except for Kellermann's Der Tunnel—much indication of the resonance which they may have found with their readers. Nonetheless, our selection of texts has a two-fold claim to representativeness. First, each of the major forms and subgenres of speculative fiction is represented in it—the social utopia, the scientific romance, and the future war story. So, too, are the two principal classes of catastrophe which figure in catastrophist literature—natural/cosmic cataclysms and man-made disasters (which, for the period here under consideration, are war and social revolution). The second claim to representativeness which may be advanced on behalf of our selection is based on the the ideological diversity of our material. The ideologies embodied in our narratives range from agrarian romanticism to Leninism, from liberalism tinged with cultural-pessimism to reactionary modernism. The narratives to which we shall now turn can thus be said to offer an accurate reflection of the ideological ferment of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.
Notes


5. Suvin—ibid., 4—states that any definition of the literary utopia must include as one of its elements the "radical" difference—"in respect of sociopolitical conditions"—between the imaginary society and the empirical society of the author and his readers. Hans Ulrich Seeber identifies such "otherness" together with social-critical intent as two distinctive features of the literary utopia in his contribution to the introduction to **Literarische Utopien von Morus bis zur Gegenwart**, ed. Klaus L. Berghahn and Hans Ulrich Seeber (Königstein/Ts.: Athenäum Verlag, 1983), 17.

6. Or we can, as in the title, also group them together under the widely used rubric "speculative fiction." This is the practice followed, for example, by W. Warren Wagar in **Terminal Visions: The Literature of the Last Things** (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983). See his discussion of genres and classification on pp. 8-9.


8. Though both are "anti-naturalistic" genres, Suvin distinguishes between science fiction and the "fantasy (ghost, horror, Gothic, weird) tale, a genre committed to the interposition of anti-cognitive laws into the empirical environment." See **The Metamorphoses of Science Fiction**.

8. Suvin's distinction, which I have adopted as a useful rule-of-thumb here, is of course open to question. For two recent studies of the fantastic, see Rosemary Jackson, **Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion** (London: Methuen, 1981), and Christine Brooke-Rose, **A Rhetoric of the Unreal: Studies in Narrative and Structure, especially of the Fantastic** (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).


11. The specialized literature on the end-of-the-world theme in ancient and primitive religious and mythological traditions is extensive. For a succinct comparativist survey of the various versions of the end-of-the-world myth, however, see the chapter entitled "Eschatology and Cosmology" in Mircea Eliade's Myth and Reality (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), 54-74; Eliade also alludes to the secularized eschatological myths of modern totalitarian movements and to the apocalyptic character of artistic modernism.

12. The author of a recent article on the end-of-the-world theme in modern science fiction notes that "in most post-holocaust fiction, the 'end of the world' means the end of a way of life, a configuration of attitudes, perhaps a system of beliefs--but not the actual destruction of the planet or its population (though this population may be severely reduced). . . . The world--in the sense of economic and political systems, beliefs and behavior patterns--may be destroyed; but more often than not the earth abides--and so, at least in part, does humanity." See Gary K. Wolfe, "The Remaking of Zero: Beginning at the End," in Rabkin, End of the World, 1-19. The quote is
on pp. 1-2.

13. Ibid., 7.

14. Commenting on modern science fiction and its frequent use of the end-of-the-world theme, G. Legman (The Horn Book) observes that the "profound and ambivalent willingness to see the world go up in flames, and oneself along with it, is the measure of the disaffection of an ever-increasing portion of the world's population from the life that must now be lived on that world." Quoted in Schäfer, Science Fiction als Ideologiekritik?, 342.

15."Even in eschatologies," Eliade writes, "the essential thing is not the fact of the End, but the certainty of a new beginning." Myth and Reality, 75-76.


17. Rowland, The Open Heaven, 23.


20. On the apocalyptic patterns which structure the "mythologies" of communism and National Socialism, see Norman Cohn, The Pursuit of the Millenium (Fairlawn, New Jersey: Essential Books, 1957), 307-314. Kermode, in "Apocalypse and Modern," calls attention to the apocalyptic strain in artistic and literary modernism: "Art was the gospel of the New; it announced the terrible sterility of the old order, its sexual debility and corruption, the collapse of its cities, its evil communications. Sometimes it offered formal imitations of these terminal


22. Majewski, "Grainville's Le dernier homme," 114-116. Majewski attributes the hold which the theme of the end of the world or of grand-scale catastrophe had on the "pre-romantic imagination" to a "troubled awareness of the decadence of society and the disorder of the political system" and to "the loss of metaphysical certainties in the eighteenth century." In addition to Robert's painting and Mercier's journal, he cites several other late-eighteenth-century French works which exhibit a fascination with disaster, cataclysm, and decay. See also Robert Favré, La Mort dans la littérature et la pensée françaises au Siècle des lumières (Lyon: Presses universitaires de Lyon, 1978), 402-411, and John McManners, Death and the Enlightenment: Changing Attitudes to Death among Christians and Unbelievers in the Eighteenth-century France.


25. Curtis Dahl, "Bulwer-Lytton and the School of Catastrophe," *Philological Quarterly* 32 (October 1953): 428-442. Dahl identifies Burke's theory of the sublime as an important source for the aesthetic of destruction manifest in the works of Martin and others. The interest in large-scale catastrophe was further nurtured and re-inforced by the anxiety induced by the French Revolution, by early-nineteenth-century evangelicalism, and by developments in geology and archaelogy.


32. While pessimism and cultural despair were unquestionably potent ideological forces during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, one seeking to understand the mental climate of the period should not give them one-sided emphasis. On the ambivalent response to modernization in Germany, see David Blackbourn and Geoff Eley, *The Peculiarities of German History: Bourgeois Society and Politics in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985). See especially the chapter by Blackbourn entitled "Economy and Society: The Shadow Side." "It is not the case," observes Blackbourn, "that between the middle and the late nineteenth century cultural optimism simply gave way to cultural pessimism, that belief in progress yielded to despair. The reality was a complex juxtaposition of the two. On the one hand, anxiety did indeed give rise to a sense of cultural disenchantment. But this was seldom a blanket rejection of the modern world, and anxiety could also manifest itself in an optimism which was more brittle and often therefore more facile and narrowly conceived than that associated with earlier decades" (217).


36. For a general but well-informed and insightful survey of the revolt in pre-WWI Europe against modernity, see James Joll, Europe Since 1870: An International History (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1973), chapter six "The Industrial Society and its Critics." Also useful on the crisis of liberalism generally during the last two decades of the nineteenth and the first part of the twentieth century are George Lichtheim, Europe in the Twentieth Century (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1972), chapters four, five, and six, and George L. Mosse, The Culture of Western Europe, 2d ed. (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1974), where the rise and decline of liberalism serves as the organizing theme for a topically-arranged survey of nineteenth- and twentieth-century European cultural history.


38. In an important corrective to a one-sided scholarly interest in the reactionary or protofascist strains of romantic antimodernism in Germany, Eugene Lunn has called attention to the "democratic and humanitarian versions" of "völkisch romanticism" which existed in Wilhelmine Germany. See his Prophet of Community: The Romantic Socialism of Gustav Landauer (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 5-8. See also Martin Jay's review of Lunn's book in Central European History 8 (March 1975): 67-72. The German historian Thomas Nipperdey makes essentially the same point as Lunn in his essay "Jugend und Politik um 1900," in Kulturkritik und Jugendkult, ed. Walter Ruegg (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1974), 87-114. Rejecting the "besserwissersche Kritik der Nachgeborenen," Nipperdey alerts us to "das demokratische und liberale Potential" of the German Youth Movement prior to World War I. See pp. 96-97.


42. On the various forms which resistance to urban-industrial modernity took in late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century Germany, France, and America, see Mosse, Weber, and Lears (note 33) as well as the relevant specialized literature on specific figures and movements.


44. For an informative, though not especially rigorous general history of this literature of anticipation, see I. F. Clarke's *Pattern of Expectation*. There are also numerous specialized studies of particular authors, genres, and national traditions of speculative literature. Among the latter, late-nineteenth-century American utopian fiction is especially well represented, e.g., Kenneth Roemer's *The Obsolete Necessity: America in Utopian Writings, 1888-1900* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1976) and Jean Pfaelzer's *The Utopian Novel in America, 1886-1896: The Politics of Form* (Pittsburgh: The University of Pittsburgh Press, 1984).

45. The flourishing of the utopian novel towards the end of the nineteenth century provoked comment from German intellectuals on both the left and the right. For a representative
conservative view, see Arthur von Kirchenheim’s *Schlaraffia Politica: Geschichte der Dichtungen vom besten Staat*, published anonymously in Leipzig in 1892 (reprint; Amsterdam: Librac N. V., 1967). In his penultimate chapter, Kirchenheim surveys the most recent contributions to the genre, including anti-utopian works such as those by Richter and Gregorovius. For a survey of earlier visions of the perfect society by the leading theoretician of the German Social Democrats, see Karl Kautsky’s "Zukunftsstaaten der Vergangenheit" in *Die Neue Zeit* 11 (1892-93): 653-663, 684-696. "Eine der auffallendsten Erscheinungen der letzten Jahre," notes Kautsky, "ist das Wiedererwachen des Interesses an sozialistischen Utopien, das niemals so stark gewesen zu sein scheint, als gegenwärtig." This interest was stronger among the bourgeoisie than among the workers, Kautsky maintains, and is rooted in the anxiety and uncertainty of an "absterbenden" class about the future (653-654). But contrary to Kautsky’s claim that the German workers were too busy creating the new society to indulge themselves in utopian fantasies, Bellamy's novel seems to have been as popular among the workers as it was in the other classes, a fact which caused the Social Democratic leadership some alarm. "In fact, the success of Bebel's *Woman and Socialism* . . . and Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward* . . . was so great," writes the historian Guenther Roth, "that party leaders became apprehensive lest the workers’ interest in this topic [the Zukunftsstaat] distract their attention from the immediate problems of the movement." See Guenther Roth, *The Social Democrats in Imperial Germany: A Study in Working-class Isolation and National Integration* (Totowa, New Jersey: Bedminster Press, 1963), 237.

reprint, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970), xi-xlii. Though not quite the phenomenal success that Bellamy's Looking Backward was, Hertzka's Freiland: ein soziales Zukunftsbild enjoyed a fair measure of popularity and, like Bellamy's novel, inspired some readers to attempt to translate the author's utopian design into socio-political reality: following the novel's publication in 1890 a considerable number of Freiland societies were formed throughout Germany and Austria; these were analogous to the Nationalist groups inspired in the United States by Looking Backward. Surprisingly little has been written about Freiland and the Freiland-movement. For a general discussion of all three works, see the chapter entitled "Utopia Victoriana" in Frank E. Manuel and Fritzie R. Manuel's encyclopedic Utopian Thought in the Western World (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1979), 759-772. On German utopian fiction of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, see Erwin M. J. Kretzmann's informative dissertation "The Pre-War German Utopian Novel" (Brown University, 1936).

46. For a useful discussion of the narrative strategies available to the writer of utopian fiction, see Pfaelzer, The Utopian Novel in America, chapters one and four.

47. On German anti-utopian fiction during the last decade of the nineteenth century, see Kretzmann, The Pre-war German Utopian Novel, 51-87, and, on critical German responses to Bellamy, Riederer, "The German Acceptance and Reaction." On Richter's Sozialdemokratische Zukunftsbilder, frei nach Bebel, see Ina Susanne Lorenz, Eugen Richter: Der entschiedene Liberalismus in wilhelminischer Zeit, 1871 bis 1906 (Husum: Matthiesen, 1980), 217-227, and Wolfgang Asholt, "Sozialistische Irrlehren und liberale Zerrbilder: Die Anfänge der Anti-utopie," Germanisch-Romanische Monatsschrift NF 35 (1985): 369-381. Richter's anti-utopia was widely circulated: a quarter of a million copies were printed between 1891 and 1893; it was serialized in over forty bourgeois newspapers, and certain trade and agrarian groups arranged for its distribution in pamphlet form among the workers. See Lorenz, Eugen Richter, 218, and Roth, The Social Democrats, 236-237. Richter's anti-utopia figured in and perhaps helped inspire the "Zukunftstaat" debate which took place in the Reichstag in February, 1893.

49. The classic study of the future war novel is I. F. Clarke's *Voices Prophesying War*.

50. On the European and American fear and suspicion of the Chinese and Japanese which constitute the historical background to such novels, see Heinz Gollwitzer, *Die gelbe Gefahr: Geschichte eines Schlagwortes: Studien zum imperialistischen Denken* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1962).

51. See Brian Stableford, "Man-made Catastrophes," 104-107. "There were very few writers," Stableford observes, "who displayed the least trace of the attitude which became commonplace in future war stories written after the Great War: the view that involvement in war is a catastrophe for everyone, winners and losers alike" (105).


53. Wagar surveys the various forms which natural catastrophe has taken in


56. On the changed temper and characteristic themes of futuristic fiction following World War I, see the chapter "From Bad to Worse" in Clarke, Pattern of Expectation, 225-251. The quote is on p. 227.


58. For fundamental remarks on the use and abuse of the "cultural pessimism" approach to modern German history, see Blackbourn and Eley, The Peculiarities of German History, 211-229.

59. On the bibliographical difficulties which the student of German science fiction and utopian literature faces, see Nagl, Science Fiction in Deutschland, 7.

60. William B. Fischer, The Empire Strikes Out: Kurd Lasswitz, Hans Dominik, and the Development of German Science Fiction (Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1984). Though largely descriptive in character, Kretzmann's 1936 dissertation (see note 45 above) is very informative, sensible, and utterly free of methodological and ideological pretensions. It has been altogether ignored by the German secondary literature; not even Biesterfeld includes it in his revised bibliography.

62. To be sure, Kretzmann, "The Pre-War German Utopian Novel," 30, notes frequent invocations of the *Führerprinzip* in the German utopias written around 1900.


64. See Vondung, "Träume von Tod und Untergang," 156: "[die Untergangsvisionen des Fin de siècle] dürfen auf keinen Fall als gezielte Prophezeiung eines kommenden Krieges aufgefaßt werden." Vondung views such visions as an "ästhetisches Spiel," on the one hand, rooted in "black romanticism" and fin de siècle decadence, and, on the other, in the case of writers of the younger generation such as Heym, as an expression of ennui, frustration, and the desire for *Ausbruch* out of an existence which was perceived as sterile, monotonous, and inauthentic.

65. Jeffrey Herf, *Reactionary Modernism: Technology, Culture, and Politics in Weimar and the Third Reich* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984). Herf uses the term "reactionary modernism to denote a "paradoxical combination of technics and irrationalism" which, though present to some extent in all industrial nations, became "a constitutive part of the national identity" only in Weimar and Nazi Germany (219-220).
Chapter One

"Des Teutareiches Untergang":

Michael Georg Conrad's Messianic Fantasy In purpurmer Finsterniš

Michael Georg Conrad (1846-1927) was a prominent figure in Munich literary circles during the last two decades of the nineteenth century. Though principally a journalist and essayist, he published a number of fictional works in addition to the novel here under consideration: among these were some prose études à la Zola; three thick "naturalist" novels inspired by Zola's Rougon-Macquart series and set in contemporary Munich; and Majestät, a novel based on the life of Ludwig II, for Conrad the symbol of the martyrdom of Art and Beauty in a ruthless, materialistic world.¹ As was the case with several other of the early naturalists such as Bleibtreu and the Harts, however, Conrad's talent as a creative writer was not up to the task of reforming German literature through innovative works; and his chief claim to fame lies in his presence on the South German literary scene as a "personality"—as an organizer, discoverer, agitator, promoter—as well as, of course, in his role as the founder and editor of Die Gesellschaft, during the first two or three years of its existence the organ of Munich naturalism.²

Conrad was born in Gnödstadt into an Lower Franconian peasant family which could trace its presence in the region back 500 years.³ His South German rural background and his life-long identification with the "common man"—i.e., the independent farmer and the small-town tradesman—are important factors in explaining his subsequent ideological and political development;⁴ for here are to be found the roots of his agrarian romanticism and anti-urbanism, his involvement with the democratic-populist Deutsche Volkspartei,⁵ and his strong anti-Prussianism. Trained as a teacher, Conrad left Germany in 1868 to teach abroad, first in Switzerland and then in Italy, where he lived and studied (languages and literature) for six years. It was here, in a Neapolitan bookshop, that he first encountered the writings of Friedrich Nietzsche, who quickly became one of his idols.⁶ In 1878, he moved to Paris, where he taught, gave lectures on German culture (Wagner, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche) to various clubs and societies,⁷ and worked—together with Max Nordau—as a Paris correspondent for Leopold Sonnemann's liberal Frankfurter Zeitung. In Paris, Conrad met and became a passionate admirer of Zola; and he wrote a number of articles introducing Zola's works and ideas to a German
audience as well as a number of "studies" in a naturalist manner. In 1882 he decided to return to Germany and selected Munich as his new home, where he lived until his death in 1927. Shortly after his return to Germany, Conrad was introduced by Franz Liszt to his third great idol, Richard Wagner, in Bayreuth.

Conrad was a rebel and a fighter—the heretic and the "Kriegsknecht aus der Zeit der Bauernkriege" were among his favorite self-stylizations—and the Germany he found upon his return after fourteen years abroad offered him many casus belli. First and foremost was the state of German letters and of German culture generally—not, the disproportion between the stunning material and political achievements of Bismarck's Reich and its stagnant artistic and literary culture, a situation which seemed to confirm Nietzsche's fears of the eventual "Niederlage, ja Exstirpation des deutschen Geistes zugunsten des 'deutschen Reiches.'" Within a year of his return, Conrad had added his to other voices of protest against the prevailing literary taste of the cultured middle classes as well as against the evasive and hypocritical morality in which it was embedded. Together with the Hart brothers, Bleibtreu, Alberti et al., Conrad called for a "literary revolution," for the creation of a new national literature, the distinguishing characteristics of which would be its uncompromising truthfulness in the face of unpleasant social realities and its unashamedly national character.

This patriotic and nationalistic orientation of the "Litteraturrevolution" should not be overlooked, especially in the case of Conrad and the Harts: the new German literature was to be "vaterländisch"—not "kosmopolitisch"—and it was to be, Conrad wrote, "eine Litteratur aus dem Volke für das Volk." There is perhaps more than a faint echo of Wagner's populist conception of art in Conrad's words: the ardent Wagnerite Conrad referred to Oper und Drama as his "ästhetische Fibel" and characterized Wagner's life and works as "meine Erlaubtung und meinen Ausgangspunkt zur Revolutionierung des versumpften Litteraturwesens."

The literary rebels could not look to the reading public for support in their efforts to create a literature which would be both modern and vaterländisch. And unable to compete in the thoroughly commercialized literary marketplace with such best-selling writers as Ebers or Marlitt, some of them looked to the State for support in the realization of their cultural revolution. At issue here was, after all, the soul of the nation. In the eighteen-eighties, however, the State—
the person of Imperial Chancellor Bismarck—was more concerned with military appropriations and with containing the Social Democratic threat than with the rebirth of German art and literature; and under Wilhelm II, the attitude of the State towards its non-conformist writers changed from one of relative indifference to one of open hostility, a change signalled by the "Leipziger Realistenprozeß" of 1890.17

The antagonism between Art and the State became a recurrent theme in Conrad's editorials for Die Gesellschaft: "Die Litteratur repräsentiert den freien, schöpferischen Gedanken, den fessellosen Geist. Das ist nichts für ein Militärreich, das nichts als Disziplin kennt und fordert."18 For Conrad, "Preußen-Deutschland" was the complete antithesis of Art and all that Art represented: the free, creative individual and the soul of the people; and his editorials bristle with attacks on Bismarck's "verdrillten, verkasernen Militärstaat."19 Many of his criticisms of the Kaiserreich have an unmistakeably libertarian and populist flavor. Conrad was an impassioned champion of free thought and expression and a long-time opponent of militarism. He was a determined individualist who opposed all forms of regimentation and systematization. And he was, finally, a populist for whom the centralized government of the Reich—wedded as it was to the interests of big industry, the East Elbian agrarians, and the Catholic Center—was inimical to the true needs and interests of the people, whereby he thought principally of rural and small-town folk, not the urban proletariat. For the liberal populist Conrad, the Prusso-German Reich was, in short, the perfect embodiment of those things which he hated; it was the quintessence of repression, militarism, reaction, and centralized bureaucratic authority.

Yet Conrad's opposition to the Reich involved something more than a populist libertarian's fear of State power. There was also the refusal, rooted in strong South German particularist and federalist sentiments, to accept the Prussian Reich of 1871 as anything more than a temporary solution to the German question, and not a very satisfactory one at that. In Conrad's eyes, Bismarck's creation was at best "eine Durchgangsstation zu dem nicht einseitig verpreuβten, sondern deutschen 'All-Deutschland' im großen Einheitsstil."20 Conrad never elaborates on this Pan-German alternative to the Reich; and though his writings abound with complaints about the destruction of German culture by the Slavs in Austro-Hungary and the brutal treatment experienced by the Baltic Germans at the hands of the Russians,21 Conrad never explicitly draws
the expansionist conclusions implicit in the Pan-German ideal. Nonetheless, there is an
unmistakeable ideological affinity between certain of Conrad's views on the composition and
policies of the Reich and positions of the radical-nationalist Right as represented, for example, by
the Pan-Germans, Friedrich Lange's German-Union, and the Society for the Eastern Marches.
To be sure, the rejection of unification under Prussian hegemony may have been part of Conrad's
South German left-liberal heritage; there is, as we have seen, a strong liberal strain in his
thought. Yet in tone and substance his criticisms of "Kleindeutschland," especially after 1890,
often more closely resemble those of conservative critics such as Constantin Frantz and Paul de
Lagarde than they do those of Conrad's democratic forebears in the DVP. In any event, what is
important here for the discussion of the piece of speculative fiction with which this chapter is
concerned is: 1) the distinction between the nation and the state which is implicit in Conrad's
rejection of Prusso-Germany, a distinction which derives from romantic political thought and
according to which the nation is the natural, organic basis for political organization, while the
state represents a soulless, artificial contrivance; and 2) Conrad's eschatological hope for the
creation of a legitimate German nation-state at some time in the future and in his belief in "die
endliche Erneuerung und wahrhafte Einigung unseres zu hohen Zielen berufenen Volkstums."23

Conrad's disenchantment with the Kaisereich had do with the cultural situation in the new
Reich and with the policies and political system of Prusso-Germany; but it also had to do with
changes and dislocations wrought in German life by industrialization and urbanization and hence
with tendencies and institutions which are characteristic of modern urban-industrial civilization
generally. Thus, we find in Conrad's editorials most of the stock anti-modernist themes,
arguments, and positions: a vague, emotional anti-capitalism; a hatred of the metropolis and its
masses; a strong strain of agrarian romanticism; a longing for community; and so forth. There is,
moreover, implicit in Conrad's cultural criticism a repudiation of the basic philosophical
foundations of the modern age--rationalism, scientific materialism, utilitarianism. We see this, for
example, in a comment on Bertha von Suttner's utopian work, Das Maschinenalter, in which
Conrad rejects "die reinwissenschaftliche, logisch präparierte Kultur" envisioned by her and
invokes as counter-ideals Nature and "jene andere und höhere Kultur, die aus dem Gemüte und
dem Blute stammt, die naive Kultur des Kunstmenschen."24 The dualism of "scientific-rational
culture" and "naive aesthetic culture" in terms of which Conrad frames his remarks on Das Maschinenalter anticipates one of the major themes of the novel here under discussion and will be examined in greater detail below.

His occasional brave talk about the need for a solid grasp of the facts of political and economic life notwithstanding, Conrad was basically not interested in systematic, well-informed political and social criticism and analysis. He was by temperament a moralist and a Jeremiah, not a pragmatic political thinker, and he cast his criticisms of what he perceived as the present period of national decline and degeneration in emotional, moralistic terms. His central concern was, in the final analysis, the diagnosis and cure of a sickness that afflicted the German soul, a national spiritual malaise to which all of the other evils which he castigated were related either causally or symptomatically. Conrad referred to this malaise variously as "nationale Charakterlosigkeit und Verschwommenheit," "Mangel eines manhaften Selbst- und Nationalbewußtseins," "volksseelische Entartung," "nationale Degeneration," "Rassenverfall" etc.25 and meant in each case the same thing: the deficient sense--or total loss--of national and ethnic identity, of "Germanness" and all the (unspecified) virtues which that implies. Although he attributed Germany's spiritual crisis in part, at least, to political and economic circumstances, i.e., to the stunting influence of the forces of reaction and to the pernicious effects of capitalism, remedies which were exclusively political and economic, he suggests in an 1892 editorial, were, in the end, irrelevant "externalities."26 What Conrad sought instead was a dramatic act of national renewal and rebirth, an "Erlösungsthat von gesund jugendlicher Lebenskraft,"27 which would go beyond any of the solutions offered by late-nineteenth-century social and political thought. That this act of salvation was a literary fantasy and not a realistic expectation goes without saying. This and the many similar passages in which Conrad invokes the notions of rebirth, salvation, and divine retribution are traditional jeremiadic rhetoric. They are hyperbolic expressions of disaffection and discontent, of longing for radical change, and of frustration and a sense of impotence vis-à-vis a social and political reality which is perceived as immutable. At the same time, however, Conrad's apocalyptic rhetoric reproduced certain patterns of thought and meaning which were, as the following passage from Walter Rathenau's An die deutsche Jugend suggests, a significant part of the collective political mentality of the Wilhelmine era:
There is always someone—Lohengrin, Walther, Siegfried, Wotan—who can do everything and knock everything down, who can release suffering virtue, punish vice and bring general salvation, striking an exaggerated pose, with the sound of trumpets, and lighting and scenic effects. A reflection of this operatic manner could be seen in politics, even in the use of expressions like "Nibelung loyalty." People wanted the word of salvation to be spoken on every occasion with a great gesture, people wanted to see historical turning points presented before them, they wanted to hear the clash of swords and the flapping of banners.²⁸

Rathenau's words capture precisely the spirit of Germanic messianism and apocalypticism which animates Conrad's extended fictional treatment of the theme of national regeneration in his 1895 "Roman-Improvisation aus dem dreißigsten Jahrhundert," In purpurner Finsternis.²⁹

In this novel of the future, one of many published in ever increasing numbers during the last third of the nineteenth century, Conrad exploits fully both the utopian and the dystopian/satirical potential of the genre. He uses the motif of an imaginary society to criticize and satirize aspects of the Second Kaisercrphant as well as to project a utopian alternative to it and to the institutions and practices of nineteenth-century Europe generally. When read strictly as a piece of satirical writing, In purpurner Finsternis is quite unremarkable. Of greater interest, however, are the many thematic and motivic parallels between the dystopian sections of Conrad's novel and more familiar works of dystopian fiction from the twentieth-century, parallels which are to be explained in terms of a common literary and intellectual heritage. If Conrad's dystopia resembles the "clockwork worlds" of contemporary anti-utopian fiction, the utopian alternative to nineteenth-century Germany which he projects in the novel bears the strong imprint of the Wilhelmine "counterculture." The novel's idealized images of healthy and handsome Germanic youths; its exaltation of physical beauty and vigorous physical activity; its idyllic, "pre-industrial" natural settings; its visions of free and open relations between the sexes, of anti-authoritarian schools, of a non-repressive, unalienated society—all these point to the ideological affinities between Conrad's utopian fantasy and contemporary forms of middle-class protest against Wilhelmine society such as the Youth and FKK movements, Jugendstil, the Arts and Crafts movement of Avenarius.³⁰ One could, indeed, imagine an edition of the novel with illustrations by Fidus. Finally, there is the theme of apocalyptic change, of the movement from dystopia to utopia, of Wiedergeburt and Erneuerung which is of central importance to In purpurner Finsternis as indeed it is to Conrad's cultural criticism generally. The novel climaxes with a
vision of national renewal through the advent of a charismatic Germánšc messiah who, to borrow Rathenau's words, "knocks everything down, releases suffering virtue, punishes vice and brings general salvation." The novel also presupposes the nearly complete destruction of modern civilization as the precondition for the existence of the regenerate society depicted in its utopian passages. The horrible cataclysms which bring about the end of the "Machine Age" are presented in vulgar Darwinian terms as a "grausamer Segen," as an act of natural selection from which the fitter members of European society emerge to begin civilization anew.

The motivation and compensatory appeal of this sort of eschatological fantasy were clearly perceived by the anonymous reviewer of Conrad's novel for Die Gesellschaft: "Haß, Wut, Bitterkeit, geschluckter Ärger, empfangene Fußtritte, Mißhandlungen des Körpers und der Seele," the reviewer wrote in 1896, "das alles häupt sich an, Schicht für Schicht, und bildet zuletzt den Humus, aus dem die Messias-Idee, schlank wie eine Tanne, emporwächst. Dies ist bei einzelnen wie bei Völkern." The soil of apocalypticism and messianism is unhappiness with the present. The principal reasons for Conrad's unhappiness with the culture, society, and politics of Imperial Germany we have attempted to outline above. Let us now turn to In purpurner Finsterniß itself and examine more closely the utopian and messianic-apocalyptic fantasies to which his disenchantment with his age gave rise. In what follows we may assume the work's representativeness as a manifestation of a certain ideological formation typical of the petty-bourgeois intelligentsia in Wilhelmine Germany--representativeness in the questions it raises, in the answers it offers, and in the idiom in which both questions and answers are cast.

In purpurner Finsterniß takes place in the thirtieth century and is set principally in two places, Teuta and Nordika. The former evolved from what remained of Germany after the "großen europäischen Krach" (153), the general collapse of European civilization during the third millenium. The Teutans are a subterranean race, inhabitants of a massive underground metropolis built in the mine shafts and galleries to which their ancestors had fled "in der Noth der Zeiten" (205). They are a highly advanced people, at least with respect to science and technology, and have transformed their subterranean caverns into an artificial paradise where intricate machinery assures them a life of ease, comfort, and material well-being. Life-like automata, artificial
lighting, a controlled climate, television, synthetic food and so forth--standard equipment in the nineteenth-century novel of the future--all bear witness to the triumph of artifice over nature which the Teutans celebrate as their finest achievement: "Größe und Glück unseres Teutalandes, seine Einzigkeit und sein Ruhm begründen sich darauf, daß wir über die Natur hinaus sind, seit Jahrhunderten, seit Jahrtausenden. Alles ist Mechanik und Mystik" (24).

"Mechanik" refers not just to Teuta's highly advanced technology but, metaphorically, to the character of her social and political institutions as well. "Alles ist bei uns Gesetz und Regel" (217), the protagonist complains: Teuta is an authoritarian bureaucratic state, the Beamtenstaat of the nineteenth century projected eleven hundred years into the future. Conrad leaves the reader in no doubt about its repressive and conservative character. Teuta's rulers govern according to the maxim "Des Volkes Wohl liegt in seiner Beherrschung" (40) and, haunted by the fear of revolution, proscribe any idea or activity which threatens the stability of Teutan society as well as, course, their own continued rule: self-interest, ambition, and fear of change are what motivate Teuta's rulers, although they mask their true motives and cynical disdain for their subjects with hypocritical professions of concern for the salus publica. Thus, the Teutans are subjected to certain prohibitions. They may not read certain writings, among which, significantly, is the passage from Nietzsche's Zarathustra attacking the "new idol," the State. They may not engage in too outspoken political discussion, write poetry, or use certain words ("Entwicklung," "Natur"). Male Teutans may not allow their beards to grow, and Teutans of both sexes are prohibited from entering into a romantic, sexual relationship except at the prescribed time and then only for the purpose of procreation. Order is maintained with the help of a network of police spies and informers; and dissidents are placed in mental hospitals or subjected to public ridicule during the annual national celebration.

Teuta is a one-dimensional, static society, a "Flatland" where order, stability, and uniformity are valued over change and individuality: "Eine weite, ruhige, gradlinige Fläche ist die Erde in Teutaland. Alles ist klar und bestimmt nach Maß und Gewicht. Dieser Zustand soll erhalten bleiben, er ist der denkbar glücklichste für unsere Menschen" (41). The prospect of change and development--the fundamental law of Nature--fills the Teutans with the dread of disorder and anomie: "Wohin mit Entwi-- Entwicklung? [. . .] Entwicklung--wem schauderte da
nicht? Stürz in's Bodenlose. . ." (33-34). The Teutans equate happiness with comfort, security, and the satisfaction of basic material needs: "Alle satt und ruhig"—"Also Alle glücklich" (21); and it is in this shallow "Glück des Niemalsunglucklichseins" (18) rather than in freedom and intense, authentic experience that they find the goal of human activity and the legitimation of their society and culture. The assumptions and values upon which this culture rests are exemplified by the complacent optimism and sterile rationalism of Teuta's Chief Scientist. A thirteenth-century heir to nineteenth-century cult positivism and scientism, he rejoices in the untroubled rationality of life in Teuta, in its orderliness and painlessness ("Im Lande der Teutaleute kennt man keine Tränen" [38]), and dismisses the natural, organic world as "unhealthy," as fit only for the overheated imaginations of poets and lovers: "Diesen vergangeneren Dingen können nur zwei Menschenarten nachschwärmen: Poeten und Verliebte. Und mit ihnen haben wir seit Annodazumal in Teuta aufgeräumt, gründlich" (41).

Notwithstanding the optimistic official view "daß bei uns Alles Eintracht und Zufriedenheit atmet" (28), there are alarming signs of unrest and rebellion in Teuta, notably among the youth. "Ein gewisser Geist der Empörung" (273) has manifested itself and Teuta's gerontocratic rulers are seized with an "ungewöhnlichen Straf-Wetteifer" (277). Like its ancestors in the second millennium, however, Teuta is the terra obedientiae and most Teutans are docile and submissive, content in "ihrem ärmlichen Geistesdämmer und stumpfen Genüßleben" (169). The pleasures and comforts of their artificial civilization have rendered them soft and flabby, while political repression and the authoritarian character of Teutan society have stunted the growth of a strong, healthy sense of self among the Teutans. "Verblödet im Glück des Niemalsunglucklichseins und des stumpf gewordenen Willens" (18), enervated and enfeebled both physically and spiritually, the Teutans are unaware of the hollowness and banality of their existence and are incapable, on their own, of rebellion. They must await the coming of a Redeemer.

Nordika contrasts fundamentally with Teuta. Teuta has developed a "mechanistic" civilization based on the domination of nature, both externally in its subterranean paradis artificiel and internally in its state-regulated sexuality. The Nordikans, on the other hand, have allowed a "natural," "organic" culture to evolve in their country. Natur, naturalness, manifests itself in Nordika at every level of cultural activity and in every social and political arrangement, informing
the relations of man to his fellows and to himself as well as his relation to the natural world.

The physical settings and contrasting material cultures of Teuta and Nordika mirror the fundamental difference between the two societies quite clearly. Above ground, Teuta is a barren wasteland of sand and stone, agriculture having been abandoned altogether and the production of foodstuffs entrusted to the chemists. Below ground, it is a massive, overcrowded city ("eine einzige Riesenstadt," 162), an artificial world of machines and technology. In contrast, Nordika is by design rural and agrarian. Relatively untouched by the cataclysms of the preceding millennium, the Nordikans have succeeded in realizing an Arcadian alternative to the pre-catastrophe Machine Age and to its survivals in the urban-industrial civilization of Teuta. Nordika's landscape is a pastoral one of rolling hills, fertile fields, and verdant forests, among which are nestled picturesque villages and self-sufficient communities of hardy rural folk. There are no cities ("Wir kennen keine Stadt" [162]); and all superfluous technology has been abolished ("Alles überflüssige Maschinenwerk ist bei uns abgethan. Schon lange" [175]), while that deemed indispensable has been hidden underground or behind hedgerows. The Nordikans' determined independence from technology is rooted in their love of the "natural" and in their desire for sensuous, unmediated, physical interaction with their surroundings. It is also one of the reasons for their physical and mental vigor.

The social and political arrangements of Nordika are likewise more "natural" than those of Teuta and the Machine Age. They respect and preserve the natural freedom and equality of the individual---within, to be sure, the context of community. Organized on the principles of economic and social equality and of the maximization of individual liberty, Nordikan society does not recognize artificial distinctions of property and rank nor are its institutions characterized by the repressiveness and authoritarianism typical of those in Teuta. "Unser Land ist Freiland, unser Volk ist eine einzige große Familie: Gemeineigenthum aller Grund und Boden, Austausch der Fähigkeiten und Dienst der Gleichgestellten" (165). Nowhere, perhaps, is the naturalness of Nordikan society more evident, and the contrast with Teuta and the past more striking, than in the enlightened attitudes of the Nordikans towards women and sexuality. Whereas in Teuta women are regarded contemptuously as "sinnliche Werkzeugsnaturen" and "minderwerthige Nebengeschöpfe" (170), in Nordika they have complete equality with men and are allowed to
develop their full potential without artificial barriers and constraints. Nordikan men and women enjoy, moreover, free and open relations with each other and are, if the female protagonist Maikka is typical of her countrymen, liberated sexually. In Teuta, by contrast, the sexes are segregated into separate districts from adolescence on and are permitted contact only during the state-prescribed mating season. Sex, which in Teuta has been completely functionalized, remains in Nordika a pleasurable, free, and natural act of self-expression.

Nordikan society is natural in another sense, too. Its practices and institutions have not been fabricated according to some abstract, "mechanistic" scheme but have evolved over time, as it were, "organically." They are expressions of the unique cultural and ethnic character of the Nordikans and are thus objects not merely of intellectual assent but of powerful emotional identification as well. The fervent patriotism of the Nordikans contrasts sharply with the arid rationalism of the Teutans, for whom there are only "verstandesmäßige Staatsbegriffe" (150). In Teuta, the State is a mere mechanical contrivance, alien (if not inimical) to the spirit and character of the people; in Nordika, by contrast, the distinction between State and Volk has, in a sense, been obliterated: there exists only the natural, organic, quasi-mystical community of the Volk, whose soul shapes and permeates Nordika's various social and political forms: "Eine tiefe, starke Seele durchzieht Alles" (143), the Teutan protagonist notes approvingly of Nordika, whereas in Teuta "Alles in seelenlose Mechanik umgewandelt ist" (150).

The Nordikans' strong sense of national pride and identity is matched by the individual Nordikan's healthy sense of self, by his "ruhig stolzes Ichgefühl, das in seiner Lebensgestaltung sich frei und selbstschöpferisch weiß . . . " (169). Rooted in the Volk community, unfettered by 'unnatural' and repressive laws and customs, each Nordikan is free to realize his unique individuality in all its fullness and multifacetedness. Wholeness, not fragmentation and alienation, characterizes the individual in Nordika--indeed, this is the "new meaning" of Nordikan culture, a culture in which the antagonisms and contradictions of the Machine Age have been resolved in a higher synthesis: "Wir sind alle Bauern in Nordika. Bauern und Kulturstädter im älteren Sinne zugleich--und das ist unser neuer Sinn. [. . .] Mitten in der Natur arbeitsam zu leben und der Kultur froh zu werden. Alle Bauern und Arbeiter und Geistmenschen zugleich, da kommt kein Gefühl zu kurz. Keins" (165).
Committed to the ideal of wholeness, the Nordikans neglect the cultivation of none of their faculties. An enlightened, anti-authoritarian philosophy of education and its practical application in Nordika’s progressive schools allow the students to discover and develop their interests, talents, and personalities freely and naturally, "ohne zu künstlicher Blüte und raschem Verwelken gepeinigt oder zu allerlei Krüppelhaftigkeit im Geistigen und Leiblichen herangezüchtet zu werden" (176). The Nordikans consider learning "etwas Heiliges" (168), to be sure. Even those who are post school age will interrupt their labors in the fields to attend adult education classes on a variety of topics. But for all their zeal for knowledge, they remain free of the pedantry, dusty erudition, sterile intellectualism, and love of metaphysical abstraction characteristic of the Teutans. For Maikka ("Aller Verstandesbesitz war ihr zugleich Gefühlsbesitz" [202]) and her Nordikan countrymen, reason, emotion, and imagination are one, and their apprehension of reality is direct, spontaneous, sensuous, and not mediated by dead formulas and abstractions.

Just as the cultivation of the mind plays an important role in Nordikan society, so, too, does the cultivation of the body. A youthful people of great physical beauty and vitality, the Nordikans enjoy their bodies and derive obvious pleasure from strenuous physical activity--hence their love of athletics and competitive sport as well as their rejection of the labor-and time-saving technology so beloved by the Teutans.

The main plot of *In purpurner Finsiemüt* is quickly summarized. The novel begins with the flight of Grege and Jala from Teuta shortly before the "Zarathustrafest," the Teutan national celebration in which Grege plays the role of Zarathustra. Both Grege and Jala are "Ausnahmemenschen," extraordinary individuals. He is the "Sproß alter Könige" (11) and is possessed of great physical and intellectual endowments. She is a prophetess and represents for Grege the "verkörperte Sehnsucht nach den höchsten Räthseln des Lebens und der eigenpersönlichen Lösung" (10). They are dissatisfied with life in Teuta, with its "blöden Glück des Niemalsunglücklichseins," and feel suffocated by Teuta's herd-like masses, by the "dichten, drückenden Schwarm der Gleichmäßigen" (18). Grege and Jala have, moreover, become lovers, thereby transgressing against the Teutan prohibition against monogamous relationships and sexual contact outside the officially prescribed mating period. Thus they flee; their destination is an island paradise known to Jala where, perhaps, they will be the parents of "die neue
Menschheit." They become separated as they make their way across the Central European wasteland; and Grege is taken prisoner by two Angelos, who intend to sell him to the royal ethnographic zoo in London. On the journey back to Angelland, however, the Angelos' airship is knocked off course by another vessel and begins to drift northward. A fight breaks out between Grege and this captors in which the Teutan pushes one of the Angelos overboard and subdues the other one. This struggle is an important point in Grege's development: he discovers in violence and danger a new side of life, one which offers an invigorating alternative to the flabby comfort of life in Teuta and one which heightens his sense of manhood, his sense of selfhood:

Grege verhehlte sich's nicht, daß die neue Seite des Lebens in ihrer Mischung von Brutalität und Bosheit, so sehr sie auch allen Lehren und Sitten der Teutaleute daheim wider den Strich ging, ein nicht zu unterschätzendes Gefühl der Frische und Behaglichkeit in ihm geweckt habe. Die Gefahr selbst, die seine Nerven gestraft hielt, empfand er als eine Berechung seiner Männlichkeit. (70)

The surviving Angelo has detected a change in course that will bring them to Angelland. Still faced with the prospect of captivity, Grege makes a desperate leap overboard as the airship passes at low altitude over what turns out to be a part of Nordika.

Grege experiences Nordika as an idyllic, hospitable, and at times an almost enchanted land. His arrival there becomes "eine Wiedergeburt zu neuem Leben" (121); and this sense of rebirth and new life remains with him during his stay in Nordika. The first Nordikan he meets is Maikka, a Germanic beauty whose very name suggests Spring with its renewal of life and who is, as Grege later remarks, the perfect symbol of her country: "Alles an ihr strahlte von Gesundheit und heiterem Geist" (160). Maikka combines in perfect consonance intellect, reason, and learning with instinct, sensuality, passion, and vigorous physicality. Both cerebral and "verklärt animalisch" (234), she is the embodiment of vitality, naturalness, and wholeness and is the complete antithesis of Grege's enfeebled countrymen. It is Maikka who will be Grege's host in Nordika, who will introduce him to Nordikan customs and institutions, and who will guide his intellectual and psychological development. For although Grege is an "Ausnahmemenschn," he is not certain of his role in life and retains many undesirable Teutan qualities: "Das Alte lastet," he complains to Maikka, who replies reassuringly: "Der neue Mensch wird die alte Last abschütteln" (139). And indeed, under Maikka's tutelage, which soon acquires an erotic dimension, Grege matures in mind and character. He has been transformed and reborn. And his individual
transformation and rebirth in Nordika prefigure that millenial renovation which he will effect in Teuta and which, with regenerate eye ("Ich sehe . . . verwandelt" [260]), he prophesies in an enraptured, ecstatic speech before a Nordikan audience.

During his stay in Nordika, Grege is overcome by a patriotic sense of responsibility for the fate of his native Teuta and resolves to return home and share with his countrymen what he has learned in Teuta:

Und stieg's nicht wie ein Schwur in seiner Seele auf, das hier Erlebte und Erfahrene dereinst mit Posaunen seinen Volksgenosse zu verkünden, damit sie erwachten aus ihrem ärmlichen Geistesdämmer und stumpfen Genüßeblen, daß sie sich aufraffen zu einem bedeutungsvollen, inhaltreichen Dasein? (169)

His resolve is strengthened by discussions with Maikka and with a Nordikan Elder concerning the political situation in Teuta; and his plans take on a more definite shape when Maikka alerts him to the traitorous machinations of a member of the Teuta High Council. Teuta, she tells him, is ripe for revolution—"wenn der rechte Umstürzer kommt" or "der rechte Zarathustra." "Zarathustras Wiedergeburt also," Grege adds portentously, "oder Wiederkehr" (262). It is thus as the true Zarathustra that Grege returns to Teuta, arriving to his astonishment in time for the Zarathustrafest, which had been rescheduled so that a substitute for Grege could be found. As he watches from his hiding place, he realizes that his moment of truth has arrived: "Die Stunde ist da! Plötzlich, unentrinbar!" (353). When the false Zarathustra, a deceptively life-like automaton fabricated by the traitorous Council member to replace Grege, begins to declaim, Grege, every inch the Nordic hero, steps forth from the portal of the Royal Palace and smashes his double, the Zarathustra-automaton, with his staff. Quickly recovering from their initial stunned silence, the Teutans hail Grege as their liberator: "... und wie Donnerstimme hält's: Heil dem Befreier! Heil dem Befreier!" (357). And Grege, one arm around Jala and the other brandishing his staff, proclaims that the hour of Zarathustra, Judge and Redeemer, has arrived: "Volk von Teuta, Zarathustra jüngste Stunde ist gekommen, Zarathustras des Richters und Erlösers!" (358). This marks the beginning of the end of "Teutas alte Elendsordnung" (359) and as "das Zeichen zum neuen Leben, zur Wiedergeburt im Kampfe" (358), it signals Teuta's rebirth.

With its depiction of Teuta as a country whose citizens are morally, physically, and intellectually enfeebled and whose government is repressive yet ineffectual, In purpurner
Finstemüpp was obviously intended to be read allegorically as a satirical comment on Wilhelmine society and politics. Thus, for example, we can readily identify in Teuta's Sacred Vocabulary as well as in other restrictions on free thought and free expression in Teuta thirtieth-century counterparts to the Socialist Law, the Lex Heinze, the Subversion Bill and all the other measures with which the Kaiserreich attempted to control undesirable ideas and attitudes and of which Conrad was a vociferous and prominent opponent.\(^{33}\) Likewise, in the motif of youthful unrest and rebellion we see an allegorization of the revolt of petty-bourgeois intellectuals during the eighties and nineties against Imperial German society, culture, and politics, a revolt which Conrad celebrated repeatedly in the pages of Die Gesellschaft.\(^{34}\) Moreover, Conrad's burlesque depiction of the Teuton High Council as a nest of indolence, ineffectuality, ambition, and intrigue surely represents a rather crude attempt to satirize and caricature the Wilhelmine government under the chancellorships of Caprivi and Hohenlohe; and there are certain overt depreciatory references to Wilhelm's New Course in the novel as well. Similarly, the "groteske Parodie auf das antike Herrschertum" (337) which forms a part of the Zarathustrafest is clearly a thinly veiled allusion to the reign of Wilhelm II with his bombastic theatricality and absolutist pretensions.\(^{35}\)

What is more important, however, is the fact that Conrad's opposition to the government of the Kaiserreich was both liberal/anti-authoritarian and intensely nationalistic in motivation: in his various comments on the political situation in the Reich, Conrad lambasted the loss—through Caprivi's "conciliatory" colonial agreement with England—of "weiter, mit deutschem Gut und Mut gewonnener Kolonialgebiete in Afrika" and the "callous" toleration of the "Russifizierung mit Knute und Kerker in tüchtigen deutschen Volksstämmen an der Ostsee"\(^ {36}\) with the same fervor as he did the Subversion Bill, the Lex Heinze, and the military appropriations bill of 1893. Conrad's nationalism was unquestionably zeitgemäss: it was of the same cloth as that of the populist nationale Verbände which emerged during the 1890s in opposition to the older conservative groups and which contributed significantly to the radicalization of right-wing politics in Germany.\(^ {37}\) This seemingly contradictory mixture of liberal-democratic and völkisch-nationalist elements in Conrad's ideology was not unique. We find a similar "complex amalgam of 'progressive' and 'reactionary' motifs" in the thought of Friedrich Lange, whom Conrad cites on occasion with approval in his Leitartikel for Die Gesellschaft. Eley's strictures
against "assimilating [Lange] too easily to an irrationalist pre-history of Nazi ideology" can be applied with equal validity to Conrad.38

From these remarks as well as from the preceding summary of In purpurmer Finsterniß, it should be clear to what extent Conrad's futuristic fantasy is an expression not just of left-liberal opposition to a reactionary Militärstaat but of contemporary nationalistic discontent as well. The Teutans, as we have seen, are characterized by that same lack of healthy national pride and völkisch identity for which Conrad castigated his fellow countrymen in editorial after editorial.39 Moreover, Conrad portrays Teuta as a state without a soul, an empty "mechanical" contrivance. This is a clear echo of his criticisms of the Reich of 1871 as a piece of "Stück- und Flickwerk" alien to the spirit and traditions of the Volk and hence unable to hold its own in an age of Weltpolitik against such nations as America, England, and Russia--nations whose policies are rooted in the "tiefsten Mysterien der Volksseele und ihres geschichtlichen Milieus."40 The ideals of national community and of a healthy, vigorous Volk which Conrad counterposed to what he perceived as the historical reality of the Kaiserreich are embodied in the novel, of course, by Nordika and the Nordikans. But while Conrad's description of the Nordikans as a proud, independent Volk and of Nordika as a viable Volksgemeinschaft may seem pacific and desirable enough, the aggressive-imperialistic implications of the plea for national renewal and regeneration which In purpurmer Finsterniß contains are not to be overlooked. They are illustrated quite dramatically, for example, by Conrad's characterization of the fight with the Angelos on board the airship as an important stage in Grege's self-recovery (which, as was noted above, prefigures that of Teuta) and by the lessons which Conrad has Grege draw from his encounter with the Angelos: "Nur Gewalt konnte ihm Recht bringen" (73) and "Das war jetzt sein Weltbild: Feindschaft ringsum" (74). In the context of late nineteenth-century imperialist rivalries and especially within the narrower context of Anglo-German tensions, the implications of this scene as well as of Grege's later aphoristic insight "Ein schlechtes Volk, das nicht das Erste sein will" (141) require no explanation.41 On the other hand, while we cannot ignore the militancy of Conrad's rhetoric and the sometimes chauvinistic tone of his nationalism, if we wish to do full justice to the complexity of his ideology, then neither can we disregard Conrad's consistent and vocal opposition to military build-ups, including fleet construction, and to the social groups
whose interests such build-ups served.42

To be sure, Teuta is a rather unambiguous allegory for the Second Kaiserreich; however, Teuta's "mechanistic" subterranean civilization displays many features which are characteristically "modern." Thus it may also be understood as a metaphor for modern urban-industrial society in general. Let us then in the following broaden the context of our discussion somewhat by leaving off any further consideration of the specifically German themes which Conrad addresses in In purpurner Finstemiß and by examining instead Conrad's futuristic fantasy within the tradition of antimodernist dystopian fiction.43

There are a number of thematic and motivic parallels between Conrad's novel and better-known twentieth-century dystopian writings such as Forster's "The Machine Stops" (1909), Zamyatin's We (ca. 1920), and Huxley's Brave New World (1932).44 Among the shared themes or motifs are, for instance, the threat posed by mass society and the bureaucratic state to individuality; the loss of intense, authentic experience in a world of material ease and comfort; the dominant role of science and technology in the modern age; and so forth. Indeed, In purpurner Finstemiß conforms rather closely to the pattern described by Orwell for We and Brave New World. Like these novels, Conrad's book deals with "the revolt of the primitive human spirit against a rationalised, mechanised, and painless world."45 The parallels between Conrad's futuristic satire and these other works are due, of course, not to any prophetic ability on Conrad's part. They derive rather from the fact that In purpurner Finstemiß, We, and Brave New World were all written in response to the same epochal socio-historical process--modernization--and to the fact their authors all drew upon the same intellectual and cultural tradition for the values which they counterposed to the modern age. This tradition may be broadly defined as "romantic." Like Zamyatin's and Huxley's novels or Forster's short story, In purpurner Finstemiß is a romantic protest against modernity--against urbanization and industrialization as well as, more abstractly, against what Weber defined as the progressive bureaucratization, rationalization, and "disenchantment" of the world.

A central theme in modern dystopian fiction is the conflict between the free individual and the uniform, regimented collective. As we have seen, it is in these terms that Conrad frames his plot--as the revolt of an "Ausnahmemensch" against the "Vielzuvielen und Zusammen-
hängenden," against the "drückenden Schwarm der Gleichmäßigen" (18). One of the symbols employed in In purpurner Finsterniß for the uniformity and regimentation of Teutan society against which Grege rebels is the motif of legally prescribed and enforced beardlessness: "Nur in Teutas Land ist die Gleichheit so strenges Gesetz, daß sich Keiner den Bart darf sproßen lassen" (14). Allowing one's beard to grow is a thus a gesture of defiance, an assertion of one's individuality. By the end of his stay in Nordika, Grege, who at the beginning of the novel was clean-shaven like all good Teutan males, is sporting a handsome full beard; and the Chief Scientist's rebellious students challenge Teutan custom not only by writing poetry, but also by letting their beards grow. In Conrad's story, allowing one's beard to grow is both a form of social protest, an assertion of individual identity vis-à-vis the faceless masses, and an act of political protest against the illegitimate extension of state authority. But it is also more than this. Like D-503's hairy hands in Zamiatin's We, the beard is an atavism, something primitive and untamed—and thus a fitting symbol for that primitive and untamed part of man which resists the rule of rationality and order.

As Schäfer points out, two conventional symbols frequently employed in dystopian fiction for the primitive and untamed in man are sexuality and art. In purpurner Finsterniß associates both poetry and romantic passion with Nature; and all three have been banished from the mechanistic world of Teuta as inconsonant with the orderliness and stability of Teutan society. Though art plays but a minor role in Conrad's novel, its subversive character is symbolized by the dissident poems of the Chief Scientist's students. More important, however, is the fact that Conrad seems to conceive of his protagonist as a poet-hero in revolt against his society and culture: "Er ist ein Dichter! Er spricht entzückend! Er ist schön, ein Sänger und Held zugleich!" (259). Drawing upon the romantic conception of the poet, Conrad casts Grege—and by implication himself and his fellow Jüngstdeutschen—in the three-fold role of the poet-prophet ("Wie ein ekstatischer Seher stand er da" [257]) who envisions the renovation of the world; of the poet-rebel who reenacts the Original Rebellion ("Teufel!" [261]); and of the poet-messiah who redeems the world.

Sexuality plays a somewhat greater role in Conrad's Zukunftisroman: one of the distinctive features of Teutan society is government regulation of the relations between the sexes. As we
have already seen, Grege's illicit passion for Jala brings him into conflict with his society and is one of the prime motives for his rebellion and flight from Teuta. Moreover, the subversive role of sexual passion is further exemplified in the novel by the fate of the Oberlehrer, Minus, the representative of the established order who is guilty of secret heresies and whose understanding and temperament transcend the narrow limits imposed by official ideology and doctrine. Minus despises the shallow rationalism of the Chief Scientist and feels nothing but disgust and loathing for the hollow, bloodless culture celebrated by the latter as the pinnacle of human achievement: "Und diesen müßigen Lebensbrei auslößeln, mit zugehaltener Nase, Tag für Tag, bis endlich die Sickerquelle des Bewußtseins und Begehrens im elenden Hinsiechen sich von selbst verstopft?" (84). But however disenchanted with life in Teuta Minus may be, it is his forbidden love for Jala which precipitates the crisis that leads to his suicide. He is admonished by the High Priest to regain control of his wayward passions: "In Teuta ist kein Raum für leidenschaftliche Überschwänglichkeiten" (81). Unable or unwilling to do so and "voll ... bis zum Halse von bitterem Ekel über sich und seine Mitwelt" (83), Minus puts an end to his unhappy life.

Both Grege and Minus resist Teuta's repressive laws controlling the relations between the sexes. On one level, of course, these controls can be understood as an allegorical allusion to the prudish morality of Wilhelmine Germany; similarly, the functionalization of sex in Teuta can be read as a reference to the nature of marriage in nineteenth-century bourgeois society. If, however, we accept Schäfer's view of the irrationalistic and primitivistic elements in modern anti-utopian fiction as expressions of an essentially utopian protest against the institutionalized "pseudorationality" of modernity,49 we can see in Conrad's novel an early articulation of this protest and thus read the motif of the state-regulated sexuality on a deeper level as a symbol of the "irrational" rationality of modern technocratic society in its early stages. In this context, Maikka's eroticism, sensuality, and vitality take on a manifestly utopian significance: as qualities characteristic of man in an instinctually non-repressive society. As the embodiment of this ideal society, Nordika takes its place within the tradition of erotic utopias which runs from the idealized depictions of Tahiti in the eighteenth-century to the sexually emancipated utopias of Wilhelm Reich, Norman O. Brown, and Herbert Marcuse.50

Maikka's eroticism and sensuality--her "transfigured animality"--must, along with many
other attributes of life in Nordika, be viewed in the more specific intellectual-historical context of
turn-of-the-century vitalism as well as within the more general tradition of utopian thought.
Vitalism, the cult of "life" in both its creative and destructive aspects, figured prominently in the
art, literature, and thought of Europe and North America during the period around 1900. It
played a key role, as Wolfdietrich Rasch has pointed out, in turn-of-the-century German
literature.\textsuperscript{51} Though perhaps associated particularly with expressionism, vitalistic elements also
occurred even in the writings of early naturalists such as the Hart brothers, Schlaf, Holz, and, of
course, Conrad; these elements became more pronounced as the century drew to a close. In his
discussion of vitalism and early naturalism,\textsuperscript{52} Gunter Martens outlines a number of attitudes,
themes, motifs, and images which are characteristic of literary vitalism: strong anti-urban and
anti-industrial sentiments and preference for the more vital realm of the Bauer and the Scholle;
the glorification of physical action; pervasive eroticism and the celebration of the senses and the
body; anti-intellectualism; the frequent use of the sun, spring, and youth as symbols for life; the
celebration of Nature as a living, creative force; and so forth. Instances of most of these can
readily be found in \textit{In purpurem Finsternis}.\textsuperscript{53}

In view of the centrality of the idea of Nature to Conrad's criticism of his age, there is one
vitalistic motif present in the novel which deserves more specific comment: that of Nature as
\textit{natura naturans}, as a dynamic, creative force opposed to everything static and reified.\textsuperscript{54} The law
of Nature is transformation, change, evolution: "Alles, die physische wie die moralische Welt
wird von dem Gesetz der Transformation beherrscht, . . . "\textsuperscript{55} This law Conrad describes in
unmistakeably Darwinian and progressivist terms: "Die Transformation ist eine Macht, die ihre
Norm in sich selbst trägt, das Leben steigert und bessert, indem sie die verdorbenen Elemente,
die unfähig und unnutz gewordenen Organe in stetem Werdekampfe eliminirt."\textsuperscript{56} Viewed thus,
Nature is an inherently revolutionary, subversive force--"O diese Natur," Conrad writes in
1882, "welch' eine Umstürzlerin!" And a few lines later: "Entwicklung--wie heisst? Im
Wörterbuch einer guten Weltpolizei dürfte nur Umsturz, Universalrevolution für die Sache
stehen. [. . . ] O, wenn das Weltall eine preussische Provinz wäre, der heimliche
Entwicklungs-Unfug würde bald den rechten Namen und sein handfestes, solides
Ausnahmegesetz haben!"\textsuperscript{57} We find this idea echoed in \textit{In purpurem Finsternis} in the motif of
the Sacred Vocabulary, from which the words Natur and Entwicklung have been banned. The symbolism of this is obvious, and Conrad’s point is clearly to underscore the static, fixed, and reified character of Teutan institutions.

Like other dystopian societies, Conrad’s world is completely without change and hence completely inhuman. That stasis and stagnation are inherent in the notion of a perfect society is, of course, the classic anti-utopian argument against the very idea of utopia and one which, as we see, is implicit in In purpurner Finsterniß as well. It is a theme which Conrad reiterates towards the end of the novel in the parable of the Last Judgement: alone on his celestial throne after the conclusion of the Last Judgement, God realizes that he has put an end to history and time and thereby condemned himself to an intolerably dull eternity. "Und er seufzte und beklagte seinen Eifer, der diese strenge Ordnung geschaffen und alle Überraschungen und alle Phantasie auf ewig vernichtet hatte" (302).

This parable, which Grege tells Maikka shortly before his departure from Nordika, has other meanings as well. Three characters occur in it besides God: a man, who obviously represents Grege, and two women, who represent Maikka and Jala. Forced to choose between the "lichten, lachend süßen Weib" (Maikka) and the "stummen, bleichen Gestalt" (Jala), Grege chooses the latter, who becomes suffused with new life (303-304). While Grege and Jala return to the dead earth--"dem neuen Erdenmorgen entgegen" (304)--to begin history and the human race anew, Maikka remains to be God’s companion through all eternity. Grege’s parable is obviously a restatement of and variation on the novel’s central theme of rebirth and renewal. More interesting than this, however, is the fact that Conrad, by means of the motif of Maikka’s "apotheosis," manifestly invests her and, by extension, Nordika with a mythical quality. Nordika assumes the character of a Paradise outside time and history; and Grege’s choice of the Jala-figure over "das lichte, lachend süße Weib" symbolizes his choice of history, struggle, and becoming over the seductions of Paradise. Even before the parable scene, there are occasional allusions to the realms of myth, magic, and Märchen: e.g., the mysterious, "enchanted" quality which Nordika seems to the newly-arrived Grege to possess;58 the references to Maikka as "die Zaubervarte" (138) or to Grege as a "verzauberter Prinz aus Märchenland" (158, 197). These, together with passages such as the one in which Maikka observes that in Nordika "das Leben
selbst Poesie [ist]" (295), suggest, perhaps, a certain kinship between Nordika and the poeticized Märchen-utopias of German romanticism. In any event, they serve to characterize Nordika as a poetic, fairy-tale-like world outside and opposed to prosaic history, an enchanted Nowhere set against the disenchanted world of modernity.

In the case of most anti-utopias, as Schäfer points out, we can extrapolate by a process of inversion the outlines of a desirable alternative to the unpleasant world portrayed in the novel. A utopian alternative is implicit, that is, in almost every anti-utopia. But what is implicit in most dystopian works In purpurmer Finsterniß makes explicit in the form of an idealized Nordic country free of the evils of the Machine Age as well as of the ills peculiar to the Teutans. If Teuta resembles the repressive, totally regimented and rationalized societies of twentieth-century dystopian fiction, Nordika has much in common with the free, natural societies envisioned in primitivist utopias such as the near-contemporary News from Nowhere (1890) by William Morris. Both Conrad's Nordika and Morris' twenty-first-century England are, for example, libertarian, egalitarian, and communistic societies of a basically rural, pre-industrial character; both enjoy idyllic natural settings, unspoiled by big cities and dirty factories; both have an archaic air about them, reminiscent in the one case of fourteenth-century England, in the other of an idealized Germanic past; and both are populated by a youthful, healthy, and handsome folk, fully and harmoniously developed in mind and body. Like Morris, in other words, Conrad counterposes to the "artificial" or "mechanistic" world of urban, industrial modernity the basically nostalgic vision of a "natural" world, a world in which the alienation and fragmentation of man in modern technological society has been overcome and in which man's lost wholeness and his original unity with Nature have been recovered—a quintessentially romantic theme.

In the final analysis, of course, Conrad was less concerned with the static contrast between the two societies, Teuta and Nordika, than with the transformation of the one in the direction of the ideal embodied by the other; and the novel culminates, as we have seen, in the enactment of the first stage of this transformation, in "des Teutareiches Untergang," and concludes with the promise of Teuta's "rebirth" to "new life." In purpurner Finsterniß is, in other words, an apocalyptic fantasy in the strict sense of the word "apocalypse" as defined by Abrams: i.e., "a vision in which the old world is replaced by a new and better world." In the preceding section
we discussed Conrad's images of both the "old world" (Teuta) and the "new and better world" (Nordika). In the following let us examine more closely his treatment in the novel of the theme of apocalyptic change with its sub-themes, the destruction and subsequent re-creation of the world.

The end of the world—or, more precisely, the destruction of a particular society or civilization—is a common motif in utopian/anti-utopian literature, science fiction, and tales of the future generally. It may figure as the principal or, at least, a central narrative event, as in the case of certain short stories and novels by H. G. Wells such as The Time Machine, "The Star," and The War of the Worlds. It may also simply be part of the background to the main narrative, a motif that enables the author to account more or less plausibly for the differences between an imagined future and his and the reader's historical reality: e.g., the turmoil and upheavals of the "terrible period of transition" in News from Nowhere, the "Great Two Hundred Years' War" in We, or the "Nine Years' War" in Brave New World. In Conrad's novel, the end of a world is both: "des Teutareiches Untergang" is the climactic narrative event, while the cataclysmic destruction of the modern world during the thousand-year period which precedes the events that take place in Nordika and Teuta forms a thematically important background element in the narrative.

The past is the subject of a lecture and public discussion which Grege attends towards the end of his visit in Nordika (243-256); it is also the topic of several conversations which Grege has with Maikka (153-156). From these passages, the reader learns that the millenium separating the nineteenth and the thirtieth centuries was a time of "Katastrophen, Umstürze, Zusammenbrüche" which climaxed in a "großen Vernichtungskampf" and in "Europas Untergang als einer geordneten Kulturstaatgruppe" (252-253). We must not, of course, attach too much prophetic or admonitory significance to the terrors which Conrad's imagination projects onto the future: socialist and communist social experiments, revolution and bloody counterrevolution, physical and moral degeneration, devastating epidemics, the invasion and subjugation of Europe by the Chinese, internecine war among the nations of continental Europe—these are stock motifs in the nineteenth-century novel of the future, contemporary apocalyptic fears and fantasies which have in many instances—such as in Conrad's novel—been divested of their affective power and trivialized to harmless clichés about the shape of things to come. The significance of the novel's
vision of future cataclysms is to be found rather in the fact that the narrative characterizes modern civilization as corrupt and celebrates its violent end as a necessary and beneficial act of purification and renovation. Far from expressing contemporary fear and anxiety, the fantasy of Weltuntergang in Conrad's novel possesses a wishful character and is rooted in the author's cultural pessimism, in his fundamental disaffection from the modern age.

One of the participants in the discussion referred to above characterizes the upheavals and disasters of the second millenium as the "grauenhaften, durch Generationen und Generationen sich hinziehenden Selbstmord der europäischen Zivilisation" (254), thus underscoring with the idea of suicide the fact that modern European civilization was brought down by intrinsic flaws and weaknesses rather than by any extrinsic factors. Among those characteristic evils of the "Maschinen-Weltalter" alluded to in the novel are such familiar objects from the catalogue of nineteenth-century cultural criticism as mammonism, capitalism, industrialism, mass socialization, the press, militarism (155)--the sins, in other words, of late-nineteenth-century Europe as viewed through the eyes of romantic anti-modernists as well as, to a lesser extent, through those of the bourgeois left (militarism). Even the positive achievements of the modern age, of the "industrielle und kapitalistische Metallzeit" (153), appear, in Conrad's pessimistic retrospective, as essentially hollow triumphs:

Wir wissen, daß man vor tausend Jahren, bevor die Chinesenherrschaft in Europa triumphierte, Weltreichsel zu lösen im Begriffe war, von denen wir heute keine Ahnung haben. daß man damals fast das Problem gelöst hatte, aus dem Dunstkreis der Erde hinaus und in die Sphäre des Mondes hineinzufahren. Hat dieser Aufschwung gehindert, daß dennoch ganz Europa in die Brüche gegangen? Daß all' die großen Reiche des Kontinents verschwunden und wir nur armelige Reste sind? (35)

Not only were the unparalleled achievements of European civilization not enough to prevent its self-destruction--they also formed a glittering facade that concealed sickness and decay within. This is the theme of Grege's musings on Teuta's past as he wanders across the Central European wasteland: "Was lag rings unter dem Sande gebettet? Städteleichen über Städteleichen. Für blühende Gemeinwesen haben sie sich gehalten, und ihre Blüthe war eine Wurzelfäule. Ihr Aufstrebem war ein maskirter Niedergang" (10-11).

Conrad and his characters do not lament the passing of the Machine Age: its civilization was hopelessly flawed and deserving of destruction. Indeed, for all its terrors, the cataclysmic
destruction of continental Europe and the decimation of its decadent population were necessary and beneficial. As Maikka, invoking a sort of popular-Darwinian theodicy, tells Grege, it was "die einzige Möglichkeit, die Völker Europas, soweit sie kulturfähig waren, auf eine neue Bahn zu bringen. Es war ein Segen, ein grausamer Segen, daß über vier Fünftel der europäischen Bevölkerung in jenen Katastrophen draufgegangen sind. Was nach dieser furchtbaren Musterung übrig geblieben, war doch eine Art Auslese" (153). And what this surviving select found was a world which had been cleansed and purged of the old "Elendswurzeln," a world which had been made anew.

This, the renovation, the re-creation of Europe, is the theme of the third participant in the historical discussion which Grege attends (255-256). She describes "wie aus dem Meere von Herzeleid, in welchem die alten Völker versunken waren, gleich begrünten Inseln der neue Lebensmuth emporgewachsen und die kleinen überlebenden Völker zu zweckmäßiger Ordnung ihres Daseins trieb" (255). Unencumbered by the institutions and problems of pre-catastrophe Europe, the surviving peoples created new institutions better suited to their needs, traditions, and ethnic characters—institutions such as those of Nordika which were, in other words, "organic" and "natural" rather than "artificial" and "mechanistic." The post-catastrophe societies which thus emerged were able to realize ideals that had proven so elusive to earlier ages: the three of 1789 ("Freiheit, Gleichheit, Brüderlichkeit") plus two late-nineteenth-century additions ("Gesundheit und Schönheit"); and they succeeded in striking a happy balance between the well-being of the individual and the needs of the community (256). Indeed, the social and economic systems of reconstituted Europe put to shame the "alten sozialistischen, kommunistischen, anarchistischen Utopien" of an earlier age (256). Moreover, the nations of the new Europe succeeded in banishing the specter of militarism and war: "Ein stilles Hausglück ist über Europa gekommen," the Nordikan tells her audience, "und auf dem Festlande hat kein Nachbar den andern zu fürchten und kein Volk sich des anderen zu schämen" (256).

Such is Conrad’s vision of a regenerate Europe. Teuta, however, does not, as we have seen, participate in the felicitous condition enjoyed by Nordika and the rest of Europe; it still awaits renovation and redemption: "Den giftigsten und stinkendsten Leichnam beherbergt jedoch Euer Haus, Teutaland," Maikka tells Grege, with reference to the survival in Teuta of certain
evils of the past; to this, Grege--Teuta's future Redeemer--replies with heroic pathos: "Bei meinem Leben, Maikka! Er soll hinausgeschafft werden!" (156). The renovation, the rebirth of Teuta through the destruction of the old order is the goal towards which Conrad's plot moves. It is foreshadowed in several passages in the novel, as in the exchange between Maikka and Grege just cited or in Jala's messianically tinged conviction "daß die Ordnung rings nur ein feiges Elend sei, dem ein Held erstehen müsse, der Alles erlöse, indem er Alles aus den Fugen schlägt" (18-19). Teuta's national regeneration is prefigured, moreover, by Grege's own "rebirth" and transformation, a process begun by Jala and completed in Nordika under the Diotima-like tutelage of Maikka. Indeed, In purpurmer Finsternis is a sort of a sketchily realized Bildungsroman: it tells how, under Maikka's guidance, Grege sheds his negative "Teuton" qualities and grows in understanding and in his sense of self. And during the course of his "education" in Nordika, Grege also comes to understand that it is his destiny to return to his homeland and to help bring about Teuta's regeneration; but only after his arrival in Teuta does he experience "die Offenbarung des Geheimnisses, das sein Leben in sich trug, die Wiederbelebung einer großen Vergangenheit, die Neugeburt der königlichen Seele . . . " (334).

It is Grege, of course, who is the object of Jala's soteriological longing, the messianic Hero "who redeems by smashing everything to pieces." "Zarathustras jüngste Stunde ist gekommen," he proclaims, "Zarathustras des Richters und Erlösers!" (358). There are unmistakeable parallels to the Apocalypse and the Last Judgment in Grege's return to Teuta as the "true Zarathustra": the false Zarathustra is unmasked and cast down, the wicked are punished, and the elect, i.e., "die zahlreiche Gruppe der Männer und Jünglinge im Büßerhemde" (357), are compensated for their persecution. There is perhaps also an allusion here to the Kaisersage, that peculiarly German eschatological myth of national renewal in which Friedrich von Hohenstaufen (Barbarossa) returns from his long sleep in the Kyffhäuser to restore the riche.\(^63\) This is suggested by the references to Grege's royal lineage ("Sproß alter Könige") and by such phrases as "die Wiederbelebung einer großen Vergangenheit, die Neugeburt der königlichen Seele."

In purpurner Finsternis gives full fictional treatment to a motif which occurs occasionally in Conrad's editorials for Die Gesellschaft, the motif of the messianic deliverer who will purge Germany of whatever evils Conrad happens to be castigating at the moment and who will restore
the nation to its proper state. In "Berlin, Wien, München" (1892), for example, a fanatical lament on the "nationally degenerate" urban culture of Berlin and Vienna, Conrad admits perplexity regarding the question "wie aus dieser Degeneration der Weg zur Wiedergeburt gefunden werden soll" and prophesies dreadful calamities to come "wenn uns die große Erlöserin Natur im Stiche läßt und uns nicht rechtzeitig Nothelfer sendet in der Gestalt genialer deutscher Männer." Likewise, in "Unterwegs" (1898), an editorial attacking Miquel's coalition of industrialists and agrarians, Conrad foresees hard times "in diesem neuen Baalsreich" for "das sittlich und frei auf sich gestellte Individuum." "Das heißt," he continues, "wenn nicht aus dieser Drangsal der wahrhaftige Übermenschen entsteht, der die Macht für sich zu organisieren und die Handelsgesellschaft zu stürzen versteht." "Und das," Conrad adds with perhaps more wishful thinking than conviction, "wird er." In these as well as in other passages from Conrad's editorials for Die Gesellschaft, we hear clear echoes of Jalas longing for a Hero "der Alles erlöse, indem er Alles aus den Fugen schlägt": Grege is "der wahrhaftige Übermenschen," one of Conrad's "genialer deutscher Männer." Both, the novel and the editorials, are rooted in the unshakeable belief--held not just by Conrad alone--that the Second Kaiserreich was in a corrupt state and in need of regeneration and redemption. Indeed, this is the central theme of Conrad's social and cultural criticism, which is relentlessly jeremiad in character and which frequently employs apocalyptic images and motifs as well as Biblical language as a part of its rhetorical strategy. For Conrad, the present was a "Zeit der Verderbnis und Unterdückung," the Reich a "Baalsreich," and the German metropolis a modern Babylon and a focus of national degeneration; cultural and political life were in sad decline, the symptoms of which ranged from the neglect and/or persecution of members of non-establishment German writers and artists to Wilhelm's policies in southwest Africa, from the "ästhetische Überfeinerung" characteristic of the anti-naturalistic literary avant-garde to the indifference shown by the German government and people towards the "Russifizierung mit Knute und Kerker in tückigen deutschen Volksstämmen an der Ostsee" (cf. "der schimpfliche Vertrag mit den Slavakos" in In purpurner Finsterniß) as well as towards the "Entdeutschung deutscher Kernlände in der österreichisch-ungarischen Monarchie." Conrad did not give himself over completely to despair, however; his pessimism about the
present was mitigated by the hope of cultural and national regeneration: "Die Unfehlbaren" (1891), for example, concludes with the consolatory observation that God chastises corrupt peoples "damit sie aus der Verderbnis in neuer Gestalt erstehen, ein neues, gesundes Leben zu erweisen." We find similar expressions of faith in the eventual regeneration of Germany throughout Conrad's editorials. Moreover, the notion of renewal through destruction and the violent rhetoric of the jeremiad clearly appealed to Conrad's combative, aggressive nature and allowed him to derive a sort of vengeful pleasure from prophesying the violent end--whether through an anarchist's bomb or in an act of divine judgement and retribution--of a world which he hated:

Den Geist rufet nicht. Wenn er kommt, wahr und wirklich, dann geht diese Welt in Trümmer. Dann fallen die Sterne auf die Erde und die Kronen in den Staub, und das Gold verwandelt sich in Kot und Blut und euere Schönheit in ein Jammergerippe und euere Ruhmredigkeit in Heulen und Zähneklappern--und das jüngste Gericht bricht an: dies irae--

Images of violent retribution are, indeed, a characteristic feature of Conrad's rhetoric and manifest the same animus towards aspects of the Second Kaisereich and the modern age as we find expressed in In purpurner Finsterniß in the visions of a cataclysmic "Weltwende" and "des Teutareiches Untergang." Indeed, such passages as the one just cited and the two in the preceding paragraph concerning the messianic deliverer represent the germ of In purpurner Finsterniß.

Though brought up a Protestant, Conrad was not religious in any conventional sense. His earlier writings bear very much the stamp of free thought. Thus, the striking frequency with which he employs religious language and imagery in his social and cultural criticism neatly illustrates the accuracy of Proudhon's observation that "We are full of the Divinity, Jovis omnia plena: our monuments, our traditions, our laws, our ideas, our languages, and our sciences--all are infected with this indelible superstition, outside of which we are not able either to speak or act, and without which we simply do not think." Especially for the discontented intelligentsia--utopians, cultural critics, reformers, revolutionaries and the like--have the Judeo-Christian religion and its principal text, the Bible, proven to be an inexhaustible storehouse of images, paradigms, and gestures: images of punishment and retribution, paradigms of renewal and deliverance, gestures of invective and prophecy. To mention an especially pertinent example:
the pervasive use of apocalyptic and messianic motifs, images, and patterns of thought is, as
Gotthart Wunberg has shown, a particularly salient feature of the programmatic and critical
writings in which the early naturalists and other oppositional litterateurs of the eighteen-eighties
and -nineties attempted to articulate their dissatisfaction with the hegemonic literary practice of
gründerzeitlich and Wilhelmine Germany and to issue their call for the creation of a new German
literature.\(^72\)

Whatever its wider filiations and affinities, in other words, the apocalyptic and messianic
rhetoric of Conrad's cultural criticism is very much a phenomenon typical of the time, a
characteristic manifestation of what Lukács terms "die messianische Aufgeregtheit" of certain
petty-bourgeois intellectuals in the Second Kaiserreich.\(^73\) To be sure, millenial, messianic,
apocalyptic expectations and hopes have been to some degree present in every age, as Wunberg
points out; but there are periods in which they are more manifestly a part of the mentality of
certain groups than in others—and the late nineteenth century in Germany, he suggests, was one
of them.\(^74\) To illustrate his point, he cites the following passage from Gerhart Hauptmann's
novel \emph{Der Narr in Christo Emanuel Quint} (1910):

\begin{quote}
Man rechnete allen Ernstes mit einem gewaltigen, allgemeinen gesellschaftlichen
Zusammenbruch, der spätestens um das Jahr Neunzehnhundert eintreten und die
Welt erneuern sollte. Wie die armen ländlichen Professionisten, die den Spuren
des Narren gefolgt waren, auf das Tausendjährige Reich und auf das Neue Zion
hofften, so und nicht anders hofften die sozialistischen Kreise und diejenigen
jugendlichen Intelligenzen, die ihrer Gesinnung nahestanden, auf die
Verwirklichung des sozialistischen, sozialen und also idealen Zukunftsstaats.
Über vielen Biertrunken politisierender Volkskreise schwebte damals, verquickt
mit dem Bier- und Zigarrendunst, gleich einer bunten narkotischen Wolke, die
Utopie. Was bei dem einen diesen, bei dem andern jenen Namen hatte, war im
Grunde aus der gleichen Kraft und Sehnsucht der Seele nach Erlösung, Reinheit,
Befreiung, Glück und überhaupt nach Vollkommenheit hervorgegangen: das
gleiche nannten diese Sozialstaat, andere Freiheit, wieder andere Paradies,
Tausendjähriges Reich oder Himmelreich.\(^75\)
\end{quote}

Hauptmann was writing about the eighteen-eighties; though his first sentence ("Man rechnete
allen Ernstes . . .") may no longer have been true for the nineties, the apocalyptic paradigm of
collapse and renewal, with its connotations of punishment, reward, and election, still retained its
potency as a compensatory fantasy as well as a useful rhetorical convention. It served the
disaffectected and disenchanted both as a means of self-definition (i.e., as members of an elect) and
as a formula for articulating their discontents and hopes.
The following quotation illustrates these functions and the prevalence of the eschatological idiom quite dramatically:

Richtet nur das heilige, gotthafte Deutschum noch völlig zugrunde! Es wird auferstehn und sich rächen und all euer wüstes, großmäßiges, freches Plebejertum und Proletengeschmeiß überwältigen! Auch wir sind ja ausgestoßen, auch wir sind von dem jetzt alleinherrschenden entarteten Gesindel wie Aussätzige aus dem Gemeinwesen ferngehalten, auch wir, die wir noch das göttliche Geheimnis unseres Volkes im Herzen tragen und davon zu zeugen berufen sind. gehören eigentlich hierher, müßten vor den Toren jener profanierten, entgotteten und alles entweltenden Welt angesiedelt sein, um als Hüter des ewigen Lichtes zu sterben. Aber glaubt mirs: von der Blutleuchtendes Lichtes wird sich einst ein Feuerbrand entzünden, der die babylonischen Türme der Entarteten in Schutt und Asche legen soll—und das bald.76

It is difficult to imagine a writer who on the surface of things at least is more dissimilar to Conrad than Stefan George, whose invective against urban sprawl we have just cited. Nonetheless, George’s denunciation of this one aspect of the modern age shares a number of ingredients with the jerejadian passages from Die Gesellschaft which we have examined above as well as with In purpurner Finsternis. Among these common elements are: 1) the strong ethno-nationalistic sentiment; 2) the sense of marginality and persecution together with the compensatory belief in one’s election; 3) the vision of the world as corrupt, degenerate, and deserving of destruction; 4) the vengeful prophecy of the imminent destruction of this corrupt world; and 5) the certainty of renewal and regeneration. Their considerable differences notwithstanding, in other words, both Conrad and George share certain assumptions about the historical reality of the Second Kaiserreich and both invoke the same mythic paradigm to define and interpret this reality, their situation in it, and their attitudes towards it.77

This mythic paradigm, as the studies of Wunberg and Lukács suggest, was a characteristic feature of the mental world and self-understanding of petty-bourgeois artists and writers in turn-of-the-century Germany. Indeed, in the two short stories “Gladius Dei” (1902) and “Beim Propheten” (1904) the “messianic excitement” of these circles was the subject of ironic treatment by Thomas Mann.78 Like the autobiographical “Novellist” of the latter story, Mann had “ein gewisses Verhältnis zum Leben” and could thus afford to view the messianic-apocalyptic pretensions of bohémians like Derleth, the prototype for the “prophet,” with ironic distance. However, for those marginalized writers, artists, and bohémians, who did not enjoy Mann’s “certain relationship” to the middle-class world, who were neglected by the art- and
literature-consuming public, and some of whom had even suffered police persecution, the apocalyptic-messianic myth offered a means of articulating disaffection from the modern age and a gratifying fantasy of ultimate recognition, vengeance, and redemption.
Notes

1. His naturalistic "studies" done ostensibly in the manner of Zola are Lutetias Töchter: Pariser-Deutsch Liebesgeschichten (n. d.) and Totentanz der Liebe: Münchner Novellen (1885). The three novels which make up his Munich trilogy are Was die Isar Rauscht (1888), Die klugen Jungfrauen (n. d.), and Die Beichte des Narren (1893). Majestät was serialized in Die Gesellschaft in 1898 and published in book form in 1902. Conrad also published some poetry and wrote, together with L. Willfried, two plays, Die Emanzipirten: Lustspiel in vier Akten (1888) and Die Firma Goldberg: Schauspiel in fünf Akten (1889). In addition to his contributions to various newspapers and journals, which ranged from the left-liberal Frankfurter Zeitung to the völkisch Bayreuther Blätter, Conrad published monographs on diverse subjects (Free Masonry, Italian music, French art and literature) as well as highly polemical social-critical and cultural-critical essays and tracts, e. g., Flammen! Für Freie Geister (1882), Ketzerblut: Sozialpolitische Stimmungen und kritische Abschlüsse (1893), and Der Übermensch in der Politik: Betrachtungen über die Reich-Zustände am Ausgang des Jahrhunderts (1895). Conrad's principal forum for setting forth his views on contemporary art, literature, politics, and culture was, of course, Die Gesellschaft (see following note), for which he wrote the Leitartikel, some book reviews, and occasional notes on the Munich art and theater scene.

2. Die Gesellschaft was published from 1885 to 1902, for most of that period under Conrad's editorship. The periodical was intended as a forum in which writers and critics of the younger generation could, under the banner of "realism," attack the "genteel" literature and art of the bourgeois cultural establishment and work towards the creation of a vigorous, "modern" national literature. While lacking a well-defined aesthetic and ideological program, Die Gesellschaft saw itself as "ein Organ des ganzen, freien, humanen Gedankens, des unbeirrten Wahrheitsinnes, der resolut realistischen Weltauffassung" and declared its opposition to "dem Verlegenheits-Idealismus des Philistertums, der Moralitäts-Notlüge der alten Parteien- und Cliquenwirtschaft auf allen Gebieten des modernen Lebens." See Conrad, "Die Gesellschaft," Die Gesellschaft 1 (January 1885): 1. With the eclipse of Munich by Berlin as the center of
German naturalism towards the end of the eighties and the emergence around 1890 of various anti-naturalistic tendencies in German literature, the importance of Die Gesellschaft in German cultural and literary life began to diminish. During the nineties it continued to serve Conrad as the principal vehicle for his ideologically confused, "liberal-völkisch" critique of various facets of German cultural and political life. On Die Gesellschaft, see Fritz Schlawe, Literarische Zeitschriften, 1885-1910 (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1961), 17-19, and the comments by Erich Rupprecht in Literarische Manifeste des Naturalismus, 1880-1892 (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1962), 57-58.

3. There is no reliable biography of Conrad. Hedwig Reisinger’s 1939 dissertation (Würzburg), Michael Georg Conrad: Ein Lebensbild mit besonderer Berücksichtigung seiner Tätigkeit als Kritiker, offers neither a factually informative account of his life nor an analysis of his position in the cultural life of late-nineteenth-century Germany. M. G. Conrad: Ein Deutscher von echtem Schrot und Korn by Otokar Stauf von der March (Zeitz: Sis-Verlag, 1925) is more concerned with völkisch hagiography than with reliable biography or literary/historical analysis. The standard source for information about Conrad’s life, of course, his literary memoir Von Emile Zola bis Gerhart Hauptmann: Erinnerungen zur Geschichte der Moderne (Leipzig: H. Seemann Nachfolger, 1902); additional information can be gleaned from the occasional autobiographical references which are to be found in some of his articles for Die Gesellschaft. See also Conrad’s contribution to Geistiges und Künstlerisches München in Selbstbiographien, edited by W. Zils-München (Munich: Kellerer, 1913), 47-48, and the entry on Conrad by Paul Arthur Loos in Neue Deutsche Biographie.

Gesellschaft 9 (September 1893): 1102.

5. Conrad ran as the DVP candidate for Reichstag deputy from the Kitzingen electoral district in the new election necessitated by the dissolution of the Reichstag in the summer of 1893. He was soundly defeated by the Center candidate. (See the three articles on his campaign in the August, September, and November issues of 1893 Die Gesellschaft.) Three years later, in the Stichwahl which followed the death of the incumbent, Conrad was chosen as the DVP deputy from the third Middle Franconian electoral district. He was MdR from 1896-1898. Conrad had neither the temperament nor the intellect for politics, and his political career was brief and undistinguished. On his election and impressions and experiences as a novice deputy, see "Reichstag," Die Gesellschaft 13 (January, 1897): 12-20. On Conrad's involvement with the DVP, see R. Hinton Thomas, "Nietzsche and the Subversion Bill of 1895," Oxford German Studies 9 (1978): 84-104. On the Deutsche Volkspartei, see James Clark Hunt, The People's Party in Württemberg and Southern Germany, 1890-1914: The Possibilities of Democratic Politics (Stuttgart: E. Klett, 1975). "In South Germany," Hunt writes, "Left Liberalism was represented primarily by the German People's Party (Deutsche Volkspartei). When the Revolution of 1848 proved abortive, the radical democrats of South Germany were left defeated and shattered. But they re-grouped in the 1860's as the People's Party in order to oppose the Prussian solution for national unification. In contrast to the Left Liberals of the North, the South German Populist were explicitly committed to democracy, vehemently anti-Prussian, and more clearly representative of lower middle-class interests. Like their American namesakes, the German Populists (Volksparteiler) represented a movement of small-town and rural protest, anti-statist and anti-plutocratic. ... However, the Germans stood closer to tradition liberal solutions than did the Americans; they did not embrace bi-metallism, for example, or the racism of certain Americans" (7).

des Philosophen: ein Schriftumsverzeichnis der Jahre 1867-1900 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1974). On Conrad's Nietzscheanism and his critical reaction to the "false" appropriation of Nietzsche's thought in the 1890's, see Thomas, "Nietzsche and the Subversion Bill of 1895," and M. E. Humble, "Zarathustra's Return: Two Novels by Michael Georg Conrad and Carl Bleibtreu and the Contemporary Reception of Nietzsche," German Life and Letters 33 (1979-1980): 209-219. Humble writes with specific reference to In purpurner Finsterniß. He views Conrad's book as "one of the first attempts to treat Nietzsche's ideas in fictional form, in which the political implications of a misunderstanding of his work are adumbrated" (214), and sees in the novel's agrarian romanticism and ethno-nationalism "an 'unadulterated' Nietzscheanism as interpreted by Conrad" (212). While it is true that In purpurner Finsterniß satirizes the Nietzsche cult of the 1890's, which Conrad also attacks in other writings from the time (e. g., Der Übermensch in der Politik [1895]), Conrad's use of Nietzsche in the novel is so superficial that it is mistaken to speak of an attempt "to treat Nietzsche's ideas in fictional form." The anti-modern ideological content of the novel does not come from Nietzsche, but has its roots in romantic and völkisch thought. In my discussion of In purpurner Finsterniß, I have therefore chosen not to address the question of Nietzschean influence and to focus instead on the novel's romantic antimodernist elements.

7. Deutscher Turnverein, Institut Polyglotte, Association Internationale


Reformbewegung in Wilhelminischem Deutschland (27-51) and his comments on the ideology of the Bayreuth Circle, especially the role played therein by the idea of "regeneration," provides an important background for an understanding of In purpurnem Finsterniß.


11. Nietzsche's oft-cited phrase occurs at the opening of "David Strauß: Der Bekenner und der Schriftsteller," Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen, part 1 (1873)

12. Heinrich Hart (1855-1906) and Julius Hart (1859-1930) were theoreticians and critics whose Kritische Waffengänge was one of the principal organs of early German naturalism. Unlike Conrad, who was interested in the novel and who looked to France and Zola for models, the Harts invoked Scandinavian and Russian models and were concerned with the reform of drama and lyric poetry. Karl Bleibtreu (1859-1928) was a collaborator of Conrad's. His 1886 "Revolution der Litteratur" is one of the important programmatic statements of German naturalism. Bleibtreu was a self-styled Kraftgenie whose own literary output was quite mediocre and is today justly forgotten. Conrad Alberti (1862-1918) was the "house critic" of Die Gesellschaft. He sharply attacked the sham idealism of middle-class art and literature as well as later, with equal vehemence, the "consequent naturalism" of the Berlin naturalists. His novel cycle, Kampf ums Dasein (1888 and afterwards), is today forgotten.

13. See the relevant programmatic statements which are reprinted in Rupprecht, Literarische Manifeste des Naturalismus.

14. Conrad, "Kehraus!" Die Gesellschaft 7 (February 1891): 155. Early naturalism was in Germany clearly a form of cultural nationalism. What was sought by Conrad and the Harts was a national literature that would be a confident expression of the national soul and would be able to hold its own with the literature of other world powers. "Ja," wrote the Harts in Kritische Waffengänge, "wir wollen eine große, nationale Literatur, welche weder auf Hellenismus noch

15. Conrad, "Professor Volkelt und der deutsche Realismus," Die Gesellschaft 6 (March 1890): 321. In 1910, in the Bayreuther Blätter, Conrad lauds Wagner as the "Erneuerer und Vermehrer vaterländischer Kultur, Wegbahner zu höchsten Menschheitszielen durch die Wiederbelebung völkischer Ideale und durch die Verklärung nationaler Vergangenheitsbilder." Quoted by Schüler, Der Bayreuther Kreis, 164. Published in 1852, Oper und Drama was Wagner's principal theoretical work, in which the composer envisions a national opera that would draw on Germanic mythology for its subject matter rather than on history. The expression "ästhetische Fibel" is curious, since there is no evidence of any influence of Wagner's aesthetic views or practices on Conrad. What certainly appealed to Conrad, however, was the composer's cultural nationalism and the anti-statist sentiments of the second part of Oper und Drama.

16. See the "Offenen Brief an den Fürsten Bismarck" which the Harts published in 1882 in Kritische Waffengänge (reprinted in Literarische Manifeste des Naturalismus, 23-27). Here they complain about the Reich's neglect of literature ("das eigentlich Unsterbliche eines Volkes") and respectfully remind the Chancellor "daß neben den politischen und sozialen Einrichtungen auch eine neue, gesunde und zielbewußte Pflege der idealen Kulturkräfte schon heute anzubahnen ist." To this end, they call for the creation of a "Reichsamt für Literatur, Theater, Wissenschaft und Künste." (Emphasis in the original.) Although Conrad never makes so explicit an appeal as this, his writings in Die Gesellschaft leave no doubt that he, too, expects the state to take an active role in helping to bring about Germany's literary and cultural rebirth.

17. The state's first major counter-attack on the literary avant-garde occurred in 1890 with the trial of three naturalist novelists and their publisher (Alberti, Conradi, Walloth, Friedrich) on
charges of obscenity and blasphemy—the so-called Leipziger Realistenprozeß. This signalled the beginning of a veritable campaign against writers whose works offended middle-class moral, religious, and aesthetic sensibilities. (Complaints about politically subversive or inflammatory content were less common.) Among the writers whose works were banned (though often later released) or who were prosecuted on charges of blasphemy, obscenity, or lesé majesty were Hermann Bahr, Richard Dehmel, Gerhart Hauptmann, Oskar Panizza, Heinrich Sudermann, and Frank Wedekind. On censorship and naturalism, see Gerhard Schulz, "Naturalismus und Zensur," in Naturalismus: Bürgerliche Dichtung und soziales Engagement, ed. Helmut Scheuer (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1974), 93-121.


21. See, for example, Conrad's complaints about the "die Verschechung, Verslavung und Verjudung Österreichs" and about the "Russifizierung mit Knute und Kerker in tüchtigen deutschen Volksstämmen an der Ostsee" in "Berlin, Wien, München," Die Gesellschaft 8 (December 1892): 1533-34. In this and other writings, Conrad follows the usage of romantic political thought and counterposes to the Reich as a mechanical contrivance ("die militärisch-mechanische Reichsbildung") the true cultural nation, the ethnie, the Volk.

22. Constantin Frantz (1817-1891) was a political thinker who opposed the Bismarck's kleindeutsch Reich. He was an advocate of federalism (Der Föderalismus, [1879]) and argued for a league of central European states under Habsburg leadership. See the entry on Frantz by Erich in Wittenberg in Neue Deutsche Biographie. On Paul Lagarde (1827-1891), see Fritz Stern, The Politics of Cultural Despair: A Study in the Rise of the Germanic Ideology (Berkeley: University of California Press 1961), section one ("Paul Lagarde and a Germanic Religion"). The criticisms set forth by Lagarde in his Deutsche Schriften (1878) of the kleindeutsch Reich, of
modernity, of the Verjudung of German culture find clear echoes in Conrad's Zeitkritik.


24. Conrad's comments are made in an editorial afterword to a review of von Suttner's book by Hans Land in Die Gesellschaft 6 (September 1890): 1341-48. The afterword is on pp. 1346-1348, the quote on p. 1347. Bertha von Suttner (1843-1914) was a leading figure in the pacifist movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Das Maschinenalter, Zukunftsvorlesungen (1890) presents lectures supposedly given in the late twentieth century on the social and political questions of the nineteenth centuries.


26. In "Berlin, Wien, München," Conrad reminds his readers "wie wenig die ausschließlich politischen Umwälzungen und Neuformungen für den Geist der Menschheit bedeuten und wie die großartigsten äußeren Ereignisse in Siegen und Niederlagen und dergleichen den Verfall der Völker nicht aufzuhalten vermögen, wenn einmal das Blut verdorben und der Boden durchseucht und die Atmosphäre vergiftet ist" (1535, emphasis in the original).

27. Ibid., 1540.


29. In purpurner Finsterniß: Eine Roman-Improvisation aus dem dreißigsten Jahrhundert (Berlin: Verein für freies Schrifttum, 1895). All references to this will be given within the text. For critical comment on the novel see, in addition to the article by Humble referenced in note 6 above, the following: Edwin Martin John Kretzmann, "The Pre-War German Utopian Novel," (Ph. D. diss., Brown University, 1936), 125-137; Martin Schwonke, Vom Staatsroman zur Science Fiction: Untersuchung über Geschichte und Funktion der naturwissenschaftlich-technischen Utopie (Stuttgart: F. Enke, 1957), 64-65; Stanley R. Townsend, "A Modern Prophecy by Michael Georg Conrad," The German Quarterly 31 (November 1958): 259-268; Hans-Jürgen Krysmanski, Die utopische Methode: Eine literatur- und wissenschaftsoziologische Untersuchung deutscher utopischer Romane des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts (Cologne:
Westdeutscher Verlag, 1963), 31-35. Kretzmann notes the predominantly romantic tone of the novel and calls attention to its pre-fascistic character; he sees in the novel, which he reads in part as an anti-socialist work, a reflection of Conrad's shift away from an initial identification with the Social Democrats. This is too simplistic and overlooks central continuities in Conrad's ideology. Kretzmann also makes little effort to situate the work within its historical context. Schwanke touches on In purpurner Finsterniß only briefly, aptly characterizing it as "eine Utopie des Ressentiments and Komplexe" (164) and rightly grouping it together with Morris' News from Nowhere. Townsend emphasizes the relationship between Conrad's novel and later twentieth-century pieces of dystopian fiction such as Brave New World. He presents little analysis, however, and is not particularly interested the historical situation which produced the novel. Krysmanski stresses the Nietzschean influence on the novel and views In purpurner Finsterniß as a fictional elaboration of Nietzsche's attack on the state in Zarathustra. Conrad's "Interesse," Krysmanski observes, "richtet sich auf die übermenschlichen Möglichkeiten des Menschen" (33). While correctly noting that Conrad's novel belongs "seinem Klima nach in die Anfänge der Jugendbewegung" (31), Krysmanski is more concerned with establishing the novel's dubious character as a utopian Gedankenexperiment than with exploring the historical and cultural historical background to the novel.

"Jugend und Politik um 1900," in *Kulturkritik und Jugendkult,* ed. Walter Rüegg (Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 1974), 87-114; Gerhard Kratsch's introduction to his *Kunstwart und Dürerband: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Gebildeten im Zeitalter des Imperialismus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1969);


34. For example, "Jugend!" *Die Gesellschaft* 11 (January 1895): 1-3.


37. See Geoff Eley, *Reshaping the German Right: Radical Nationalism and Political Change After Bismarck* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980), chap. 5 ("The Ideology of Radical Nationalism"). The discussion on pp. 184-205 is especially important.

38. Ibid., 187.

39. See note 25 above.

41. Kretzmann ("The Pre-War German Utopian Novel" [136]) calls attention to the
background of contemporary Anglo-German rivalry against which the popular Anglophobe
stereotypes in Conrad's novel must be understood.

42. See, for example, the editorial written by Conrad as "Fritz Hammer" against the
Military Bill of 1893 (e.g., "Professor Delbrück and die Militärvorlage," Die Gesellschaft 9
[May 1893]) and his attacks on navalism, Weltpolitik, and Sammlungspolitik in the four
"Sammel-Briefe" which appeared in Die Gesellschaft in 1898 (Hefte 8, 9, and 11).

43. The literature on modern dystopian fiction is extensive. One of the best discussions of
the genre is by Martin Schäfer in his excellent Science Fiction als Ideologiekritik? Utopische
See the chapter entitled "Die Anti-Utopie als Utopie," from which many of my ideas in my
discussion of In purpurner Finsterniß have been drawn. Also good is George Woodcock's
"Utopias in Negative," Sewanee Review 64 (1956): 81-97. See also: Mark R. Hillegas, The
Future as Nightmare: H. G. Wells and the Anti-Utropians (New York: Oxford University Press,
1967); Chad Walsh, From Utopia to Nightmare (New York: Harper & Row, 1962); the essays
collected in Clockwork Worlds: Mechanized Environments in Science Fiction, edited by Richard
D. Ehrlich and Thomas P. Dunn (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1983); and No Place
Else: Explorations in Utopian and Dystopian Fiction, edited by Eric S. Rabkin, Martin H.

44. On Forster, see the excellent essay by Charles Elkins, "E. M. Forster's 'The Machine
Stops': A Liberal-Humanist's Hostility to Technology," in Ehrlich, Clockwork Worlds. A good
discussion of Zamyatin is the chapter on We in T. R. N. Edwards' Three Russian Writers and
the Irrational: Zamyatin, Pil'nyak, and Bulgakov (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,
1982). On Brave New World, see Theodor W. Adorno, "Aldous Huxley and Utopia," in

45. Orwell is quoted by Schäfer, Science Fiction als Ideologiekritik? 44. The quote is from
Orwell's 1946 review of We. See In Front of Your Nose, 1945-1950, vol. 4 of The Collected
Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell, ed. Sonia Orwell and Ian Angus (London:
Seckler & Warburg, 1968).

46. Notwithstanding his populist inclinations and his attacks on the elitism and "Größenwahn" of the literary and artistic avant-garde, there is a strong elitist strain in Conrad's thought. As in the following passage, to the oppressive, stultifying collectivity with its utilitarian morality, Conrad counterposes the ideal of the extraordinary individual, either historical or mythological, who is the true culture hero and the true subject of history: "Und die großen weltgeschichtlichen Thaten, die etwas, was wie Fortschritt und Besserung aussieht, in die menschliche Gesellschaft, die staatliche organisierte schwatzende, genüßelnde, skatspielende Zweihänder-Herde bringt, diese großen weltgeschichtlichen Thaten--sie liegen ursprünglich selten, man täusche sich nicht, auf politischem, diplomatischem oder juristisch-bürokratischem Gebiet, verschwindend selten!--werden von Jahrhundert- und Jahrtausendmenschen gemacht. Diese großen Sondergeister, in welchen die Natur ein vollgerüttelt Maß von Macht und Tiefsinn gesammelt, reißen die organisierten Massen auf neue Bahnen und geben dem nachhinkenden Staat auf Jahrtausende hinaus alle Hände voll zu thun." Conrad, "Der alte Adam," Die Gesellschaft 6 (October 1890): 1412.

47. Schäfer, Science Fiction als Ideologiekritik? 47.

48. This motif is not an uncommon one in utopian and dystopian literature. It may be found in Campanella's seventeenth-century Città del Sole as well as in Zamyatin's We, for example. In his article on Zamyatin and Wells, Christoper Collins traces it back to Plato's Politeia. See "Samjatin, Wells und die Tradition der literarischen Utopie; in Der utopischer Roman, ed. Rudolf Villgrander and Friedrich Krey (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1973), 335.

49. Schäfer, Science Fiction als Ideologiekritik? 48, 65. "Weil die Vernunft zum Instrument der institutionalisierten Unvernunft geworden ist, argumentieren die Anti-utopisten vor allem mit Hilfe der Metapher der Sexualität. Dadurch geraten sie in gefährliche Nähe zur konservativen Utopiekritik, die sich gerne auf die 'menschliche Natur' beruft. Zugleich aber erfassen sie aber auch ganz wesentliche Aspekte der falschen Vernunftsherrschaft, nämlich ihre sozialpsychologischen Auswirkungen (und an diesem Punkt trifft sich die Anti-Utopie wieder mit
der Kritischen Theorie von Horkheimer, Marcuse usw., die sich primär ebenfalls mit den nicht ökonomischen Aspekten pseudorationaler Herrschaft befassen, wenn auch auf ungleich reflektierter Art“ (65).


53. Especially in the Fidus-esque descriptions of Nordika and the Nordikans, whose youthfulness, vigor, naturalness, and active physicality contrast pointedly with the a-vitalism of Teutian culture.


55. Ibid., xv.

56. Ibid.

57. Ibid., xvi.

58. The sense of the fabulous, marvellous, fairy-tale-like quality of life in Nordika is created *inter alia* by the recurrent use of expressions like "geheimnisvoll," "wunderkräftig," "wunderbar stark," "wie im Traum," "Zauber," etc.

59. E. g., Novalis' *Die Lehrlinge zu Sais* (1798-9) and Klingsohr's "Märchen" in *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* (1799-1800).

61. Martin Schwonke groups *In purpurner Finsterniß* together with *News from Nowhere* in *Vom Staatsroman zur Science Fiction*, 164.


64. Conrad, "Berlin, Wien, München," *Die Gesellschaft* 8 (November 1892): 1393. This is the first of two editorials of this title. The second appeared in December.

65. Conrad, "Unterwegs. Sammel-Briefe von M. G. Conrad," *Die Gesellschaft* 14 (1898): 510-511. This is the first of three editorials in which Conrad attacks Miquel's "Sammlungspolitik." This was policy, conceived of by the National Liberal Finance Minister Johannes Miquel, of uniting the agrarians and heavy industrials in a common parliamentary front against the Social Democrats. Two of the key policies of this alliance were the expansion of Germany's overseas spheres of influence and the construction of a modern fleet.

66. This was an article of faith among radical nationalists like the Pan-Germans as well as among conservative cultural critics like Lagarde, Langbehn, van den Bruck, Chamberlain and members of the Bayreuth Circle, and cultural reformers of all persuasions. See, for example, Stern, *The Politics of Cultural Despair*, xi-xxx, and Schüler, *Der Bayreuther Kreis*, 180-190. See also Roger Chickering, *We Men Who Feel Most German: A Cultural Study of the Pan-German League, 1886-1914* (Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1984), chap. 4 ("Ideology"). "The word [Erlösung] appeared constantly in the literature of the Pan-German League," Chickering writes, "as did others with explicit religious connotations, such as 'diaspora' and 'Gospel'" (81). A reading of Chickering's chapter on Pan-German ideology will show clearly Conrad's proximity to the Pan-Germans.

67. For representative statements of Conrad's criticisms of the Kaisereich at their shrillest extreme, see his editorials from the summer and fall 1892 issues of *Die Gesellschaft*: "Moderne Bestrebungen" (June), "Ketzerblut" (July), and "Berlin, Wien, München" (November and
December). The völkisch and anti-modern elements in Conrad's ideological formation are especially pronounced here.


69. "Moderne Bestrebungen," 688. This editorial also contains a good example of Conrad's messianism in his image of the "poet of the future." "Ja, das ist mein Dichter der Zukunft: der gesunde, schliche, weise Mann, der männliche Mann, der Zeuge der großen Natur, der Herz- und Nierenprüfer der Gesellschaft, der Maskenbrecher der stolzlerenden Gemeinheit, der Tröster und Mutmacher der Armen und Gedrückten, der holde Freund und Labsalspender einer neuen Menschheit" (686).

70. E. g., Flammen! Für freie Geister.

71. Quoted in Abrams, Natural Supernaturalism, 66.


75. Quoted by Wunberg, ibid., 268.

76. Attributed to Stefan George by Georg Fuchs, in Sturm und Drang in München (Munich, 1936). Quoted by Wucherpfennig in Kindheitskult und Irrationalismus, 145-146.

77. The attitudes and feelings shared by members of the intelligentsia around 1900 is well characterized by Wucherpfennig as "das allgemeine Gefühl krisenhafter Erstarrung und
Hilflosigkeit, meist von Nationalismus und aristokratisierender Haltung überlagert." This feeling of crisis and helplessness is combined with "einer von Protest und Resentiment bestimmten individualistischen Außenseiterhaltung, die einen mehr oder weniger offen ausgesprochenen Führungsanspruch enthält." Ibid., 145.

78. "Gladius Dei" tells of an overwrought young man, a modern-day Savonarola, who, enraged by the profanation of art in the commercialized art world of turn-of-the-century Munich, makes a scene in a gallery and is forcibly ejected onto the street. The story concludes with the young man's feverish vision of divine judgment: "Er sah gegen die gelbliche Wolkenwand, die von der Theatinerstraße heraufgezogen war und in der es jetzt leise donnerte, ein breites Feuerschwert stehen, das sich in Schwefellicht über die frohe Stadt hinreckte . . ." Thomas Mann, Erzählungen (Frankfurt: S. Fischer, 1958), 214-215. "Beim Propheten" is based on Mann's visit, together with his future mother-in-law, to a reading of "proclamations" by the bohemian writer Ludwig Derleth. The autobiographical figure of the "Novellist" reflects Mann's ironic reserve vis-à-vis the more eccentric denizens of bohemian Schwabing and enjoys, like Mann, "ein gewisses Verhältnis zum Leben," i.e., a comfortable relationship with the world of bourgeois respectability. On the background to this story, see Richard Winston, Thomas Mann: The Making of an Artist, 1875-1911 (New York: Knopf, distributed by Random House), 188-189.
Chapter Two

"Ein bißchen Weltuntergang schwelgen":
The Catastrophist and Eschatological Fantasies of Max Haushofer

In this chapter we shall examine the eschatological/catastrophist fiction of Max Haushofer (1840-1907),¹ professor of economics at the Technical University of Munich during the last third of the nineteenth century and amateur bellettrist with close ties to the literary establishment of the Gründerzeit.² Unlike the combative Conrad, whose apocalyptic fantasy In purpurner Finsternis was rooted, as we have seen, in a radical dissatisfaction with the culture and politics of Wilhelmine Germany, Haushofer was a respected Munich notable who was well-integrated into the world of the liberal Bildungsbürgertum and who found himself in fundamental accord with the political and social structures of the Second Kaiserreich.

After a childhood and adolescence in Prague, where his father was professor of painting at the Academy of Art, Haushofer entered the University of Munich in 1858 to study economics, law, and political science. He received his doctorate in 1867 and the following year was given a post at the new Technical University, where he taught until his death. Though not one of the towering figures of nineteenth-century German economic thought, Haushofer nonetheless published several books and articles on economics and politics and wrote on various social questions as well.³ Nor was his interest in public issues restricted to the printed page. "Eine der Hauptsützen des Liberalismus in München,"⁴ he represented his native city as National Liberal deputy in the Bavarian Diet from 1875 to 1881.

In addition to his writings on economics and politics, Haushofer also published a number of bellettristic works: epigonal poems which betray the influence of Heine and Geibel; Der ewige Jude (1886), a drama in verse based on the legend of Ahasver;⁵ a long narrative poem, Die Verbannten (1890); several collections of prose sketches, including Geschichten zwischen Diesseits und Jenseits: Ein modemer Totentanz (1888) and An des Daseins Grenzen (1908); and Planetenfeuer (1899), a novel of the future. His writings are characterized by a curious and not completely successful mixture of gentle satire (of the Fliegende Blätter variety), melancholy, fantastic motifs and settings, and a predisposition for "grand philosophical themes;" they display,
moreover, a certain thematic inconclusiveness and lack of compositional rigor. They are not read today nor do they seem to have enjoyed much success even in their own day. Well-disposed contemporaries stressed--somewhat euphemistically one suspects--the idiosyncratic character of Haushofer's work but noted with approval his independence of and implicit opposition to the modernist literary trends of the late nineteenth century. "Ein 'moderner' Dichter," wrote Oskar Hey, "ist Haushofer ganz und gar nicht." Indeed not; Haushofer's general aesthetic orientation was fundamentally at odds with that of, for example, the Naturalists. The informing sensibility of his work, whether in prose or verse, was rather that of the Goldschnittlyrik of the Gründerzeit. He wrote in service of the "Higher" and sought in his writing to cultivate the "True, the Good, and the Beautiful"--ideals which have become synonymous with the evasiveness and Verlogenheit of the aesthetic and ideology which Haushofer represents.

In the following discussion of the catastrophist novel Planetenfeuer and of the eschatological sketches contained in An des Daseins Grenzen, we shall see how Haushofer treats the potentially subversive themes of cosmic cataclysm and mass extinction in keeping with the dictates of bourgeois Salonästhetik, thus trivializing and rendering them harmless. (We shall see, that is, how the end of the world can be rendered according to the conventions of the epigonal Herbstgedicht.) We will be concerned, in other words, with the disproportion between theme, on the one hand, and imagination and aesthetic means, on the other. Further, we shall inquire into the motivation of Haushofer's destructive fantasies. What does it mean that an author like Haushofer, who, as we have said, was in fundamental agreement with his world, should fantasize about its destruction? What do his eschatological visions express--the uneasiness and anxiety of a social group threatened by historical change or the unacknowledged longing in the heart of even the most well-adjusted Staatsbürger for violent release from the dreariness of quotidian existence?

Haushofer's futurist novel, Planetenfeuer (1899), tells the story of the near-destruction of the world by an errant celestial body. Haushofer draws his inspiration from social utopian novels such as Edward Bellamy's Looking Backward (1888), on the one hand, and from catastrophist science fiction stories such as Camille Flammarion's La fin du monde (1894), on
the other. The catastrophist aspects of *Planettenfeuer* will concern us below; let us begin by considering Haushofer's novel as a social utopia.

The novel is set in 1999 and takes place primarily in Munich. Haushofer's principal characters are all representatives of the educated middle class; it is chiefly through their conversations on a variety of topics as well as through fictive lectures and newspaper pieces that we learn about life in the last year of the twentieth century and the developments of the preceding hundred years. Georg Santen, a popular lecturer at the Volkshochschule in Munich, and Hubert Schrader, the editor-in-chief of a Munich newspaper, both affirm the accomplishments of their age. While Schrader tends perhaps towards a shallow rationalism and complacent optimism, Santen is of a melancholy, pessimistic disposition and entertains no illusions about the defects in modern civilization. Santen's friend, the prominent physician Heinz Rudhardt, is an outspoken critic of his society. Characterizing himself as "einen unverbesserlichen liberalen Reaktionär" (8), he is an opponent of the new form of economic organization and a critic of the over-civilized manners and practices characteristic of society at the end of the twentieth century. We shall return to his criticisms below.

One of the most salient differences between the Germany of 1999 and that of Haushofer's own day concerns the extent to which the government involves itself in the economy. Extrapolating from the shift during the last quarter of the nineteenth century from economic liberalism towards greater state interventionism, Haushofer envisions a future in which the dominating principle of economic organization is state socialism. This development is summarized, approvingly, by Santen in a lecture on the history of the twentieth century which he is preparing for his evening course at the Volkshochschule. In the belief that "das schlimmste aller sozialpolitischen Systeme die Herrschaft des Großkapitals sei," the central government, supported by all the political parties except the Conservatives and the Freisinnigen, decided to embrace a number of measures intended to counter the power of the "Plutokratie mit ihren das Volksleben vergiftenden Wirkungen" (76). Among the state socialist measures adopted by the central government were the introduction of a progressive income tax and a tax on wealth, the imposition of controls on unearned income, and the nationalization both of certain heavy industries and of large agricultural enterprises. The principle of free competition was not
abandoned altogether, however: "Man konnte und wollte nicht verzichten auf die Anregung und
den Sporn des Unternehmergeistes" (77); and in spite of extensive Verstaatlichung, several
branches of production remained in private hands. Further, the government proceeded slowly
and cautiously with the implementation of its program. The necessary "Einschränkungen der
Wirtschaftsfreiheit" were made with the consent of the governed, not by tyrannical decree, and
were compensated "durch wichtige politische Freiheiten" and other reforms (79-80). The
government's economic policies led indisputably to increased prosperity for all classes and to an
overall improvement in the material conditions of life:

Das konnte von keiner Seite bestritten werden; auch nicht von jenen Parteien, die
der Regierung am feindlichsten gegenüberstanden. Konnte man doch überall diese
bessere Lebenshaltung fast mit den Händen greifen! Überall sah man die
Wohnungen besser und gesünder, die Nahrung reichlicher und zuträglicher
werden; überall stiegen die Löhne, wurden die Arbeitsbedingungen für die
Arbeiter günstiger. Von einem Jahrzehnt zum anderen ließ dieser Fortschritt sich
nachweisen. (80)

While Santen believes "daß der Staatssozialismus . . . bei weitem die beste
Gesellschaftsform sei," Heinz Rudhardt remains a staunch advocate of economic liberalism,
arguing "daß wir heute viel besser daran wären, wenn wir bei den freiheitlichen Grundsätzen des
Wirtschaftslebens geblieben wären, die im neunzehnten Jahrhundert herrschend waren" (8); and
though he must acknowledge the splendid material accomplishments of the state socialistic
system, he maintains "daß wir mit dem alten System des Liberalismus nicht bloß gerade so weit
in der allgemeinen Wohlfahrt gekommen wären, als wir heute sind, sondern viel, viel weiter!"
(9). Rudhardt warns Santen of dangers which he feels are endemic to a state-controlled economy:
bureaucratic red tape and inefficiency, corruption and favoritism, and economic stagnation. "Ich
fürchte," he tells Santen, "das allmäßliche Einreißen des Schlangens in den Staatsbetrieben; das
allmäßliche Anwachsen von unlauterem Ehrgeiz, von Protektions- und Gevatterschaftswesen,
Trinkgelderumfug und buhlerischen Weiherintriguen; das allmäßliche Nachlassen in der
Gesamtproduktion der Nation, wenn der Sporn der freien Konkurrenz immer mehr beseitigt
wird" (102). So far these dangers seem not have manifested themselves in the model state
socialistic economy of twentieth-century Germany; but, Rudhardt tells Santen ominously, "wenn
man die Symptome der Fäulnis einmal bemerkt, Freund, dann, fürcht ich, ist es zu spät für alle
Therapeutik" (103). A further argument Rudhardt advances against state socialism is that state
ownership of the paper mills and printing shops as well as the economic dependence of an ever increasing segment of the population upon the state represents a potentially serious threat to the freedom of thought and expression.\textsuperscript{10}

The debate between Santen and Rudhardt on state socialism must be viewed against the background of the non-proletarian reaction against classical economic liberalism which set in everywhere throughout Europe during the last third of the nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{11} In Germany, this reaction manifested itself variously—in the formation of the Verein für Soziale Politik (1872), in the ascendancy of the so-called Kathedersozialisten at German universities, in the emergence of various anti-liberal parties such as Stöcker's Christian-Socialists, and, of course, in Bismarck's various interventionist social and economic policies.\textsuperscript{12} Common to all of these were, first, the recognition of the "evils" of economic laissez-faire and, second, the fear of a revolutionary, social-democratic or communist solution to the Sozialfrage. The term "Staatssozialismus" itself was used somewhat loosely during the 1880s and 1890s as a general designation for both the reformistic ideas and proposals of the Kathedersozialisten and for Bismarck's social reforms; it was also used rather more specifically with reference to the economic theories of the renowned Berlin economist, Adolf Wagner.\textsuperscript{13} Indeed, the state socialistic economy described in Planetenfeuer closely resembles Wagner's notion of a "maßvollen, langsam fortschreitenden, seiner auch wieder vorhandenen inneren Mängel, Bedenken und Schwächen sich wohl bewußten Staatssozialismus."\textsuperscript{14}

In Der moderne Sozialismus (1896), Haushofer distinguishes between "Sozialreform" and "Staatssozialismus" and uses the latter to designate an economic system which is characterized by the extensive, though not total, nationalization or communalization of private enterprise and industry.\textsuperscript{15} Haushofer was not a doctrinaire economic liberal; indeed, he recognized that the future belonged to some form of socialism—"wenn auch nicht gerade dem, was heute, und was speziell von der Sozialdemokratie als Sozialismus bezeichnet wird."\textsuperscript{16} While he supported "moderate social reform," however, which he considered a kind of socialism, it is clear from his comments in Der moderne Sozialismus that he was no advocate of state socialism. In the debate between the apologist for state socialism, Santen, and the "unverbesserlichen liberalen Reaktionär," Rudhardt, Haushofer's sympathies are with the latter.\textsuperscript{17}
Haushofer's account in *Planetensfeuer* of an apparently viable state socialist economy cannot, therefore, be understood as an act of advocacy, as the setting forth of a program or blueprint for social and economic change. This, among other things, distinguishes Haushofer's novel from such contemporary programmatic social utopias as Bellamy's *Looking Backward* or Hertzka's *Freiland*. On the other hand, Haushofer softens in two ways whatever effectiveness the novel might have had as a dystopian warning against the state socialist tendencies of Wilhelmine Germany. First, he portrays late-twentieth-century state socialism relatively favorably. Second, he restricts his critique of it to mere warnings about the potential dangers inherent in such a system rather than giving the reader graphic pictures of these dangers actualized (i.e., in the novel's fictive world). Haushofer's vision of German state socialism at the end of the twentieth century is perhaps best viewed simply as an attempt at the balanced fictional elaboration of what the author felt to be one possible but by no means certain course of development for Germany in the future.

In certain respects, Haushofer's vision of the late twentieth century resembles the optimistic projections of the nineteenth-century progressive imagination. He foresees an apparently shining age of peace, prosperity, and progress. The pressing social problems of the late nineteenth century have disappeared: state socialism has resolved the "Sozialfrage;" women have been emancipated, albeit with mixed results; and there has been an overall improvement in the material conditions of life. The twentieth century has, moreover, seen "glänzende Erfindungen ... auf dem Gebiete der Baukunst, des Ingenieurwesens, der Physik, Elektrotechnik, der wissenschaftlichen und technischen Chemie, des Maschinenbaus, der Instrumentenfabrikation, der Hygiene" (219). Among the technological innovations Haushofer describes in the novel are high-speed trains, automobiles, and flying machines; telephones and a kind of television called the "Pantoskop"; a machine for transcribing speech into writing; tide-powered electric generating stations—in short, all the technological props of the nineteenth-century novel of the future. Finally, Haushofer imagines a world at peace. It is a peace maintained not through the balance of military power, but on the basis of mutually recognized rights and interests. "Unermeßlicher Reichtum aller Klassen; stets erstarkende Herrschaft über die freundlichen und feindlichen Mächte der Natur, immer tieferes Eindringen in jedes Gebiet der
Erkenntnis, stets erleichterte Gewöhnung an ersprießliches Zusammenwirken, zauberhafter Schöpferdrang in allen Künsten und Gewerben" (136)—thus does Chefredakteur Schrader, the embodiment of enlightened reason and humanity in the novel, summarize, in the resounding phrases of a contemporary *Leitartikel*, the state of the world at the end of the twentieth century.

Despite such progressive, "utopian" moments, however, the dominant tone of *Planetengefehr* is one of "genteel" pessimism concerning both human nature and the nature and scope of progress. Indeed, one of the central questions Haushofer raises in the novel is whether, as a result of progress, "mankind is essentially happier." His answer is clear: "Wissender wohl; glücklicher kaum" (67). Unhappiness, dissatisfaction, class hatred still exist in Haushofer's future world, the benefactions of state socialism and improved technology notwithstanding. Thus, while Santen defends state socialism as "bei weitem die beste Gesellschaftsform," he must also acknowledge "daß wir trotz dieser besten Gesellschaftsform elend und beklagenswert sind und es ewig bleiben werden" (8). A general improvement in the material conditions of life does not, in other words, guarantee an increase in human happiness; nor does technological and social progress imply the moral and spiritual evolution of mankind. On the contrary, material progress may even occur at the expense of man's spiritual well-being. One of Haushofer's minor characters notes a "furchtbare Leere im Gemütseben der Gesellschaft," and alludes to "der modernen Seelennot, jener nervösen Unzufriedenheit mit dem Dasein, welche trotz, oder vielmehr wegen unserer glänzenden Kulturfortschritte die Gesellschaft erfaßt hat" (60).

Santen rejects as unfounded the "ganz merkwürdigen Optimismus" which he finds in the works of nineteenth-century utopian writers such as Bellamy (47). The content of this utopian optimism was, to appropriate Bellamy's own words, the idea that human misery was the product of the particular set of "conditions of life" prevailing under laissez-faire capitalism. Capitalism encouraged "selfishness" and developed "the brutal qualities of human nature." Under socialism, however, it would be "for the first time possible to see what unperverted human nature really was like." Man's "depraved tendencies" would "wither," and his "nobler qualities" would show "a sudden luxuriance." 18 It is precisely this belief in "eine jähre Verbesserung des Menschengeschlechts" that Haushofer questions, though not the belief in man's capacity for spiritual evolution per se: "An der Möglichkeit einer intellektuellen und moralischen
Verbesserung der Menschheit ist nicht zu zweifeln." Haushofer conceives of such moral and spiritual progress in Darwinian terms as the result not of revolutionary transformation, but of millenia of slow evolution: "Die Verbesserung der menschlichen Rasse," he writes in Der moderne Sozialismus, "kann nur in der Weise stattfinden, daß in einem durch Jahrtausende sich fortsetzenden Kampf ums Dasein die Schwächen und schlechten Eigenschaften ganz allmählich zurückgedrängt werden."19

A further aspect of utopian optimism which Haushofer rejects is the belief in the inevitability of progress. Santen recognizes, for example, that, for Europe at least, the future might mean a relapse "in tiefste Barbarei" instead of continued progress, although he considers a moderate measure of progress for the human race as a whole to be "wahrscheinlich" (48). Rudhardt, on the other hand, allows not only for the decline of individual civilizations, but also for the possible retrogression of the entire human race. He imagines this happening as the result of a period of cataclysmic geological "revolutions" (45-47), a theme which, as we shall see below, Haushofer takes up again in An des Daseins Grenzen. Rudhardt's catastrophist speculations are, of course, also one of the many foreshadowings of the cosmic catastrophe in which Planetenfeuer culminates. The portentous discussions among the characters on progress and historical decline are inconclusive, to be sure: however, they serve to establish a suggestive context for the events and situations depicted in the novel and induce the reader to reflect on where modern civilization, as represented metaphorically by the socially and technologically advanced civilization described in Planetenfeuer, stands in the historical cycle of rise and fall.

The future age envisioned in Planetenfeuer (and thus, by implication, the author's own age) is one of decline and decay. The late twentieth century stands clearly, to quote one of the novel's chapter titles, "Im Zeichen des Verfalls" (30), although the seriousness of the malaise which afflicts mankind and its prognosis remain open questions: "Ob, wenn irgend welche ungeheure Ereignisse auf die Menschheit einstürmen,"--an unmistakeable anticipation of the global disaster which occurs at the end of the novel--"nicht durch sie eine großartige Erneuerung unserer besten Eigenschaften, ein Aufflammen herrlichsten Heldentums herbeigeführt wird--wer weiß das? Oder wer kann sagen, ob unheimbare Fäulnis an uns frisst und Altersschwund unsere geistigen und physischen Kräfte eindorren läßt?" (47). Among the symptoms or aspects of
decadence which are alluded to in the novel are neurasthenia, the artificiality and unnaturalness of life in the twentieth century, a rise in the number of religious and pseudo-religious movements, the nearly universal use of narcotics, a high suicide rate, and the general sense of spiritual malaise referred to above. The most serious manifestation of mankind's decline, however, is the decrease in the world's population, a secular trend in which Rudhardt sees "eine wenigstens partielle Rückentwicklung der Menschheit" (46). The novel attributes the global population decline to unspecified "hemmenden und zurückdrängenden Gegenströmungen gegen die Volksvermehrung" (223); to the emancipation of women, which has destroyed "den Familientrieb und die Freude an der Familie" (223); and to the widespread use of pleasant narcotics ("Hallin," "Nirwanol," "Erotit"), from which around five hundred thousand people a year die in Germany alone, "entweder absichtlich oder aus Willenschwäche" (13).20

These "behördenden Giften, welche uns die Fortschritte der chemischen Wissenschaft verschafft" (13) serve Haushofer as a convenient symbol for the ambivalent character of modern civilization: the price for the increased ease, comfort, and pleasure which progress brings is enervation, enfeeblement, and the impoverishment of experience. "Man dämpft die Schatten des Lebens nicht," Rudhardt says, "ohne zugleich die Lichter desselben mit einem Schleier zu überziehen. Ich bin für die ganze Energie des Daseins in Lust und Leid, mit unumflortem Blick!" (25). Rudhardt's is an argument with which readers of anti-utopian fiction are well-acquainted--indeed, the "Wildling" (20) Rudhardt is related, however formally and distantly, to Huxley's Savage.21 The common link is a primitivistic rejection of civilization in the name of intense, authentic experience, of "die ganze Energie des Daseins in Lust und Leid." Rudhardt criticizes life in the twentieth century for its "zunehmende Annehmlichkeit" and its artificiality: "Was ist überhaupt noch Natur in unserem Leben? Unsere Arbeit ist ebenso verkünstelt, wie unser Vergnügen; wir kommen verkünstelt auf die Welt, und nach unserem Tode können wir auch wieder ein Kunstprodukt aus uns bereiten lassen: . . . Und all das entspricht unseren Absichten noch lange nicht; wir müssen etwas viel Künstlicheres aus uns machen" (46). The twentieth century, he declares, is suffering from overcivilization: "Unser Feind heutzutage ist nicht mehr die Natur mit ihren Mängeln und Unvollkommenheiten, sondern die Kultur und das Raffinement der Menschen. Die heutige Menschheit stirbt an ihrer
Überkultur" (151). This sense of overcivilization afflicts the tragedian, Leonore Link, too: she longs for a "Ferdinand, wie er sein sollte und wie ihn die Menschen am Ende des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts nicht mehr spielen können" because they have become "viel zu klug, zu blasiert" (84).\textsuperscript{22}

Rudhardt's and Link's complaints about Überkultur and Blasiertheit; the scattered allusions in the novel to neurasthenia, to the nervous, overstimulated, hectic character of late-twentieth-century life; the notion of Seelennot, of spiritual malaise brought about or exacerbated by progress--these are, of course, all commonplaces of late-nineteenth-century cultural criticism and reproduce the sense of cultural crisis which spread among members of the educated upper middle class towards the end of the nineteenth century as the radical nature of the changes wrought by modernization became more and more obvious.\textsuperscript{23}

The novel's pessimistic view of modern civilization notwithstanding, it is important to note that Haushofer was not motivated to write Planetenfeuer by discontent and reformist zeal. He had no fundamental criticisms to make, no program for political and social change to offer, no alternative reality to render plausible and persuasive to his readers. Planetenfeuer is the work rather of a person in fundamental agreement with the existing political and social organization of his world. Thus, the late twentieth century does not, as Haushofer envisions it, differ markedly from the late nineteenth century--there have been changes, to be sure, but no Change; and where the two worlds do diverge in more than just details, as in the case of state socialism and feminism, the author's attitude towards the imagined future developments away from nineteenth-century practice is skeptical and disapproving, though never vigorously critical.

Of special interest in this context is the assent implicit in Haushofer's vision of the future to the basic political arrangements of the Second Kaiserreich. The growth of state socialism which he foresees leaves the existing undemocratic political structures and institutions intact; this was, of course, precisely the argument invoked by the Social Democrats against state socialism.\textsuperscript{24} "Seit fast hundertunddreißig Jahren," Santen proclaims, "steht die Reichsverfassung und das allgemeine Wahlrecht heilig und unangetastet fest" (103). In order to understand the ideological significance of this statement, we must recall the realities of the Prusso-German constitutional system which Santen's resounding rhetoric conceals: Bismarck's "sacred" Constitution of 1871
contained built-in safeguards against parliamentarism and democracy; while providing for a parliament, it severely restricted the power and effectiveness of this body and instead conferred almost absolutist power on the Prussian monarch. And though Bismarck's introduction of universal suffrage unsettled conservative politicians, the weakness of the Reichstag and various features of the electoral system minimized the threat posed by a mass electorate to conservative hegemony in the Reich. There is nothing in Planetenfeuer to suggest that Haushofer questions the legitimacy of this system; indeed, despite some liberal reservations about the extension of state power, Haushofer depicts the government of the Reich and its representatives in the most favorable and idealizing light possible.

Haushofer's vision of Germany's future is a reassuring one: it affirms the basic political and social institutions of the Kaiserreich and prophesies their stability and continuity. A good National Liberal, the author had little sympathy, of course, for the "staatsfeindlichen Elemente" in the Reich, i.e., for the Social Democrats. However, his attitude towards them, in Planetenfeuer at least, is more patronizing than paranoid: Haushofer foresees not social revolution, but the failure of the general strike and the fragmentation of the Social Democratic party. The Reich wisely avoids any sort of "reaktionäre Sozialpolitik"--an oblique warning against the repressive measures being urged by conservatives during the late 1890s--and embarks instead on a conciliatory program of state socialism (75-76). Instead of appealing to conservative fantasies of social upheaval by emphasizing the Social Democratic threat, Haushofer minimizes, indeed trivializes the significance of social and political unrest and thus, by implication, of the Social Democratic opposition to the Reich. He does this in two ways: first, through caricature and ridicule in his heavy-handedly satirical description of the "anarchists" (124ff.); and secondly, by portraying discontent as an anthropological constant and thus stripping it of any historical or political character. No matter what improvements are made in the material conditions of existence, people will always be unhappy. This seems to be the point of Haushofer's assumption that dissatisfaction and class hatred will remain even after state socialism has solved the Sozialfrage. And this is, of course, also one of the easiest and most often invoked arguments in defense of the status quo.

Haushofer's fundamental agreement with the status quo is one of the principal reasons for
the weakness of *Planeteneuer* as a utopian novel. The modern literary utopia derives its energy from a refusal to assent to the world as it is and promises its reader either a vigorous critique of that world or a compelling vision of an alternative to it. Not so *Planeteneuer*, however; a bloodless anticipation of things to come, it offers neither critique nor vision. A further reason for the novel’s inadequacy resides in the lack of imagination and understanding with which the author responds to the political and social realities of his time: as the reviewer of *Der moderne Sozialismus* for *Die neue Zeit* noted, Haushofer’s socio-political insights remain well within the narrow horizons of the provincial National Liberal newspapers.²⁸ To read Haushofer is to acquaint oneself with the nineteenth-century German bourgeois mind at its most mediocre and to be made aware of the ideological impoverishment of the liberal bourgeoisie at the end of the nineteenth century. Haushofer himself unwittingly lends support to such an interpretation: "Ein weiter in die Zukunft schauendes Programm,“ Haushofer has Chefredakteur Schrader write concerning the political situation around 1900, “hatte eigentlich damals nur die sozialdemokratische Partei" (139).

There was a flowering of the literary utopia during the last third of the nineteenth century; and though not one of the genre’s best representatives, *Planeteneuer* is part of this literary-historical phenomenon. Haushofer was doubtless inspired to try his hand at describing the society of the future by the phenomenal success enjoyed at the beginning of the decade by Bellamy’s *Looking Backward*, which, in the early 1890s, provoked a flurry of imitations and anti-Bellamiades. But there was a second source of inspiration for *Planeteneuer* as well. This is to be found in stories of the earth’s destruction through collision with an errant celestial object. The favorite such objects were, of course, comets, which at the end of the eighteenth century changed roles and went from being mere portents of the end of the world to being the actual agents of the earth’s destruction.²⁹ One of the best-known late-nineteenth-century comet stories was *La fin du monde*, a novel published six years before *Planeteneuer* by the renowned French astronomer, Camille Flammarion. The first half of Flammarion’s novel is set in the twenty-fifth century and tells of a giant comet’s collision with the Earth. This does not bring about the end of the world, however. While destruction is extensive, "the Earth [continues] to revolve in the light of the sun, and humanity to advance forward toward a still higher destiny."³⁰ According to the
H. G. Wells scholar, Bernard Bergonzi, *La fin du monde* may have been the inspiration for another story of cosmic catastrophe published towards the end of the nineteenth century, H. G. Wells' "The Star." Here, however, it is not a comet, but "a strange new planet" which, early in the twentieth century, collides with Neptune; "locked in a fiery embrace," the shattered remains of the two planets hurtle towards the sun, causing terrible destruction as they pass close to the Earth. As in Flammarion's story, the world survives and life continues, though under radically altered geological and climatological conditions.\(^{31}\)

"The Star" appeared in 1897, two years before *Planetfeuer*. While there is no proof that Haushofer knew Wells' story, the catastrophe in *Planetfeuer* closely resembles the one that Wells describes in "The Star." Once again, it is not a comet which threatens to destroy the Earth, but the ruins of two planets--"zwei der kleinsten und zuletzt entdeckten Planeten unseres Sonnensystems" (155)--which collide and enter an orbit that will take them across the earth's path. Rudhardt describes the probable outcome of this encounter: "Trümmer, von denen einzelne vielleicht so groß sind, wie der Montblanc, werden, von der Anziehungskraft der Erde erfaßt, mit rasender Wut sich auf unsere Länder stürzen, werden unsere Gebirge erschüttern, unsere Meere zu Riesenwellen aufschäumen lassen, unsere Städte zermalmen" (156). Things happen as Rudhardt predicts: the moon is destroyed by the fiery wreck of the two planets; and for three days the Earth is bombarded by meteorites and wracked by horrible volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, and tidal waves.

What are we to make of the fact that Haushofer, to all appearances a comfortable and satisfied bourgeois, subjects his fictive world to such a violent assault? Bergonzi suggests that "The Star' may illustrate Nordau's complaint that for the *fin de siècle* mentality 'the prevalent feeling is that of imminent perdition and extinction'."\(^{32}\) Is the motivically similar *Planetfeuer* not perhaps an expression of this *fin de siècle* sense of impending doom as well? Or, if it is true that "it is basically ill will which is given body in the fantasies of the end of the world,"\(^{33}\) is Haushofer's novel not then a manifestation of the author's "ill will" towards the world of Wilhelmine Germany, an ill will which finds a sort of sadistic satisfaction in violent and destructive fantasies? And if so, is there implicit in the fantasy of destruction the hope for the apocalyptic renovation of the world?
Although *Planetenfeuer* is an example of what can be loosely termed the "end-of-the-world" novel, it is not an apocalyptic story in the strict sense of the word. For central to apocalyptic fiction is the idea of radical transformation, of death and rebirth, of the destruction of an old world and the creation of a new and usually better one. "The Star," for example, is apocalyptic: here, cosmic catastrophe is followed by the emergence of a "new brotherhood . . . among men." 34 No matter that, as Bergonzi points out, this ending seems "anti-climactic" after Wells' virtuoso description of the spectacular cataclysms unleashed by the ruined planets as they pass near the Earth; 35 however attenuated, the apocalyptic paradigm of destruction and regeneration is clearly present. This pattern is more fully developed in Wells' novel, *In the Days of the Comet* (1906), where a mysterious green gas from a passing comet brings about a great and salutary "Change" in man and society. 36

The apocalyptic paradigm is not present in *Planetenfeuer*, however. There is no Change, no renovating transformation, no purifying destruction of the world. To be sure, Haushofer's characterization of the late twentieth century as an age which is in some respects decadent and Rudhardt's allusion to a possible "Erneuerung" seem to suggest the idea of apocalyptic renovation as a thematic possibility; but nowhere does the author develop this theme. Nor is it surprising that he does not. The essence of apocalypticism is, after all, discontent and the longing for radical change, while Haushofer was a well-integrated Bildungsburger who was in agreement with the fundamental structures of his world. He had little conscious wish to see this world, either in reality or in fiction, radically transformed. On the contrary, it was the apparent stability of the nineteenth-century bourgeois world, its continuity and survival, which concerned Haushofer. And indeed, stability and continuity rather than destruction and change are what he depicts in *Planetenfeuer*. Late-twentieth-century society, to be understood as a metaphor for the author's own world, does not collapse when faced with the forces of chaos and destruction. Rather, it continues to function, and survives, its fundamental structures and values intact. Implicit in Haushofer's catastrophist fantasy, in other words, is a reassuring message of the essential viability and survivability of the bourgeois world. It is one of the "mythic functions" of the end-of-the-world story, it has been argued, to provide "reassurance of survival." 37 And this is precisely what *Planetenfeuer* does provide, both in its vision of a future society which is in all
essentials continuous with the contemporary readers' own and through its demonstration of this society's ability to survive, both inwardly and outwardly, a catastrophe of unparalleled magnitude.

The catastrophism of Planetenfeuer thus seems to express neither fundamental disaffection from the world of the Second Kaiserreich (represented metaphorically by the novel's fictive future society) nor deep-seated anxiety about the impending end of that world. On the level of manifest, conscious meaning and message this is certainly the case. And yet the predominantly affirmative character of Haushofer's narrative must not cause us to overlook the covert presence within it of traces of both disaffection and anxiety. The latter is implicit in the novel's very message of reassurance. Will the world as we know it go on? This was the middle-class reader's unspoken question, the uneasy query, the moment of self-doubt, perhaps only partially acknowledged, to which Haushofer's narrative offered its reassuring answer of continuity and survival. The former, the trace of disaffection which exists in the novel, is to be found in a remark of Rudhardt's to Santen. This remark, if read as a self-reflexive comment on the novel itself, affords us a partial clue to the motives of Haushofer's catastrophism.

After praising Berlin's sophisticated public transportation system, Rudhardt observes: "Aber trotzdem beschäftigt sich die Phantasie immer mit irgend einem ungeheuerlichen Zufall, welcher plötzlich jene fünf Millionen [the population of Berlin at the end of the twentieth century] aus den gewohnten Geleisen und in die heilloseste Verwirrung bringen könnte" (11). Berlin--with its "wunderbar ausgebildeten Verkehrsmitteln"--serves Haushofer, of course, as a metaphor for modern technological civilization; and Rudhardt's fantasy of an "ungeheuerlichen Zufall" clearly foreshadows the cosmic catastrophe which occurs at the end of the novel. The sense of this passage seems clear enough: it alludes to the precariousness and fragility of man's works, no matter how advanced or sophisticated they may be. And yet--is there not also an undertone of wishful thinking in the doctor's catastrophist fantasy? Might it not, in fact, be directly related to his complaints about overcivilization and to his longing for intense, authentic experience, for "die ganze Energie des Daseins in Lust und Leid"?

If so, this affords us an interesting perspective on the psychology of Planetenfeuer itself as a fantasy of catastrophe and destruction. It suggests that the novel's catastrophism is rooted in the
author's own sense of a "furchtbare Leere im Gemütsleben der Gesellschaft." In this case, for both Haushofer and his readers, the appeal of large-scale catastrophe would have resided in its promise of filling this "furchtbare Leere" with intense, authentic experience; it would have lain in the prospect of revitalization, of the "Erneuerung unserer besten Eigenschaften," of the "Aufflammen herrlichsten Heldentums," which such an extreme situation might have brought about. The quest for release through violence and destruction from a present which is perceived as empty, barren, and inauthentic is a psychology which is familiar to us: we find it in Georg Heym's longing for war or revolution as an alternative to the deadening dullness of quotidian life in Wilhelmine Germany. We find it as well in the enthusiasm with which millions of Europeans greeted the outbreak of the First World War.\(^{38}\)

The element of wishful thinking aside, what finds expression in Rudhardt's fantasy of an "ungeheuerlichen Zufall" befalling modern urban-industrial civilization is a sense of the fragility of even seemingly the most secure and ordered existence. Indeed, informing Haushofer's narrative is a general sense of the precariousness of existence, is the recognition of the vulnerability of both the individual and the collective to chaotic, destructive forces—to, in a word, death. Death and the question of life after death are central themes in Haushofer's other writings (cf. Geschichten zwischen Diesseits und Jenseits: Ein moderner Todentanz\(^{39}\) and "Das Buch der Seelen" in An des Daseins Grenzen) and figure prominently in other sections of Planetenfeuer as well which have no direct link with the concluding cataclysm. The cosmic catastrophe described in Planetenfeuer is thus perhaps best understood simply as a metaphor for death, as yet another manifestation of the force to which Haushofer, almost obsessively, turns again and again in his writings. Such a reading has the virtue of conferring at least a degree of thematic cohesiveness on an otherwise clumsily constructed novel\(^{40}\) by tying together such episodes as Ortrud's conversation with Geigant concerning the cruel "Weltgesetz" (100), the "poetic" cemetery scene (106ff.), the meeting of Thanatognostic Society (294ff.), and Ortrud's suicide and promise to communicate with her friends from beyond the grave (331ff.).\(^{41}\)

Haushofer's ideas about death and immortality are not in themselves very interesting, and there would be little gained by discussing them in detail. What is important, however, is to recognize in his various mediationes mortis a reflection of the uncertain attempt of the
nineteenth-century liberal-humanistic bourgeois mind to come to terms with the basic existential fact of death. This had to be done without recourse to the traditional comforts afforded by Christianity and its guarantee of personal immortality, on the one hand, and without embracing a radical nihilism, on the other. To view Haushofer's concern with death in this context is not, of course, to motivate his Todesthematik in terms of some personal existential Betroffenheit; nor is it to overlook the conventional character of death and immortality as suitably edifying "poetic" themes. Haushofer's treatment of death is not, moreover, characterized by great philosophical vigor or tough-mindedness: it is, in fact, extremely sentimental and idealized. But it is perhaps precisely here—in the disproportion between the subversive potential of such themes as death and mass destruction and the sentimentalized, idealized treatment which they receive in a novel like Planetenfeuer—that the banality and evasiveness of the culture which Haushofer represents manifests itself with unmistakeable clarity.

We find this evasiveness in the idealized view of human nature and society which informs the novel's account of twentieth-century man's orderly response to catastrophe. Haushofer does not present the catastrophe as a divinely ordained and hence meaningful event. His is the secularized, godless universe of nineteenth-century materialism and positivism, and the catastrophe he describes is merely an unmotivated, morally indifferent act of nature. Haushofer's atheism and his recognition of nature's indifference to man do not, however, lead him to the nihilistic denial of all meaning and value. On the contrary, he locates meaning in man and in man's heroic assertion of his humanity in the face of nature's brutality and senselessness. "Wir müssen eben Menschen bleiben bis zu unserem Untergang" (310)—this is the central ethical idea of the novel, the "ennobling" moral of Haushofer's catastrophe story. This ethos is given fullest expression in Schrader's ringing exhortation to the readers of his Leitartikel: "Die Würde der Menschheit ist in die Hand der heute Lebenden gelegt; sie ist das Kleinod, das wir unter allen Umständen, unter dem drägenden Schrecken unbekannter Todesgefahr zu erhalten haben, um unserer selbst willen, sei es nun, daß wir den Kampf überleben oder in ihm untergehen; und um derer willen, die nach uns kommen" (203). As the repeated references elsewhere in Schrader's editorial to Pflicht—duty—show, there is a strong element of popularized Kantian ethics in the novel's heroic humanism. But, to return to the point we wish to make concerning Haushofer's
idealized view of human nature, nowhere in the novel is the reader given any cause to doubt mankind's capacity for the humanity and heroism he prescribes; nowhere in Planetenfeuer, that is, do the chaotic, destructive forces of nature unleash chaotic, destructive forces within man—as they do, for example, in the panic scenes in Kellermann's Der Tunnel or, as we shall see, in the scenes of mob violence and irrationality in Mayer's Rapanui.

Planetenfeuer was not Haushofer's only treatment of the theme of cosmic catastrophe. The novel's central motif is used again in a sketch contained in An des Daseins Grenzen. This collection of "Geschichten und Phantasien," published posthumously in 1908, promises the reader glimpses into the mysterious and sometimes terrifying realm which lies outside the confines of "normal reality" as defined by custom, religion, and science. This realm begins, as the title indicates, "at the boundaries of existence" and is the province neither of "Glaubensformeln" nor "der wissenschaftlichen Welterkenntnis" but of our fears and dreams and of the poet's fancy. But "the poet's fancy" is not, in this case, made of especially stern stuff. Haushofer was no opium-eating bohemian well-acquainted with the "margins of existence" in every sense of the word, but a successful, complacent Bildungsbürger dedicated to the cultivation of the "Schönen" in his leisure hours; and though they may have inspired like-minded readers "mit unnennbaren Hochgefühlen," the images he offers of the worlds "beyond the limits" are so idealized, sentimentalized, and trivialized that they are utterly devoid of all power "uns mit Grauen zu schütteln." Walter Hof's observation concerning the pessimism which pervades the literary culture of Germany's Bildungsbürgertum during the second half of the nineteenth century applies to Haushofer's writings as well: "Doch es sind . . . bei den Dichtern nicht die Ängste des Nihts, die empfunden werden, und sie wirken nicht in den Lebensbereich hinein, als Proberanzen der Finsternis gleichsam, wie wir sie vor allem seit Kafka kennen."

The stories and sketches in An des Daseins Grenzen are arranged in four books according to their themes: prehistory ("das Buch der Vergangenheit"); extraterrestrial life ("das Buch der Ferne"); death ("das Buch der Seelen"); and the future ("das Buch der Zukunft"). It is the eschatological fantasies of the "Buch der Zukunft" which concern us here.

Like Planetenfeuer, "Das Buch der Zukunft" betrays a pessimistically tinged agnosticism
concerning the future—that of individual nations and peoples as well as that of the species as a whole. Here Haushofer outlines, in a series of short prose sketches, various possible futures for the human race and for the planet. As we shall see, he entertains both utopian and dystopian possibilities. Common to his utopian as well as to his dystopian fantasies, however, is a sense of the finitude of civilization, of the human race, and of the world in the literal, geological and astronomical sense. In each, Haushofer describes or alludes to the end of one or all of these. The history of the planet, he reminds his readers, is one of violent natural upheavals and catastrophes; and we can only assume that mankind has been granted but a limited "Spielzeit," a "Ruhepause zwischen der letzten und der nächsten jener Umwälzungen." The length of the Spielzeit allotted man for his development, however, the nature of the catastrophes and upheavals which will bring about the end; and, most important of all, the direction man's development will take in what remains of his allotted time, whether upward or downward—these are open questions. But Haushofer lacks both the literary skill and the scientific background of an H. G. Wells, for example, and thus proves much better at raising questions than he is at imaginatively exploring the implications of the questions he has raised.

As in Planetenfeuer, the catastrophes which Haushofer depicts in "Das Buch der Zukunft" are natural and not man-made. In this respect, his little eschatological sketches are quite representative of most other fin du globe stories published before the First World War; in these, nature, not man, was usually the destroyer. Haushofer suggests a number of ways in which the world or, more narrowly, its human inhabitants and their civilization might perish. "Wenn kein Wasser mehr rauscht" describes a completely desiccated world, all of the lakes, rivers, and oceans having drained into subterranean caverns and crevices created by the cooling of the earth's interior. In "Sonnenseite" and "Die Welt im Leim," on the other hand, Haushofer alludes to a nineteenth-century astronomical theory, according to which the Earth, like the other planets, must eventually spiral back into the sun. In "Weltbrand," too, he envisions a fiery end of the world: the final conflagration occurs when a giant star "aus einem unberechenbar fernen Gebiete des Weltraumes" collides with the solar system. The world may end by ice instead of fire, however—this possibility is hinted at in "Weltherbst," his elegiac reflection on the earth's final autumn which will be followed by a "Winter, der weiß ist und todeskalt . . . ." Geological
catastrophism, too, figures in the fin du globe fantasies of An des Daseins Grenzen: in "Zertrümmerung" he presents a picture of a world wracked by centuries of earthquakes, volcanoes, floods, and violent storms. Finally, in "Zerstäubung" Haushofer entertains the queer notion that the Earth may someday disintegrate in a giant cloud of dust because of the failure of gravity—while parallels to all the other fins du globe imagined by Haushofer in "Das Buch der Zukunft" can easily be found in the science fiction of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, this seems to be his own unique contribution to cosmic thanatology.52

We can, of course, discern behind Haushofer's various end-of-the-world fantasies the dim outlines of contemporary scientific and pseudo-scientific theory and conjecture concerning the eventual fate of the planet. The possibility of planetary death through progressive desiccation ("Wenn kein Wasser mehr rauscht"), for example, is discussed in Flammarion's La fin du monde and figures prominently in the Mars theory of the American astronomer Percival Lowell, who coined the term "desertism" to describe it.53 The "geistvolle Hypothese" mentioned in "Sonnenseite" possibly alludes to a part of G. H. Darwin's theory of tidal evolution, embraced by the German astronomer and scientific popularizer M. Wilhelm Meyer and cited by H. G. Wells in his early popular scientific writings.54 The sudden destruction of the Earth through collision with another celestial body—the most dramatic and popular of the end-of-the-world scenarios—was discussed, and usually discounted, by scientists in lectures, magazine articles, and popular works on astronomy.55 And underlying the sketch "Weltherbst," finally, is perhaps the notion of a universal winter brought about by the heat death of the sun. The idea of the eventual extinction of the sun was not new, of course: it is to be found in older cosmologies and is employed in some of the last-man stories from the first part of the nineteenth century (e.g. Byron's "Darkness" [1816]). It was, however, as Wagar tells us, "revived, with closer attention to what astrophysics had to say on the subject, in many of the scientific romances of the 1890s and 1900s."56

But unlike T. H. Huxley's former student, Wells, or the professional astronomer, Flammarion, Haushofer was not in the least concerned with the scientific plausibility of his end-of-the-world visions. Nowhere does he attempt to incorporate the scientific knowledge of his day into his fiction the way, for example, Flammarion does in La fin du monde, which provides
the reader a useful summary of late-nineteenth-century astronomical and geological thought on possible ends of the world. \textsuperscript{57} Haushofer's cosmology is strictly a "poetic" one, and that in the most sentimental sense of the word. In it, planets fall back into the sun not as the result of tidal drag and diminishing centrifugal force, but because of "einer Art kosmischen Heimwehs"; \textsuperscript{58} and the heat death of the sun becomes an occasion for melancholy reflections \textit{à la} countless autumn and evening poems contained in countless gilt-edged \textit{Grönderzeit} anthologies. But the question here is not really that of poetry vs. science, but that of the difference between a literature which challenges and subverts received ideas and beliefs and one which seeks to draw a veil of genteel melancholy and ennobling beauty over the dissonances of existence. After all, Byron's "Darkness" is no more scientific than Haushofer's "Weltherbst"--nor, for that fact, is Flammarion's account in his \textit{Popular Astronomy} of a frozen, lifeless Earth orbiting a dying sun any the less "poetical." \textsuperscript{59} But while Byron fully exploits the potential of the end-of-the-world theme to make what to his contemporaries seemed a compelling statement of nihilism and despair, Haushofer strips the idea of universal extinction of its power to evoke terror and despair, his promise of "Grauen" notwithstanding, and domesticates it for the genteel sensibilities of the educated middle class.

The ultimate natural death of the Earth and solar system as described by geologists and astronomers was an intellectual given, a fact accepted by educated men in the late nineteenth century regardless of their social or political ideology. Yet to acknowledge the inevitable demise of the planet at some point in the far distant future did not answer the question of the more immediate future history of civilization and mankind. Granted that man must ultimately perish--will the development of the human race in the time remaining before its extinction be upward or downward? This question is raised, as we have seen, in \textit{Planetensfeuer}, and it occurs in the sketches of \textit{An des Daseins Grenzen}. In each instance Haushofer is ambivalent in his answer and entertains the possibility of future decline as well as that of future progress. His ambivalence, at least, would seem to set him apart from some of his more complacent and shallowly optimistic contemporaries (as well as from the pessimistic ones). Yet we must ask ourselves how serious a challenge to--or how serious a departure from--the world view of his fellow bourgeois this ambivalence about the future really was.
Haushofer takes an optimistic view of mankind's future in two of the sketches in An des Daseins Grenzen: "Weltherbst" and "Weltbrand." Informing each is a different utopian paradigm—that of the mythical natural utopia, on the one hand, and that of the man-made utopia, on the other. The central idea of "Weltherbst" is that of Reife, of ripeness and maturity, of fullness, abundance, and the richness of the harvest. Drawing on the idea of a natural utopia such as underlies the aetas aurea and Cockaigne/Schlaraffenland myths, Haushofer describes an autumnal Golden Age in which nature and man attain the highest stage of their evolutionary development. "Die letzte Wüste" is transformed into fertile "Ackerland," the thistles and thorn bushes bear "aromatische Früchte," and "das Gespenst der Not" vanishes forever. Universal plenty renders irrelevant the division between rich and poor, between bourgeois and proletarian: "Und der Weltherbst verteilt seinen Segen gleich gültig an alle." In other words, a bounteous and beneficent nature resolves the "Sozialfrage." Freed from "der Sorge um sein leibliches Dasein," man is at last able to devote himself to his spiritual and intellectual "Vervollkommnung." Indeed, civilization progresses to the point where "die Wissenschaft nichts mehr zu forschen hat und die Kunst nichts mehr zu schaffen." Alluding to the utopias described by "Politiker, Philosophen und Dichter" in their "Staatsromane," Haushofer observes that the "autumn of the world," too, is "ein utopischer Zustand." But, he implies, it manifests a much more profound and mysterious truth than do the utopian schemes of the Staatsromane, which speak to the intellect and imagination alone.

The future world Haushofer outlines in "Weltbrand," on the other hand, is just the sort of conventional progressive utopia we find in the utopian projections of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, in which the Golden Age is recovered through the efforts of Man, through scientific and technological, social and political progress. It is, in fact, a more advanced and more unambiguously eu-topian version of the world depicted in Planetenfeuer. Universal peace and brotherhood reign, and the only weapons to be found outside museums are those "die gegen Unwissenheit und Armut, gegen Krankheit und Not zu schwingen gelernt wurden." Poverty has been abolished, along with many of the other ills which plagued modern industrial society. Tiresome and menial tasks are performed by machines, while man is free to choose the occupation to which he is intellectually and temperamentally best-suited. Alienated labor is a thing
of the past "weil alles menschliche Schaffen entweder zum anmutigen, wechselreichen Spiele geworden, oder aber, wo es noch schwere Aufgaben stellt, doch durchgeistigt ist von künstlerischen Antrieben oder vom Eifer rastlos fortschreitender Erkenntnis." Medical science has found ways to prevent most diseases and to ease the suffering caused by the rest; and though death remains an ineluctable reality, man has succeeded in stripping it of its terror by partially unlocking the mysteries of the afterlife (shades of the "thanatognostische Gesellschaft" in Planetenfeuer). 62

Set against these optimistic visions of the future are the dystopian anticipations of two further sketches in An des Daseins Grenzen in which Haushofer develops the idea suggested by one of the characters in Planetenfeuer:


The two sketches referred to are "Wenn kein Wasser mehr rauscht" and "Zertrümmerung." In each Haushofer depicts the collapse of civilization and the regression of mankind into a barbarous, primitive condition as the result of secular natural catastrophes.

In "Wenn kein Wasser mehr rauscht" the secular catastrophe which brings about the decline of civilization is, as we have seen, the progressive desiccation of the Earth. Vast deserts cover the surface of the planet and have transformed the great cities of man into spectral ruins:

Es kamen Jahrtausende, in denen die Hauptstädte der Welt nach und nach zu menschenleeren Gespensterstädten wurden. Mächtige Häuserzeilen lagen da, aber niemand mehr ging in ihnen ein und aus. Kein Wagen rollte mehr über das Pflaster, keine Botschaft floh mehr durch die Dämme, die sich über den Dächern hinspannten. In Warenhallen und Häusern waren Vorräte und Gerät längst zu trockenem Staub zerfallen. In den leeren Strombetten füllten sich die Räume der letzten, trocken liegenden Schiffe mit Flugsand. Und in der Landschaft, die diese Städte umgab, sah man nichts mehr als Geröll und Klippen, um die der Wüstensturm den Staub der Vergangenheit wirbelte. Sanddünen waren streckenweise über die prachtvollen Straßen und Eisenbahnen der vergangenen Kulturzeit geweht. 63

Most of mankind has perished. The few survivors live in artificial "oases" where they work day
and night to maintain the life-giving wells; but as the water recedes ever deeper into the earth's interior, these communities too will disappear. Unable to read and write, concerned only with the grim struggle for survival, the oasis dwellers are ignorant of the glories of the vanished civilization whose ruined cities loom on the desolate horizon. At one oasis, however, the last literate man in the region has attempted to preserve—inscribed in metal tablets and on the walls of cliffs—"das Größte und Wentröstste" of the past for the day when "einmal eine junge Geschichte anhebt, wenn die Wasser wieder zu rinnen anheben und junger Wald aus den Wüsten wächst."

In "Zerüberung," too, Haushofer imagines a future in which the world's great cities are in ruins, the triumphs of modern civilization forgotten, and mankind reduced to small groups of pathetic survivors. Centuries of earthquakes, floods, volcanic eruptions, and storms put an end to the world as Haushofer's readers knew it. Millions perish in the violent convulsions of nature—"vermalmt, verzrückt, vernußt, verschwemmt, vom Erdboben verschluckt, von hagelnden Lavablöcken zerstobert;" millions more die in the "hundertjährigen Kriegen" which are fought in the desperate struggle for food. Civilization collapses completely in Europe; there is no more art, science, education, religion, or commerce; there are no more nation-states, cities, armies, laws, or social classes. Those who survive the upheavals of nature and the wars live in isolated rural settlements and villages scattered across the continent; some of them farm, but most hunt—the use and manufacture of weapons being almost the only "civilized" skill to survive the collapse. As nature reclaims what she had lost to civilization, Europe reverts to a vast, primitive wilderness—a transformation for which the overgrown ruins of what was once a major city furnish a fitting symbol:

"Der Wald und seine Bewohner werden wieder Herren über die Kultur"—the return to nature after the cataclysmic destruction of civilization is, of course, a stock theme in science fiction and the tale of the future, and it may be developed in a number of different ways. One
frequently employed strategy is to envision the post-catastrophe world in "Rousseauistic" terms as a paradisical alternative to "corrupt" civilization. The prototype of such stories is *A Crystal Age* (1887) by W. H. Hudson, who—together with his less Rousseauistic contemporary, Richard Jefferies, (*After London*, 1885)—is credited with introducing the return-to-nature theme into the tale of the future. Such "apocalyptic arcadias" are rooted in a romantic antimodernist disenchantment with contemporary reality and contain a strong element of wish-fulfillment, with respect both to the pre-industrial, arcadian future they project and to the "violent and agreeably anticipative acts of destruction" by which they put an end to the old world.67

While "Zentrümmerung" belongs, like *A Crystal Age* and *In purpurner Finsternis*, to the subgenre of return-to-nature stories, the attitude which Haushofer displays here towards nature and civilization is strikingly different from that of either Hudson or Conrad. There is not a trace of cultural primitivism in Haushofer's sketch and—on a conscious level, at least—none of the loathing for modern civilization which animates the destructive fantasies of Hudson and Conrad. Haushofer presents the destruction of civilization as a loss, as an occasion for lamentation rather than rejoicing. Moreover, there is nothing arcadian about the future wilderness which he envisions. With their wolf packs, the forests which grow up over the ruins of Europe bear little resemblance to the bucolic, pre-industrial landscapes of Hudson's England or Conrad's Nordika. Nor do his future men resemble Hudson's happy English farmers or Conrad's Fidus-esque Nordikans: illiterate, superstitious, brutal, they revert more and more to the ignoble savagery of man's prehistoric ancestors. "So leben die Menschen jener Jahrhunderte dahin," Haushofer writes, "mehr und mehr zurückfallend in jene Zeitalter, die der Weltgeschichte vorangingen." Just as he did in "Wenn kein Wasser mehr rauscht," however, Haushofer mitigates the pessimism of his vision of mankind's decline by hinting at the possibility of renewal and regeneration, of the emergence of "eine neue Gesitung . . ., frei von den blutigen Schatten der alten, strahlend, segensreich und groß."68

The scientific notion of the ultimate extinction of the planet through heat death provided some late-nineteenth-century writers a compelling image with which to articulate a general pessimism concerning the meaning of life and civilization. In a despairing passage on the vanity and illusoriness of all in which man finds value and meaning, for example, Joseph Conrad
writes: "The fate of humanity condemned to perish from cold is not worth troubling about. If you take it to heart it becomes an undurable tragedy. If you believe in improvement, you must weep, for the attained perfection must end in cold, darkness and silence." The *locus classicus* of late-nineteenth-century "cosmic pessimism," of course, is the powerful image of a dying Earth with which H. G. Wells concludes *The Time Machine*. Compared with Wells' grim evocation of "that remote and awful twilight" or with Conrad's bleak reminder of the final "cold, darkness and silence," however, there is nothing radically pessimistic or overwhelmingly final about the visions of the end which Haushofer presents in *An des Daseins Grenzen*. The end of the world, as a cosmological, natural-historical fact, has been sentimentalized, idealized, "poetically transfigured" into a fiery "Zukunft für Götter," into a "großes, schrecklich schön endendes Heldengedicht," into a "prächtiges Schaustück in der tiefblauen Weltmacht." As Wells' Time Traveller surveys the dying planet with its dull red sun, its "green slime," and its tentacled "black objects" "hopping fitfully about" by a frozen sea, he is overcome with "horror" and seized with "a deadly nausea;" Haushofer's Jovian spectators, on the other hand, experience an "andachtsvollen Schauer" as they gaze, with "strahlenden Augen," towards the disintegrating Earth.

Moreover, the various endings which Haushofer describes so poetically lack the finality they have for Wells and other writers. As we have just seen, both "Wenn kein Wasser mehr rauscht" and "Zertrümmerung" conclude with the hint of a possible renewal and rebirth of civilization. In "Die Welt im Leim" and "Nachmensch" Haushofer introduces the idea of superior beings who will inherit the Earth after humanity in its present form has disappeared. However highly evolved these "Nachwesen" may be in comparison to the current race of men, they will recognize Man as their long vanished ancestor; they will decipher the overgrown ruins of his civilizations, preserve his memory, and thus confer on him a form of immortality. "Und wer sich in den Gedanken an [die Nachmensch] versenkt," Haushofer writes, "der kann zu ihnen beten und auf sie vertrauen, daß sie in ihrer rätselhaften Schönheit und Größe seine Verjüngung und Emeuerung werden." Even those sketches which depict the end of the world in the literal sense are informed by the idea of universal transformation and transfiguration, by the notion an eternal, cosmic process of "stirb und werde." In "Weltbrand," for instance, the
collision of a giant star with the solar system fuses the Earth and all the other planets "zu einem riesigen Flammenkörper, zu einem feurigen Quell neuen Lebens, junger Schöpfungskraft." In "Zerstörung" one of the Jovians who observes the disintegration of the Earth proclaims: "Wohin auch die zersprühenden und zerstäubenden Reste vom stofflichen und geistigen Bestande jenes Gestirnes sich verlieren: irgendwo im großen Gang ihrer künftigen Schicksale finden sie Ähnlichkeiten, finden sie einen Spielraum, um das Beste und Edelste von dem, was einst in ihrem Erdenleben sie trieb und besteuerte, wieder zu erneuern."75

Verjüngung, Eneuerung, Quell neun Lebens--survival, in other words, not annihilation, is Haushofer's concern in these end-of-the-world sketches. Underlying them is the notion of a continuous process of destruction and creation, a process which occurs on both a planetary and a cosmic scale. We find this idea in various older mythologies and religions, of course: Haushofer's "feuriger Quell neuen Lebens," for example, recalls the universal conflagration which in certain mythological cosmologies prepares the way for a new creation.76 But we also encounter it in secularized form in the popular scientific literature of the 1890's and 1900's. In Flammarion's Popular Astronomy, for instance, the ancient belief in cosmic conflagration and renewal finds expression in the language of modern astronomy and scientific cosmology: "The stars will rise from their ashes. The collision of ancient wrecks causes new flames to burst forth, and the transformation of motion into heat creates nebulae and worlds. Universal death shall never reign."77 As Flammarion's last sentence indicates, there was an attempt during the nineteenth century to derive from the cold facts and theories of modern science the comfort and consolation in the face of death which religion, especially Christianity with its doctrine of personal immortality, had traditionally provided. This consolatory moment is clearly present in Haushofer's fin du monde sketches, too, with their promise of renewal and rejuvenation. As was noted above, the question of death and the afterlife was a central thematic concern--indeed, preoccupation--of Haushofer's; and the eschatological fantasies of An des Daseins Grenzen are, in a sense, but variations on this theme.

What is the significance of Haushofer's catastrophist or end-of-the-world fantasies? It is tempting to answer this question by referring simply to the epochal "fin du globe" feeling which
Bergonzi finds expressed in the early writings of H. G. Wells. "The fin de siècle mood produced, in turn," Bergonzi writes, "the feeling of fin du globe, the sense that the whole elaborate intellectual and social order of the nineteenth century was trembling on the brink of dissolution." Even if we agree that this is, in fact, what Haushofer's catastrophism expresses, several questions would still have to be answered. To what social, political, cultural, and economic factors, for example, was this sense of imminent dissolution due? What was the sociology of the fin du globe feeling Bergonzi invokes? In which social groups was it to be found? What world did they sense to be ending and what were their attitudes towards such an event?

In his 1972 study, Science Fiction in Deutschland, Manfred Nagl attempts to answer at least some of these questions by offering a social-psychological explanation for the end-of-the-world stories written around 1900. He suggests that these stories be viewed not just as an expression of the fin-de-siècle feeling of members of the "Oberschicht" but as "ein Indiz für ein allgemeineres Angstsyndrom der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft um die Jahrhundertwende." Among the several causes of this pervasive anxiety which Nagl mentions are a sense of powerlessness and mystification vis-à-vis the "irrational rationality" of modern society; loss of status and financial power by certain segments of the bourgeoisie; fear of socialism; and anxiety resulting from rivalries among the imperialist powers. Such end-of-the-world stories (indeed, all science fiction) are, moreover, politically reactionary: they are anti-socialistic; they glorify an "aristokratische Untergangsbereitschaft;" they mystify historical processes by explaining catastrophe in terms of "autonom-anonymen Mächten;" in short, they serve the "direkten politischen Indoktrination zugunsten der bürgerlichen Reaktion." As examples of this class of stories, Nagl cites, inter alia, Planetenfeuer and An des Daseins Grenzen; further, he illustrates the reactionary character of turn-of-the-century Weltuntergangsliteratur by quoting certain passages from Planetenfeuer which express elitist, anti-democratic, and mildly nationalist sentiments.

Nagel's account of the end-of-the-world literature written around 1900 is not altogether satisfactory. First, it is too easy and too simplistic to dismiss works such as Planetenfeuer and An des Daseins Grenzen as "reactionary." To be sure, Haushofer was, as we have seen, in
fundamental agreement with the basic social and political structure of the Reich. He believed in private property, was opposed to the Social Democrats, and viewed reform rather than revolution as the answer to the Sozialfrage. He displayed a typically vulgäridealistische tendency to overemphasize "the Higher" and to underemphasize the importance of the material conditions of life. He had, as the chapter "Ein Frauenkongreß" in Planetenfeuer shows, grave reservations about feminism. Indeed, it is not a difficult task at all to identify in Haushofer's writings the anti-democratic, Social Darwinistic attitudes and sentiments which were characteristic of much of European bourgeoisie during the second half of the nineteenth century. Nonetheless, the conservative character of his world view should not blind us to his refusal, implicit in Planetenfeuer, of some of the more extremist tendencies in Imperial politics during the 1890's.

As was noted above, for example, Santen's retrospective history of the twentieth century contains an oblique criticism of the truly reactionary measures (the Subversion and Penitentiary Bills) which the Emperor and the Conservatives attempted to enact against the Social Democrats during the so-called Ära Stumm.likewise, when viewed against the background of the Flottenpolitik, the Weltpolitik, and the radical nationalism of the 1890's, Schrader's editorial on the European "Friedensfest"--with its emphasis on restraint and international cooperation and with its implicit repudiation of Kolonialpolitik--can be read as Haushofer's plea for restraint in his own time and as a caution against the aggressive foreign policy then being pursued by the Imperial government. Finally, the striking absence of any mention of the Kaiser in Haushofer's account of late-twentieth-century Germany strongly suggests that the author may have entertained serious doubts if not about the throne itself, then certainly about its current occupant. Such moments of dissent do not, of course, add up to a radical critique of the Kaiserreich; but in a historical reading of the book, we must acknowledge them and take them seriously.

Secondly, Nagel's attempt at a social-psychological explanation of works like Planetenfeuer is as schematic, a priori, and unhistorical as is their blanket dismissal as "reactionary." The generalizations he makes about the "sociogenesis" and ideological function of turn-of-the-century German Weltuntergangsliteratur are supported neither by close readings of representative texts nor by detailed information about author/reader sociology. As we can see from the examples of Conrad and Haushofer, the end-of-the-world theme in the speculative
fiction of the Jahrhundertwende can manifest quite different meanings, motivations, attitudes, values, and concerns. It can express radical disaffection and the longing for violent upheaval; it can reveal fundamental assent to the status quo and offer the reassurance of continuity; or indeed, it can mingle elements of each and gratify both the need for stability and the desire for destructive release. In order to understand this complex range of functions, meanings, and motivations manifest in the eschatological and catastrophist fiction of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, however, we must avoid such schemata as those employed by Nagel and seek instead to convey for each work a sense of context, of historical specificity, of ambiguity and nuance.

We have suggested above that by its very message of reassurance, Planetenfeuer implies a degree of uneasiness and anxiety on the part of the author and his readers. Without invoking a category as imprecise as Nagel's "allgemeines Angstsyndrom der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft," we can readily identify several aspects of Haushofer's historical situation which might have produced in him and in other members of his social group an uneasy fin du globe feeling, a sense that their world was ending. Haushofer was, to borrow Fritz Ringer's term, a German "mandarin," a representative of "the traditional noneconomic upper middle class of officials, professional men, and academics." "During much of the nineteenth century," Ringer writes, this group "had played a predominant role in the political, social, and cultural life of the nation, and its leadership was now [i.e., in the 1890's] in effect being challenged."82 This challenge came from a number of quarters. Politically, it came not only from the Social Democrats but also from agrarian, Mittelstand, and nationalist pressure groups as mass politics began to reshape the Wilhelmine Right.83 Culturally, the mandarins saw their traditional aesthetics, their epigonal cultivation of the "ewig Schönen" coming under sharp attack from an unruly literary and artistic avant-garde: in the last two decades of the nineteenth century, Munich was, of course, one of the centers of artistic and literary rebellion in Germany; and Haushofer was, as we know, a representative, albeit a minor one, of that middle-class literary culture against which Michael Georg Conrad and his fellow Jüngstdeutschen directed their diatribes. There was, moreover, among the mandarins a general sense of cultural crisis which mirrored their fears and misgivings about the effects of modern industrial civilization on the intellectual and spiritual life of the nation.84 As we have seen, the "moderne Seelennot," the "nervöse Unzufriedenheit mit dem
Dasein," the "furchtbare Leere im Gemütsleben der Gesellschaft" which characterize the futuristic society that Haushofer describes in Planetenfeuer echo this feeling of cultural crisis.

In several respects, then, the world of a liberal bourgeois like Haushofer was, in fact, coming to an end during the 1890's. It seems perfectly natural, therefore, that we should read the catastrophist/end-of-the-world fantasies of Planetenfeuer and An des Daseins Grenzen as symbolic expressions of Haushofer's sense of this ending. But a word of caution is in order. Though plausible, such an interpretation is by no means conclusive. Without further evidence of a personal, biographical nature, we have no way of knowing whether Haushofer actually had the sense of ending which we have postulated on the basis of his social and class background. Other, equally plausible explanations for Haushofer's catastrophism can be offered. His fascination with catastrophe, ruin, and destruction could, for example, be a matter of purely private rather than social psychology and could, like perhaps his preoccupation with individual death and immortality as well, have its roots in some private tragedy or loss.\textsuperscript{85} Since the catastrophes and cataclysms he envisions are natural rather than social or political, his texts themselves provide no clues one way or the other.
Notes

1. For biographical information about Haushofer, see the article by A. Dreyer in Biographisches Jahrbuch und Nekrolog, vol. 12 (1909); the article "Max Haushofer" by Carry Brachvogel in Das litterarische Echo: Halbmonatsschrift für Litteraturfreunde 9 (October 1906): 6-13; and the booklet by Oskar Hey, Max Haushofer Der Dichter (Stuttgart: J. G. Cotta'sche Buchhandlung Nachfolger, 1907). Brief entries on Haushofer are also to be found in the Brockhaus Konversations-Lexikon (1893) and in the Handwörterbuch der Staatswissenschaften (1923). Haushofer's son, Karl, the general and geopolitician, offers some interesting private glimpses into his father's life in his memoirs; see Hans-Adolf Jacobsen, Karl Haushofer: Leben und Werk (Boppard am Rhein: Boldt, 1979), vol. 1, Lebensweg, 1869-1940 und ausgewählte Texte zur Geopolitik.

2. During his student years Haushofer was in regular contact with "Das Krokodil," the literary club associated with the "Münchner Dichterkreis" around Geibel and later Heyse. Haushofer was also a good friend of the novelist Felix Dahn, who had taught him at the university and whose autobiography contains reminiscences of Haushofer and his elder brother Karl.

3. E. g., Das deutsche Kleingewerbe in seinem Existenzkampfe gegen die Großindustrie (1885); Die Ehefrage im Deutschen Reich (1895); Lehr- und Handbuch der Statistik in ihrer neuesten wissenschaftlichen Entwicklung (1882); Der moderne Sozialismus (1896); Grundzüge der politischen Ökonomie, 3d rev. ed. (1894). Most of Haushofer's writings are on economic, social, and political questions are not written for specialists but for a more general audience and consist of textbooks, handbooks, primers, and articles in such solidly middle-class periodicals as Westermanns Monatshefte, Deutsche Revue, and Velhagen & Klasings Monatshefte. The reviewer of Haushofer's socialism book for the Social Democratic Die neue Zeit is justifiably contemptuous of the intellectual level of Haushofer's writings on economics and politics (see note 28 below).

4. Hey, Max Haushofer, 14.

5. On Der ewige Jude, see George K. Anderson, The Legend of the Wandering Jew
6. Hey, Max Haushofer. 4. See also Brachvogel's characterization of Haushofer's work in Das literarische Echo.


8. Haushofer, Planetenfeuer: Ein Zukunftsroman (Stuttgart: J. G. Cotta'sche Buchhandlung Nachfolger, 1899); An des Daseins Grenzen: Geschichten und Phantasien, 2d ed. (Stuttgart: Beck, 1908). References to Planetenfeuer will be made within the text.

9. Marked in Germany by the protectionism of the late 1870s and the social legislation of the 1880s. See note 12 below.

10. In the formally open, i. e., unresolved debate between Santen and Rudhardt on the better form of economic organization, the novel manifests an ambivalence towards the state which was a characteristic of German liberal thought since the early 1800s. The state was both condemned as an instrument of repression and celebrated as an agency of progress and reform. On this, see James J. Sheehan, German Liberalism in the Nineteenth Century (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 35-43.

11. For a discussion of the liberalism of the 1860s and 1870s in a general European context and of the reaction against it in the 80s, see Carlton J. Hayes, A Generation of Materialism: 1871-1900 (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), chaps. two and six.

12. On the various forms which the reaction against economic liberalism took in Germany, see, inter alia, Karl Erich Born, Staat und Sozialpolitik seit Bismarcks Sturz: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der innenpolitischen Entwicklung des deutschen Reiches, 1890-1914 (Wiesbaden: F. Steiner, 1957), chapter three ("Kräfte und Ideen der Sozialpolitik"), 33-83; Hans Rosenberg, Große Depression und Bismarckzeit: Wirtschaftsablauf, Gesellschaft und Politik in Mitteleuropa (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1967), especially the section on the "Diskreditierung des Liberalismus" after the Crash of 1873 (62-78) and chaps. five and six on protectionism and social legislation; and Walther Vogel, Bismarcks Arbeiterversicherung: Ihre Entstehung im Kräftepiel der Zeit (Braunschweig: G. Westermann, 1951).


16. Ibid., 15.

17. See his discussion of "Sozialreform" and state socialism, ibid., 54-69, and especially his enumeration of the "Schattenseiten" of the latter on p. 69.


20. Haushofer incorporates into his depiction of decadent late-twentieth-century society a number of elements familiar to us from the catalogue of vices and cultural ills of the fin de siècle. Complaints about neurasthenia, the artificiality of modern civilization, the spiritual emptiness of modern life, the hectic pace of life in the modern big city, and so on were, for example, cultural-critical commonplace around the turn of the century. The pathological religious practices of Schrader's wife are strongly reminiscent of decadent fin-de-siècle religiosity and mysticism (just as Haushofer's description of Frau Schrader's self-flagellation owes something to similar scenes in the literature of decadence). The widespread use of narcotics depicted in *Planetenfeuer* clearly alludes to the popularity of drugs among certain members of the middle and upper classes towards the end of the nineteenth century, a sociological fact which led Max Nordau to suggest that "ether, chloral, naphtha, and hashish" dens would take the place of "the present taverns" in
the twentieth-century. See Nordau, Degeneration, 7th ed. (New York: D. Appleton, 1895), 538. In addition to the drugs mentioned by Nordau, opium, morphine, cocaine, and barbiturates such as veronal were widely used, in various forms and preparations, at the turn of the century. I have not been able to find any information on the use of narcotics in Wilhelmine Germany, but the description of drug use in France in Eugen Weber, France: Fin de Siècle (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1986), 31-36, may help to give some idea of the corresponding phenomenon in Germany. A late-nineteenth-century French source cited by Weber suggests that Germany may have been even more advanced than France in the social use of narcotics (36). Contemporary demographics provide no support for the novel's vision of a future global depopulation. Here Haushofer is not extrapolating from present trends. On the contrary, the trend was towards greater population growth, as shown by the fact that the population of Germany increased two and a half times from 1850 to 1813. See Knut Borchardt, "Germany, 1700-1914," in The Emergence of Industrial Societies, vol 4., pt. 1 of The Fontana Economic History of Europe, ed. Carlo M. Cipolla (London: Collins/Fontana, 1973), 121.


22. The reference is to the tragic aristocratic hero in Schiller's Kabale und Liebe (1784). A late product of the Sturm und Drang, Schiller's bürgerliches Trauerspiel serves Haushofer as a symbol for the emotional intensity and authenticity missing from contemporary life. (Haushofer conveniently overlooks the play's social-critical and indeed revolutionary implications.)

23. On turn-of-the-century cultural pessimism, see—in addition to such classic studies of German cultural pessimism and antimodernism as Fritz Stern's The Politics of Cultural Despair (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1961) and George L. Mosse's The Crisis of German Ideology (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1964)—T. J. Jackson Lears, No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1920 (New York: Pantheon, 1981). Although Lears' subject is American society, his book can be read profitably by students of German culture as well. It offers a far more comprehensive and subtle account of fin de siècle
antimodernism and cultural pessimism than anything written about Germany (including the
studies by Stern and Mosse) and could well serve as a model for a similar study devoted to
turn-of-the-century German culture. I have found certain of Lear's terms and concepts such as
the "quest for authenticity" and the "evasiveness of bourgeois culture" very helpful and have not
hesitated to appropriate them for my discussion of Conrad and Haushofer.

24. In the section of his commentary on the Erfurt Program entitled "Der Staatssozialismus
und die Sozialdemokratie," Karl Kautsky set forth the official Party position on state socialism:
"Wie jedes Staatswesen ist auch der moderne Staat in erster Linie ein Werkzeug zur Wahrung der
Gesamtinteressen der herrschenden Klassen. Es ändert nichts an diesem seinem Wesen, wenn er
gemeinnützige Funktionen übernimmt, die nicht bloß im Interesse der herrschenden Klassen
allein, sondern den der ganzen Gesellschaft gelegen sind. Er nimmt diese Funktionen oft nur
deswegen auf sich, weil ihre Vernachlässigung mit dem Bestand der Gesellschaft auch den der
herrschenden Klassen gefährden würde, auf keinen Fall besorgt er aber diese Funktionen in einer
Weise, die den Gesamtinteressen der oberen Klassen widerspricht oder gar deren Herrschaft
bedrohen könnte." See Das Erfurter Programm: In seinem grundsätzlichen Teil erläutert von Karl
Kautsky, with an introduction by Suzanne Miller, 17th ed. (1922; reprint, Hannover: J. H. W.
Dietz, 1964), 124-125. On the Social Democratic position on state socialism, see Vernon L.
Lidtke, The Outlawed Party: Social Democracy in Germany, 1878-1890 (Princeton, New Jersey:
Princeton University Press, 1966), chap. six ("Invitation from the Right: State Socialism and
Social Democracy"), and Reinhard Jansen, George von Vollmar: Eine politische Biographie
(Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 1958), 44-47.

25. On the political arrangements of the Second Kaiserreich, see Gordon A. Craig,
Structure of the Empire").

26. See, for example, the chapter entitled "Politisches" (172 ff.).

27. Such as the Bill of Subversion (1894) and the Penitentiary Bill (1899).

Haushofer's book with justified contempt: Haushofer's arguments are derived from the "Arsenal
der fadesen Vulgarökonomie" (633); they represent "Variationen über allbekannte Themata, wie
29. In the *System of the World* (1796), the French mathematician and astronomer Laplace rejects the superstitious belief in comets as signs of divine wrath. He goes on to describe the effects of a cometary collision with the Earth, the probability of which he suggests is quite small. On Laplace's discussion of comets, see Carl Sagan and Ann Druyan, *Comet* (New York: Random House, 1985), 276-277. In *La fin du monde*, Flammarion quotes the relevant passage from Laplace: "The Earth's axis and rotary motion changed; the oceans abandoning their old-time beds, to rush toward the new equator; the majority of men and animals overwhelmed by this universal deluge, or destroyed by the violent shock; entire species annihilated; every monument of human industry overthrown; such are the disaster which might result from collision with a comet." This passage, which Sagan and Druyan also cite, is taken from the 1894 English translation of Flammarion, *Omega: The Last Days of the World* (reprint, New York: Arno Press, 1975), 37-38.


32. Bergonzi, *The Early H. G. Wells*, 76. Bergonzi refers to Max Nordau's *Entartung* (Berlin, 1892-93). Nordau considered his age to be in the grips of "a sort of black death of degeneration and hysteria." One manifestation of this "severe mental epidemic" was the sense of imminent doom cited by Bergonzi. (Nordau quotes are from *Degeneration*, 537.) A student of the Italian psychologist and criminologist, Cesare Lombroso, Nordau attempted, in a pseudo-scientific critique of turn-of-the-century culture, to demonstrate that much of the art and literature of the period had to be viewed as a product of mental and physical degeneration.


37. Gary K. Wolfe, "The Remaking of Zero: Beginning at the End," in Rabkin, The End of the World, 1-19. Wolfe's discussion of this mythic function of end-of-the-world fiction is on pp. 7-8. As we shall see below, survival, not annihilation, is the theme of Haushofer's later eschatological fantasies as well. In these, however, the notion of survival is generalized and refers not to the survival of a specific society or nation but to that of the human race or even of intelligent life itself.

Linking the fashionable pessimism of the late nineteenth century with enthusiastic embrace of war in 1914, he writes: "In der dumpfen Lust, die breite Kreise angesichts pessimistischer Gemeinplätze empfanden, tut sich un- oder halbbewußt das Leiden am Verlust der kategorischen Welt und das Unbehagen an der Existenz in einer hypothetischen kund. in der man nur den Zerfall des Alten, nichts Eigenes, Selbstwertiges zu sehen vermag. Von hier aus versteht man den Begeisterungsausbruch, mit dem der erste Weltkrieg begrüßt wurde, die metaphysischen Deutung, die er sogleich erfuhr--war er doch nach der 48er Revolution und der Gründung des Kaiserreichs der dritte und universalste Ausbruch ins Politische, das noch einmal in Gestalt des 'Großen Kriegs' als das Rettende erschien, als das neue Kategorische oder als das, was ihm die Bahn bereiten konnte." Walter Hof, *Der Weg zum heroischen Pessimismus: Pessimismus und Nihilismus in der deutschen Literatur von Hammerling bis Benn* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1974), 69.


40. In a review of *Planeteneifer* along with two other contemporary novels of the future, Leo Berg aptly characterizes Haushofer's novel as a "**compositum mixtum** von allerlei Hintertreppen- und Verbrecher-Romantik, eine Durchausandersschachtelung von mindestens sechs Romanen, die zum Teil auch äußerlich kaum zusammenhängen, . . . die alle nichts mit einander und schon gar nichts mit der Weltkatastrophe zu thun haben." See Leo Berg, "Der Zukunftsroman," *Das literarische Echo* 2 (November 1899): 159-165, here 164.

41. The theme in each of these episodes is death and the possibility of some form of survival after death. Ortrud justifies her cynicism and inconstancy as kind of emotional armor against the eventual loss of the beloved other: "Wenn zwei Leute sich heiß und innig geliebt haben, zehn, zwanzig, dreißig Jahre lang, und der unerbittlicher Tod reißt sie dann gnadenlos auseinander und stäubt ihre Atome durch Weltenfernen hin, ist das etwa eine Mahnung zur Treue?" (100). During a stroll though a Munich cemetery, described as a "wunderbar poetische Stätte mitten im Lärm der modernen Stadt" (106), Rudhardt and Santen encounter an old woman seated at the grave of her long dead husband. She exemplifies precisely the "Treue" of which Ortrud is incapable. "Diese Frau ist vielleicht nicht so sehr zu bedauern, als du glaubst," Santen tells his friend. "Die Trauer um den Toten war durch siebenundfünfzig Jahre die Nahrung ihres
Herzens, das Große in ihrem Leben. Und wie beneidenswert ist der Mann, der, obschon er vielleicht gar nichts Rühmenswertes geleistet hat, siebenundfünfzig Jahre hindurch so fortlebt” (108). The "Thanatognosten" attempt to use scientific methods to discover what happens to the individual after death: "Der Unsterblichkeitsfrage auf den Wegen des Experiments direkt nachzugehen, ist heute das Ziel der Thanatognosten" (295). Impressed by their efforts, Ortrud bequeathes her body to them in the belief "daß es nur noch eines Hauches von Erkenntnis bedarf, um die letzten Rätsel zu lösen, daß nur ein winziger Funke mehr aufspringen muß, um das große schlummernende Licht zu entzünden, das über den Tod hinaus leuchtet" (333).

42. Haushofer's writings illustrate certain secular responses to death which were characteristic of the nineteenth century. For instance, Ortrud's lament about death's cruel separation of lovers and the old lady's faithful vigil in the cemetery exemplify the concern with the death of the other and the cultivation of the memory of the deceased which Philippe Ariès identifies as distinctively nineteenth-century attitudes towards death. See Ariès' *Western Attitudes toward Death: From the Middle Ages to the Present* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), chap. four ("Thy Death"), and also his *The Hour of Our Death* (New York: Knopf, 1981), chap. three ("The Beautiful Death"). Haushofer's interest in the possibility of unlocking the secrets of the afterlife through scientific experimentation reveals another concern typical of especially the later nineteenth century. Hobsbawm notes "a genuine tendency to rescue the consolations of religion into the age of science" during the second half of the century. "The remarkable popularity of spiritualism, which first acquired its vogue in the 1850s, is probably due to this," he continues. "But apart from its other attractions, [spiritualism] had the considerable advantage of appearing to place survival after death on the sound basis of experimental science, perhaps even (as the new art of photography purported to prove) on that of the objective image." E. J. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Capital* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1975), 273.

43. "Friedhofsgedichte" and elegaic poems on autumn and evening, transience and death abound in the genteel "Goldschnittlyrik" of the period, the aesthetic and mentality of which inform Haushofer's writings. See Mahal's introduction to *Die Lyrik der Gründerzeit*.

44. This ethos is characteristic of the "heroic pessimism" which Walter Hof finds
exemplified in certain representative German writers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It informs, for example, the works of Haushofer’s teacher and friend, Felix Dahn, notably his enormously popular historical novel Der Kampf um Rom (1876). There we read, for example: “Edelsinn und Edelart und Heldentum kann immer den Untergang weihen, verherrlichen, nicht aber immer ihn wenden. Und nur das ist der letzte Trost: nicht was wir tragen, wie wir’s tragen, verleiht die höchste Ehre.” Quoted by Hof, Der Weg zum heroischen Pessimismus, 53.


46. Ibid., 2.

47. Walter Hof, Der Weg zum heroischen Pessimismus, 43.


49. See Saul Friedländer, "Themes of Decline and End in the Nineteenth-Century Western Imagination," in Visions of Apocalypse: End or Rebirth? ed. Friedländer et al. (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1985), 71: “Thus, during the second half of the century, the vision of total end resulting from natural processes, be they biological, geological, or cosmic, haunted men’s minds. It was at the turn of the century, however, that a new vision of catastrophe appeared, one which from its timid beginnings, has come to haunt the imagination of our own time: catastrophe through science and technology, the destruction of man by man.”


51. Ibid., 212.

52. For a survey of the various forms of natural catastrophe which have figured in end-of-the-world fiction, see W. Warren Wagar, "The Rebellion of Nature," in Rabkin, The End of the World, 138-172.

53. Flammarion, Omega, 91-97. On Lowell, see William Graves Hoyt, Lowell and Mars (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1976). Lowell’s concept of desertism, which is "the state to which every planetary body must eventually come," is discussed by Hoyt on p. 158ff. and p. 253ff.

54. In an article entitled "The ‘Cyclic’ Delusion" which was first published in 1894 in Saturday Review, Wells offers the following summary of the tidal evolution theory advanced by G. H. Darwin, the biologist’s grandson: "According to Professor G. H. Darwin, the actual
motion of a satellite is spiral; it recedes from its source and primary until a maximum distance is obtained, and thence it draws nearer again, until it reunites at last with the central body." The article is reprinted in H. G. Wells: Early Writings in Science and Science Fiction, edited with critical commentary and notes by Robert M. Philmus and David Y. Hughes (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), 110-113. Quote is on p. 112. In Der Untergang der Erde und die kosmischen Katastrophen: Betrachtungen über die zukünftigen Schicksale der Erdenwelt, 2d ed. (Berlin: Allgemeiner Verein für deutsche Litteratur, 1902), M. Wilhelm Meyer describes the final collapse of a solar system back into itself: "Je älter nun aber das ganze System wird, je mehr also die Sonne erkalmt, desto mehr rücken auch die großen Planeten zu ihr heran. Je mehr neue Energien also die Sonne bedarf, desto grössere Rationen werden ihr auch durch den Aufsturz der großen Planeten wieder zugefügt und so sehen wir, je tiefer wir in die Organisationen der Welten zu blicken vermögen, ein um so wunderbareres Ineinandergreifen aller Teile zur Erhaltung und zur Vervollkommnung des Ganzen" (325).

55. For a reliable statement of late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century scientific thought on the likelihood and effects of a cometary collision with the Earth, see Flammarion, Omega, 38-69.


57. Flammarion, Omega, 74-121.


60. On the Cockaigne/Schlaraffenland legend in the context of classical Golden Age myths, see Frank E. Manuel and Fritzie P. Manuel, Utopian Thought in the Western World (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1979), 80-81.


62. Ibid., 251, 252.

63. Ibid., 227.

64. Ibid., 231.

65. Ibid., 235, 236, and 237-238.
66. Ibid., 236.

67. See the brief discussion of these novels in I. F. Clarke's *The Pattern of Expectation: 1644-2001* (New York: Basic Books, 1979), 146-150. Quotes are on pp. 149 and 147.


74. Ibid., 264.

75. Ibid., 254, 259.


80. Ibid., 94 (note 158) and 97.

81. The *Ära Stumm* refers to period from 1895 to 1900 during which there was in
conservative circles a marked heating up of the anti-socialist rhetoric and increased lobbying for legislation directed against the Social Democrats. It is named after the militantly anti-socialist industrialist Baron Carl von Stumm-Halberg. Haushofer's name appears, incidentally, along with Michael Georg Conrad's, on a petition which was circulated in 1894 against the Bill of Subversion. See Flammende Worte des Protestes, Deutschlands Führende Geister über die Umsturzvorlage (Zürich: Caesar Schmidt, 1895). This is a collection of statements and editorials by leading writers, academics, and public figures in opposition to the bill. A statement by Haushofer appears on p. 43 and his name appears on p. 74 in the "Register von Männern der Wissenschaft, Litteratur, Kunst, von Vereinen etc. etc., die sich den Petitionen gegen die Umsturzvorlage angeschlossen."


84. On this see Ringer, The Decline of the German Mandarins, 253-304 ("The Origins of the Cultural Crisis, 1890-1920").

85. Oskar Hey alludes to the early death of Haushofer's first wife, Adelheid (Max Haushofer [14]). Her death was, one suspects, an extraordinarily painful and traumatic event for Haushofer, and his grief at her loss may be well the source of his preoccupation with death. Of course, one motivation certainly need not exclude the other. Haushofer's Todes- und Katastrophenthematik was probably determined by both individual-psychological and social-psychological factors.
Chapter Three
"Das Epos vom Eisen und der Elektrizität":

Der Tunnel by Bernhard Kellermann

Bernhard Kellermann's novel Der Tunnel was what today would be termed a "runaway bestseller": within the first month of its publication in mid-April 1913 the novel had sold ten thousand copies. By October of the same year more than one hundred thousand copies had been sold, plans had been made for a film version, translation rights were being negotiated, and, in view of the approaching Christmas season, the publisher, Samuel Fischer, was preparing to bring out a special "gift" edition at six marks a copy.¹ According to contemporary accounts, in every tram, subway car, and city train people could be seen reading Kellermann's "Reiße" and the question: "Haben Sie den 'Tunnel' gelesen?" was on everyone's lips. Among the enthusiastic readers of Kellermann's "Epos vom Eisen und der Elektrizität" was Walther Rathenau, the urbane industrialist and author of several works critical of modern "mechanized" industrial society, who told Oskar Loerke that he had read the novel in one sitting.² According to an oft-cited but apocryphal account, another Tunnel-enthusiast was a young "Kunstmaier" in Vienna, Adolf Hitler, who, on a rare visit to the cinema, saw the film version and was "beside himself" with excitement over one of the mass demonstration scenes.³

It was no wonder, de Mendelsohn observes, that Der Tunnel so fascinated the director of the AEG--for "Hier waren die Triebräfte der Zeit begriffen."⁴ And indeed, whatever its other virtues as a novel written for a mass public may have been, Der Tunnel owed its enormous popularity in large part to the fact that Kellermann had succeeded in capturing what must have seemed to many contemporaries the very essence of the modern age just dawned. Like the fictitious Edison Biograph film documentary of the tunnel project which Kellermann describes in the novel (and which we can read as a self-reflexive metaphor for the novel itself), Der Tunnel offered its spellbound readers "Szenen eines weitaus größeren und mächtigeren Dramas, dessen Held ihre Zeit war."⁵ It was the modern age itself--with its metropolises and masses, its trusts and stock markets, its Promethean technology, its Taylorism, its frenetic tempo and "Rekordwut"--that was the protagonist of Kellermann's novel. Here, in the accessible idiom of
popular fiction, were the "great crowds agitated by work, pleasure and revolt," the "arsenals and workshops beneath their violent electric moons," the "factories suspended from the clouds by the thread of their smoke," and all the other Requisten of modern industrial society invoked by Marinetti in his manifesto of 1909.\textsuperscript{6} As the success of Der Tunnel illustrates, modernity—or at least certain aspects of it—could be celebrated with equal enthusiasm, though with different motivations, by the anti-bourgeois avant-garde and by middle-class audiences as well.

Kellermann's attitude in Der Tunnel towards modern industrial-capitalist society is basically an affirmative, indeed celebratory one; what else is his vision of sparkling new cities arising from coastal marsh lands and shallows (291-292) but a re-statement of the Faustian and capitalist dream, the dream of limitless technological, economic, and social progress fueled by the ambition, greed, will-to-power of a few bold entrepreneurs? And yet there are aspects of Der Tunnel which compel us to examine the question of Kellermann's putative assent to the modern age more closely and which have given rise to contradictory critical readings of the novel.\textsuperscript{7} First, Kellermann does not neglect to depict a number of the negative features of modern industrial-capitalist society and in certain scenes charges his narrative with language and images that are rich in apparently negative connotations. Second, Kellermann employs in Der Tunnel certain topoi, such as the antitheses of Art and Technics, which have come to be associated with an anti-modernist critique of modern technological civilization. Third, a good two-fifths of the novel is concerned with the description of a terrifying natural disaster and of the subsequent period of social and economic turmoil. In view of the widespread interpretation of catastrophe in Western literature and art either as an act of judgement on a sinful and fallen world or as a humbling reminder of the fragility and vanity of human achievement, we must entertain the possibility that Kellermann likewise employs the motif of catastrophe to challenge the assumptions and achievements of the very civilization which he seemingly celebrates.\textsuperscript{8}

In short, there are in Der Tunnel suggestions of other, more critical perspectives on the modern age. Whether these perspectives compel the reader to question seriously the legitimacy of the world depicted in the novel, whether there exists any real tension between them and the epic- celebratory point of view noted above, is a question which will concern us later. For now let us simply note the presence in Der Tunnel of suggestions of alternative perspectives which,
together with Kellermann's general avoidance of explicit authorial commentary and judgment, confers on the text a kind of "openness." Thus, readers were able to bring to the novel apparently contradictory attitudes, beliefs, and prejudices and find confirmation for them in Kellermann's text. While some German readers of 1913 may, for example, have responded positively to Kellermann's invitation to admire the ruthlessness, power, and fabulous wealth of America's industrial titans, others doubtless derived from their reading of Der Tunnel reaffirmation of vague anti-capitalist sentiments and substantiation of their worst suspicions about the creeping danger of "Amerikanismus." Or again: for one set of readers the interest of the novel may have resided in Kellermann's descriptions of the negative features of work in the mechanized world of industrial capitalism; whereas for another it lay in the grandeur of the technological project which forms the centerpiece of the novel and the heroism of the engineers, technicians, and workers who execute it. That such contradictory responses can be found within the same reader goes without saying. Indeed, cultivation in the reader of a tolerance for such contradictions is an ideologically significant effect of works of popular fiction such as Der Tunnel.

Der Tunnel, in other words, had something for almost everyone, and its success was doubtless due in part at least to this open quality. But within the novel's apparent openness there are certain ideological tendencies which predominate. In the final analysis, as most critics recognize, Kellermann does glorify the achievements of industrial capitalism and reaffirm the sustaining assumptions of bourgeois society. In this regard, as well as in regard to its particular fictional mode, Der Tunnel is strongly reminiscent of the scientific romances of Jules Verne: indeed, if these represent "a logical extension of the engineering mentality of the Age of Steam," then Kellermann's "scientific romance" exemplifies, we might say, "the engineering mentality of the Age of Electricity and Speed." Reproducing widely-held beliefs in the benefactions of capitalism and technological progress, both Verne's novels and Kellermann's Der Tunnel provided their respective readerships with what A. P. Foukes, drawing on Ellul's distinction between agitational and integrative propaganda, would term "capitalist integration myths."

In order to understand the significance of Der Tunnel for contemporary German readers,
however, we must not stop with general characterizations such as "capitalist integration literature." We must attempt to situate the work in its specific historical context by identifying those aspects of the historical situation which can help us to account for the resonance Der Tunnel found with the German public as well as by examining those components of the novel which Kellermann's readers may have perceived as responses to their immediate historical situation. Among the historical factors which helped facilitate the novel's reception doubtless one of the most significant was the hardening of attitudes among the industrial bourgeoisie and allied groups which had been profoundly unsettled by the parliamentary "Rück nach links" in the election of 1912. This was manifested, inter alia, in the renewed vigor of the Right's attacks on "Sozialpolitik" as well as in its increasingly militant stance towards working-class "Terrorismus" (as strikes were described in the right-wing press); in the "Ruf nach dem starken Mann" which was to be heard on the Right with ever increasing volume; and in what was described in the reform-oriented Soziale Praxis as "eine einseitige Verherrlichung der freien Unternehmerpersönlichkeit." Two additional elements in the historical context which bore on the reception of Der Tunnel were the 1912 Ruhr miners' strike, memories of which were still fresh in readers' minds in the spring of 1913; and the recession of 1913-1914, which, in the months following publication of Der Tunnel, would inspire some journalists to dire warnings of "Sturm und herannahenden Katastrophen."

It is against this background that we must read Der Tunnel if we wish to have the full ideological significance of the novel emerge. In this respect, a careful examination of Kellermann's treatment of the theme of social and economic upheaval in Der Tunnel will prove especially helpful in illuminating the basic affinity between the ideology of the text and the militant attitudes of the industrial bourgeoisie and their allies towards the working class which were noted above. Further, it will reveal how Kellermann appeals to and reinforces the political "demonology" of the Right by organizing his plot around the conflict between a good bourgeois engineer and the stereotypical enemies of the middle-class, i.e., the "fanatical" worker and the rootless Jew. Finally, it will show how Kellermann plays on middle-class fears of social and economic instability only in the end--like Haushofer in another context--to offer his readers a reassuring myth of the resilience and survivability of bourgeois society.
The outlines of Kellermann's rather breathless story are easily sketched. Mac Allan, an American engineer whom good fortune, pluck, and talent have elevated from anonymous pony-handler in a coal mine to successful and respected industrialist, conceives the plan of constructing a submarine tunnel between America and Europe. Such a tunnel, the reader is asked to believe, is well within the technological capacity of the period depicted in the novel, and Allan's first problem is financial rather than technical in nature: he must secure the backing necessary for his project. He first wins the support of the railroad magnate and banker, C. H. Lloyd; with Lloyd as his powerful ally, Allan is then able to interest other members of America's plutocratic elite, who recognize at once the project's potential for enormous profits. Work on the tunnel proceeds at a frenzied pace, but progress is slower than anticipated. There are accidents and set-backs, to be sure, but these are relatively minor in scope.

In the fall of the seventh year, however, a major disaster occurs in the American shafts in which close to three thousand workers perish. The aftermath of the "October catastrophe" is disastrous both for Allan personally and for the project: his wife and child are killed the day of the catastrophe by a violent mob of angry and vengeful workers' wives; and the American workers, terrified at the prospect of going back into the tunnel, strike and are soon joined in their strike by the workers at the Atlantic and European stations. In spite of the syndicate's and Allan's best efforts to persuade the workers to return to their jobs, they refuse and Allan responds by dismissing two hundred thousand striking workers, an act which provokes a mass demonstration through the streets of New York. Contrary to expectation, the demonstration takes place without violence. Work on the tunnel, however, is at a complete standstill. Thanks to the genius of the financial director, a Central European Jew named S. Woolf, the financial collapse of the syndicate is avoided. After several months abroad in mourning, Allan recovers his old resolve and orders work on the tunnel to resume: "Durch die finsteren Stollen unterm Meer zuckte ein belebender Strom: Allan hatte das Steuer wieder in die Hand genommen" (206). He enters into negotiations with the unions which, unable to maintain the strike much longer, soon agree to resume work. This is not to be, however: a scandal involving the misappropriation of syndicate funds by the syndicate's financial director precipitates a world-wide financial panic. The crisis is exacerbated by often bloody confrontations between labor and capital until finally a general strike
by the workers of all the industrial nations plunges the civilized world into chaos: "Gegen Weihnachten waren die großen Städte, Chicago, New York, London, Paris, Berlin, Hamburg, Wien, Petersburg, vollkommen ohne Licht und in Gefahr, ausgehungert zu werden. Die Menschen froren in ihren Wohnungen, und was schwach und elend war, ging zugrunde. Täglich gab es Feuersbrünste, Plünderungen, Sabotage, Diebstahl. Das Gespenst der Revolution drohte . . ." (240). The headquarters of the Atlantic Tunnel Syndicate is stormed by panicked shareholders; and the syndicate, which had been kept afloat till now by Lloyd's massive credit advancements, finally collapses. "Es war die traurigste und elendste Zeit seit hundert Jahren," the narrator sums up. "Die Welt war um zwanzig Jahre in ihrer Entwicklung zurückgeworfen" (256).

Once a mass idol, Allan is now denounced by his former admirers as "der größte Gauner aller Zeiten" (255). He is tried and convicted of fraud and sent to prison. After two appeals, the verdict—which has more to do with public opinion and political pressure (and, it is intimated, bribery) than with justice—is overturned and he is released. Embittered, Allan secludes himself in Mac City and from there attempts to raise capital for the resumption of work on the tunnel. After numerous fruitless efforts to enlist the support of the American government, Big Business, and even of Lloyd himself for the tunnel, Allan, to whom the completion of the tunnel project is more important than all else ("Das Projekt war sein Leben!" [18]), enters into a marriage of convenience with Lloyd's daughter. She proves to be a woman of character and intelligence and not the frivolous schemer Allan suspects. Financed by Lloyd's billions, work on the tunnel resumes: "Die große Maschine, die sich seit der Krise langsam dahingeschleppt hatte, zog mit einem plötzlichen Ruck an" (288). The world begins to recover from crisis, and work on the tunnel is soon proceeding at its old feverish tempo as though nothing had happened: "Streik, Katastrophe--alles war vergessen!" (289). At each of the five tunnel stations, on new land created from the coastal marshes, shallows, and reefs, spectacular new cities arise, "vorgeschobene Forts des amerikanischen Geistes, gepanzert mit Willenskraft und angefüllt mit Aktivität" (292). In the twenty-fourth year of the project, the Atlantic shafts meet and the link between the Old and New World is made. Two more years of preparation follow; and finally, twenty-six years after the beginning of the project, Allan's tunnel is complete and the first transatlantic train races from New Jersey to France. The tunnel is a triumph of Technology and Capitalism, and it is
appropriate that the first passenger of the "America-Europe-Flyer" should be none other than Lloyd himself: "Nicht ein Kaiser oder König, nicht der Präsident der Republik, die Großmacht Lloyd, das Geld war der erste Passenger!" (301).

The world in which these events occur is only nominally a futuristic one. In its essence, the world Kellermann depicts is, as Krysmanski, Ilberg, and other critics have observed, identical with his own. More precisely, it is identical with the urbanized, industrialized world which had been taking shape in Germany (and elsewhere in Europe) since the 1880s and which, to the European observer, was embodied in its purest form in American society and culture. America was the accepted metaphor for modernity, and it is thus not surprising that Kellermann should choose to set his story here, albeit in a fictive, larger-than-life America.

As it is envisioned in Der Tunnel, this "Americanized" world is energized by three forces: money, technology, and the urban masses. These were the "Triebkräfte der Zeit" which, according to de Mendelssohn, the novel so vividly captured for contemporary readers. It is around these three Triebkräfte that the novel's key themes and motifs are clustered. In Kellermann's treatment of the first two, moreover, there is a potential Ansatz to a critique of modern technological civilization, a reminiscence of a world which was rapidly vanishing before the advance of urban-industrial modernity. Thus, an examination of the way Kellermann treats these three driving forces of modernity in Der Tunnel will not only allow us to identify the novel's central themes and motifs but will also enable us to determine to what extent, if any, the narrative bears within itself values and attitudes that challenge the world which it apparently celebrates. Let us look at the novel's treatment of each force in turn.

Money. Kellermann might well have subtitled his novel "The Power of Money in Bourgeois Society" for this is surely one of its major themes. The dominant role of money in capitalist society is given symbolic expression in the opening scene of the novel, where, in the description of a gala concert at Madison Square Garden, the world of high finance and business is counterposed to the world of art: whispered business dealings ("... zwanzig Prozent Dividende, Mann! Es ist ein Geschäft, wie es glänzender..." (8)) compete with the melodies of the "alten, längst vermoderten Meister" (6). The account a few pages later of the effect which the entrance of a beautiful young heiress has on the audience leaves no doubt which of the two rival
forces, art or capital, is the more powerful. The heiress, Ethel Lloyd, arrives after the concert has already begun; she is wearing the spectacular "Rosy Diamond":


At the close of the novel Kellermann underscores the point made in this opening scene by having Ethel's father, C. H. Lloyd, ride as the first and only passenger on the inaugural journey of Allan's America-Europe-Flyer: "Nicht ein Kaiser oder König, nicht der President der Republik, die Großmacht Lloyd, das Geld, war der erste Passagier!" (301). The world which Kellermann describes in Der Tunnel, in other words, is one in which older institutions and values have grown weak in power and influence and their place has been usurped by capital.

This new force, capital, is personified by the aging railway magnate Lloyd, a character modelled on the great entrepreneurs of late nineteenth and early twentieth century America such as J. P. Morgan and Jay Gould. Lloyd is the real power behind the scenes: in the final analysis, even Allan and his project are but playing pieces on Lloyd's game board ("... und dieser Allan glaubte zu schieben und wurde geschoben" [43]). Lloyd's seemingly limitless wealth and resources confer on him an almost divine omnipotence and omnipresence: "Denn es handelte sich hier um noch etwas, es handelte sich hier um Lloyd und um keinen anderen als Lloyd den Allmächtigen, der wie ein goldenes Gespenst, schaffend und vernichtend, über den Erdball schritt" (43). Evidence of that god-like power and presence of money in modern society to which the epithet "almighty" and the cliché of the "golden specter" astride the globe in the preceding citation allude confronts the reader on nearly every page of Der Tunnel. Such evidence is to be found, for example, in the novel's haute monde settings with their tantalizing images of fabulous wealth and luxury; in the glimpses Kellermann offers into the workings of international high finance; in the innumerable references to money, from the smallest amount to the most dazzling sums; in the occasional allusions to the venality of the press and other opinion-makers as well of the legal system. Indeed, such is the power and promise of money in Kellermann's fictive world that even small amounts of it appear to the anonymous mass men who inhabit that world to be
their only hope of a truly human existence: "Eine Handvoll [Geld]--soviel sie mit einer Hand
packen konnten! --, und sie, die Nummern, Motoren, Automaten, Maschinen waren: Menschen"
(91).

What attitude does the narrative invite the reader to take towards this "goldene Gespenst"
whose presence is felt everywhere in the modern world? The novel depicts two alternative realms
of activity or existence which have the potential to compel the reader to challenge the legitimacy
of the world embodied by Lloyd et al.: that of art, represented by the symphony orchestra in the
opening scene, and by Maud and Hobby; and that of the workers, three thousand of whom
perish in the tunnel disaster and hundreds of thousands of whom are put out of work by the
syndicate’s ruthless response to the general strike. Moreover, certain details of characterization
suggest that, for all its glamor, the haut monde is afflicted by moral rot and decay: Lloyd's
"mummy-like" appearance, for example, and the hereditary facial blemish which disfigures both
Lloyd and his daughter.18 Yet it must be noted that such negative elements in the novel’s
portrayal of the "upper ten thousand" represent little more than "interesting," gossip-column
details and hardly constitute a serious moral indictment of the upper bourgeoisie. They are,
moreover, offset both by the basically positive depiction of other members of the upper class
such as Hobby, Allan, and, in the final analysis, Ethel Lloyd herself19 and by the fascination
which glimpses into the world of the rich and famous exercise on the readers of popular
literature. Kellermann does little to counteract this fascination and everything to encourage it.
Indeed, the observation made later in the novel--"Die Menschen haben stets die Kühnheit und
Reichtum bewundert"--seems intended to be read self-reflexively. It appears both to suggest the
appropriate and expected response from the reader (Bewunderung) and to explain the secret of
the novel’s success.

What about the potential counter-perspectives afforded by art and the worker? The answer
in short is that the narrative does not actualize this potential nor does it sustain readings that do.
The various elements implying alternative norms and value systems to those of urban-industrial
modernity never fuse into compelling counter-perspectives. To be sure, Ilberg may consider the
theme of the Der Tunnel to be the "Gegensatz von Kapital und Kunst" as well as the opposition
of art and technology.20 But in fact this "theme" remains little more than a motif, a stock
opposition invoked but undeveloped and unexplored. Of an effective counterposition of aesthetic culture to the materialism of modern civilization in Der Tunnel there can be no question. Similarly, there can be no question of a serious challenge to the assumptions and institutions of industrial capitalism implicit in the novel's portrayal of the workers and of the conditions of their existence under capitalism. Since the novel's publication in 1913, critics, both Marxist and non-Marxist, have recognized that "Kellermann is not interested in the rights and welfare of the workers (despite some Communist leanings in his later life),"21 that "to get things done, gigantic things, unheard of things is what matters in [his] book." The argument, moreover, is not convincing that, with their negative metaphors and images, the descriptions in Der Tunnel of men at work in the shafts depict "exploitation" in "ihrer ganzen Nacktheit"22 and thus constitute an implicit indictment of industrial capitalism. The appropriate receptive disposition (and the one Kellermann calculated on) for scenes such as the one Ilberg cites in support of his contention that the narrative offers "ein wundervolles Abbild der barbarischen Gegenwart"23 is less indignation at the barbarism of industrial capitalism than awe at the mighty forces at work in the modern world.

Technology. Capitalism is one of the driving forces in Kellermann's fictive world; technology is another. The central conceit of the novel is, after all, a monumental engineering project. Its completion represents a stunning triumph of technology as well as of capital and inspires such rhapsodic locutions as "das Epos vom Eisen und der Elektrizität." The world which Kellermann depicts in Der Tunnel is a completely mechanized and electrified one, and there is scarcely a scene in the novel which does not contain some reminder of the ineluctable presence of technology, of the Machine, in modern society. The narrative abounds, for example, with allusions to the new technologies of transportation and communication. The wireless, the cinema, the telephone, the telegraph, the rotary press; the automobile, the airplane, the airship, the railroad, the transatlantic steamer, and even the elevator: all figure prominently in Der Tunnel. Still novelties in 1913, these symbolized to Kellermann and his contemporaries "die Überwindung von Raum und Zeit durch Dampf und Elektrizität." Man's triumph over time and space.24

The settings of Kellermann's tale, too, bear the heavy imprint of technology. Urban and
industrial, they constitute a fictive landscape which is studded with steel mills, coal mines, railroad yards, dynamos, power stations, factories, skyscrapers and all the other landmarks of modern technological civilization. Moreover, there are in Der Tunnel frequent images of fabrication and construction, detailed descriptions of machinery, and highly visual, impressionistic scenes of frenetic industrial activity. Der Tunnel is, it has been noted, in the final analysis a celebration of "die menschliche Energie"; and in scenes describing the construction of the tunnel and the mobilization of the enormous resources required for the tunnel project, Kellermann skillfully conveys a sense of the energy, the excitement, and the frantic tempo of the Machine Age. In this he was quite successful: "Der Erfolg des 'Tunnel'," the publisher wrote, "liegt aber nicht zum geringsten Teil in der Darstellung eines hinreißenden Lebenstempos, das in dieser Zeit unbändiger Aktivität wie ein Rausch gewirkt hat." Kellermann's breathless parataxis; his relentless superlatives and constant references to the unprecedented size of the forces mobilized for the tunnel project; his mythicizing metaphors; his dynamic vocabulary—these were effective rhetoric. They enable Kellermann to overwhelm the reader—Klaus Günther Just prefers the more colorful "vergewaltigen"—and to inspire in him an uncritical awe of the heroic undertaking upon which Allan was embarked, an undertaking in which the reader recognized a metaphor for his own world and activity.

Just as Lloyd embodies capital, so Mac Allan embodies the power of technology in the modern age. His creed is: "Wo der Mensch von heute eine Maschine aufstellen kann, da ist er zu Hause!" (42). Celebrated as the "Odysseus der modernen Technik," Allan is a representative of that profession which assumes an almost archetypal significance in twentieth-century literature. He is an engineer, "perhaps the symbol of this age"; and his literary kinsmen include the "Ingenieur" and "Großingenieur" of Kaiser's Gas I and Gas II, Frisch's Walter Faber, and even Paul Scheerbart's Lesabéndio. Allan is Kellermann's version of the homo faber figure: he is the incarnation of Man's will to fabricate, to build, to assert his mastery over the forces of Nature: "Der Niagara ist nicht mehr zu haben," Allan tells a group of potential backers, "so werde ich meinen eigenen Niagara bauen!" (44). Allan's most distinctive quality is perhaps his enormous capacity for and almost fanatical devotion to work. Indeed, Kellermann seems to have conceived of his protagonist as the personification of work, of human labor and industry. One of Maud's
most vivid memories, for instance, is of Allan building a fire, an obvious allusion to Prometheus, the Fire-giver and prototypical homo faber: 'Da sah sie nun, wie Allan das Feuer zurechtmachte. Wie er still, unbeachtet von allen, Äste zerbrach, zerknackte, wie er arbeitete!' (10: emphasis in the original) Work, productive activity, is Allan's essence; without it he must perish. Ethel Lloyd recognizes this fact: "[Allan] würde zugrunde gehen, wenn er die Arbeit nicht bald wiederaufnahme . . ." (268). And indeed, more than all his other misfortunes combined, it is the enforced inactivity of imprisonment which very nearly destroys Allan: "Ausgeschaltet vom Leben und von der Aktivität mußte ein Mann wie Allan zugrunde gehen; wie eine Maschine zusammensackt, wenn sie zu lange stillsteht" (261).

Certain of Kellermann's male readers would have had no difficulty identifying with Mac Allan, for he exemplifies the ruthless work ethic which was instilled in students at Wilhelmine technical universities: "An den Technischen Hochschulen--so berichtet Eugen Diesel--wurde das Ethos 'unter Mißachtung des Gefühls zu arbeiten,' bewußt gepflegt."29 This brutal suppression of all other concerns and values in the interest of maximum performance and productivity is, according to Werner Sombart, a characteristically modern trait. In an excerpt from Der Bourgeois (1913) published in Die neue Rundschau six months after the appearance of Der Tunnel, Sombart refers specifically to Mac Allan as an example of this mentality and praises Kellermann's "geniale Schau" in capturing it so vividly: "Alle Lebenswerte sind dem Moloch der Arbeit geopfert, alle Regungen des Geistes und des Herzens dem einen Interesse: dem Geschäft zum Opfer gebracht. Das hat wiederum mit genialer Schau uns Kellermann in seinem Tunnel-Buch geschildert."30 Kellermann's story more than adequately illustrates Sombart's point. Allan's dedication to the tunnel project grows more and more monomaniacal as the novel progresses: "Er war zerstreut, absorbiert von der Arbeit, und aus seinen Augen wich nicht jener scheinbar geistesabwesende Ausdruck, den die Konzentration auf ein und dieselbe Idee erzeugt" (113). His obsession with the tunnel estranges him from his first wife, the gentle and sensitive Maud, and destroys her happiness: "Zwei, drei Jahre lang hatte sie im reinsten Glück mit Mac gelebt--bis der Tunnel kam und ihn ihr entriss" (113). And towards the end of the novel we are presented with an image of Allan as a lonely old man, in poor health, devoid of almost all human emotions, the slave of his own creation: "Schöpfer des Tunnels, war er zu seinem Sklaven geworden. Sein heißes Gehirn
kannte keine anderen Ideenassoziationen mehr als Maschinen, Wagentypen, Stationen, Apparate, Zahlen, Kubikmeter und Pferdekräfte. Fast alle menschlichen Empfindungen waren in ihm abgestumpft" (292).31

The novel depicts Allan as a driven man who has in essence suppressed his humanity in the interest of his project and thereby becomes enslaved to his own undertaking. There is in this portrait clearly an Ansatz to a critique of modern technological civilization, of which Allan, the engineer, is the representative embodiment and victim. But nowhere in the narrative are the values opposed to the world that Allan represents articulated with sufficient consistency, vigor, and conviction to constitute a serious challenge to that world and a serious qualification of the novel's celebratory depiction of it. Here once again, a promising critical Ansatz remains undeveloped.

Another potentially critical perspective on modern technological society is offered by a second antithesis which figures motivically in the opening description of the gala concert: the antithesis between, to borrow Lewis Mumford's phrase, art and technics.32 This opposition—a recurrent topos in the literature of the technischen Zeitalter—is embodied in the contrasting characterizations of the engineer Allan and his art- and music-loving wife, Maud. While Maud surrenders to the spell of the music, Allan's thoughts wander restlessly to practical questions concerning the construction of the concert hall, lighting costs, and so forth (7-9). Deaf to the beauty of the music, Allan admires only "die maschinelle Exaktheit" with which the orchestra plays and regards the distinguished European conductor mistrustfully as a representative of an alien race: "Dieser Mann schien ihm einer fernen Zeit und einer sonderbaren, unverständlichen, fremden Rasse anzugehören, die dem Aussterben nahe war" (3). And twenty or so pages later, the motif is sounded again when Maud recalls the lack of interest in the fine arts which her husband displayed on their first trip to Europe:

Mac hatte sie natürlich überallhin begleitet, wenn sie es wünschte, aber sie hatte sehr bald gefühlt, daß ihn diese herrlichen Gemälde, Skulpturen, alten Gewebe und Schmuckstücke nicht besonders interessierten. Was er gerne sah, das waren Maschinen, Werke, große industrielle Anlagen, Luftschiffe, technische Museen, und davon sah sie ja nichts. (32-33)

The art/technics motif occupies a rather prominent place in the first quarter of the novel; and we
may thus expect Kellermann to invoke, if only nostalgically, the ideal of aesthetic culture and counterpose it to the world of industrial capitalism and technology represented by Allan. Once stated, however, this motif remains undeveloped; like much in the novel, it gives rise to thematic expectations which Kellermann never fulfills. In fact, Kellermann explicitly defuses whatever critical potential may inhere in the aesthetic ideal by having Maud recognize and acknowledge the equivalence and complementarity of the two modes of human activity, art and technics: "Es war ihr plötzlich der Gedanke in den Sinn gekommen, als ob Macs Werk ebenso groß sei wie jene Sinfonien, die sie heute gehört hatte, ebenso groß--nur ganz anders" (31). This, the assertion of the equivalence of the fine and the mechanical arts, was, according to Leo Marx, during the early stages of industrialization a stock argument in what he calls "the rhetoric of progress." One version of this argument, Marx notes, employed literary metaphors to suggest the equivalence of art and technics. We find this tactic used in Der Tunnel, too, in such phrases as "das Epos vom Eisen und der Elektrizität," "der Odysseus der modernen Technik," and "das Epos des Eisens, größer und gewaltiger als alle Epen des Altertums." In the last phrase there is even a suggestion not of the equivalence but of the superiority of modern technological civilization to aesthetic culture.

We have noted above Allan’s relationship with other literary engineers of the twentieth century. Unlike many of his kinsmen, however, in modern anti-utopian fiction, for example, or in such works as Frisch’s Homo Faber, Kellermann’s protagonist does not serve to symbolize one-dimensional or alienated reason. As an engineer, Allan does, to be sure, implicitly represent Man’s domination of Nature through reason. But in Der Tunnel this domination remains unproblematical, and the question of the limits and legitimacy of scientific and technical rationality is one which the novel does not even raise.

Moreover, as a celebration of "menschliche Energie," Kellermann’s narrative is an expression of that amoral vitalism which constituted such an important component in the artistic and literary consciousness of the Jahrhundertwende. Far more important for Kellermann’s purposes than Allan’s rationality, therefore, is his raw vitality and inexhaustible energy. At the end of Der Tunnel Allan is, to be sure, a burnt-out old man, "schneeweiß, verbraucht, mit fahlen, etwas schwammigen Wangen" (300): for the better part of the novel, however, Kellermann
presents him as the embodiment of vigorous good health, of somewhat brutal strength, and of indomitable will-power. He frequently alludes to his protagonist's physical strength and powerful build, for instance. Moreover, in several passages he employs, in his characterization of Allan, the symbol of the boxer--in the semiotic code of the early twentieth century an oft-invoked vitalistic symbol: Allan is "breit und stark gebaut wie ein Boxer" (7); he is the "Championboxer von Green River" (24); his prospective backers size him up "wie einen Boxer, auf den man setzen will" (44); and, like Old Shatterhand, he knows when the moment has arrived "für einen gutsitzenden Faustschlag" (75), a characterization with clear sociopolitical implications.

Allan's vitality manifests itself above all, however, in his activism, in his capacity and zeal for work, in the ruthlessness with which he drives himself and his workers, in his merciless "tempo." This tempo--"das Allansche Tempo," invoked leitmotivically throughout the narrative--is, metaphorically, that of modern technological civilization itself, pushed to the limit: "Es war das an sich höllische Tempo Amerikas und dieser Zeit, zur Raserei gesteigert" (55). Allan's vitalism is not directed against his culture; it is an expression of it. Allan is a symbol of the presumed raw power and vital energy of the Machine Age. To be sure, to many members of the German intelligentsia, the salient feature of the recently dawning Machine Age was precisely its a-vitality: for them, the Machine symbolized sterile rationality, dehumanization, stultifying uniformity, and a loss of intense, authentic experience.37 This is, of course, the romantic antimodernist point of view, the point of view from which manifestly anti-utopian works such as In purpurner Finsterniß, We, and Brave New World are written and which is incorporated as well in more subtle and complex literary treatments of technological society such as Homo Faber.38 But Der Tunnel is, as most critics agree, free from any romantic Technikfeindschaft.39 When Kellermann employs the metaphor of the Machine, its connotations are positive: it signifies precision, control, and, above all, power. The attitude towards technology which Kellermann displays in Der Tunnel is comparable to that of certain sectors of the European avantgarde during the first decades of the twentieth century--to that, for example, of Marinetti and the Futurists. But such parallels should not cause us to overlook the fact that Kellermann's affirmation of technological civilization also mirrors the attitudes of the vast majority of his bourgeois readers.
The fascination with the Machine—with its potential speed, its controlled power, its new beauty—was simply part of the mental climate of the early twentieth century.

Urban masses. The power of money and the power of the Machine in industrial-capitalist civilization are, as we have seen, two of Kellermann's themes in Der Tunnel. A third aspect of modernity which Kellermann thematizes in the novel is the dominant presence in modern society of the crowd, of the urban masses. "We will sing of great crowds agitated by work, pleasure and revolt," wrote Marinetti in 1909—and this is precisely what Kellermann, in the idiom of the popular novel, does. Kellermann's style is highly visual and pictorial; and his narrative contains countless brief, impressionistic scenes and almost "filmic" images of urban crowds, teeming streets, and bustling work sites. The two passages which follow are representative of many others: "In allen Straßen stiegen Fontänen von Extrablättern über Menschenknäuel und ausgestreckte Hände" (50) and "Die schweißtiefenden Menschenhaufen wälzten sich wieder im gleißenden Licht der Scheinwerfer vor und zurück" (289). In addition to such more or less fleeting, evocative references to "Menschenknäuel" and "Ströme von Menschen," to "Arbeiterscharen" and "Scharen von Arbeitsuchenden," there are scenes in Der Tunnel in which the crowd emerges from the background, as it were, and becomes a major participant in the action. These—the panic in the tunnel, the murderouls riot in Mac City, the workers' demonstration in Manhattan, the run of panicked investors on the tunnel syndicate's headquarters—are among the most effective scenes of the novel.

There is one aspect of the rise of modern mass society which seems to interest Kellermann especially: the emergence of the mass media, including advertising, as a distinctive feature of modern culture. There are frequent references in Der Tunnel to mass advertising, the ultimate refinement of which is ascribed, significantly, to S. Woolf, the rootless Jew who personifies "bad" capitalism (233-234). It is above all, however, the press and the cinema—in 1913 still a fascinating novelty—which figure so prominently in Kellermann's narrative. For the novel not only tells the story of the construction of the transatlantic tunnel; it also shows how the tunnel project and its originator, Allan, quickly become the subjects of extensive, though often sensationalistic and ill-informed coverage in the popular media. The picture which Kellermann thereby presents, especially of the press and of the sensation-hungry, newspaper-reading public,
is hardly a favorable one, though it is characterized more by good-humored cynicism than by moral outrage.40

The important role played by the mass media in modern life had by the first decade of the twentieth century become obvious to all thoughtful observers. By using the press, the sensationalistic news story, and the newsreel as motifs in Der Tunnel, Kellermann was, on the one hand, simply reproducing in his fiction an undeniable sociological and cultural fact. Beyond their purely mimetic function, however, Kellermann's allusions to the press and newsreel accounts of the tunnel project introduce an unexpected and perhaps unintentional moment of self-reflexiveness into the novel. That is, such fictive narratives, it can be argued, refer implicitly to Kellermann's own narrative; and his characterization of them, and of the significance which the events they narrate assume for an imaginary public, provides clues to Kellermann's conception of Der Tunnel as well as to his self-understanding as a writer who had found a mass audience. This is especially true in the case of the Edison-Biograph "Tunnelfilm," the fictive documentary film which records every detail of the work on the tunnel throughout its twenty-five year duration and which, as a recurrent motif in the narrative, serves as a self-reflexive metaphor for the novel itself. Thus, such passages as "Edison-Bio verkündete das Epos des Eisens, größer und gewaltiger als alle Epen des Altertums" (129) or Kellermann's description of the audience response to an Edison-Biograph newsreel ("Ein ungeheurer Jubel bricht los! Der menschlichen Energie und Kraft jubelt man zu-sich selbst, seinen eigenen Hoffnungen" [130]), for all their hyperbole, reflect Kellermann's conception of Der Tunnel as an epic celebration of modern industrial civilization and indicate the attitude which he invites his readers to assume towards the world depicted in the novel: an attitude which is celebratory, affirmative, uncritical.

There is, however, another passage which is relevant in this context and which can be read as an implicit authorial reflection on the function of such works as Der Tunnel, and of popular culture generally, in modern society. In trying to explain the hold which Allan's project has on the popular imagination, Kellermann observes: "Die Menschen haben stets die Kühnheit und den Reichtum bewundert." Both daring and wealth are, of course, amply present in Der Tunnel. He then continues:

Selbst unfruchtbar, stürzten sie sich von jeher auf fremde Ideen, um sich daran zu erwärmen, zu entflammen und über die eigene Dummheit und Langeweile

By extending the reference of this passage, we can easily recognize in it an implicit allusion to the surrogate character of popular literature, to its compensatory function in a materially and spiritually depriving world. Like the sensationalistic newspaper stories referred to here, Der Tunnel provided mass audiences with manifold images of wealth, power, and daring; it afforded them momentary escape ("wenn der Treibriemen auf ein paar Stunden stillstand") from the alienation and drudgery of quotidian existence. Moreover, Kellermann explains the intellectual and spiritual sterility of the masses—their "Unfruchtbarkeit," "Dummheit," "Langeweile"—in terms of the material conditions of their existence rather than in terms of a fixed natural inequality. Thus, the real interest of this passage lies not in Kellermann's insight into the escapistic, compensatory, restorative function of popular culture. It resides rather in the dissonance between the indictment of modern industrialized society implicit in the mechanistic metaphor of the "sautenden Treibriemen," on the one hand, and Kellermann's invitation to glorify the accomplishments and energy of this selfsame civilization, on the other. This dissonance, too, however, like other glimpses of the dark side of modernity in Der Tunnel, is drowned out by the fanfare with which the novel salutes the modern age, the age of capital, technology, and the masses.

The presence of negative elements in Kellermann's celebratory narrative is a fact acknowledged by all critics of the novel, though they disagree about how these negative elements are to be weighted. In some cases it is even disputable about how negative Kellermann may in fact have intended these "negative" elements to be. Moreover, alternative values, norms, and forms of human activity are referred to explicitly in the novel (art) or are, as negations of negation, implicit in the negative features of modernity which the novel depicts. As we have seen, however, Kellermann does not fashion the negative elements into a consistent vision of the
dark side of modernity nor does he develop the human and aesthetic values represented, for example, by Allan's tragic first wife into a compelling alternative to those of the world which Allan represents. The unintegrated coexistence of potentially critical and celebratory elements in Der Tunnel has to do in part with Kellermann's unreflected, mechanical use of stock figures, situations, and oppositions (career vs. family, art vs. technics) as well as stereotyped ideas and images of the modern age to piece together a popular novel with the widest possible appeal. It also rests in part perhaps in his own ambivalence about modernity.

This admixture of negative elements in an otherwise affirmative, celebratory narrative serves, it should be noted, an important ideological function, one which is implicitly recognized in Werner Ilborg's perceptive observation that the "seductive" bourgeois ideologemes in the novel are rendered even more dangerous by the apparent honesty with which the capitalistic methods of exploitation are shown "ohne Beschönigung." This function is aptly characterized by Roland Barthes in Mythologies as "inoculatory." "One immunizes the contents of the collective imagination," he writes, "by means of a small inoculation of acknowledged evil; one thus protects it against the risk of a generalized subversion." Thus, the recognition in Der Tunnel of negative aspects of industrial capitalism and the suggestion of alternative values to those that the narrative glorifies are not, as Kellermann treats them, inconsistent with the character of the novel as a capitalist integration myth; indeed, they may even enhance its integrative power.

We have stressed the affirmative tendencies of Der Tunnel and have read it, in accord with contemporary readers as well as with later critics, as an epic celebration, cast in the idiom of the popular novel, of the spirit and achievements of industrial capitalism. Although the narrative appears to contain Ansätze to a critique of urban-industrial modernity, we have seen that Kellermann never develops these into a serious counterperspective. The values which shape and inform his narrative are precisely those of the world it describes. In this congruency are to be found both the reason for the novel's remarkable success and its symptomatic significance as an expression of its time.

There is, however, one further thematic element which threatens to disturb this congruency and to subvert the celebratory message of the novel. This is the theme of catastrophe. Catastrophe occurs in Der Tunnel in two forms: the first involves the impingement of brute nature upon man
and his works; the second, the eruption of irrational human forces. First, there is the gas explosion in the tunnel in which nearly three thousand workers perish. Such explosions, albeit on a smaller scale, were not uncommon in coal mines: e.g., the 1908 explosion in a pit near Hamm which claimed 348 miners. "Gas," it was said, "hurls us to eternity and the props and timbers to a chaos." Thus, Kellermann’s account of the tunnel disaster—with its horrifyingly detailed descriptions of mangled bodies, shattered timbers, and suffocating smoke—reproduced a fact of life in industrialized society, a grim aspect of contemporary reality familiar to his readers from newspaper and magazine reports of mine disasters. And yet however much Kellermann’s description of the nightmare beneath the ocean floor may have thrilled his readers, it was, one suspects, his vision of social upheaval and economic chaos which they found most compelling.

Labor unrest, strikes, and mass demonstrations were another fact of life in industrialized Germany, and one with which most of Kellermann’s readers certainly had had some direct experience. The decade prior to publication of Der Tunnel had seen moments of sharply increased radicalism in the working class and an intensification of labor conflict. There had been two general strikes (1905 and 1912, in the Ruhr mining region) and innumerable smaller-scale work stoppages. Moreover, 1910 had been the year of the "suffrage storm," during which waves of suffrage-reform demonstrations and rallies—such as the Social Democrats’ "Wahlrechtsspaziergang" with its turn-out of 150,000 demonstrators—had swept the major German cities. Such incidents reinforced the Right’s fears of social chaos and revolution and inspired calls for "energetic" countermeasures: "Vor allem Schutz der Arbeitswilligen in der energischsten Form! Scharfschießen!"—thus the Emperor himself on the question of how to deal with the 1912 Ruhr strikers. When Der Tunnel is read against this background, the topicality of Kellermann’s vision of the industrialized world brought to a complete standstill by bloody strikes and riots—brought, indeed, to the very brink of revolution—becomes immediately apparent. So, too, does the appeal which such a vision held for a large part of Kellermann’s bourgeois readers, as a vivid articulation of the perhaps only latent fear, hostility, and suspicion which they felt towards the working classes.

As far as the theme of economic crisis is concerned, let us simply note that in 1913 the German economy was basically quite solid, although the effects of a mild recession were
beginning to make themselves felt in some sectors. This inspired some newspapers to warn of "Sturm und herannahenden Katastrophen." Such warnings were, of course, exaggerated, but they may have contributed to the receptivity of German readers for a tale such as Kellermann's. But even though there was no economic collapse on the immediate horizon, the history of the industrial world during the preceding half century certainly provided abundant examples of the crises to which the capitalistic order was subject. Perhaps the strongest hold on the German collective imagination was exercised by the Crash of 1873, which put an abrupt end to the feverish speculation and unbridled expansion of the Gründerzeit and precipitated the so-called Great Depression (1873-1896). For the reader of 1913, there were obvious parallels between Kellermann's story of boom and bust and the almost archetypal events of forty years before.

Before we discuss the theme of social and economic crisis further, however, let us look more closely at the novel's treatment of the tunnel disaster itself. In particular let us ask ourselves: With what significance--moral, philosophical, or socio-political--does the narrative invest the sudden death of three thousand workers? Does this event serve, for example, as an indictment of industrial capitalism, which--in its preoccupation with productivity and tempo--shows a ruthless disregard for workers' welfare? Safety was, after all, a key issue in the labor disputes of the pre-war period: next to American mines, for example, German coal mines were the unsafest in the industrialized world. Or does the tunnel catastrophe, like the explosion in Kaiser's Gas II, symbolize the self-destructive potential of modern technological civilization? Or again, and more universally, does it dramatize the precariousness and fragility of the world which man has built for himself and must maintain in the face of ever-threatening chaos and destruction? Or does the novel leave the catastrophe uninterpreted altogether? Is it not perhaps, in the final analysis, nothing more than a thrilling episode which is devoid of any deeper significance?

A brief look at another contemporary fictional account of a large-scale disaster may help in understanding the extent to which Kellermann does or does not exploit the thematic potential inherent in the idea of catastrophe. Gerhard Hauptmann's Atlantis, serialized in the Berliner Tageblatt in early 1912, offered readers a gripping account of a great sea disaster, the sinking of the steamer Roland during a brutal winter storm in the North Atlantic. The novel's description of the storm and the sinking is an effective piece of writing and doubtless gratified the
contemporary public's taste for thrilling and diverting reading matter. But Hauptmann was concerned with more than mere sensationalism. For all of its popular elements, his narrative has a serious theme, within the framework of which the storm and shipwreck episode acquires important symbolic significance. Atlantis explores what Hans-Joachim Schrimpf has, in another context, identified as a recurrent concern of Hauptmann's. This may be described as "die Situation des Menschen, der auch in der technischen Zivilisationsgesellschaft den verborgenen "typhonischen Mächten" ausgeliefert ist." In Atlantis, these two opposing realms are symbolized, inter alia, by the transatlantic steamer Roland and the brutal North Atlantic seas: the steamer is the "swift and sure" "Meerschiff der Zivilisation, das den Intellekt zum Kapitän und die Humanität zum einzigen Hausverwalter hat," while the ocean represents the ever-present forces of chaos and destruction which threaten the fragile artifact of human society from both within and without.

The sinking of the Roland, which is but one of several instances in the novel of the irruption the anomic forces of death and destruction into man's ordered and precariously maintained world, is not invested with any religious or metaphysical meaning. Indeed, for Hauptmann's protagonist, who is the embodiment of metaphysically shipwrecked modern man, it calls into question the very possibility of such meanings. The destruction of the steamer is the work of "blind zerstörenden, tauben und stummen Mächten," a manifestation of Nature's "stumpfen Unsinn," of her "unüberbietbaren Grausamkeit und Brutalität." It is a brute and senseless event which, together with other similar events narrated in the novel, challenges both traditional religious beliefs in a benificent deity and the optimistic assumptions of modern "Alexandrian" rationalism and social meliorism.

If we look now at Der Tunnel, we are struck by how little Kellermann makes of an analogous situation. Both he and Hauptmann depict the destructive assault of irrational natural forces on a representative human artifact: like the Roland, Allan's transatlantic tunnel is a "Wunderwerk der Technik" and a symbol for the proud achievements of modern technological society. Unlike Hauptmann, however, Kellermann does not treat the tunnel disaster as a metaphor for man's existential situation, for the ever-present threat posed to human society by the forces of chaos, death, and destruction. A less philosophically inclined writer than Hauptmann,
Kellermann draws no lessons from the event; it occasions no reflections, on the part either of the writer or of his characters, on the presence of suffering in the world, on the precariousness and fragility of civilization, on the vanity of man's pride. Characters in Kellermann's novel do not, in fact, reflect at all. Kellermann's treatment of the tunnel disaster does resemble Hauptmann's treatment of shipwreck in another respect, however: both writers depict the respective catastrophes as random, unmotivated, and morally indifferent events. In neither novel does the disaster come about because of a human flaw or failing; in neither does it manifest, as a metaphor for nemesis or divine judgement, some universal principle of justice; and in neither does it symbolize the self-destructive forces of modern society. But while in Atlantis the randomness of the catastrophe follows from Hauptmann's Schopenhauerian pessimism and underscores the theme of inexplicable suffering, in Der Tunnel it is, as we have seen, devoid of any philosophical significance whatsoever. As we shall discover in the next paragraph, however, the randomness which Kellermann ascribes to the tunnel disaster well serves the novel's apologetic tendencies by removing the event altogether from the realm of human responsibility.

Even though the tunnel disaster is ultimately shown to be an act of blind fate and not the result of a flaw in some particular individual or in Kellermann's fictive society as a whole, the question of responsibility is raised nonetheless--by the tunnel workers and their families, for whom Allan suddenly ceases to be the popular figure celebrated in the "Lied vom Mac" (138) and becomes "der Henker des Kapitals" (188) and "Mac Allan, Mörder von 5 000" (193). The workers' indictment of Allan is, of course, at the same time an indictment of the system which he represents. Accordingly, the debate among the striking workers on whether or not to resume work on the tunnel becomes, in a sense, a debate on the merits of the industrial-capitalist world as Kellermann depicts and celebrates it in Der Tunnel. One group of labor leaders (bought, Kellermann informs his readers, by the syndicate) argues for immediate resumption of work and reminds the strikers of all they owe Allan and the syndicate:

Another group of leaders (in the pay of the syndicate's rivals, the transatlantic steamship companies) presents the counterarguments:

"Mac ist kein Freund der Arbeiter! Nonsens und Lüge! Mac ist der Henker des Kapitals! der größte Henker, den die Erde je trug! Mac ist ein Wolf im Schafpelz! 180 000 Mann beschäftigt er! 20 000 in seiner höllischen Arbeit niedergerohrten Menschen pult er jährlich in seinen Hospitalen auf, um sie dann zum Teufel zu jagen—Krüppel, fertig für immer! Mögen sie auf den Straßen verfaulen oder in Asylen verrecken, Mac ist das egal! Ein ungeheures Menschenmaterial hat er in diesen sechs Jahren vernichtet! . . . Seht euch die Reihe von Särgen da drüben an! Zwei Kilometer lang ist die Reihe, Sarg an Sarg! Entscheidet euch!" (188)

Finally, Allan himself appears before the strikers to plead his case; he flatly rejects any responsibility for the October catastrophe: "Ihr schreit, ich hätte dreitausend Menschen getötet! Das ist eine Lüge! Das Schicksal ist stärker als ein Mensch. Die Arbeit hat die dreitausend getötet! Die Arbeit tötet täglich auf der Erde Hunderte! Die Arbeit ist eine Schlacht, und in einer Schlacht gibt es Tote!" (189). Allan concludes his speech by invoking the everyone-can-be-a-capitalist myth and by underscoreing the democratic, class-transcendent aspects of his plan. He reminds the workers "daß der Tunnel nicht zur Bereicherung einzelner Kapitalisten geschaffen werde, sondern dem Volk ebensogut gehöre. Gerade das sei seine Absicht gewesen. 'Euch selbst Tunnelmen, gehört der Tunnel da runten. Ihr seid selbst alle Aktionäre des Syndikats!'" (189). Allan's arguments do not prevail, however; and at all five tunnel stations the workers refuse to return to work.

Notwithstanding the apparent impartiality with which he reports the workers' and Allan's arguments and counterarguments, Kellermann does not in fact withhold judgment; nor does he allow the reader to do so either. Indeed, nowhere does the novel's ideological tendency manifest itself more clearly than in the fashion in which Kellermann shapes his account of the tunnel disaster and its aftermath so as to ensure that the readers' sympathies will, like the author's, be with Allan. He does this in several ways. First, and here we take up the point made above concerning the randomness of the catastrophe, Kellermann explicitly absolves Allan and the syndicate of any responsibility for the deaths of the three thousand tunnel workers. He does this by referring to a court decision favorable to Allan: legal proceedings, the reader is informed, have been initiated against the tunnel syndicate only to be broken off "da es sich bei der Katastrophe ganz offenbar um force majeure handelte" (203). To be sure, this explicit exoneration of Allan is
not really necessary at all—for, as Ilberg points out, there is nothing in the narrative up to that point to support the workers' indictment of him as the "Mörder von 5 000." Nowhere does Kellermann raise the question of safety or even hint at negligence on Allan's part. On the contrary, he prevents the suspicion of negligence from even arising in the reader's mind by having the explosion occur only hours after Allan completes his annual inspection of the tunnel. The inspection lasts several days and turns up no serious problems; and the fact that the explosion follows so thorough an inspection merely serves to emphasize the unforeseeability and unpreventability of the catastrophe.

Another way in which Kellermann disposes the reader to side with Allan is through his unsympathetic portrait of the tunnel workers. This aspect of Der Tunnel has been noted with disapproval by otherwise well-disposed Marxist critics, who protest the novel's deficient treatment of the working class and its portrayal of the workers as an "ameisenhafte Masse, dumpf verführbar durch Reklame und beherrscht von Spontaneität und fanatischer Rachsucht." The negative image given in Der Tunnel of working-class irrationality and emotionality is particularly evident in the episodes here under discussion. Kellermann describes, for instance, the panic which breaks out in the tunnel following the explosion and contrasts the workers' blind, animal terror with the courageous, disciplined behavior of the bourgeois engineers and technicians. Or, to take another example, he describes the brutal murder of Allan's wife and daughter by a mob of workers' wives. This scene seems especially contrived to manipulate the reader's sympathies and to block any sympathetic identification with the workers. Allan's wife is reknowned for her charitable work and for her efforts to improve worker welfare, and she and her child are so obviously innocent victims that the reader's sense of justice is outraged by their deaths. Heightening the reader's sense of injustice is the knowledge that the man, whose vengeance-seeking wife leads the mob and in fact hurls the lethal rock, had escaped injury in the explosion and been killed in the ensuing panic by a fellow worker in a knife fight. There is, moreover, a racist component in novel's negative portrayal of the masses: whenever the narrative focuses on individual workers or small groups of workers, they are invariably Italian or Black—i.e., representatives of groups held to be highly emotional, violent, and irrational; the technicians and engineers, on the other hand, are usually German or Caucasian American.
The image which emerges in such scenes as these of the working class as an irrational, emotional, and violent mob serves to discredit the striking workers' attacks on Allan and on the system he represents. It also diminishes whatever legitimacy the work stoppage and mass demonstration may have seemed to the reader to possess. Kellermann does not present these as rational, purposive actions motivated by legitimate concerns and directed towards specific practical goals. They seem rather to be expressions of sheer terror, on the one hand, and of the "fanatischen Haß zwischen Arbeiter und Kapital" on the other. They are more organized perhaps, but no less irrational than the panic in the tunnel and potentially no less murderous than the mob's assault on Allan's family.

Such scenes as the riot in Mac City and the mass demonstration, together with the vision which occurs later in the novel of a world crippled by strikes and bloody labor battles, were obviously intended to play on the readers' fears of anarchy and social chaos. Kellermann's portrayal in such scenes of the workers as an irrational and violent mob reproduces the way in which many of his middle-class readers perceived the working class and doubtless helped to reinforce their anti-democratic and anti-socialistic sentiments. Fear and suspicion of the masses were, of course, an important part of the bourgeois mentality throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and had even been given "scientific" legitimacy by Gustave Le Bon's influential study of collective behavior, Psychologie des Foules (1895). Of particular relevance to the question of the receptiveness shown by German readers to Der Tunnel, however, was a change in the social-political climate of Germany during the last pre-war years. This "Stimmungsumschwung" was characterized by a general indifference, if not hostility, among the educated classes to social reform. Interest in the problems of the working class was a thing of the past. "Statt dessen," Saul informs us, citing the reform-oriented Soziale Praxis, "setzte eine "einseitige Verherrlichung der freien Unternehmerpersönlichkeit" ein, und die sich ausbreitende 'große individualistische Welle' verschaffte auch der alten Klage über den 'Terrorismus' der Arbeiter eine größere Resonanz." The new climate was further characterized by the increased militancy of heavy industrialists and agrarians put on the defensive by the stunning Social Democratic performance in the elections of 1912. A symbol of this new militancy was the formation in the fall of 1913 of a new agrarian-industrialist coalition, the anti-union and
anti-socialist Kartell der schaffenden Stände. 70

Not only does Der Tunnel give shape to its readers' mistrust of the lower classes and fears of social chaos, it also validates the belief in the need for a "strong man" and in the necessity of "energetically" maintaining law and order. "Sie hätten sich den rabiaten Leuten entgegenwerfen müssen, wenn sie Ihnen auch ein paar Löcher in den Kopf geworfen hätten," Allan angrily tells his second-in-command upon his return to Mac City after the disaster. "Sie haben doch Fäuste--oder? Sie hätten auch schießen können--ja, zum Teufel, weshalb nicht? Ihre Ingenieure standen da, Sie hatten nur zu befehlen" (177). Most of the novel's readers probably applauded Allan's speech. 71 Viewed against the background sketched in the preceding paragraph, Allan's authoritarianism, his firing of all the striking workers, and his willingness to employ force against them seem to express a timely endorsement of the militant methods and attitudes of Allan's real-life counterparts.

With this, our attention has shifted from the tunnel disaster itself to the social chaos which follows in its aftermath in the form of panic, riots, strikes, demonstrations. Kellermann does not, as we have seen, explore or develop the metaphorical and thematic implications of the tunnel disaster proper, i.e., as an instance of the impingement of brute nature on human society. It may seem, notes Johannes Mahr, "daß man wieder an Schillers Mahnung erinnert wird: 'Denn die Elemente hassen/Das Gebild der Menschenhand'." But, Mahr continues, "die Reminiszenz zeigt nur Kellermanns ganz andere Problemstellung." 72 Indeed, apart from the pure entertainment value of Kellermann's thrilling account of it, the tunnel catastrophe functions principally as a plot device to unleash the forces of social chaos and anarchy. It is these irrational human forces and not the irrational forces of nature which command the full attention of the author and his readers.

In his comments on Der Tunnel, Mahr does not discriminate among the various forms of crisis and catastrophe which occur in the novel nor does he differentiate among the different meanings which may attach to them. Rather, he lumps everything together under the rubric "Schwierigkeiten beim Bau;" these "difficulties" he attempts to link to the main characters' moral failings: "Nicht 'die Elemente' wehren sich. Schwierigkeiten beim Bau entstehen durch die mangelnde moralische Qualifikation derer, die den Tunnel planen, finanzieren, durchführen."

The text simply does not support this reading, however. Whatever Kellermann's "ganz andere
Problemstellung" may be, this is not it. To be sure, Kellermann portrays neither Lloyd nor Allan as morally unblemished characters; this is especially true in the case of Lloyd, whose hideous physical appearance probably is, as Mahr suggests, intended to mirror an inner moral rot. But, as we have seen, Kellermann makes no consistent thematic use of the negative elements in his characterizations of Lloyd and Allan. Like much else in the novel, they are simply there for effect and remain unintegrated in any overall concept. And more to the point, he neither explicitly nor implicitly connects whatever moral deficiencies Allan and Lloyd may possess to any of the catastrophic events which occur during the twenty-six years it takes to complete the tunnel--not, as we have seen, to the tunnel disaster itself and not, as we shall see, to the economic crisis which plunges the world into chaos and brings it to the brink of revolution.

Kellermann does not organize his story in terms of the conflict between man and nature, although such a conflict is certainly implicit in his material; nor does he organize it in terms of an inner dialectic whereby the tunnel project bears within itself the forces of its own destruction. What, then, are the plot dynamics of Der Tunnel? If Allan is Kellermann's protagonist and the completion of the tunnel is his goal, who or what does the author show standing between him and the achievement of this goal? We could perhaps answer "fate" or "circumstances" and let it go at that. But this explanation is unsatisfactory because it neglects the fact that behind what may on one level appear to be simply "circumstances" or an "unfortunate concatenation of events" can be discerned the workings of social forces inimical to the interests of the middle class. What, in the final analysis, structures and energizes Kellermann's overly eventful and rather messy story is a very simple and doubtless very gratifying model of social reality. According to this model, the good bourgeois and his projects are threatened by destructive social forces for which he bears no responsibility. This model also reassuringly guarantees the ultimate survival of the bourgeois and his works. The good bourgeois here is, of course, Allan. Mahr's opinion to the contrary, Allan is, as Rottensteiner points out, meant to be accepted as a positive, basically unproblematical Identifikationsfigur. Indeed, the novel's Wirkung depends on the reader's identification with Allan and with the tunnel project. But what, to return to our initial question, are the forces that Kellermann pits against Allan?

In order to answer this question, let us look at the novel's plot more closely. The plot of
Der Tunnel is characterized by what Eco characterizes as a "sinusoidal structure: tension, resolution, renewed tension, further resolution, and so on." The three major moments of tension in the novel are: 1) the tunnel disaster and the strike which follows; 2) the collapse of the syndicate and the world-wide economic crisis provoked by the disclosure of the financial director's malfeasance; and 3) Allan's difficulties in raising funds to resume work on the tunnel after his release from prison. This last moment need not concern us here, as it involves a rather clumsily handled sub-plot centering around Allan's decision to marry Lloyd's daughter. Let us turn instead to the first two moments of tension.

Since we have discussed Kellermann's account of the tunnel disaster and its aftermath at length above, we can restrict ourselves here to a few brief comments. The most important thing to note is the fact that it is not the explosion itself which constitutes the principal threat to the successful completion of the tunnel project. This represents at the most a setback of some weeks or months. The real obstacle to the realization of Allan's plans, rather, is the tunnel workers' strike. The conflict around which Kellermann organizes this part of the novel is, in other words, that between Allan and his workers or, read metaphorically, that between labor and capital. As we have seen, Kellermann presents this conflict in such a way as to block any sympathetic identification with the workers, whom he characterizes as an irrational mob and whose cause he denies any justice or political legitimacy. This is, of course, the class struggle as seen through the eyes of the industrial bourgeoisie.

The novel's second major moment of tension occurs when the damage to the tunnel has long since been repaired, the strike has lost its momentum, and Allan is about to resume work on the tunnel: "Da aber zog sich—for Allan ganz unerwartet—ein zweites Ungewitter über dem Syndikat zusammen. Ein Ungewitter, das weitaus verheerendere Folgen haben sollte als die Oktoberkatastrophe," Kellermann's omniscient narrator tells us portentously: "Durch den finanziellen Riesenbau des Syndikats ging ein böses Knistern . . ." (211). There is no need to give an account here of the description in Der Tunnel of the workings of the modern capitalist economy. No matter how accurately Kellermann may have captured certain aspects of modern capitalist economy, no matter how vivid a sense of the dynamics of high finance he may have been able to convey to his readers, what matters is the fact that he does not motivate the economic
crisis in terms of abstract processes and systemic dysfunctions. It is, we recall, the scandal involving the misappropriation of syndicate funds by the syndicate's financial director which precipitates the world-wide financial crisis. To be sure, Kellermann does portray the world economy as a complex, fragile network of interrelationships which are precariously maintained and easily disrupted; and other events do contribute to, compound, and exacerbate the crisis once it has begun. But the ultimate cause of the second catastrophe which befalls Allan, that which sets the entire train of cataclysmic events in motion, is the perfidy of the syndicate's financial director, S. Woolf. About this Kellermann leaves his readers in no doubt.

This S. Woolf, formerly Samuel Wolfssohn, is a brilliant Central European Jew. He has, through talent, determination, and self-sacrifice, risen from humble origins in a small Hungarian village to become Lloyd's right-hand man and the financial director of the Atlantic Tunnel Syndicate. Kellermann's characterization of Woolf is strongly colored by the anti-Semitism of the period; and Woolf displays all of the negative qualities associated with the classic anti-Semitic stereotype of the Jew. Of "typically Jewish" appearance ("wulstige Lippen, eine starke, krumme Nase, kurzes, schwarzes, gekräuseltes Haar" [85]), he is, as his name suggests (Woolf!), rapacious, ruthless, and power-hungry; he is a debauched sensualist who loves good food, fine wine, and beautiful young women ("besonders jungen Engländerinnen, Deutschen, Skandinavierinnen gab er den Vorzug" [125]). Woolf is, moreover, rootless. Chameleon-like and devoid of a distinctive, "organic" personality, he is a completely artificial creature of his own making: "aus Millionen Elementen zusammengesetzt, die er von anderen Menschen entlehnt hatte!" (127). He is tormented by self-hatred and longing to be assimilated and consumed with resentment, envy, and vengefulness towards all those who "belong." It is, in part at least, these feelings of resentment and vengefulness that fuel Woolf's lust for beautiful Nordic women: "Er rächte sich an jener hochmütigen blonden Rasse, die ihn früher mit dem Fuß ins Gesicht trat, indem er jetzt ihre Frauen kaufte" (126). And it is precisely these same feelings which impel him to attempt to wrest control of the syndicate away from Allan.

An "origineller Mensch," a "selbständige Persönlichkeit," Allan represents everything which Woolf is not but longs desperately to be: "Dieser Allan hatte keine Pose, er war stets natürlich, einfach, er selbst, und er wirkte!" (128). As Woolf reflects on the differences between
himself and Allan, on Allan's naturalness and easy authority, he is overcome by hatred and conceives the plan of acquiring de facto control of the tunnel syndicate.

Weshalb sollte es nicht möglich sein, daß seine Stellung eines Tages einer absoluten Beherrschung des Syndikats gleichkame? S. Woolf legte die orientalischen Augendeckel über seine schwarzen, glänzenden Augen, und seine fetten Wangen zitterten. Das war der kühnste Gedanke, den er in seinem Leben gedacht hatte, und dieser Gedanke hypnotisierte ihn. Er brauchte ja nur eine Milliarde Aktien im Rücken zu haben--und dann sollte Mac Allan sehen, wer S. Woolf war. (129)

In order to raise enough money to buy the shares necessary for a take-over, Woolf engages in improper private speculation using syndicate funds. This, as we know, leads ultimately to Woolf's downfall, to the collapse of the syndicate, and to a dark period of economic and social chaos. There is, of course, more to the near fall of the western world that Kellermann describes than merely the Woolf episode. But what makes the strongest impression on the reader is the role of Woolf, the vengeful Jew, in destroying or nearly destroying Allan's work.

In motivating the novel's first major crisis, Kellermann's narrative appeals to his readers' mistrust of the irrational lower classes and, implicitly, to their fear of socialism; in motivating the second, he appeals to their anti-Semitism. And just as most of Kellermann's readers probably applauded Allan's question "Sie hätten auch schießen können--ja, zum Teufel, weshalb nicht?" so, too, did they identify with his outrage at Jewish treachery:


At issue here, incidentally, is not Kellermann's own ideology: whether or not Kellermann was an anti-Semite, what his attitudes towards Social Democracy may have been, and so forth--these are not questions which need concern us here. In writing Der Tunnel, he was writing a popular novel for a mass audience and employed whatever situations, motifs, characters he thought might contribute to effective storytelling. What we are interested in, however, is, first, the ideological content of these narrative elements which presumably, in the case of so enormously popular a novel as Der Tunnel, reproduces to a great degree the ideology of the readers; and, second, the
fact that Kellermann in no way challenges, interrogates, or subverts this ideology. On the contrary, as we have seen, he exploits and reinforces it.

There is one final point which must be made about Der Tunnel. Like Planetenfeuer, Kellermann's novel thematizes the vulnerability of modern technological society to the forces of chaos, death, and destruction. Unlike Haushofer, however, who still held to an older, optimistic liberal view of man's essential rationality, Kellermann, the cynical observer of the emergent modern age, had no such illusions. Thus, his narrative situates the chaotic, destructive, anomic forces which assault the novel's fictive world both in external nature and within man himself. (In Planetenfeuer, we recall, the sole threat to civilization was external. Even at moments of extreme danger and terror, the inhabitants of Haushofer's future world conducted themselves with exemplary orderliness and selflessness.) However, despite Kellermann's bleaker view of human nature and his more realistic sense of the threat which mass irrationality poses to the civilized order, the covert message of his novel is, in the final analysis, identical to that of Haushofer's: the survival of the world, not its destruction. Both works, that is, subject their fictive worlds to assaults of unprecedented scale and nature only to demonstrate in the end the survival, essentially unaltered, of the fundamental institutions of those worlds (and, metaphorically, of the readers' world as well). To Kellermann's contemporary readers, one suspects, this reassuring message of continuity and survival was as important as the novel's celebratory evocation of the breathtaking tempo and monumental achievements of the modern age.
Notes

1. See the section entitled "Der erste Bestseller" in Peter de Mendelssohn, S. Fischer und sein Verlag (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag, 1970), 629-631 and also 635. On the silent film version of Kellermann's novel, see Hätte ich das Kino! Die Schriftsteller und das Kino (Munich: Kösel, 1976), 179. This is the catalogue, prepared by Bernhard Zeller, of an exhibition organized by the Deutsches Literaturarchiv at the Schiller Museum in Marbach. The dates given by de Mendelssohn for the film (635) are incorrect.

2. Loerke is cited by de Mendelssohn, ibid., 630.

3. See Alan Bullock, Hitler: A Study in Tyranny, rev. ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1964). The story of Hitler's enthusiastic response to the film, which Bullock takes from Olden, derives ultimately from Reinhold Hanisch's account of his time together with Hitler in Vienna. Hitler was allegedly fascinated by a scene that showed a demagogue working a crowd up to a frenzy. Hanisch recounts how Hitler returned from the cinema in a state of great excitement and "for days afterward . . . spoke of nothing except the power of the spoken word." Quoted in Bullock, page 35. The incident is described in a recent unscholarly account of Hitler's Viennese years (J. Sydney Jones, Hitler in Vienna, 1907-1913 [New York: Stein & Day, 1983]) and is mentioned as well by Joachim Fest in Hitler, trans. Richard and Clara Winston (New York: Random House, 1974), 52. Fest adds that the story is "dubious." In fact, Hanisch's story is completely false: in production during 1914 and 1915, the Tunnel-film was not released until September 1915--well, that is, after Hitler had broken off contact with Hanisch (in August 1910) and indeed well after he had left Vienna for Munich (May 1913). There is no way the event Hanisch describes could have occurred. Nor is it likely that Hanisch is simply confused and in retrospect mistakenly attributes Hitler's enthusiasm to the film rather than to the novel. The book appeared during the last six weeks of Hitler's stay in Vienna and while he could have read it there, it is improbable that Hanisch would have been privy to his reaction to it. Hanisch might, of course, have heard about it second-hand, from a mutual acquaintance at the home for men. In all likelihood, however, the story is simply a neat fabrication, one of the many for which, according to Werner Maser, Hanisch is responsible. (On Hanisch's unreliability and influence on widely

There is, interestingly, another, similar report of Hitler's fascination with Kellermann's crowd scenes, this time from a more reliable witness. In his diary entry for April 7, 1957, Albert Speer makes the following observation: "Sonntbar, wie sich solche cäsarische Demagogen, die doch eigentlich eine atomisierte Gesellschaft benötigen, literarisch schon in der hierarchisch streng geordneten, stabil wirkenden Welt des Fin de Siècle ankündigen. Ich dachte daran, wie oft Hitler von Kellermanns *Tunnel*, ebenfalls der Geschichte eines Demagogen, als einem seiner großen jugendlichen Leseendrucke schwärme." See Speer's *Spandauer Tagebücher* (Frankfurt am Main: Propyläen, 1975), 459-460.


5. Bernhard Kellermann, *Der Tunnel* (1913; reprint, Munich: Wilhelm Heyne Verlag, 1979), 129. Subsequent references to this edition will be made in the text.


7. In *Vom Staatsroman zur Science Fiction* (Stuttgart: F. Enke, 1956), for example, Martin Schwonke briefly discusses *Der Tunnel* under the rubric "die Gegenutopie im Jahrzehnt dem Ausbruch des Weltkrieges" (65) and argues that the novel's characterization of modern technological society betrays the anti-technological stance "des Gefühlsmenschen und Ästheten" (66). In spite of his attempt at authorial neutrality vis-à-vis the events he describes, Kellermann is nonetheless unable to hide his "Zugehörigkeit zur Partei der Unterlegenen" (67). Hans-Jürgen Krysmanski (Die utopische Methode [Cologne: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1963]) quite rightly rejects the notion of a pervasive anti-technological trend in the novel (37). He calls attention to the fascination which the "new type of man" (Mac Allan)--and by implication the new world to which this new man belongs--exercised on the novel's readers. Franz Rottensteiner likewise sees in *Der Tunnel* an uncritical study of "a state of mind and a new type of human being: the engineer, the titanic planner, the advocate of technological efficiency and the machine, one who
will do anything to achieve his ambitious plans, including the sacrifice of his own family." See "The Tunnel (Der Tunnel)," in *Survey of Science Fiction*, ed. Frank N. McGill (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Salem Press, 1979), 2316. Rottensteiner rejects readings of the novel which stress its putative antitechnological and anticapitalist tendencies and observes that Kellermann "shows no interest in the rights and welfare of the workers" (2319).

This last point has troubled Kellermann's socialist readers from Engelbert Pemerstorfer (see note 43 below) to the East German author(s) of the comments on *Der Tunnel* in Geschichte der deutschen Literatur: Von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart, vol. 9 Vom Ausgang des 19. Jahrhundert bis 1917 (East Berlin: Volk und Wissen Volkseigener Verlag, 1974), 470-471. The latter criticizes the novel's failure to portray the workers as anything but an "ameisenhafte Masse, dumpf verführbar durch Reklame, beherrscht von Spontaneität und fanatischer Rachsucht" and views this failure as a symptom of Kellermann's "fetishization" of the institutions and arrangements of monopoly capitalism. In *Bernhard Kellermann in seinen Werken* (East Berlin: Volk und Welt, 1959), Werner Ilberg sees in the novel's penetrating expose of the structures and practices of monopoly capitalism a masterpiece of critical realism (39). Ilberg points out, however, "daß der Humanist und Realist Kellermann noch immer von den Vorurteilen seiner Klasse befangen war" (46) and notes various aspects of the novel in which the author's class prejudice manifests itself. What especially distinguishes Ilberg's comments on *Der Tunnel* is his subtle sense of the ideological ambivalence and tensions which mark Kellermann's narrative and his implicit recognition (44) of the potential for ideological abuse inherent in the novel's "realism." Ilberg's reading of *Der Tunnel* is very good and parallels in many respects my own. It overstates, however, the negative implications of Kellermann's depiction of industrial-capitalist society and underestimates the novel's celebratory character. In particular, as subtle in many respects as it is, Ilberg's reading shows no "feel" for the fascination exercised by even apparently negatively drawn characters and situations: a scene, for example, which to the Marxist Ilberg seems to depict exploitation "in ihrer ganzen Nacktheit" (43) would, one suspects, have had for many contemporary readers a certain "macho" appeal and thus been, in the final analysis, affirmative in its *Wirkung*.

8. For an example of the reading of catastrophe as judgment, we need only recall the
interpretations which were, and continue to be, placed on the sinking of the Titanic, an event which occurred the year before Kellermann's novel was published and the impact of which was still fresh in his readers' minds. The author of a recent study of the disaster expresses well the emblematic significance with which the sinking has been invested: "The Titanic's mystique is therefore a poetic realm, in which her maiden voyage expresses the blind justice of Greek Tragedy and the allegorical warning of the medieval morality play. Here, the Titanic is an eternal symbol: She was, is, and will be. She was the Titans' struggle against Jove, the Babylonians' ziggurat to heaven. She was Lucifer's fall from Grace, the 'Night Sea-crossing' of the medieval alchemists, and the moment of truth realized too late by the tragic hero whose aspirations led him fatally beyond his limitations. She is not mere history, but a parable to the effect that the mighty of each age must fall. In a word, she is Hubris." Wyn Craig Smith, The Titanic: End of a Dream (New York: Penguin Books, 1979), 441. The theme of hubris, of the transgression of limitations, is present potentially in Der Tunnel. Unfortunately, Kellermann does not choose to actualize it.

9. In some cases this openness can be explained simply in terms of a certain narrative and thematic indecisiveness on Kellermann's part, while in others it no doubt reflects a deeper ideological uncertainty and ambivalence. Of the critics of Der Tunnel mentioned in note 7 above, Illberg is most sensitive to the novel's ideological ambivalence. See, for example, his comment on the narrative's ambivalence towards "Amerikanismus" (43).


11. A. P. Foulkes, Literature and Propaganda (London: Methuen, 1983), 10-13 and chap. 6 ("Capitalist Integration Myths").

Bismarckschen Rezept das Wort redeten."

13. Soziale Praxis is quoted by Saul, 368.

14. On the Ruhr strike, see Saul, 269-282; on the recession, see Fischer, Krieg der Illusionen, 516-524. The quote is from the conservative Reichsbote of July 1913, cited by Fischer, 521. Such dark predictions were also to be found in the Social Democratic press as well, such as the Hamburger Echo (also cited by Fischer).

15. Ißberg finds the world envisioned to in Der Tunnel to be "ein wahres Abbild der bestehenden Zustände," "ein wundervolles Abbild der barbarischen Gegenwart" (Bernhard Kellermann in seinen Werken, 39, 53.) Krasmanski notes that the technology and social arrangements depicted in the novel are "kein Jahr älter als 1913" (Die utopische Methode, 36). To be sure, as both Ißberg and Krasmanski note, Kellermann's portrait of the modern age is not a naturalistic one but employs to good effect exaggeration, distortion, and hyperbole. "Es ist das perfekte Modell einer zweiten Wirklichkeit," Krasmanski writes, "das Elemente der Umweltwirklichkeit des Autors gemischt, verlängert und planvoll verzerrt in sich bewahrt" (36). According to Ißberg, Kellermann exposes the essence of modern industrial-capitalist society through the tried means of "Vergrößerung, Verfeinerung, Vergrößerung" (43).

16. According to one scholar, the portrait of American civilization that Kellermann offers in the tunnel shaped "das Bild Amerikas, das fast zwei Jahrhunderte mit leichten Variationen die europäischen Film- und Leserphantasien beherrscht hat" (Paul Fechter quoted by Krasmanski, Die utopische Methode, 36). Enriched by details noted during his 1907 sojourn in the United States, Kellermann's vivid, hyperbolic image of America drew on and reinforced pre-existent and widespread European attitudes and preconceptions about America as the land of capitalism, technology, scientific management, mass society as well as, in contrast to a decadent Europe, of raw, youthful vigor and vitality.

17. The title of a section of Marx's Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844.

18. See the discussion below (150-151) of the problem of motivating the novel's catastrophe in terms of the moral inadequacies of the main characters.

19. Rottensteiner notes that "although Kellermann's figures are in some respects quite inhuman, unfeeling, and coldly calculating, they are not unsympathetically drawn" ("The
Tunnel," 2319).


22. Ilberg, Bernhard Kellermann, 43.

23. Ibid., 53.


30. The anonymous author of the comments on Der Tunnel for the East German Geschichte der deutschen Literatur notes that Mac Allan is "ein neuer Typ des Bourgeois, wie ihn Werner Sombart für möglich hielt" (471). Though no reference is given, what is meant is clearly Werner Sombart's essay contrasting the "Bourgeois alten Stils" with the new bourgeois of the age of high capitalism. See "Der Bourgeois einst und jetzt," Die neue Rundschau 24 (November 1913): 1481-1509. The quotation is on p. 1503.

31. It is precisely this passage that Sombart cites in his article for Die neue Rundschau, 1503.


33. For Ilberg, this opposition, together with that between art and capitalism, constitutes the theme of the novel (Ilberg, Bernhard Kellermann, 39-40). Given the lack of development
accorded it in the novel, however, it is better called a motif. As noted above (note 7), Martin Schwonke is quite off base in *Vom Staatsroman zur Science Fiction* when he suggests that the perspective from which modern technological society is viewed in the novel is that (negative perspective) of the "Gefühlsmenschen und Ästheten."


35. This, too, was part of the popular rhetoric of progress. Leo Marx quotes an American patent official from the 1850s who boasts that "A steamer is a mightier epic than the Iliad,--and Whitney, Jacquard and Blanchard might laugh even Vergil, Milton and Tasso to scorn" (ibid., 203).

36. See note 25 above. On literary vitalism in German literature at the turn of the century and a little later, see Gunther Martens, *Vitalismus und Expressionismus: Ein Beitrag zur Genese und Deutung expressionistischer Stilstrukturen und Motive* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1971).

37. See Conrad's *In purpurner Finsternis*, or, to take an example roughly contemporaneous with Der Tunnel, Georg Kaiser's *Gas* plays.


39. Schwonke is, to my knowledge, the only one to attribute concern for "die bedrohte Seele" and "Gegnerschaft zur Technik" to Kellermann (*Vom Staatsroman zur Science Fiction*, 66).

40. The press is characterized throughout as having more regard for newspaper sales and scooping the competition with a good story than for accuracy and truth. See, for example, the references to the press on pp. 24, 121, and 255.

41. Ilberg, Bernhard Kellermann, 44.

43. As examples of contemporary responses to Der Tunnel we can cite Engelbert Pernerstorfer's characterization of the novel as a "hohes Lied des Kapitalismus" in "Bernhard Kellermann," Das literarische Echo 16 (October 1913): 16, and the following comment (on the Tunnel-film) from the Lichtbild-Bühne 8/37 (1915): "Gerade das hohe Lied der Arbeit, die Poesie der Maschinentechnik und der imposante Zauber der riesenhaften Groß-Industrie sind doch hier das tragende Moment." Cited in Hätte ich das Kino! 179.

44. These values can be well summarized as those which Sombart identified in his 1913 essay as "specifically modern," as those held by "alle echtmoderne Menschen"—size, speed, newness, and power. See Sombart, "Der Bourgeois einst und jetzt," 1499-1500.


49. Quoted in Saul, Staat, Industrie, Arbeiterbewegung, 278.

51. On the state of the German economy in 1913, see, in addition to Fischer (note 14 above), also Martin Kitchen, *The Political Economy of Germany, 1815-1914* (London: Croom Helm, 1978), 266.

52. On the Great Depression and its aftershock, see Hans Rosenberg, *Die Große Depression und Bismarckzeit: Wirtschaftsablauf, Gesellschaft und Politik in Mitteleuropa* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1967), especially 51-57, 88-117. The Crash of 1873 and the ensuing depression were contributing factors in the revival of anti-Semitism during the last third of the nineteenth century and helped give rise to the stereotype of the unprincipled Jewish Börsianer. Significantly, such a stereotyped character figures prominently in *Der Tunnel* as one of Allan's two antagonists.


55. See Hans Joachim Schrimpf's introduction to *Gerhart Hauptmann*, ed. Schrimpf (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1976), xxix. The phrase "typhonic powers" is used in Hauptmann's 1906 play *Und Pippa tanzt*.


58. Hauptmann's novel situates the "typhonic forces" within man as well as in external nature. They confront the protagonist not only in the *Roland* disaster but also in his wife's insanity and suicide, in his own psychotic episode, and in his overpowering passion for a sixteen-year-old nymphomaniacalVariété dancer.

59. Hauptmann employs the situation of shipwreck and the related one of adriftiness as metaphors for his protagonist's difficult and crisis-ridden life. The narrative clearly suggests the
representative character of the protagonist's crisis. Whatever its immediate, contingent causes, his sense of disorientation and of ideological adriftness mirrors the spiritual condition of the "meisten Menschen von heut" (Atlantis [618-619]). See also pp. 573, 614, and 674. On the use of the metaphor of shipwreck and related metaphors in nineteenth and twentieth century art and literature, see George P. Landow, Images of Crisis (Boston: Routledge & Keegan Paul, 1982).

60. Hauptmann, Atlantis, 553, 584.

61. "Hauptmann," Schrimpf writes, "hat das Leiden und im Leiden das Leben als höchstes menschliches Gut als unaufhebbar bejaht, aus dem Zusammenhang des christlichen Erlösungsgeschehens ebenso herausgelöst und isoliert wie aus der perspektivischen Beschränkung auf bloß ökonomischer Verhältnisse und Klassengegensätze." See Schrimpf, Gerhart Hauptmann, xxxiii. The expression "Alexandrian" I have taken from Nietzsche's Die Geburt der Tragödie, where it is used to describe the un-Dionysian faith of the "Socratic" or "theoretical" man, his optimistic belief "an eine Korrektur der Welt durch das Wissen, an ein durch die Wissenschaft geleitetes Leben," and "an die Erkennbarkeit und Ergründlichkeit aller Welträtsel." (See section 17 of Die Geburt der Tragödie. Quotes here are from vol. 1 of the Werke in drei Bänden, ed. Karl Schlechta [Munich: C. Hanser, 1954-1956], 98, 86.) The Alexandrian faith and disposition are embodied in the novel by an aggressively modern and rationalistic physician who has preserved the belief in science and progress that the protagonist has lost. Hauptmann's novel bears the strong imprint of Die Geburt der Tragödie both in this and in its contraposition of the destructive "Dionysian" element (the ocean, erotic passion, madness, and death) with the Apollinian realm of order, harmony, and "healthy superficiality" (represented by sculpture, i.e., the Apollinian art par excellence).


63. On the Schopenhauerian element in Hauptmann's writing, see Schrimpf, Gerhart Hauptmann, xxxiii.

64. "Der Leser kennt diesen Mac und weiß, daß er kein Ungeheuer ist, sondern ein sehr liebenswerter Mensch und außerdem ein Genie. Also hier wird die Arbeiterpresse der ganzen Welt offenbar ins Unrecht gesetzt." Ilberg, Bernhard Kellermann, 48-49.

65. "Diese ungeheure Leistungs- und Temposteigerung führt schließlich zur Katastrophe,
wobei es offen gelassen wird, ob das Unglück vermeidbar war. In Kellermanns Sicht handelt es sich offenbar um eine Naturkatastrophe." Ibid., 46. Ilberg's second sentence seems to contradict his first. Who, if not Kellermann, leaves open the question of the preventability of the catastrophe? The question is not, as Ilberg in his second sentence recognizes, not an open one at all. It is also incorrect to say, as Ilberg does, that Allan's "Leistungs- und Temposteigerung" leads to the catastrophe. One of the principal weaknesses of the novel is that there is no causal connection between the practices of industrial capitalism and the tunnel disaster.

66. The quote is from the East German Geschichte der deutschen Literatur, vol. 9, 471. Here it is also pointed out that, as Kellermann presents it, the conflict between the working class and the bourgeoisie is, like the struggle against the forces of nature, simply "ein Teil des großen Abenteuers, das bestanden werden muß." The Marxist complaints about the portrayal of the working class in Der Tunnel are as old as the novel itself. For example, Pernerstorfer, in his 1913 article on Kellermann for Das literarische Echo, criticizes the novel's lack of a "perspective" on the working class. "Wer," he asks, "kann den modernen Kapitalismus schildern und dabei die Arbeiter vergessen? Denn obwohl sie im Roman eine große Rolle spielen, hat der Dichter sie doch vergessen, weil er nur ihre Existenz, nicht aber ihr Wesen aufgezeigt hat" (16). See also Ilberg's criticisms in Bernhard Kellermann, 45-46, 49-50.

67. In this, Ilberg tells us, we see clearly "daß der Humanist und Realist Kellermann noch immer von den Vorurteilen seiner Klasse befangen war." "Hier," he continues, "und in anderen, ebenso bezeichnenden Stellen, zeigt sich, daß Kellermann nicht den Arbeitern, sondern der Intelligenz eine Führungsrolle zuerkennt." Ibid, 46.

68. See, for example, the scene on p. 192 of Der Tunnel, in which the narrative focuses on a group of black workers: "Diese Neger hatten sich teilweise in eine Wut hineingeschraubelt und rollten die Augen und schrien sinnlos, teilweise aber waren sie gute schwarze Burschen geblieben, die ihre weißen Zähne zeigten und den 'ladies', die sich sehen ließem nicht mißzuverstehende Liebesanträge machten." The two engineers, other than Allan, who are mentioned frequently by name in the novel, are both German, Strom and "der fette Müller."

69. "Die Arbeiter streiken, aber sie erheben nicht eine Forderung, weder nach besseren Arbeitsbedingungen, größerer Sicherheit noch nach bessrer Bezahlung." Ilberg, Bernhard
Kellermann, 46.

70. See notes 11-13 above. On the Kartell der schaffenden Stände, see Fischer, Krieg der Illusionen, chap. 13. See also Heckart, From Bassermand to Bebel, 265-266.


73. Ibid., 212-213.


76. Umberto Eco uses the term "sinusoidal structure" in an essay on Eugène Sue's Les Mystères de Paris reprinted in The Role of the Reader: Explorations in the Semiotics of Texts (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 132. Following the Sue scholar Jean-Louis Bory, Eco links this structure to the fact that Les Mystères appeared in serial form (133). Der Tunnel, too, may have been written with a view to serial publication, which would account for the sinusoidal character of its plot. In an article on Kellermann published in Ost und West, Paul Wiegler writes: "Den 'Tunnel' bot S. Fischer, selbst mit Vorbehalten gegen diesen neuen Kellermann behaftet, der Berliner Illustrierten an. Hermann Ullstein, skeptisch gegen die technische Utopie, verzichtete und bereute." See, "Bernhard Kellermann, Träumer und Rebell," Ost und West 3 (March 1949): 38-40. The quote is on p. 39.

Chapter Four

"Between Two Worlds":

Theodor Heinrich Mayer's Rapanui

Theodor Heinrich Mayer (1884-1949) was a minor Viennese writer of the first half of the twentieth century.1 His principal period of productivity was the two decades between the First and Second World Wars. Although he had been trained in pharmacology (Magister der Pharmazie, Dr. chem.), Mayer soon gave up his career as a pharmacist in order to devote himself full time to his writing. He made his literary debut in 1915 with Von Maschinen und Menschen, a collection of short stories published by the L. Staackmann publishing firm of Leipzig. Though publishing occasionally with other, smaller German and Austrian houses as well, Mayer would remain a Staackmann author--one of the "Staackmänner," as Karl Kraus referred to them2--for much of his literary career.

This long-term association with Staackmann is of more than purely bibliographical interest. It is indicative both of Mayer's overall ideological orientation and of the general character and quality of his writings. Founded in 1869, Staackmann was, from the turn of the century on, an enormously successful publisher of popular fiction.3 The firm's two specialities were Heimatliteratur, on the one hand, and, on the other, those genres which attempted to still--temporarily at least--the public's hunger for "das Abenteuerlich-Phantastische in allen seinen Formen."4 The former was represented especially by the works of Peter Rosegger, the latter by those of Karl Hans Strobl, Gustav Renker, and, of course, Mayer himself. Though a German publishing house, Staackmann Verlag was especially known for its promotion of Austrian writers. So great in fact were deemed the firm's contributions to the development of Austrian literature that in 1929 the Austrian government awarded Alfred Staackmann "das goldene Ehrenzeichen für besondere Verdienste um die Republik Österreich."5 But the Austrian literature whose cause Staackmann served so meritoriously was that not of Schnitzler or Musil but of countless second- and third-rate writers who are today deservedly forgotten. And, more to the point, the spirit and ideology which guided Staackmann's Verlagsprogram and which informed the writings of the Staackmänner was anything but republican. It was, rather, the anti-liberal, anti-modern, racist, and chauvinistic spirit of the Völkischen and the Deutsch-Nationalen.
Indeed, to liberals such as Robert Musil, the very name of the Leipzig publisher was synonymous with völkisch kitsch. "Man schwärme für Erhöhung des deutschen Wesens in Österreich," wrote Musil in 1919, "meinte damit aber nicht etwa Rilke, obgleich der ein Deutscher, Österreicher und 'Arier' ist, sondern kern-iniges deutsches Staackmannestum."6

The title of Von Maschinen und Menschen sounds one of the principal themes of Mayer's later writings: the problematic relationship between man and the technology he has created. Mayer develops this theme in the various works which make up the cycle "Sinn und Seele der Technik"; this cycle includes, in addition to several collections of short stories, a catastrophist science fiction novel, Tod über der Welt (1930), and an apocalyptic "dramatic fantasy," Wir (1921), which depicts the "Ausklang einer technisierten Menschheit." A futuristic technological society is also the setting for Mayer's story in Die Frau im Kampf (1931), a "technischer Zukunftsroman" not included in the "Sinn und Seele" cycle.7

Mayer's magnum opus, however, was to be "Hundert Jahre Österreich," a cycle of novels which would have as their subjects some of the important events and personalities of nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century Austrian history. Of the projected fifteen volumes, Mayer completed only seven. Among the subjects which he selected for novellistic treatment were post-war inflation (Prokop der Schneider [1922]);8 Karl Lueger, the popular and charismatic Christian Socialist mayor of turn-of-the-century Vienna (Die letzten Bürger [1927]); the resistance of the Siebenbürger Germans to Slav nationalism (Ein Deutscher im Osten [1932]); and the stock market crash of 1873 (Geld . . ., Geld! [1935]). Of the seven, one, Prokop der Schneider, is a Zeitroman: in it, Mayer comments directly on his time. But the historical novels, too, were more than nostalgic celebrations of Austria's past glory and greatness. They were intended to be read figurally or typologically, with the pressing social and political questions of the day always in the reader's mind as the final point of reference. Thus Minister Bruck (1929), for example, must be understood in the context of contemporary discussions of a possible Austro-German customs union: the Zollverein unsuccessfully championed by the novel's hero, the tragic Freiherr von Bruck, clearly prefigures that desired by most Austrians during the twenties as a first step towards political Anschluß.9 The ideology which informs Mayer's Austrian novels, as even just a quick survey of their subjects suggests, is anti-liberal, anti-Semitic, anti-capitalistic,
anti-democratic, anti-socialistic, and intensely nationalistic. One of them, the Siebenbürgen novel Ein Deutscher im Osten, found special favor with the National Socialists, who recommended its acquisition by small-town libraries.10

In addition to the novels and stories which make up the cycles Sinn und Seele der Technik and Hundert Jahre Österreich, Mayer wrote a number of other works, both fiction and non-fiction. They include a history of the railroad in Austria; a book about the Austrian highway system; several local and regional chronicles and tales; and, of course, more novels, on a variety of subjects. Among these "miscellaneous" works is the novel here under discussion, Rapanui: Untergang einer Welt (1923).11 Although not part of the "Sinn und Seele der Technik" cycle, Rapanui is linked motivically and thematically with it: one of the novel's central characters is a homo faber figure, and much of the narrative interest focuses on the two monumental engineering projects with which he attempts to save his land and people. Moreover, while there are no such overt parallels between Rapanui and Mayer's Austrian novels, we must at least entertain the possibility that it and a work such as Minister Bruck are related at some deeper level-related in the sense that for Rapanui no less than for the novels of the Austrian cycle the ultimate referent is the author's historical present.

"Rapanui" is the Polynesian name for Easter Island, and Mayer invites his reader to imagine that Easter Island is the remnant of a large continent which existed in the Pacific thousands of years ago. The novel tells of the destruction of this ancient continent and of the death of the civilization with flourished there. Though Rapanui belongs to the sub-genre of Lost Continent tales (Atlantis, Mu) generally, this particular subject matter was doubtless suggested to Mayer by newspaper accounts of the great Chilean earthquake of 1922, some of which falsely reported that Easter Island had sunk into the Pacific. These sensationalistic reports led, in Germany, to an upsurge in popular interest in the mysteries of the rugged Polynesian island, which became the subject of well-attended public lectures and numerous magazine articles. Rapanui is one manifestation of that interest.12

But the 1922 earthquake was only the external inspiration for Mayer's novel. Like Gottfried Benn's 1927 poem "Osterinsel" or Max Ernst's Oval Bird of 1934, Rapanui must be viewed within the wider context of the European fascination with the art and culture of the
primitive peoples of Africa, Oceania, and North and Central America. One of the salient features of European cultural history during the first third of the twentieth century, this fascination with the primitive and the archaic was rooted in a profound dissatisfaction with rationalistic, materialistic, "disenchanted" world of modernity and expressed a longing for a more natural, authentic, and vital mode of existence. The strongly anti-modern character of Mayer's story is thus implicit in the very title and setting of the work.

One manifestation of the period's intense interest in primitive cultures was the proliferation of ethnographic studies and exhibitions during the first three decades of the twentieth century. Despite the availability of such sources of information, Mayer makes only the most superficial effort, however, to incorporate into his imaginary Polynesian world what was known at the time about Easter Island as well as about Polynesian religion and culture generally. To be sure, he does employ a few actual place names (Vaihu, Ranakao); and the two deities who figure in the narrative occupy a legitimate place in the Polynesian pantheon. Mayer's description of Make-Make as the God of Destruction and his explanation of the giant Easter Island statues are pure invention, however; so, too, are most of the other aspects of Rapanui culture to which Mayer occasionally alludes. More than anything else, the civilization which Mayer depicts in his novel is a generic Ancient or Primitive Civilization, concocted according more to the conventions of the Archaic, the Exotic, and the Primitive as they obtain in Trivialitiatum than to the findings of anthropologists and ethnologists.

Rapanui opens with an account of the "Festival of Consummation," which is celebrated in honor of the Polynesian creator-god, Ta'aroa. Although Mayer is not explicit about the nature and function of the festival, certain details such as the recitation of cosmogonic and origin myths (12) suggest that he has modelled this ceremony, at least in part, on primitive rituals of renewal and regeneration similar to the ones described in the writings of Mircea Eliade and others. Such rituals, Eliade tells us, symbolically re-enact the cosmogony and, in primitive societies, are believed to "renew" the world, to re-establish the cosmos in the face of ever-threatening chaos. It is precisely the idea of cosmos as creation, order, form, and life which, along with that of renovatio, Mayer evidently intends to evoke. At the same time, however, this festival is a
celebration of endings and is thus an apt symbol for one of the novel's key ideas, the complementarity and indeed identity of beginning and ending, of creation and destruction: "Immer war Anfang und Ende nur eins, eine Geburt" (345).

The festival culminates in the "hierogamie" union of the youthful Rapanuan king, Arkaman, with Yugurdun, the dark prophetess from Vaihu, a rugged, forbidding region in the southern part of Rapanui. According to Rapanuan mythology, Vaihu is the center of the universe, the _omphalos mundi_, where Ta'aroa began the work of creation: "Von dort ging alles Werden aus, dorthin sollte es einmal müde zurückkehren" (45). Vaihu is also the domain of Make-Make, the "Herr aller Zerstörung" (45). The first man fought with this terrible deity, defeated him, and banished him into the depths of the earth. He commemorated his victory over Make-Make by erecting a statue of the god, a "Gestalt aus dem dunklen Gestein, nur ein furchtbarstes Haupt auf Schultern, ohne Arme, ohne Leib, ein Gewaltiges, das sich aus der Erde heben wollte und doch in ihr gefangen blieb" (46). Thousands of these fearsome effigies dot Vaihu, symbols of man's eternally recurring struggle with the dark forces of death and destruction: "Froh schritten die Menschen weiter auf dem Pfad ihrer Siege, oft schleuderte Make-Make noch seine finstere Kraft gegen sie, vergeblich blieb sein Wüten, und sie zwangen es von neuem in ein dunkles, totes Bild, immer jenem ersten gleichend, ein erstarrtes Entsetzen, aus Stein gehauen" (46). This sentence contains _in nuce_ the central dynamic of the novel: the eternal conflict between the forces of creation and destruction.

Destruction, disorder, and chaos--Make-Make's "finstere Kraft"--impinge upon the festival honoring the creator-god from both without and within. The eastern part of Rapanui is rent by a series of powerful volcanic eruptions, clearly visible in the distance to the inhabitants of the capital city, Rapanara, where the festival is taking place. As the ceremony progresses, the capital itself is repeatedly jolted by earth tremors of increasing violence. These are accompanied by strange and terrifying meteorological phenomena. Paralleling these violent convulsions of external nature is the "eruption" among the festival participants of primitive sexual and destructive energies. "Die Gier wütete" (29), Mayer writes, and describes how, after a week of purificatory celibacy prior to the ceremony, the Rapanuians work themselves into a sexual frenzy as night and the dissolution of the "Fesseln" imposed by "Sitte und Herkommen" (50) approach. It is not
just pent-up sexual desire which overwhelms the Rapanuians, however: "... ebenso stark war das Begehren nach einer Zerstörung" (39). Lust and envy provoke fights among the Rapanuians and give rise to thoughts of "Empörung und Mord" (35); and as the festival draws to a close, the Rapanuians are impelled by a wild "Trieb nach Zerstörung" (47) to commit senseless acts of destruction. They tear down banners, overturn booths set up for the festival, smash chairs and benches, and set fires. And adding to the general frenzy, indeed heightening the Rapanuians' lust and aggression, are the terror and panic which grip them with each new manifestation of nature's violence.

During the night a powerful earthquake reduces the capital city to rubble and kills many thousands of its residents. When King Arkaman, accompanied by his loyal vassal, Huarmi, inspects the ruins of Rapanara the following morning, he finds the surviving populace utterly demoralized and paralyzed by grief and terror. Seeking "das jubelnd befreiende Wort" (80), the king addresses a throng of his subjects gathered in the central square. He bids them set aside their grief, reproaches them for their cowardice, and exhorts them to prove themselves worthy of the name Man: "Ihr Feigen heult um euer Leben ... was kämpft ihr nicht darum? Vergaßet ihr es, Helden zu sein? Kämpft um Hoffnungen, um Taten, um Rettung, aber kämpft, damit ihr wieder Menschen euch nennen könnt!" (84). Arkaman summons them to do battle with a hostile Nature and to subject the very elements to their will. And in the first of three key scenes in which social conflict is resolved through the violent, decisive act of a strong authoritarian leader, Huarmi renders Arkaman's stirring words even more persuasive by decapitating the most vocal and cowardly member of the crowd. The king's speech and his vassal's brutal deed have the desired effect. The Rapanuians master their fear and are filled with new "Kraft, Stolz und Begeisterung" (85). Their cries of anguish and grief give way to cheers, and the by now sizeable crowd in the square begins to clamor for a "Führer," for someone to lead them to greatness: "Mach uns groß, König Arkaman, gib uns einen Führer gegen alles, was feindlich ist ..." (86).

This Führer will not be the king himself, but his trusted vassal, Huarmi, "der kühnste und stärkste Mann des Reiches" (18). Huarmi combines traditional "heroic" qualities such as loyalty, courage, and great physical strength with the organizational and technical genius of homo faber, the representative figure of the modern industrial age. He will plan, organize, and direct the
monumental engineering project with which the king hopes to save Rapanui, "mein und der Menschen Reich" (278), from Nature run amuck.

Violent volcanic eruptions and earthquakes have transformed the mountainous eastern part of Rapanui into a fiery sea of molten rock which threatens to spill over into the rich, fertile central plain and to engulf the capital city. Huarmi's grandiose plan calls for the construction of two dams and a canal. They are both works of unheard of magnitude and must be accomplished in order to contain the relentlessly advancing lava and redirect it into the ocean. For this epic "Kampf gegen das entfesselte Feuer" (89), the king and Huarmi mobilize the entire nation—millions of Rapanuians come together in a common cause, a heroic Volk united in desperate struggle against a common foe.

Under Huarmi's leadership, work proceeds with no significant material, logistical, or technical difficulties. Twice, however, disturbances and unrest among the workers threaten the project and place its successful completion in doubt. On the first occasion, the workers come under the influence of a certain Puruhura. The leader of a contemplative sect, Puruhura preaches the vanity of all effort and achievement and teaches the virtues of inwardness, surrender, and passivity; for him and his followers, supreme happiness consists in "dem Verträumen alles Lebens zum Nichts" (146). As more and more workers embrace his quietistic teachings, work on the dam comes to a complete standstill. Even the king himself falls under the spell of the religious leader and decides to abandon the project. Huarmi, who, in Mayer's quasi-allegorical counterposition of the vita activa and the vita contemplativa, embodies the active principle, is enraged and confronts Puruhura on a mountain top. In full view of the king and the workers, he hurls the frail old mystic from a precipice to his death on the rocks below. The spell is broken, the workers' will is restored, and work resumes with new vigor. Just as following the earthquake he brings the terror-stricken Rapanuians to their senses through a brutal swordstroke, here again, Huarmi, "der Starke," re-establishes order and silences dissent through a dramatic and violent act.

The second threat to the project occurs with an outbreak of mass hysteria and destructiveness at one of the dam sites. Originating among members of a sect of fire-worshippers, an ecstatic delight in the "Gewalt des zerstörenden Feuers" (188) quickly
spreads, first to the members of the Vaihu contingent, who are by tradition devotees of the destroyer-god, Make-Make, and then to the other workers. A wild orgy of destruction ensues. The Rapanuians smash, overturn, or set ablaze tools and machinery, supplies, carts and wagons, tents and buildings and, indifferent to their fate and to that of their countrymen, even begin to demolish the dam itself. "Ein unerhörtes Fest wurde der Menschheit gegeben," Mayer writes, "das Fest der Zerstörung . . . Irrsinn und Tollheit suchten sich zu überbieten" (192). He attempts to motivate this outburst of irrationality and destructiveness, in part at least, in social-psychological terms by depicting it as the Rapanuians' reaction to the stultifying, dehumanizing monotony of their work: "Unsägliche Mühe hatte man an dieses Werk gewendet, war zur sinnlos bewegten Erde abgestampft worden, das alles hatte nun ein Ende, das herrlichste aller Schauspiele begann, die große Zerstörung" (190). The orgy of destruction continues until the banks of the valley give way, plunging their occupants to an ecstatic death in the fiery torrent of lava below. Their frenzy spent, the remaining Rapanuians return to the "stumpfen Schlaf des arbeitenden Tages" (194); damage to the dam is not irreparable and soon Huarmi's project, "der Menschheit gewaltigstes Werk" (132), is completed. The king dismisses his "army" of workers; and he and Huarmi return to Rapanara, now rebuilt "in doppelter Pracht" (197), and to their wives. Both women are pregnant, a fact which is ultimately more important than Huarmi's engineering triumph. For despite their heroic efforts, the Rapanuians and their civilization are, as the reader soon learns, doomed; and the children Yurgurdun and Aymara bear within their wombs will be the first of a new race of men.

A dark presentiment of Rapanui's destruction intrudes upon Huarmi's pleasure and pride in his achievement. "Ein anderes Verderben kommt über die Menschheit, dem sie nicht entrinnen kann" (207-208), he tells Arkaman, who has himself had similar forebodings. The precise nature of this new "Verderben" soon becomes evident: reports from the coastal regions of Rapanui indicate that the entire continent is slowly sinking into the ocean. When the citizens of Rapanara learn of their fate, there is a complete breakdown of law and authority: arson, looting, rape, and murder ensue; and for a brief time drunken and rebellious citizens occupy the royal palace. Even the king himself is caught up in the general frenzy of lust and aggression. Order is restored and the population brought to its senses, however, when Huarmi destroys the dikes of the city
reservoirs and floods the town—a sobering foretaste of the catastrophe to come. Arkaman proposes to build enough ships to carry every man, woman, and child and puts Huarmi in charge of the project. The king's idea is received with wild enthusiasm by his subjects. Filled with excitement at the adventure ahead, the Rapanuians set out from Rapanara and elsewhere in the kingdom for the south, where, in the mountain forests of Nagira, the fleet is to be built.

Millions of animals of every description have been driven onto the high ground of Nagira by the approaching waters, and a brutal territorial struggle breaks out between them and the human refugees. Huarmi orders the extermination of all save domestic animals. Traditionally a pacifistic people, the Rapanuians at first balk at this command; however, the feel of the new weapons in their hands and the first scent of blood awaken within them aggressive and murderous instincts, long restrained but never extinguished by "Gewöhnung" (290), by the conventions of morality and civilization. "Wie herrlich das war, dieses Wühlen in Schmerz und Wunden und Blut, dieses rast- und ruhelose Niederwerfen der Schwächeren, . . . dieses höchste Leben in tödenden Waffen . . ." (289). The slaughter of the animals complete, the Rapanuians turn their weapons against each other, until at last, their blood lust sated, they recall the great purpose for which they have come to Nagira. They bury their dead, cremate the animal carcasses, and set about the task of building a fleet.

The construction of the fleet proceeds apace, and the mood of the Rapanuians is festive and joyful. Far from mourning the world they have lost, they view the death of Rapanui as the liberating "Erösung von allem Gewesenen" (306) and project onto the still uncertain, shapeless future all their hopes, dreams, and desires: "Ein jeder schilderte das Höchste, was er jemals zu erwarten gewagt hatte, beschrieb es so klar und anschaulich, als hätte er es schon längst gesehen, als wälzte er schon seit Jahren dort, ein zweiter und ein dritter erzählten mit anderer, ebenso schöner Erzählung; die Wünsche hatten alle Segel geschwell, trieben die Schiffe über das Meer der Zukunft zu den Ufern des Glücks, . . ." (297-298). The drowning of the continent seems to herald the beginning of a new and blissful condition for the race of man, a utopian condition in which "sich . . . alles erfüllte, was jeder in seinem bisherigen Leben erwartet oder erträumt hatte" (292).

The dream, however, quickly becomes a nightmare. Almost no sooner are the Rapanuians
afloat than they are attacked by huge swarms of vicious birds. At the same time it is discovered that the ships are teeming with vermin and that termites have so eaten away the oars and masts, beams and timbers that the vessels are no longer steerable, indeed no longer seaworthy. The animal kingdom thus avenges itself on man for "das große Morden" (297): "Haßbeschwert entschwebte die Seele der Ermordeten, traf die Tiere der Luft, belud deren Leben mit dem Haß und vergröß sich dann zu reinster Höhe. Haßtrunken sickerte das Blut der Gemordeten zur Erde und berauschte alles kleine Getier des Bodens mit Rache" (316). The elements, too, ally themselves with the birds and the vermin: a storm of unparalleled violence arises, and all but one of the ships are destroyed. That ship is Huarmi's. It bears Huarmi, his wife, and the king through the terrible tempest to the rugged coast of Vaihu, the only part of Rapanui which will survive. There, Yugurdun, whom the king has sent on ahead, awaits them.

After the king and his party arrive at Vaihu, there occurs a dramatic upheaval of nature in which, for the surviving Rapanuians at least, the world returns literally to primordial chaos: the seas burn inexplicably, a violent tempest rages, volcanoes explode, the earth convulses—creation has fallen under the dominion of the "Allzerstörer," Make-Make. Destruction and creation are but two aspects of the same cosmic process, however, and the death of the old world, Mayer makes clear, is at the same time the birth of a new one. "Wie am Ewigkeitstag einer Urzeit wurde wieder aus dem Chaos das neue Haus für eine neue Menschheit gebaut, Flammenkampf war Stein und Mörtel und schaffende Hand, und alle Dinge fiebernten in höchster Werdegut" (344). A new world is being born and with it "eine neue Menschheit." During the night of the king's arrival, Huarmi's wife and Yugurdun give birth, to a boy and a girl, respectively. These children will be the progenitors of the new race of men. Huarmi and Aymara, representing the highest and best of the race just perished, die and leave Yugurdun, the Eternal Mother, and Arkaman—proud king no longer but humble servant of the coming race—to raise both children. The storm passes; nature's primordial fury abates; and as the new day dawns, Yugurdun shows her children a radiant world reborn: "Ihr Kinder, schaut dort Rapanui, euer und aller neuen Menschen Land!" (354).

What emerges clearly from the foregoing summary is that the central tension in the novel is that between the forces of order and disorder, of creation and destruction, which Mayer has chosen to symbolize with the two Polynesian deities, Ta'aroa and Make-Make. The author shows
the struggle between these two elemental forces taking place on several levels: first, there is the rebellion of nature against man and his works; then, there is the challenge to the social order in the frequent outbreaks of mass irrationality and violence; and finally, there is the pressure of the irrational on the individual from within, as exemplified by the conflict between Huami's loyalty to his king and his lust for one of the king's chosen women. In each instance, Mayer depicts an ordered, structured, "cosmicized" world under repeated assault, from both within and without, by the dark forces of death and destruction. This world is finally overwhelmed and, as we have seen, reverts to its chaotic Urzustand.

And yet Mayer does not end the novel here. For creation and destruction are presented in the narrative less as opposites than as complementary aspects of a single, cyclical universal process, the process of Eternal Becoming, "des ewigen Werdens" (200). There is no death, Arkaman tells Huami, "nur ein Werden im Kreis von Höhe zu Höhe" (208). Every death is followed by a new birth, and each destruction bears within it the seeds of a new creation. Mayer's conception of Vaihu and of Yugurdun is shaped by this idea: Vaihu is both the land of destruction and the seat of creation; Yugurdun, the Eternal Mother and embodiment of life, wears the image of the destroyer-god on her garment.19

Thus Rapanui ends not with the world's reversion to primordial chaos, which is only the penultimate episode, but with the birth of a new race of men and with the re-creation of the world: "Neue Länder und Reiche hatten sich in Weiten erhoben..." (353)--new realms which would be a "neues Haus für eine neue Menschheit" (344). The theme of regeneration, of renovation, occurs again and again throughout the novel. It is sounded at the very beginning, in the description of the Festival of Consummation, which, as we have noted, is reminiscent of primitive renewal rites; and, of course, it is implicit in the Western name for Rapanui. Mayer underscores this point in an epilogue-like concluding paragraph which describes the discovery and naming of Easter Island by Western explorers: "Da es der Tag der Auferstehung des Heilands war, an dem sie [=die Entdecker] das geheimnisvolle Eiland betraten, gaben sie ihm damach den Namen und nannten es die Osterinsel" (354).

The notion that the end of the world will be followed by its re-creation or by a new creation is not, of course, startlingly new. It occurs, in one form or the other, in a number of different
mythologies, in a number of different religious and philosophical traditions; it is also present, in a metaphorical sense, in the ideologies and rhetoric of a wide range of revolutionary and reformist movements. Unfortunately, Mayer does not do very much with this familiar idea; he fails, in particular, to exploit its rich potential for social or cultural criticism and commentary. Thus, the novel’s informing paradigm of death and re-birth, of annihilation and re-creation remains strikingly abstract and schematic, an empty formula devoid of any explicit moral or socio-political content.

Most traditional versions or actualizations of this paradigm—whether cyclical (like the Vedic) or linear-finite (like the Judeo-Christian), whether religious or secular—involves the doctrine of the decrepitude or corruption of the world whose end they recall or prophesy. Thus, in ancient Vedic texts, the world which passes away is the decadent world of the Kāli Yuga (the Age of Darkness); in Christian eschatology, it is the post-lapsarian world of sin, suffering, and death; for the communist, it is the contradiction- and crisis-ridden world of late capitalism; for the völkisch ideologues of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, it was the soulless modern world of big cities, mass democracy, materialism, positivism, and racial heterogeneity. There is no shortage of examples. In each instance, the world which perishes is characterized as fallen, corrupt, depleted, degenerate, deserving punishment, needful of purification and re-vitalization; and each instance, too, the new world which replaces the corrupt, fallen old one—the Kṛta Yuga; the New Jerusalem; the classless, stateless society; the Nordic Volksgemeinschaft—represents a return to, a recovery of a lost Golden Age.

Such is not the case in Rapanui, however. Mayer makes no qualitative distinctions between the old world and the new one whose birth he describes in the final pages of the novel. One cosmic cycle ends and a new one begins—and that, for Mayer, is that. To be sure, the theme of degeneration, of decrepitude is sounded, very faintly, in one of the novel’s key sentences: “Von dort [=Vaihu] ging alles Werden aus, dorthin sollte es einmal müde zurückkehren” (45, emphasis added). But Mayer does not develop the idea of cosmic Müdigkeit at all. On the contrary, far from being decadent or enervated, the civilization whose end Mayer chronicles appears to be quite vigorous and viable, indeed at the very height of its development. Rapanui is a land of plenty (“Wessen die Menschen bedurften, das bot es in reichster Fülle” [9]); the
Rapanuians are a pacific people ("So friedlich war das Volk von Rapanui, daß jahrzehntelang kein Menschenblut vergossen wurde" [282]); as evidenced by the two monumental engineering projects described in the novel, they possess great technical knowledge and skill; and they face unprecedented threats to their very existence as a people with resolve, courage, and imagination.

In short, although the idea of decline is implicit in the structuring paradigm of his novel, Mayer chooses not to employ it in his characterization of Rapanui. Instead, he equips his imaginary Polynesian kingdom with traits which are positive and sometimes downright utopian. Moreover, having dispensed with the notion of present decline, Mayer no longer needs the idea of future re-vitalization either. Thus, while he concludes the novel with a vision of the birth of a new earth and a new race of men, he does not present this pristine new world as a superior, utopian or redemptive alternative to the world just perished.

The new Rapanui is neither better nor worse than the old one: it is simply new and hence still undefined, still unfinished, still open to development. As the following sentence, with its verbs of waiting and slumbering, makes clear, it is a realm of possibility rather than facticity, of potentiality rather than actuality: "Überall," writes Mayer of the "new lands and realms" envisioned at the end of the novel, "wartete Segen, daß man ihn rief, überall schlummerte Kraft, daß man sie weckte, überall harrte Größe, daß sie eines Menschen eigen wurde, überall erblühten Wunder wollten bald eine Wahrheit werden" (353). The tension between possibility and facticity and the attitude of anticipation so clearly manifest in the passage just cited are echoed at various other points in the narrative. For example, in the contrast between the "leeren Öde der Sättigung" of a "finished" present and the "seligen Noch-Nicht" of a still open future (151-152); or, again, in Mayer's account of the Rapanuians' joyful Aufbruch following their "Erlösung von allem Dagewesen" into an uncertain, indeterminate, but hope- and promise-filled future. This is not to say that Mayer is suffused with the "Geist der Utopie"24--he most certainly is not, and the utopian "not yet" remains, unfortunately, another of the novel's many merely latent themes.

How does Mayer motivate the Weltuntergang he so luridly describes? The question of motivation is a problematic one because Mayer suggests two different and unrelated explanations for the destruction of Rapanui. (As usual in this murky narrative, the difficulty reflects not a complexity of meaning but authorial uncertainty and lack of focus.) First, Mayer establishes a
link of sin and retribution, of transgression and expiation, between the events which finally bring about the end of the Rapanuians and the "großen Morden" in Nagira. Mayer clearly intends to portray these events—the attack of the birds and vermin on the Rapanuian fleet and the subsequent storm at sea—as the horrible vengeance which nature wreaks on man ("Sein war die Schuld" [317]) for the violence he has done her. "Sühne für jeden Mord!" the attacking birds seem to the terrified Rapanuians to be crying (317). The notion of sin and retribution is certainly a common enough element in end-of-the-world and catastrophist fiction. It does not, however, figure earlier in Mayer's novel at all. Certainly, neither of the two earlier catastrophes which befall the Rapanuians is accounted for in these terms: both represent, rather, an unmotivated assault by the brute forces of chaos and destruction upon man's cosmonized world. This assault takes place jenseits von Gut und Böse: the first two catastrophes are in no wise related to any transgression of which the Rapanuians may be guilty. Rapanui is, after all, not portrayed as a flawed civilization. They are neither an expression of divine judgment and wrath nor do they satisfy some abstract principle of justice imminent in the universe. Thus Mayer's introduction of the theme of sin and retribution some three-quarters of the way through the novel represents a puzzling deviation from the previous course of the narrative. This course change is, one suspects, not so much a matter of conscious artistic decision as it is the result of Mayer's casual use of stereotyped motifs, narrative formulas, and language without sufficient regard for their thematic implications. It is, at any rate, difficult to believe that Mayer seriously intends to invest the destruction of Rapanui with any sort of moral significance, his use of the words "Schuld" and "Sühne" in the scenes depicting the destruction of the Rapanuian fleet notwithstanding. In this, he departs from the format usually followed in the class of stories to which Rapanui, by virtue of its subject matter, belongs—the Atlantis or Sunken Continent tale. Such stories typically describe the destruction of an advanced civilization which is brought down, or brings itself down, because of some flaw, usually hubris or luxuria, in its collective character. Rapanui does not conform to this pattern.

One additional comment on the question of the Rapanuians' putative Schuld is in order. What the große Morden dramatizes is less their guilt or, in more general terms, less man's violation of nature than, beneath a thin veneer of civilization, his fundamental oneness with it.
several passages in the novel indicate, Mayer's view of nature is a grim, Schopenhauerian one: for him, nature is "red in tooth and claw," its essence is never-ending strife, a perpetual and merciless Kampf ums Dasein. Hence, there can be no question of the große Morden involving a sin against nature since, by slaughtering the animals in the interest of their own survival, the Rapanuians are simply acting in accordance with the law of nature. The real conflict in this episode, in fact, is not between man and nature at all, but between civilization and nature; and the real point of Mayer's account of the großen Morden is to illustrate the tenuousness of civilization's restraints and taboos and the frightening proximity of even the most civilized man to the beast.27

There are hints, worked fairly consistently into the narrative, of another explanation for the destruction of Rapanui, an explanation which has to do with the cyclical view of history which informs the novel. Mayer relates the idea of destruction to that of consummation, to that of Erfüllung or Vollendung. This Erfüllung theme is sounded at the very beginning of the novel with the "Fest der Erfüllung"; and the verbs erfüllen and vollenden, along with their substantival forms, occur with leitmotivic regularity in the novel. Mayer portrays the end of Rapanui as a manifestation of what he terms "den Willen des Vollendeten nach Zerstörung" (46). He never really explains what precisely is meant by this grand-sounding phrase. But he does refer to the "fact" that in any cyclical process the highest point is followed inevitably by decline. "... dann war die Vollendung erreicht. Und auch die Erfüllung. Nach ihr kam nur noch Kleineres, Kleines, das Sinken, das Löschen. Vielleicht das Ende als Beginn neuen Anfangs. Aber nicht mehr für diese Menschheit. Diese Höhe wie jetzt war ihr nur einmal beschieden" (131).28 The Rapanuians have, in other words, reached the apex of their development; they have consummated their history and fulfilled their destiny. All that remains for them now is to perish and to make way for a new race of men.29

The "Wille des Vollendeten nach Zerstörung" may also be related to the undeveloped theme, mentioned above, of facticity vs. possibility, of the utopian "not yet." In this case, the phrase would refer to a tendency to break up all that is vollendet—i.e., finished, fixed, determinate, closed, reified—in order to restore to the world its rich potential and openness. Thus, not only is Rapanui civilization vollendet in the positive sense of the word; but it is also
vollendet in the negative sense of "reified"—it is "perfect" and thus static, frozen, closed, estranged. "Du vollendetest etwas," Arkaman tells one of his subjects who laments the destruction of Rapanara, "schon war es dir fremd, weil es sich erfüllte" (82). The ruin of Rapanui makes possible the recovery, the re-appropriation of a world grown alien as a consequence of its very Vollendung.

Another aspect of Mayer's story which merits our attention involves a polarity or opposition which is characteristic of certain strands of conservative thought in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Once again, we are dealing with a theme which is implicit in Mayer's narrative but which Mayer never brings into distinct focus. The polarity in question is, of course, that between the historical and the cosmic, or between the rational-purposive act of Making (bauen) and irrational-organic Becoming (werden). Following a familiar archetypal pattern, Mayer identifies the former with a masculine figure and the latter with a feminine figure. He gives concrete embodiment to this opposition between two orders of being and action in the contrasting figures of Huarmi, the homo faber, and Yugurdu, the Eternal Mother. 31

One of the most frequently recurring motifs in Rapanui is the greatness and glory of man and his works. "Von der Menschen Größe und Kraft wirst du nun singen," Mayer has Arkaman tell a Rapanuan poet, revealing, as it were, his own self-understanding thereby. "Laß die Gewalt deines Wortes zum Brausen werden, das über Tod und Zerstörung den höchsten, ewigen Sinn der Erde preist, den Menschen und sein Werk!" (82-83). It is Huarmi who most fully embodies "der Menschen Größe und Kraft" in the novel. Huarmi's sphere of action is history; and the two monumental engineering projects that he directs symbolize the whole spectrum of activities by which man separates himself from nature and creates a world distinctly human. "Aus der grünen Hülle ertrinkenden Landes," Mayer writes of Huarmi's efforts to construct a fleet for his countrymen, "schuf er ein neues, das sein Leben und Sinn nur ihm verdankte; Rapanui, das Reich der Erde, versank, Rapanui, das Reich der Menschen, erstand neu aus seinen Händen" (303).

If Huarmi represents human endeavor in history, both poiesis and praxis, then Yugurdu, Arkaman's queen, personifies the supra-historical, cosmic process of Eternal Becoming. "Mit Größtem bin ich gesegnet," she tells Huarmi's wife, "mit dem Wissen des ewigen Werdens"
(137). Yugurdun is the Eternal Mother—"Mutter fühlte ich mich, seit ich wußte, daß es Mütter gibt" (163)—and she bears "das Werden einer neuen Menschheit in ihrem Schoß" (270). There is a quality about her which is more than mortal, mythic: like Arkaman, she belongs to a higher order than that represented by Huarmi and Aymara. And while Huarmi and Aymara perish, together with the world they embody, Yugurdun and Arkaman—"die Dauernden" (350)—survive. However tragically heroic his struggle, Huarmi does, after all, fail to arrest the unfolding of his people's fate along its foreordained path; and it is Yugurdun, in the final analysis, who ensures the survival of the race. Mayer's story thus demonstrates the superiority and primacy of the Eternal Mother to the homo faber, of Werden to Bauen, of the cosmic order to history. Man and his works will perish, but life, the cosmic cycle, Eternal Becoming, continues. This is, of course, essentially the same thought that occurs in the "vulgar" Lebensphilosophie of the period, and it is not surprising that on one occasion Mayer expresses it in unmistakeably vitalistic terms: "Wenn auch Lebendes starb, das Leben blieb doch überall" (142).

In the preceding section we have identified several of the novel's key themes and motifs. As we have noted in passing, these are not thoroughly and rigorously developed. Indeed, Mayer seems quite indifferent to a tight thematic structuring and elaboration of his material. Rather, his principal concern is with effect, with the emotional stimulation of the reader and with the arousal in him of pleasurable fantasies, unrefracted by reflection or critical distance. Instead of activating the reader intellectually, unsettling him, and compelling him to critical thought, Mayer's narrative encourages evasion and the passive, self-indulgent, narcissistic enjoyment of diffuse emotions and moods.33

As a catastrophist novel with its scenes of "unspeakable" horror, of mass destruction, ruin, and death, Rapanui seems especially intended to arouse necrophilous fantasies in its readers and to speak to their aggressive and destructive feelings. It is appropriate to cite here Manfred Durzak's restrictive re-definition of Hans Egon Holthusen's suggestive term "saurer Kitsch:" "Wenn der Begriff des sauren Kitsches irgendeine Bedeutung haben soll," Durzak writes, "dann wahrscheinlich nur auf psychologischer Basis, und zwar unter dem Aspekt des Sadomasochismus. Das Schlagwort wäre dafür die Lust am Grauen, die durch Aneinander- reihung von Brutalitäten im Leser oder Betrachter erzeugt wird."34 It is precisely this "Lust am
Grauen" which Mayer gratifies with scenes such as the following:

Rasend hetzten die Vögel den Sturm weiter. Jetzt trieben sie ganze Reihen von Schiffen gegeneinander, daß die morschen Fahrzeuge sich krachend verbohrten und verbissen, Menschen klammerten sich an Menschen, doch sie hielten nur mehr weiche, blutende Klumpen, fühlten einen Schmerz an ihrem Bein, wollten es greifen und streckten die Hand ins Leere, glaubten, daß ihr Körper vor Fäulnis zerriss, daß der Tod schon vor langen Zeiten gekommen war und nur ein zuckender Geist sich die Erinnerung an ein grauenvolles Sterben bewahrt hatte. Mütter wanden sich in Wehen, die Angst der Hunderttausende riß ihnen die unreife Frucht aus dem Leib, sie erwürgten das Fleisch, das kaum noch ein Kind zu nennen war, um ihm neuen Tod zu ersparen. (323)

This passage has no purpose beyond itself. It has only the most tenuous thematic justification; it does not occur in the context of a serious fictional exploration of the "heart of darkness," it is neither protest nor provocation. Like several similar scenes in *Rapanui*, this one is the purest Effekthascherei, cheap sensationalism at its worst.

A concomitant to the *Lust am Grauen* is the novel's pathologically deficient sense of and its indifference to the reality of human suffering. This deficiency manifests itself quite clearly in the ludicrously abstract and intellectualized character of the "wise counsel" King Arkaman gives his subjects in order to help them overcome their grief following the destruction of Rapanara. To the lament of a boy, for example, whose parents and siblings the earthquake has reduced to "blutendes Fleisch unter Schutt," the king responds: "Du Glücklicher... aus dir selbst mußt du alle Kraft schöpfen, um ein Großer unter den Menschen zu werden... allein trotzdem du der Welt!" (82). As this scene well illustrates, throughout the novel abstract and meaningless categories interpose themselves between the narrator and the horrors he describes, allowing him and his readers to share lurid fantasies of death and destruction, their *Lust am Grauen* undiminished by any sense of the reality of suffering, by any sympathy with the sufferers. This is a flaw which Mayer shares with other twentieth-century German writers; it is in part a question of aesthetic concerns taking precedence over moral ones and in part a quality of mind which is both reflected in and reinforced by the modern German language itself. "Twenty-first-century German is invaded by abstraction," writes J. P. Stern in his study of Ernst Jünger, "for it responds to the events of the world not directly, in the language of common discourse, but imperfectly, in semi-philosophical, semi-sociological, 'learned' and set terms, which are committed neither to the events nor to fundamental doctrine."35
The imagination of death, catastrophe, and destruction serves Mayer as a source of emotional Reiz and of aesthetic pleasure. Mayer was not alone at this time in his fascination with such themes. In the introduction to *Visions of Apocalypse*, the psycho-historian Saul Friedländer notes "a longing for catastrophe, death and apocalyptic destructiveness, a cult of death and destruction" which existed "at the core of Nazism and of fascist movements in the twentieth century." Thus, the novel’s thematic preoccupation with death and destruction, *inter alia*, allows us to situate *Rapanui* ideologically, as a piece of fascist or proto-fascist literature. The term "fascist" does not refer to the novel’s manifest social or political content, for there is none, or almost none. About Rapanuiian social and political institutions Mayer reveals to us little more than the fact that Rapanui has a king. Thus we cannot read *Rapanui* as a social utopia (or dystopia), as a carefully developed political or social allegory, as we could, for example, *In purpurner Finsternis*. Mayer does not use the fiction of an alternative world in order to criticize the social, political, and economic arrangements of his own world or to propose alternative arrangements to them. We look in vain in the novel for expressly political ideas or themes such as anti-Semitism, anti-socialism, anti-capitalism, or nationalism as well as for the characteristic antinomies of right-wing thought such as *Kultur* vs. *Zivilisation* or *Gemeinschaft* vs. *Gesellschaft*.

To be sure, the few passages which could be said to have a social or political content or message are predictably anti-democratic, authoritarian, illiberal, and reactionary. Consider, for example, the implications of the scenes, noted in the summary, where Huarmi "resolves" social discord and restores order through a single violent, decisive act--or the implications of Mayer’s invocation of the *Führerprinzip* in passages such as "Mach uns groß, König Arkaman, gib uns einen Führer gegen alles, was feindlich ist" (86) or "Einer nur befahl, und mit seinem Namen war Kampf und Sieg auf alles Menschenerinnern hinaus verbunden" (90).

However, it is not primarily in such authoritarian statements with a direct "political" message that the novel’s proto-fascist character is to be sought. It manifests itself uniformly throughout the work, in theme, image, tone, and diction. Proto-fascist are, for example, the mythicizing, archaicizing quality of the narrative, with its *Umlandschaften*, its primitive heroes, and clashing elemental forces; the glorification of *Treu*, of will ("das ewige Mal des Menschen,
der göttliche Wille" [104]), and of sacrifice ("Millionen von Menschen starben vielleicht, damit
die Menschheit blieb" [90]); the predilection for martial imagery and metaphor; the obscene
fascination with death and destruction; the biologicist, cyclical concept of history; the
irrationalism and vitalism ("Wenn auch Lebendes starb, das Leben blieb doch überall" [142]);
and so forth. All of these are elements which *Rapanui* shares with National Socialist literature
and its nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century forerunners. Even the vocabulary and the style of the
novel, with its pretentious obscurity and empty pathos, are those of the writers and intellectuals
of the völkisch Right.

Let us turn, finally, to a question which was raised in the introduction to this chapter.
What, if any, is the relationship between Mayer's tale of destruction and re-creation and the
historical situation in which it was written? Viewed on the level of plot and setting, of course,
*Rapanui* is pure escapism; it is characterized precisely by the fact that Mayer forsakes the realm of
history for the realm of myth or pseudo-myth and seeks in the clash of invented cosmic forces a
substitute for experienced historical conflict. On a deeper level, however, and on one of which
Mayer was perhaps not even fully conscious, history, the author's own historical situation, is
very much present in the narrative, all the author's mythicizing and archaicizing notwithstanding.

Mayer's relationship to his immediate historical situation was not an untroubled one. As *Prokop der Schneider* and his other Austrian novels show, Mayer was a determined opponent of
Austria's social-democratic First Republic. *Prokop* is, in fact, a shrill attack on the Republic: in
it, Republican Vienna appears as a modern-day Babylon, where mammonism and socialism run
rampant. The novel concludes, however, on an encouragingly apocalyptic note with a vision of
the eventual triumph of an intellectual, artistic, and professional elite (members of the
"Hüet-Euch!" movement) over greedy capitalists and the lazy socialist masses. Can we not,
then, read *Rapanui* as an allegorizing re-statement of these themes? As an apocalyptic parable
which depicts the destruction of a corrupt old world (i. e., the First Republic) and its replacement
by a new and better one (perhaps the Habsburg monarchy restored)? Even though the novel's
underlying apocalyptic paradigm may suggest such a reading, it should be sufficiently clear from
remarks made earlier in this chapter that we cannot. *Rapanui* is apocalyptic, but only in a formal
sense. Mayer does not, as we have seen, characterize the "old" Rapanui as corrupt nor the "new"
Rapanui as necessarily better than the old one.

How are we to relate Rapanui to the author's historical situation, if not as an apocalyptic parable of social-critical intent? I would like to suggest an interpretation which views the novel in a wider historical context, a European rather than a specifically Austrian one, and which seeks to understand it as an unconscious attempt to articulate in symbolic form what was perhaps the central historical experience of the "generation of 1914." The "generation of 1914" is Robert Wohl's label for the group of European intellectuals who were born during the last two decades of the nineteenth century and who saw the allegedly secure and ordered bourgeois world of their youth--Zweig's "Welt von Gestern"--perish in the bloody Materialschlachten of the First World War. Since, during the 1920s and early 1930s, no new order had yet emerged from the ruins of the old, these intellectuals felt themselves to be living in "the abyss between two times," to be "wandering between two worlds."^40

It is precisely this generational sense of being between two worlds--one dying, the other coming into being--to which Mayer gives symbolic expression, however inadequately, in his tale of a cosmic Wende. In this reading, then, the "old" Rapanui represents bourgeois Europe at the summit of its development--the pre-war, pre-Freudian "Welt der Sicherheit" whose character Mayer's fellow Viennese and contemporary, Stefan Zweig, evokes so vividly in Die Welt von Gestern. This brilliant civilization was, however, only a "Traumschloß"--"Wir mußten," Zweig writes, "Freud recht geben, wenn er in unserer Kultur, unserer Zivilisation nur eine dünne Schicht sah, die gerade jeden Augenblick von den destruktiven Kräften der Unterwelt durchstoßen werden kann."^41 Mayer, as we have seen, has learned this lesson, too: his descriptions in the novel of outbreaks of mass violence and madness are intended to remind us "wie unsäglich viel Böses auch in den sonst gut und vornehm erscheinenden Menschen verborgen lag" (232).

The "subterranean destructive forces" to which Zweig alludes erupted during the First World War and brought down the European "Traumschloß" once and for all. It was the war which made the generation of 1914; and it is interesting in this context to note Mayer's frequent use of metaphors and motifs which are directly evocative of war. Arkaman's "army" of workers marches off in resolute columns to "do battle with the fire": "kampfdrängend dröhnte ihr harter
Schritt" (104). On the way to the lava flow, his army passes through the vast tracts of once fertile land now laid waste and encounters columns of panicked refugees from the east. Similar scenes would have been known to many of the novel's readers from their wartime experiences, the memories of which were still fresh in their minds. Moreover, the novel alludes to two psychological responses to combat which figured prominently, almost as topos, in the contemporary literature on the war: the exhilarating experience of combat and bloodshed ("dieses höchste Leben in tödenden Waffen" [289]) and the ennui which sets in afterwards ("Auch für [Huarini] war nach der beispiellosen Anspannung der letzten Monate diese Ruhe keine freudige Erlösung" [196]). While the novel's martial metaphors and images are to some extent an automatic and inevitable consequence of the pervasive tendency in Western culture to think in terms of "man's battle with nature," it seems likely, given the date of the novel's composition, that the experience of the war was also present in the author's mind as he was writing Rapanui.

If the "old" Rapanui symbolizes pre-war bourgeois civilization, then the "new" Rapanui, with a vision of whose birth the novel concludes, represents the future as it presented itself to the generation of 1914: inchoate, indeterminate, open. To be sure, others viewed the future more darkly. For Huxley, it was a world "powerless to be born."

Mayer does not share this pessimism. The present which would give birth to this future was a period of revolution and counterrevolution, of inflation and economic collapse, of unemployment and social unrest. To Mayer, as to many of his contemporaries, it appeared a time of chaos, disorder, misrule, and flux—the operative metaphors in the final pages of Rapanui are "fließen" and "schweben" ("Nur ein Gott kann dieses Fließen der Welten ertragen" [349]). The present was the terrible and pregnant moment between No Longer and Not Yet. These are the vanishing points of Mayer's narrative: like King Arkaman's magic bird, Ollin, Rapanui "sings" of the "Reich Nicht-Mehr" (64) and of the "Land Noch-Nicht" (61). The future remains open at the end of the novel—a Not Yet, rich in potential. And yet the spirit of Rapanui—with its irrationalism; its glorification of the heroic, of sacrifice; its empty pathos; its lurid fantasies of death and destruction; its indifference to the experience of human suffering—leaves no doubt about the character of the Not Yet that was to come ten years later in Germany and fifteen years later in Austria.
Notes


5. On the conferral of the Ehrenzeichen on Alfred Staackmann (eldest son of the firm's founder Ludwig), see Hall, Belletristische Verlage, 538-539.

6. The homages to Staackmann in the völkisch-nationalistic press which are cited by Hall give a good idea of the reputation and ideology of both the publisher and his authors. "Der Leser weiß," wrote, for example, one nationalistic journalist of the Staackmannbücher, "daß er in diesen Büchern keinerlei zersetzenden Tendenzen der Gegenwart begegnet wird, daß alle diese Bücher mitarbeiten wollen an der inneren Gesundung des deutschen Volkes." Staackmann's
"Germaness" and his meritorious contributions to the German race were duly acknowledged by Der Völkische Beobachter, which praised Staackmann as someone "der auf dem weiten Plane deutschen Schrifttums selbstsicher, unerschüttert deutsch geblieben ist, der sich Deutsches, nur Deutsches zur Richtschnur machte---unbestritten bleibt ihm das Verdienst, das deutsch gebliebene Schrifttum der Ostmark wie ein gewaltiger Magnet in sich gesogen und betreut der großen deutschen Leserschaft inst Herz gestreut zu haben." Cited in Hall, 536, 538. The passage by Musil, also cited in Hall (536), is from Musil's essay "Der Anschluß an Deutschland."

7. Castle characterizes Die Frau im Kampf as a "technischen Zukunftsroman" (Deutsch-Österreichische Literaturgeschichte, vol. 4., 2246; the phrase "Ausklug einer technisierten Menschheit" is used in a list of Mayer's works which appears at the end of his novel Geld... Geld! (Vienna: C. Fromme, 1935), no page number.

8. See Achberger, "Die Inflation und die zeitgenössische Literatur," for an interesting discussion of Prokop in the context of other novellistic treatments of post-war inflation.


10. Aspetsberger, Literarisches Leben. 34.

11. Theodor Heinrich Mayer, Rapanui: Untergang einer Welt (Leipzig: L. Staackmann, 1923). Subsequent references to this will be within the text.


introductory essay, "Modernist Primitivism," and Donald E. Gordon's excellent chapter on primitivism and German expressionism ("German Expressionism"). While there are a number of works on primitivism and the visual arts, I know of no comparable studies of primitivism in the literature of the early twentieth century.


15. Make-Make, a deity who is found only in Easter Island mythology, is a creator-god, not a destroyer-god. See Sebastien Engleit, Island at the Center of the World: Nerw Light on Easter Island, translated and edited by William Mulloy (New York, 1970), 64-65.


18. The quasi-orgiastic conclusion of the Festival of Consummation may have been inspired by the practice of the collective orgy which forms a part of many primitive rites of renewal. "From one point of view," Eliade writes, "the orgy corresponds to the pre-Creation state of nondifferentiation. This is why certain New Year ceremonies include orgiastic rites: social confusion, sexual license, and saturnalia symbolize regression to the amorphous condition that preceded the Creation of the World." Eliade, The Sacred and the Profane: the Nature of Religion, trans. Willard R. Trask (New York: Harper & Row, 1959), 147.


20. "... even in eschatologies," Eliade observes, "the essential thing is not the fact of the End, but the certainty of a new beginning." Eliade, Myth and Reality, 75-76 (emphasis in the original). For a survey of various eschatological and cosmological beliefs, see Eliade, 54-74. On the "survival" of mythological patterns of destruction and re-creation in modern revolutionary political ideologies, see p. 69 and pp. 183-184 as well as, of course, Norman Cohn's "classic" The Pursuit of the Millenium (Fairlawn, New Jersey: Essential Books, 1957), 307-314.

22. On the belief in the future recovery of a lost Paradise or Golden Age, see Eliade, Myth and Reality, 50-53 ("The 'perfection of beginnings'").

23. The idea of decadence and decline is also to be found in a passage which occurs later in the novel: "... dann war die Vollendung erreicht. Und auch die Erfüllung. Nach ihr kam nur noch Kleineres, Kleines, das Sinken, das Lüsen. Vielleicht das Ende als Beginn neuen Anfangs" (131).

24. Bloch, in whose thought the "central operator" was the complex concept of the "not yet," published his Geist der Utopie in 1918. Whether Mayer knew Bloch's work or not is a moot point. What matters is that the idea of the "not yet," however rich its development in Bloch's writing or impoverished its treatment in Rapanui, is an especially eloquent expression of that sense of living in an interim, of finding oneself between two worlds, which pervaded the intellectual climate of Europe during the twenties and early thirties. (We will take this point up again below.) On this aspect of the intellectual temper of Europe between the two world wars, see the last chapter of Robert Wohl's excellent The Generation of 1914 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1979). On Bloch, see Wayne Hudson, The Marxist Philosophy of Ernst Bloch (New York: St. Martin's, 1982). See especially pp. 19-20 on the various meanings of the "not yet" as the "central operator" in Bloch's philosophy.

25. Surveying a representative sample of nineteenth-century fictions of catastrophe and destruction, the Israeli historian Saul Friedländer notes in such works, beyond all metaphorical expressions of social fear and discontent, "the surfacing of archaic fears provoked by the overstepping of the limits prescribed to man." To be sure, in the post-Christian late nineteenth century it is not God but "nature [that] will take its revenge and destroy man, who denies its laws and transgresses the limits imposed on him." See Saul Friedländer, "Themes of Decline and End in the Nineteenth-Century Western Imagination," in Visions of Apocalypse: End or Rebirth? ed. Friedländer et al. (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1985), 61-83. The citation here is from p. 80.

26. After sketching the high level of civilization attained by the Atlanteans, Plato's Critias tells of their moral decline. The narrative breaks off with the hint that the Atlanteans' fall will

27. Mayer’s insight into the tension between the destructive forces within man and the countertendencies of civilization was zeitgemäs; writing, as Fromm suggests, under the impression of the horrors of the First World War, Freud first postulates the existence of a Todestrieb, an instinct or drive opposed to the creative life force of the libido, in his Beyond the Pleasure Principle, begun in 1919 and published in 1920. (See Erich Fromm, The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness [New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1973], 447.) This polarity recurs, more cogently articulated, at the end of Civilization and Discontents. While noteworthy, the parallel between Freud’s Thanatos-Eros antinomy and the polarity of destructive and creative forces in terms of which Mayer’s novel is structured need by no means suggest that Mayer was familiar with Freud’s work or influenced by it, though this is not unthinkable. What it does suggest, however, is that both Freud and Mayer, however inferior in intellect and talent to the former the latter may have been, were expressing one of the central historical lessons of the modern age, that insight into the human "heart of darkness" which belies the progressivist view of history widely held by the optimistic bourgeois of the nineteenth century. In Rapanui Mayer is, we should note, interested less in the social determinants of destructive behavior than in the presence of destructive energies as a permanent component of the human psyche. These he dehistoricizes even further by suggesting that they are part of, are a manifestation of a transcendent, metaphysical destructive force at work in the universe.

28. Though in this citation Mayer alludes to a period of decline and decadence, he curiously omits, as was noted above, the decadence phase from his account of Rapanu’s end and plunges the Rapanuians from their highest point directly into destruction.

29. In his embrace of a cyclical view of history, Mayer is, once again, very much in tune with his time: the cyclical theory of history, which had largely been overshadowed during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by progressivist and perfectibilist philosophies of history, experienced a resurgence during the first part of the twentieth century with the publication in
1918 of Oswald Spengler's influential Der Untergang des Abendlandes. Like most educated people of his time, Mayer doubtless knew Spengler's work. There are, to be sure, no precise parallels to be drawn between Spengler's historical morphology and Mayer's account of the end of a fictive Polynesian civilization. However, with its sense of blind, ineluctable Necessity, with its vision of a purposeless, relentlessly progressing historical cycle which completely transcends human effort and will, Rapanui does bear an unmistakeably Spenglerian imprint. "The presupposition of [Spengler's] attempt," writes Karl Löwith, "is that the course of history is in itself determined by necessity. The significance of historical cultures resides in the fatal fulfilment of life-cycles, from growth and flowering to decay. Being directed neither by the will of God nor by the will of man, history has no goal or purpose. Its 'sublimity' consists in this very purposelessness." See Löwith, Meaning in History (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949), 11-12. It is precisely such a "fatal fulfilment of a historical life-cycle" which Mayer depicts in his novel and from which he attempts to wrest a certain pathetic sublimity.

30. A tendency towards destruction in whom? in what? Mayer's "Wille des Vollendeten nach Zerstörung" is a good example of his tendency towards mystification by substituting grand-sounding metaphysical categories for social-historical forces.

31. With the figure of the Great Mother, Mayer employs a motif present in many different mythological traditions. See Eliade, The Sacred and the Profane, 138-147. The idea of the terra mater is present metaphorically in the work as well, as in the following passage from the end of the novel in which Mayer draws an explicit analogy between the earth's convulsions and those of Yugurdun's labor: "Und wie der Körper der gebärenden Frau verzerrte sich auch draußen ringsum jede fließende und treibende Form" (351). The prominent role played by the terra-mater figure in Mayer's narrative and the contraposition of an all-embracing, cosmic female vitality to a limited male rationality clearly reveal the ideological tendencies and affinities of the novel: from the Bachofen reception of the Munich "Kosmiker" through Klages' Der Geist als Widersacher der Seele to the essays published in the Eranos-Jahrbuch of 1938 (Vorträge über Gestalt und Kult der "Großen Mutter") the figure of the Great Mother held a particular fascination for German irrationalist thought in the first part of the twentieth century. "Die Große Mutter," writes the editor of the Eranos-Jahrbuch in his introduction, "ist heute ebenso lebendig wie sie von jeher
war. Sie wirkt im individuellen wie im kollektiven Leben als jene Kraft der Gestaltung, die in alten Kulturepochen das Alte, Verbrauchte zerstörte um die Welt neu zu gebären" (7).


33. My criticism of Mayer's narrative in this paragraph has been influenced by Walter Killy's theory of kitsch, especially by Killy's notions of "cumulative structure" and the "Reiz" effect of kitsch. See Killy's Deutscher Kitsch: Ein Versuch mit Beispielen (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1962).

34. Manfred Durzak, "Der Kisch: seine verschiedenen Aspekte," Der Deutschunterricht 19 (1967): 93-120. Durzak's comments on Holthusen's notion of "sauren Kitsch" are on p. 101. Holthusen set forth the idea of "sour kitsch" in a polemical article criticizing much of the bleak and nihilistic literature which appeared in the decade after the Second World War and which ostensibly sought to articulate the horrors of that war. The article was entitled "Über den sauren Kitsch" and was published in the Neue Schweizer Rundschau N. F. 18 (1950/51): 145-151.


38. Manifest in the mythicizing, archaicizing quality of Mayer's narrative is that "Hunger nach dem Mythos" which, according to Theodore Ziolkowski, during the first part of the twentieth century resulted from "einem Unbehagen an der rationalistischen Zivilisation der Gegenwart" and which during the nineteen-twenties was salient feature especially of German intellectual and literary life. See Ziolkowski's essay, "Der Hunger nach dem Mythos: Zur seelischen Gastronomie der Deutschen in den Zwanziger Jahren," in Die sogenannten Zwanziger Jahre, ed. Reinhold Grimm and Jost Hermand (Bad Homburg: Gehlen, 1970), 169-201.
39. For a discussion of Prokop der Schneider, see Achberger, "Die Inflation und die zeigenössische Literatur" (note 1 above), 35-36.

40. In The Generation of 1914 Wohl offers an insightful portrait of this generation, to which Mayer (born 1884) belongs, a portrait which remains sensitive to national differences and yet allows transnationally shared sensibilities and attitudes to emerge clearly. The first quote is from Ernst Fischer, the second from Teilhard de Chardin, both cited by Wohl, 229.


42. Aldous Huxley, quoted by Wohl, 203.
Chapter Five

Levisite: Johannes R. Becher's Anti-Zukunftskriegsroman
and Consolatory Apocalyptic Fantasy

There is one sub-class of end-of-the-world or catastrophist fiction which has so far not been represented per se in this study. This is the story of the future war—the Zukunftskrieg or the guerre imaginaire—which, after numerous forerunners in the eighteenth and earlier nineteenth centuries, emerged as a clearly defined literary sub-genre at the time of the Franco-Prussian War.¹ From the publication of Sir George Tomkyns Chesney's prototypical Battle of Dorking (1871) until the outbreak of the First World War, there appeared in Europe literally hundreds of stories of future wars. Some were written by serious military men and politicians to warn sober middle-class readers of the dangers of military unpreparedness or to win support for some reform or new "weapons system" or tactic. Others, published in the popular press, were of a purely escapist and sensationalistic character and appealed to the appetite of the reading masses for thrills and adventure. All, however, were nurtured by the war scares and international tensions and rivalries of the pre-1914 era and mirrored and reinforced the patriotic prejudices, fears, suspicions, and resentments of their respective national readerships. Thus we find any number of accounts of German invasions of England, of revanchist French invasions of Germany, of Anglo-German sea battles, of Chinese and Japanese invasions of the West, most notably M. P. Shiel's The Yellow Danger (1898). And even stories of invasions of the Earth from outer space such as H. G. Wells' tale of a Martian invasion of England in The War of the Worlds can be read as expressions of contemporary anxieties about war and invasion.

"As the tale of the future grew in popularity during the last two decades of the nineteenth century," writes I. F. Clarke, "the imaginary wars and the new science fiction stories became the opium of the urban masses."² We will return to the question of the narcotic effect of such literature shortly. What interests us now, however, is the obvious affinity—hinted at by Clarke in the preceding quote and discussed at length by him elsewhere—between the tale of the imaginary war and science fiction.³ In envisioning the weaponry of the future based on extrapolations from the technological innovations of the present, the war-of-the-future story tends to cross over into
the domain of science fiction. To be sure, such technological fantasies and speculations were, in
the period before the First World War, more characteristic of the Zukunftskrieg stories which
appeared in the popular press than they were of more sober forecasts such as The Great War of
1894. "Whilst the naval and military writers confined themselves to the immediate and
practicable," notes Clarke, "others like Albert Robida and H. G. Wells played with the possible
and tried to imagine what might happen if the aeroplane, the submarine, even dynamite and
Röntgen rays were developed for use in warfare."4 Thus the arsenals of the late-nineteenth- and
early-twentieth-century popular press—the illustrated weeklies, the dime novels, the boys'
magazines—bristled with tanks, airplanes, submarines, biological and chemical agents, and
explosive substances of fantastic power. Even an occasional atomic bomb or death ray was to be
found in these stories. This trend became more pronounced during the First World War and
afterwards, and new weapons were added to the fictional inventory: automatic soldiers, flying
buzz saws, electric flame throwers, and, of course, more death rays, which were probably the
most popular futuristic weapon in the speculative fiction of the post-war period.5

When examined retrospectively, in light of the carnage and horror of the First World War,
these war-of-the-future stories from the period 1871 to 1914 were, with but a very few
exceptions, characterized by what Clarke terms a "grotesque failure in anticipation."6 Most of
them, that is, still viewed war with nineteenth-century eyes: as a limited affair, punctuated with
colorful charges and decisive encounters, as a natural and honorable extension of national
policies. Combat was romanticized and glorified, the virtues of heroism, patriotism, and sacrifice
left intact; and most importantly perhaps, there was no real sense of the awful destructive
potential of the new military technologies which the authors celebrated with undiminished
optimism. The First World War changed all that, however. As in everything else, it was the
"great divide" in the development of the war-of-the-future story. "Utopia became dystopia,"
Clarke writes, "and the once self-confident accounts of future wars changed to fearful visions of
a planetary conflict in which poison gas, or giant bombing planes, or biological weapons wipe
out the human race."7

The changed, minor-key temper of the war-of-the-future stories which appeared after 1918
is vividly illustrated by the following passage from a German future war novel of the Weimar
period. In the scene from which this is taken, one of the novel's main characters has fallen into a troubled sleep after a heated political discussion with a fellow worker. He dreams of the destruction of all life on earth as the result of a global gas war:

Es dauerte nicht lange.
Ein Monat--und alles Lebendige war auf der Erde vernichtet.
Und es wurde auf dieser Erde still, mäuschenstill.
Uhren hörte man noch ticken.
Auch sie blieben allmählich stein.
Nur das Rauschen noch von Wasser, der Wind, und da es Sommer und übermäßig heiß war, das Brodeln und Zischen der menschlichen Leichname, die geräuschvoll in Verwesung übergingen.
Nichts sonst.

The novel is Johannes R. Becher's \( (CH=\text{Cl})_3\text{As} \) (Levisite) oder Der einzig gerechte Krieg (1926). This work, although of limited literary merit, is interesting for our purposes as an example of an important sub-class of catastrophist fiction and also and perhaps even more importantly because of the political orientation of its author. Though of upper-middle-class origins, Becher, who had opposed the war for general humanitarian reasons, became a Communist in 1919 and, after a period of political quiescence, a committed one in 1923. From then until he went into exile in 1933, he faithfully and energetically served the lost cause of proletarian revolution in Weimar Germany, first as a founder and chairman of the Bund proletarisch-revolutionärer Schriftsteller, as chief editor of its journal Die Linkskurve, and as feuilleton editor of the KPD organ Die Rote Fahne. Through his poetry and prose as well as through his theoretical efforts to formulate the principles and tasks of a "proletarian-revolutionary literature," Becher worked to bring about the demise of bourgeois civilization and the advent of the Communist millenium. Levisite thus represents the only catastrophist or end-of-the-world novel in our study written from the standpoint of the extreme left.

An attempt to give literary expression to one of the two great apocalyptic-millenarian myths of the twentieth century, Levisite depicts the outbreak and first stages of the world proletarian revolution. No specific date for this event is given; however, global revolutionary war is shown to develop logically from the tensions and crises, some real, some fictive, of the period 1919-1924, i. e., between the end of the war and its attendant revolutionary conflicts and the
height of inflation. Thus the reader of 1926 was clearly supposed to imagine it occurring in the very near future, probably by the end of the decade. In making such a forecast, Becher was echoing the optimistic—though in 1924 quite unfounded—belief of the KPD leadership, expressed at the Ninth Party Congress in Frankfurt, in the imminence of proletarian revolution in Germany.\textsuperscript{10}

Though the ultimate scope of Becher's story is global, the narrative focuses on events in Germany and America. Beginning with the end of the First World War, Becher outlines the developments which lead to the outbreak of world revolution: the heightening of tensions between two imperialist powers to the point of war, on the one hand, and the intensified repression of the revolutionary working class by the forces of reaction, on the other. The conceptual framework and informing spirit of the novel are, we should note, rigorously Leninist; and in developing his scenario for the future "Riesenklassenschlacht," Becher adheres closely to the ideas on imperialism, war, and revolution elaborated by Lenin in \textit{Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism} and various other writings of the same time.\textsuperscript{11} He follows Lenin, for example, in viewing war as endemic to capitalism in the highest stage of its development, imperialism or monopoly capitalism, as the inevitable consequence of the struggle among imperialist powers for markets and raw materials. He follows him, too, in allowing for the temporary suspension of rivalries by the capitalist nations in order to deal jointly with the threat of revolution. Finally, he follows him in distinguishing between the unjust imperialist war and "dem einzig gerechten Krieg," the only just war, the war between proletariat and bourgeoisie, between colonial people and imperialist nation, the war against war.

War, Lenin believed, was the "womb of revolution." Accordingly, in \textit{Levisite}, Becher describes the transformation of an imperialist war for markets and raw materials into a world-wide revolutionary war of the oppressed against their oppressors. Drawing on contemporary American uneasiness at the emergence of Japan as a world power, Becher imagines that the struggle between Japan and the United States for control of China and India has brought the two young imperialist powers to the brink of war. As relations between the two countries deteriorate and war approaches, the fear of revolution grows among the capitalist nations, which intensify their counter-revolutionary efforts. "Der Vernichtungskampf gegen die
Kommunisten," Becher writes, "wird im Weltmaßstab organisiert" (211). All over the world communists and socialists are arrested, imprisoned, tortured, and shot; and the League of Nations, bidding its members to set aside their differences "bis nach der Niederrung der 'Roten Gefahr'," calls for a "holy war" against Soviet Russia. The attempt of the capitalist powers to destroy the revolutionary working class movement, however, provokes precisely what it is intended to prevent--world-wide revolution. There are general strikes, mutinies, and armed revolts; the American and Japanese workers refuse their governments' call-to-arms; military installations and key factories are seized; the colonial peoples of Africa, India, and China rise up against their imperialist masters; red armies are formed in Germany and America; and the Soviet Russian army--"das rote Gewitter" (362)--mobilizes to aid its comrades in the West. The battles between the revolutionary and counter-revolutionary forces are fierce and enormously destructive and are fought on both sides with the latest military technology--poison gas and the airplane.

Poison gas transforms entire cities, indeed vast regions, into surreal landscapes of death:

Ganze Städte versanken in einem unergründlich tiefen und geheimnisvollen Gasgrund... Pflanzen, Wälder, Wiesengründe färbten sich: grün, blau, violett. Wunderbare und seltsame Farbenspiele zauberten die Gasswaden aus der Erde hervor. Lautlos überzogen ganze Landesteile wie mit einer Decke sich mit Todesschlaf. (392)

At first, things go well for the Reds; after some stunning initial successes, however, the revolution begins to falter and it soon becomes clear that this is not to be the Armageddon-like final battle of popular revolutionary eschatology:

Die rote Welle überflutet auch diesmal aller Wahrscheinlichkeit nach nicht die ganze Welt, nur einige Nationen werden von ihr ergriffen werden, und man wird am Ende dieser Kriegsperiode vor der Tatsache eines großen gewaltig zusammengeschiedeten Blocks von Sowjetrepubliken stehen, denen gegenüber sich aber noch eine beträchtliche Anzahl von kapitalistischen Staaten behaupten wird. (399)

To this capitalist block, at the end of the novel, belongs the United States, where the forces of reaction celebrate a bloody triumph. In Germany, on the other hand, the revolution seems to have been successful--or so the novel's last sentence, with its reference to the decontamination of Berlin by Red Army units, suggests: "Den roten Entseuchungskommandos gelang es erst im Verlauf einiger Monate, den Gassumpf, in den die Regierungspfleger die Hauptstadt verwandelt hatten, trockenzulegen" (408).
Levisite was written in full awareness of the sensationalistic future war novels and stories of the popular press. To these, with their fantastic weapons, Becher makes two explicit allusions in the novel. Towards the end of the story, Max, Becher's proletarian "hero," is dispatched by the Party to southern Germany, where he finds employment in a huge chemical concern. There he attempts to enlighten his fellow workers, who believe that they are merely involved in the manufacture of harmless commercial chemicals, about the true nature of their activities: the production of poison gas. They do not believe him (at first), however, and dismiss his exposé as a mere "fairy tale."

"Verschrobene Vorstellungen! Inhaltsleere, blödsinnige Phantastereien, alles ein hanebüchener Schwindel, wenn man ihm ernsthaft auf den Grund geht. Ein Kinderschreck! Für alle Weiber und Flennbrüder! Da sieh nur mal her, Max, Märchenerzähler!" Und immer noch schüttelten sie ungläubig die Köpfe. Sie schleppen bürgerliche illustrierte Zeitungen an mit Beschreibungen mechanischer Polizeimänner, die gar gruselig anzusehen waren, mit Todesstrahlen, die mörderisch in den Lüften nach Fliegern herumstochern und mit anderem ähnlichen Mumpitz. (376-377)

The function of this scene is to illustrate how the honest proletarian mind is confused and deceived by the products of the bourgeois "consciousness industry," here represented by the bürgerlichen Illustrierten and specifically by speculative accounts of future war published in the popular press. The role played by such popular, technology-oriented future war stories in this process of deception is explained earlier in the novel by an American socialist, whose fears the behavior of the chemical workers more than validates. The American reminds his comrades, who have met to discuss the communists' anti-war propaganda campaign,

däß man mit allen Mitteln dem Unfug entgegentreten muß, den zukünftigen Krieg utopisch durch allerlei phantastischen Schnickschnack wie Todesstrahlen und mechanische Polizeimänner zu verzerren, dadurch wird nur erreicht, daß auch das bereits wirklich Vorhandene angezweifelt wird und unsere ganze Kampagne sich leerläuft. Die Bourgeoisie allerdings hat das größte Interesse daran, diesen Dingen gegenüber die Methode der Camouflage anzuwenden, d. h. Dinge, die sich nicht mehr verschweigen kann, durch Kombination mit blödsinnigen Ulk als harmlos und als unwirklich darzustellen. (209)

Here we have in nuce a major part of the program of Becher's novel: to counter the "utopian" Unfug of the future war stories which are published by the bourgeois popular press and which serve the interests of capital and the military. With his tale of the coming war, Becher appropriates a literary sub-genre heretofore employed almost exclusively by what the novel terms
the "mächtigen Propagandaapparat der Bourgeoisie" (125) and transforms it into an instrument of communist counter-propaganda.

Levisite is thus to be understood both within the particular context of communist anti-war propaganda and within the general context of KPD efforts to create a proletarian-revolutionary counterculture with which to compete against the bourgeois consciousness industry for the hearts and minds of the masses. Becher develops his ideas on both subjects in "Die Kriegsgefahr und die Aufgaben der revolutionären Schriftsteller," a speech delivered in the Soviet Union in 1930 at the Second World Congress on Revolutionary Literature. He calls for the creation of a "revolutionary mass literature" which would address itself to the readers of the "Millionen und aber Millionen Unterhaltungs- und Abenteuerromane, die nichts weniger als tendenziös und politisch sind und die sogar in einer sehr geschickten, dem ungeübten Leser kaum spürbaren Form die politische Tendenz vermitteln." The genre with which Becher is particularly concerned in this speech is the Kriegsroman, the war novel, which began to flourish towards the end of the 1920s. He distinguishes between "nationalistic" and "pacifistic" war literature, the former represented by Jünger's Im Stahlgewitter, the latter by Remarque's Im Westen nichts Neues. Becher rejects both—the nationalistic war novel for obvious reasons, the pacifistic one in keeping with the Communists' mistrustful view of pacifism as yet another weapon in the ideological arsenal of the bourgeoisie.

But although they embody fundamentally different attitudes towards war, both types of novel share a basic flaw: in one way or the other, they mask the true causes of war, i.e., they conceal the fact of its rootedness in the very nature of capitalism. Becher therefore proposes a third kind of war novel, a "revolutionary" one, in which war would appear neither as an "unvermeidliche Naturnotwendigkeit" nor as "Schicksal" nor as "etwas Unnatürliches, innerhalb des gegebenen Gesellschaftssystems nicht unbedingt Notwendiges" but as the inevitable consequence of advanced capitalism. In such a novel, Becher notes, would be depicted "der vergangene Krieg, der gegenwärtige, der 'Krieg im Frieden,' wie auch der kommende Krieg, in demselben Maße, wie dieser dreifache Krieg auch wirklich in der Gegenwart aufzuspüren ist"—whereby Becher could well be describing his own Levisite, with its flashbacks to the First World War, its visions of the coming war, and its characterization of the present as a time of war.
behind a facade of peace. The function of such a novel as Becher envisions is twofold: to enlighten the proletariat about the nature and causes of modern war, on the one hand, and to educate or activate him "zur Wehrhaftigkeit, zum revolutionären Heroismus." On the other. In attempting to achieve both these goals, Becher introduces into the novel, as we shall see, a dissonance, a dissonance of which he is at some level aware and which he attempts to resolve by means of a sort of narrative omissiveness.

The principles which Becher formulates in his 1930 address are quite obviously those which guided his composition of *Levisite* six years earlier, and we can appropriately regard the novel as an "experiment"--the term is Becher's own--in writing just the sort of revolutionary war novel he urges on his Kharkov audience. On one level, then, *Levisite* is an anti-*Kriegsroman*: as such, its project is to challenge the ideas, attitudes, and values transmitted by bourgeois war literature of both the right and the left--including, of course, the novel of the future war--and to impart in their stead a Marxist-Leninist understanding of modern war.

One difference between Becher's novel and both the pre-1914 future war stories and the right-wing war literature of the twenties is that while these think of war in the usual nationalistic and patriotic categories, *Levisite* does not: its standpoint is internationalist, and its appeal is not to the national consciousness of its readers but to their class consciousness. Dismissing as empty phrases the nationalistic arguments traditionally advanced by governments to legitimate and rally support for their wars ("Nationalehre," "Kampf für Freiheit und Zivilisation aller Völker," "Vaterlandsverteidigung" [176-177]), Becher instructs his reader to seek the real causes of modern imperialist war in the boardrooms of the big banks and big corporations. "Der ganze Krieg, Kamerad," he has a socialist American officer tell a wounded buddy during the First World War, "ist weiter nichts als eine Riesenprofitquetsche . . . Wir allesamt sind die Beschissenen . . ." (175). It is to satisfy the needs and interests of finance capital that wars are waged. Here, Becher tells his readers, in Morgan and Company, in the Deutsche Bank, in I. G. Farben, in Standard Oil, in the trusts and cartels of monopoly capitalism, is your real enemy. The empty phrases of the bourgeois politicians to the contrary, the real front in the "three-fold war" runs not between nation and nation but between class and class, between international proletariat and international bourgeoisie. Concealed during the First World War by the patriotic
rhetoric of the bourgeois propaganda apparatus, this front line will emerge into full clarity during the coming war as imperialist war is transformed into "civil war." "Es waren nur rote Flaggen zu sehen und weiße: die Nationalfarben hatten keine Bedeutung mehr" (392).

By thus claiming to expose the real roots of modern war in the unique economic and political configuration of capitalism, Becher seeks to counter a tendency characteristic of bourgeois war literature, the tendency to remove war from the realm of historical causation by attributing it to Fate, Natural Necessity, or Evil or by presenting it as an absurd, ultimately inexplicable event. He refers to this in his Kharkov speech as the "Verselbständigung des Kriegers," though we might best describe it as the "mythicization" of war. The task of the revolutionary war novel is therefore to de-mythicize war by showing that it lies within the "Macht und Bestimmungsmöglichkeit der Menschen" and that it is "keine unvermeidliche Naturnotwendigkeit, kein Schicksal, dem man sich unterwerfen muß."[21]

The mythicizing habit of the bourgeois mind is well-illustrated in Levisite by an interior monologue of the Bürgersohn Peter Friedjung: "Jetzt schläft er, der Krieg, hört ihn es, schnarcht. Der Krieg schläft seinen Blutrausch aus . . . Dann steht er auf, frisch, kräftig, hungrig, unersättlich, wie er ist, schwingt sich in die Lüfte, fliegt! fliegt! fliegt! Ja, fliegen wird er diesmal und einen giftigen Samen niederstreuen, Giftgas, Samen: Gas, Gas, Gas . . ." (23). This passage, like much else in the novel, betrays Becher's expressionist roots and, with its personification of war, is strongly reminiscent of bourgeois pre-war poems about war, especially of Heym's "Der Krieg" (1911). There is, admittedly, nothing to indicate that the narrator is conscious of the mythicizing effect of Peter's language or that he wishes to distance himself from his character. It is, in fact, clearly Becher who is speaking here, through the mouth of Peter Friedjung, in an unselfconscious, uncritical attempt to evoke the horror of the coming war with a presumably powerful poetic image. Nonetheless, immediately after the lines just quoted there occurs what is, in effect, a perhaps unconscious demythicization of this image when the narrator—or Peter, it is not clear who the speaker is—asks: "Wer aber ist der Krieg!? Die Menschen!? Und welcher Art Menschen sind es!?" (23).

"Der Krieg wird mit einem Geheimnis umgeben," Becher writes of the right-wing war literature of the late 1920s. "Sein wahrhes Wesen wird mystisch umhüllt--jeder soll und muß den
Krieg widererleben als den größten heroischen Augenblick in der letzten Geschichte der Nation." Just as Becher rejects the mythicization of war, so, too, does he refuse its glorification by the writers of the Right. To their celebration of heroism and patriotic sacrifice Levisite responds with graphic descriptions of the horror and carnage of the First World War. These occur in "flashbacks" to the war which are experienced by Becher's two representative characters, the bourgeois Peter and the proletarian Max, after their return to civilian life. The latter, for example, is overcome by vivid memories of the gas attack at Caporetto in the fall of 1917:

Tausende von Gasvergifteten schmorten jetzt langsam sich zu Tod in der Hitze.
Manche Leichname fingen zu brodeln an.
Fliegen summen, Käfer und Eidechsen krabbelten darüber.
Da liegt so ein fleischiger Haufen: die Gedärme aus dem Bauch neben sich hingschütten: ein seltsames Leben beginnt sich in dem Kadaver zu regen.
Es riecht nach Oliven, nach Staub . . . geronnenes Blut und faules Fleisch riecht, Jauche und Eiter . . . überall sieht man es qualmen.
[. . .]
Überall Menschenblutspritzer, Knochensplitter, Fleischfetzen: alles mit Menschenblut vollgesogen. Bis über die Knie blieb man oft stecken im Menschendreck. (165)

Such scenes as this one are clearly anti-heroic in effect and intent and have equivalents in the anti-war literature and art, e. g., Otto Dix's 1924 series "Krieg," which appeared in Germany and other countries during the 1920s. In them Becher employs what in his Kharkov address he refers to as the "pazifistische Greuel- und Abschreckungsmethode" used in the bourgeois anti-war novel.23

Becher was no pacifist, however, and Levisite is no anti-war novel, at least not in the usual sense. It is, on the contrary, a call to arms, a summons to the war against imperialism, to the "einzig gerechten Krieg." In this context we should recall that one of the tasks of the revolutionary Kriegsroman as Becher outlines in the Kharkov speech is to educate the proletarian masses to "Wehrhaftigkeit" and "revolutionären Heroismus," two imminently martial virtues. This is precisely what Levisite endeavors to do. A militant Communist, Becher believed in the necessity and legitimacy of violence: "die Gewalt war und ist noch immer seit jeher, seit Menschengedenken," explains Max after his "conversion" to communism, "die Geburtshelferin jeder alten Gesellschaft, die mit einer neuen schwanger ging . . ." (170). And Becher rejected as
counter-revolutionary in its effect the pacifism of Remarque and others: pacifism, he tells his audience at Kharkov, has acquired "eine neue objektive Bedeutung als Ideologie und Werkzeug des Weltimperialismus gegen die vordringende Weltrevolution . . ."24 This was, of course, not just Becher's personal opinion: the uncompromising rejection of bourgeois pacifism--not just of anti-war literature but also of such pacifistic political efforts as the League of Nations and various disarmament and arms control treaties--was Communist doctrine, formulated by the Comintern and echoed in any number of KPD and Comintern statements, declarations, and programs, in the pages of Die Rote Fahne, Die Linkskurve, and other Party publications.25 And the ideological character of pacifism is, of course, one of the Party teachings which Becher endeavors to translate into "Gestalt und Erlebnis" in Levisite. Thus, for example, in the scene cited above, we learn that it is not only the SF-like future war stories of the popular press which have contributed to the confusion of Max's fellow workers about the true state of affairs in the chemical industry, but also the liberal, "Wilsonian" ideology of peace through negotiation, treaty, and international cooperation (376-377).

In writing his revolutionary Kriegsroman, Becher pursues two not easily reconciled goals. He seeks, on the one hand, to challenge the glorification of war in the ideology of the Right. To do this, he employs, in the novel's WW I passages, the anti-heroic "Greuel- und Abschreckungsmethode" of the bourgeois anti-war novel: instead of scenes of glory and adventure, of heroism, comradeship, and noble self-sacrifice, Becher offers his readers images of madness and terror, of ugly and agonizing death, of mangled corpses, rotting flesh, blood and excrement. At the same time, however, Becher wishes to inspire his readers to "revolutionärem Heroismus," to incite them to a war which will be fought with even more terrifying weapons and which may prove even more cataclysmic than the last one. He invokes thereby precisely those arguments ("the just war") and those ideals of heroism and sacrifice which the experience of the horrors of modern technological warfare during the First World War had, for many of his contemporaries, rendered suspect, if not completely untenable. Thus, in so far as it thematizes the horror of modern mechanized war while retaining traditional heroic ideals, Levisite is a novel at odds with itself.

Becher is well aware of this dissonance and attempts to conceal it or, to use his
terminology, to "camouflage" it from his readers. To be sure, he does not deny the horrors of even a just war. For example, in the same passage in which he writes of "Heldentaten, die unbeschreiblich sind" he also refers unambiguously to "Qualen ohne Maß, Krämpfe und Zuckungen, wie sie die Erde seit ihrem Anbeginn noch nicht gesehen hat, Schmerzensschreie, Hilfeschreie, Todesgebrull..." (392-393). Yet while in the latter half of the novel Becher acknowledges the horror of war, he does so in such a way that it remains a sanitized abstraction, a word, a phrase. What is strikingly absent from Becher's account of the coming "civil war" between proletariat and bourgeoisie are the graphic and repellent images of mutilation, madness, and death which we find in the book's flashbacks to the First World War, i.e., to the "imperialist" war. In an imperialist war, it seems, people die deaths that are hideous, slow, and obscene; whereas in a revolutionary war they die heroically, with the "International" on their lips; there are no body juices, bone fragments, clumps of flesh, no bloated corpses, vermin or maggots. It is easy to see why Becher offers his readers such a hygienic account of the coming conflagration, why the scenes of the future "just" war must remain, compared with those of the past "unjust" war, so strikingly schematic and sparse in concrete detail. For the grisly details of violent death have the potential to subvert his summons to "revolutionary heroism," to sabotage his call to arms. They constitute a powerful argument against war, not just against "imperialist" war but against war in general, an emotional, "gut-level" argument which even the moral intricacies of the just war doctrine are hard pressed to answer convincingly.

The attempt to give a positive, "heroic" account of the just war, of the "war against war" (another of the Marxist-Leninist epithets for the coming world revolution), entangles Becher in paradox and contradiction. The means he embraces are incompatible with the noble ends they are intended to serve. To be sure, he shows some awareness of the moral dilemma, the moral problematic his espousal of violence entails, but only perfunctorily. In Levisite, Becher is too much the propagandist and agitator to concern himself with moral complexities and ambiguities. He lacks the sensibility of Brecht and the latter's insight into the tragic nature of revolutionary praxis. "Versinke in Schmutz/Uarme den Schlächter, aber/Ändere die Welt: sie braucht es!" writes Brecht in Die Maßnahme. But even here, in his agit-prop play of 1929-1930, Brecht never loses sight of the tragic paradox inherent in his injunction, a paradox which inspires, in
Svendborg seven years later, the poignant lament: "Ach wir/Die wir den Boden bereiten wollten für Freundlichkeit/Konnten selber nicht freundlich sein."26 Becher, on the other hand, is unwilling to confront the questions, raised by his own ghastly images of modern war, about his advocacy of revolutionary violence; and his "embrace of the butcher" in Levisite thus remains all too easy and all too glib.

The incompatibility of means and ends in modern war became terrifyingly clear with the advent of the nuclear age: the prospect of nuclear winter and of the extinction of the human race renders von Clausewitz's famous dictum meaningless. But it was the First World War which gave mankind its first nightmarish lesson in the destructive potential of modern military technology. "All that has been written about future war since Hiroshima," observes I. F. Clarke, "merely repeats and amplifies what was said between the two world wars. The only difference is the change of scale; for both periods reveal an initial sense of shock, which can be examined in the many visions of a ruined world."27 A change in scale is not, of course, the only difference: in the nuclear age, such visions have a potential literal truth which they lacked in the twenties and thirties; to say this, however, is in no way to minimize the intensity of the subjective experience--of the shock, horror, anxiety--which found expression in the end-of-the-world visions of post-Wold War One futuristic fiction.

For many European intellectuals, the carnage and slaughter of the First World War shattered the confident assumptions of the nineteenth-century liberal bourgeoisie concerning the rationality and perfectibility of man, the inevitability of progress, and the beneficence of science and technology. Technology, it now became clear, had increased man's power for evil as well as for good; and man's mastery over external nature had in no way been matched by an increased mastery over his inner nature, with its irrational-destructive energies as well as its rational-creative ones. As Bertrand Russell wrote in 1924:

Science has not given men more self-control, more kindliness, or more power of discounting their passions... Men's collective passions are largely evil; far the strongest of them are hatred and rivalry directed towards other groups. Therefore at present all that gives men power to indulge their collective passions is bad. That is why science threatens to cause the destruction of our civilisation.28

This was, according to Clarke, the message of many of the end-of-the-world stories which appeared between the two world wars.29 It is not, however, the message which Becher seeks to
convey in *Levisite*—notwithstanding the *zeittypische* dream-vision of a dead Earth cited above. Rather than expressing horrified insight into man’s capacity for self-destruction, this *fin du globe* vision serves merely as a hyperbolic dramatization of the murderous character of capitalist society and as a warning of mankind’s inevitable fate should the world proletarian revolution not occur. But the war has apparently raised no troubling questions in Becher’s mind about irrationality and destructiveness as inextirpable elements in man’s psychological make-up and thus he can, without difficulty, counterpose to the dystopian vision of a dead world a utopian vision of a new world, a vision which preserves intact the liberal faith in reason, progress, and science and technology.

Becher’s position in *Levisite* is the one we would expect a social revolutionary to hold: he does not partake of the anthropological pessimism of Russell and others and repudiates, as we have seen, the belief which is implicit in Russell’s statement in a fixed and eternal human nature. Rather, Becher locates the evil and destructiveness which the novel documents not in the heart of man but in his historical social and political institutions, in this case those of capitalism. This view is not without merit; but it offers, in the final analysis, only a partial explanation for human destructiveness and unreason. It evades the legitimate and difficult criticisms which have been directed by students of the “irrational” against the liberal view of man which underlies the utopia implicit in the novel. It evades these criticisms but does not answer them: and thus there are occasional moments of dissonance in the novel when what Becher describes calls into question—certainly quite against the author’s intentions—the principal assumptions of the novel. These moments of dissonance occur principally in scenes which allude to or depict acts of extreme cruelty and brutality without giving a convincing sociological or economic motivation for them.30

Communism, according to Norman Cohn, like National Socialism, the other great totalitarian movement of the twentieth century, shares with the apocalyptic traditions of antiquity and the chiliastic revolutionary movements of the Middle Ages a central "fantasy"—that of the destruction of a corrupt and evil old world and its replacement by a new and better one, in which the oppressed and persecuted are compensated for their sufferings. In the eschatological thought of Communism, this fantasy takes on the following shape: a new historical subject (the
proletariat) emerges during the penultimate stage of history (capitalism), rises up against the dominant class (the bourgeoisie), and casting down its oppressors, brings about the final stage and consummation of history, the secular millenium of socialism. Like other apocalyptic and millenarian mythologies, Communist mythology, too, has its elect, its demonic hosts and false Messiahs, its scourges and catastrophes which signal the approach of the Last Days, and its final battle. Nor does Communist eschatology lack a Messiah, though it assigns that role not to an individual savior but to the Party and to the class which the Party represents.

In *Levisite*, Becher seeks to translate this Communist apocalyptic into character and incident. His narrative contains all the key elements of the millennial fantasy outlined above.

A good portion of the novel is devoted to the description, critique, and caricature of the world which will perish in the apocalyptic "Riesenklassenschlacht" to come: the world of bourgeois society generally, that is, and of the Weimar Republic in particular. Echoing the belief in the decrepitude of the world which is commonly found in primitive and ancient apocalyptic renewal as well as in Lenin's view of late capitalism as "parasitic," "decaying," and "moribund," Becher characterizes his time as a "stinkende Kadaver" (9) and the civilization of his day as a "verwesungstriefenden kapitalistischen Leichnam" (351). For our purposes it is not necessary to examine in detail Becher's portrait of this dying civilization: his aim is agitation not analysis, and his presentation seldom goes beyond the crassest rhetoric, the stalest clichés and stereotypes, of Communist propaganda. His principal concern here, however, is to expose the brutal, violent, aggressive core of bourgeois civilization: "... aber ich habe den Blutsumpf auch mit eigenen Augen gesehen, auf dem euere Kultur erbaut ist," writes Peter Friedjung, Becher's alter ego in the novel, in his ecstatic-rhapsodic confessional (298). This brutality manifests itself outwardly in the ceaseless struggle among the imperialist powers for markets and raw materials, in their ruthless subjugation of colonial peoples, and in the hectic arms build-up taking place behind the mask of pacificistic rhetoric and policy. It manifests itself inwardly in the daily exploitation of the working class ("Ist nicht die Arbeitsstätte heute für die weitaus meisten Menschen eine Schlachthaus?!" [169]) as well as in the persecution, torture, and murder of socialists and communists by the state and state-sanctioned right-wing groups ("Überall Kommunistenverfolgungen, Hinrichtungen, Pogrome, Massakres ..." [259]).
"Die ganze Gesellschaft ist ja doch nichts weiter als Gewalt," Max tells a friend who is grappling with the question of revolutionary violence. "Nur haben natürlich die, die herrschen, ein Interesse daran, diesen bitteren Gewaltkern wohlschmeckend zu machen" (169). A second aspect of contemporary civilization which occupies Becher especially is the role which is played in bourgeois society by both high and popular culture in masking the true character of that society. We have noted above the novel's pointed references to the sensationalistic future war stories of the popular press. There are, however, many other allusions in Levisite to the ideological function of the popular press, the cinema, the radio, and so forth. The message which all of these references wish to convey is summed up in the following passage: "Film, Radio, Presse, Theater, Literatur: das sind nur die verschiedenen Ressorts jenes gewaltigen, immer mehr sich amerikanisierenden Propagandainstituts zur Weiterzüchtung der menschlichen Dummheit" (345-346). Not only do the "ideologischen Parfümeriefabriken" (351) of the bourgeois consciousness industry seek to mask the true character of capitalism from its victims; they also endeavor to conceal the terminal condition of capitalist society from the bourgeoisie itself. The repressed returns, however, and filters back into the bourgeois consciousness through one of the media of its exclusion. It expresses itself, for example, in the celluloid images of disaster with which bourgeois movie-makers attempt to divert their audiences and distract them from the end which these images presage: "Ein Kino vorn: Mit einem Plakat: ein Schiff, das im Eismeer versinkt, ein Auto, das vollbesetzt auf einer mexikanischen Alpenstraße in den Abgrund saust" (85).

Of course, the particular historical form in which this moribund bourgeois civilization presented itself to Becher was that of the Weimar Republic; this is the historical reality which is foremost in the author's mind and from which most of the novel's social and historical detail is drawn. Thus, in addition to attacking the capitalistic order in general as a transnational phenomenon, Becher addresses himself critically to a number of topical issues and situations, social types and attitudes, social and political formations which were unique to Weimar Germany. For example, in the account of the "Trio-Abend" to which Peter is taken by his father, Becher offers a critical portrait, a caricature in fact, of characteristic right-wing German "types" and attitudes. But it is not just the Right—the nationalistic and völkisch groups, the various
paramilitary organizations, the Reichswehr, the bureaucracy, and so forth—which Becher attacks: he repudiates, like his Party, the Republic altogether, whereby the Social Democrats come in for especially vigorous condemnation for their alleged betrayal of the working class: "Aber die sozialdemokratischen Führer haben die Arbeiterschaft entwaffnet, wehrlos gemacht, verraten, dem Klassenfeind ausgeliefert," a KPD member tells the Social Democrat Max before the latter's conversion to Communism. "Das haben sie . . . Und fahnenflüchtig seid ihr allesamt geworden. Rot aber habt ihr für schwarzrotschweifgelb vertauscht. Fahnenflüchtige Mosfrichbrüder!" (124). The charge of treachery and opportunism directed here against the Social Democratic leadership was standard Communist doctrine. Its pre-history is to be sought in the rift within pre-war Marxism between reformist and revolutionary elements, a rift exacerbated by the war and the vote of the SPD parliamentary fraction for war credits. This charge was given its perhaps most extreme formulation in the identification of Social Democracy with Fascism, the so-called "Social Fascism" theory, first articulated by Zinoviev in 1924. Becher's attacks on the SPD in Levisite (see especially the third chapter) thus reflect—and indeed are a part of—the hardening of the Party line towards Social Democracy which occurred under Zinoviev's influence from 1924 onward.35

In the Communist apocalyptic of the twenties, the Social Democrats are assigned a role analogous to that played by the False Messiah in Christian eschatology: they promise the working class salvation but are in reality agents of the bourgeois Anti-Christ. The true Messiah, of course, is Communism, incarnate in the Party.36 This is far more than just another political party; it is, Becher tells his readers, "die Vorhut einer neuen kommenden Weltordnung," "das gestaltgewordene neue Welt- Bewußtsein," "der Stoßtrupp der Zukunft" (349).

And how does Becher imagine the "neue kommende Weltordnung"? On the whole, he is more concerned with the sins of the capitalist present and with the coming world revolution than he is with the shape of the world which will result from that "Riesendurchbruchschlacht . . . in die Zukunft" (11). The novel's lack of curiosity about the communist society of the future can be explained principally in terms of the general tendency of Marxism-Leninism, which likes to stress its Wissenschaftlichkeit, its scientific character, not "to make up a utopia," not "to indulge in idle guess-work about what cannot be known."37 Only once in the novel does Becher violate this
principle. That is in the account of the dream in which Max envisions two antithetical endings for human history. One of these dream visions we have already cited: that of the dead planet, which represents the inevitable outcome of history under capitalism. Max's second vision, however, is of world revolution and of the new world order which will be erected in the place of capitalism.

As in all apocalyptic myths, the millenium is preceded by a period of trial and tribulation:

Durch Rauch und Blut, an Stationen neuen Elends vorbei, durch neue Wüsten hindurch, an Stätten neuer Demütigungen und Kreuzigungen vorüber. Und trotz allem, es ging vorwärts.


This vision of the future is so anemic that Becher can hardly be reproached with indulging himself in "idle guess-work about what cannot be known." There is nothing here about social, economic, or political organization; nor is there anything about art, literature, music, or other cultural activities, although we are told that the general level of education is high. The emphasis, rather, is on technology; what Becher envisions is an unproblematic technological utopia, a paradise of labor-saving devices and rationalized procedures in which Man's energies are set free for "neue gewaltige Unternehmungen," his basic material needs having been provided for.

Becher's technological utopia shares the liberal-bourgeois faith in scientific and technological progress and could, in fact, come almost verbatim from the pen of a writer in fundamental agreement with the capitalist system. It represents an example of precisely that
"rationalised, mechanised, painless world"\textsuperscript{38} which has become the object of fear and loathing in the dystopian literature of the twentieth century and which is modern technological civilization itself. To be sure, those features of such a rationalized world which provoke the classic criticisms of the modern technological utopia (especially regimentation, emotional and physical flabbiness, spiritual impoverishment) do not, with one exception, appear in Becher's brief sketch. The exception is Becher's unapologetic reference to the nearly identical appearances of the citizens of this future society ("einfach und schön, voneinander beinahe nicht unterscheidbar"). This certainly seems to confirm the charge of drab uniformity traditionally levelled against utopia by its critics. To this charge Becher, the unrepentant collectivist, would doubtless reply that it is merely an expression of diseased bourgeois individualism, a pathology which he attacks more than once in \textit{Levisite}.\textsuperscript{39}

On the whole, however, there may seem to be little about Becher's technological utopia to which one can object. What, after all, is wrong with the ideal of the technological liberation of man? Nothing at all, perhaps, as an ideal. But the historical reality of modern rationalized, industrialized, technocratic civilization had, by the time Becher wrote \textit{Levisite}, given rise to a host of difficult questions concerning the influence of technology on the social, political, and cultural spheres so that an untroubled faith, such as Becher's, in the liberating potential of science and technology was no longer defensible. Orwell states the problem nicely in a review of a collection of essays by Herbert Read, who, in one of them, embraces anarchy and the Machine Age with equal enthusiasm. "The processes involved in making, say, an aeroplane," Orwell writes, "are so complex as to be only possible in a planned, centralized society, with all the repressive apparatus that that implies. Unless there is some radical change in human nature, liberty and efficiency must pull in opposite directions."\textsuperscript{40} But what concerned Orwell, Huxley, Zamiatin, Forster, Capek, and other critics of technological utopianism, i. e., the dangers to human freedom inherent in modern technological civilization, appears not to have troubled Becher at all. On the contrary, he shares the enthusiasm of his age for Taylorism and "scientific management;" and, as evidenced by the clearly positive connotations of the novel's mechanistic metaphors,\textsuperscript{41} his attitude towards the Machine was an altogether affirmative one. This is not to say that Becher was blind to the dehumanization of the worker in modern industrial society; but
he blamed this and other evils on the capitalist system rather than on technology itself and the specific culture which it produces.

After a brief flirtation with *poesie pure*, Becher rejected the characteristically bourgeois postulate of "der Souveränität und der Unabhängigkeit der Dichtung" and embraced instead an instrumental or purposive view of literature "als Tendenz," as "Waffe im Klassenkampf." Levisite is such a "Kunstwaffe" in the ideological battle between bourgeoisie and proletariat; it is unashamedly didactic, polemical, and propagandistic. Addressed to both "Genossen" and to non-Party members who, "obwohl noch nicht Kommunisten, eine nüchterne Einstellung zum Leben haben," Becher's novel translates (though just barely) into narrative and fictional form key tenets of Marxist-Leninist doctrine concerning the inseparability of war and capitalism and the role of the Party in the world revolution. With regard to the non-Party reader, both bourgeois and proletarian, Becher's goal in writing Levisite is, quite simply, to "convert" him; with regard to his Communist readers, his goal is to illustrate, with implicit reference to the struggles taking place at the time within the Party, "correct" revolutionary attitudes and behavior. And, of course, his ultimate aim is, as the novel's many exhortatory passages show, to galvanize readers of both groups into revolutionary action.

In addition to its didactic, exhortatory, and proselytizing functions, however, Levisite performs another function as well, one which becomes evident when we read Becher's tale of world revolution against the background of the historical situation of the KPD during 1924 and 1925. "Es erschien mir gerade in der sogenannten Depressionsperiode wichtig," Becher writes, "die Zuversicht unserer Genossen zu stärken..." "Depressionsperiode" does not refer to economic depression, but rather to the low point in the Party's fortunes and in the working class movement which followed the Communist's failed attempt at revolution in October 1923. Until then, it had been possible, despite the set-backs of 1919, 1920, and 1921, for the German Communists and their comrades in the Soviet Union to sustain the belief that a revolutionary situation existed in Germany. Based on this conviction and encouraged by the economic chaos of the Inflationszeit, Trotsky and others in the Comintern ordered the KPD Zentrale to launch the German Revolution. The results were disastrous for the Party: the planned Communist
take-overs in Saxony and Thuringia were aborted before they had even begun, and Thälmann's wild-cat coup in Hamburg was put down within twenty-four hours. "Not just the KPD," the historian Ben Fowkes writes of these events, "but the whole German working class, suffered a crushing defeat in 1923."47 Nor did the Communists' fortunes improve during the next two years: 1924 and 1925 saw both an alarming waning of support for the KPD among the workers (reflected in the loss of seventeen Reichstag seats in the December 1924 election) and the increased persecution of Party members by the state (nearly 6,500 Communists imprisoned during those two years).48 While the KPD was struggling to recover from the 1923 catastrophe and to cope with internal divisions as well, however, the "bourgeois" Republic was, under its new Chancellor Stresemann, entering a five-year period of stability, both politically (the failure of putsch attempts by the National Socialists as well as the Communists) and economically (ratification of the Dawes Plan). The Golden Twenties had begun, and the message of the events of 1924 and 1925 was clear enough (though many Communists did not want to hear it): Germany was not, at least not in the foreseeable future, to be, as Lenin had believed up to his death, the site of the next stage of the great proletarian world revolution. As well as being a call to action, Becher's attempt to give vivid narrative shape to the Communist millenarian myth is thus also a wishful fantasy, born--like many apocalyptic fantasies--of defeat and disappointment and nurtured by persecution; it is an attempt by a loyal Party member to console his comrades and himself, to strengthen their faith and commitment and his, and to deny through myth the painful realities of history.
Notes

1. For the history of this genre see I. F. Clarke's *Voices Prophesying War, 1767-1984* (London: Oxford University Press, 1966) as well as the relevant sections in his *The Pattern of Expectation, 1644-2001* (New York: Basic Books, 1979). For the following sketch of the development of the tale of the future war I have drawn heavily on Clarke's account in both works. On the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century antecedents of the genre, e.g., such works as *The Reign of George VI, 1900-1925* (1763), *The Invasion of England* (1803), or *A History of the Sudden and Terrible Invasion of England by the French in . . . May, 1852* (1851), see the first chapter of *Voices Prophesying War,* "The Warfare of the Future: the Opening Phase, 1763-1871."


3. See the third chapter of Clarke's *Voices Prophesying War,* "Science and the Shape of Wars-to-Come, 1880-1914."

4. Ibid., 85-86.

5. In *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea, The Clipper of the Clouds,* and *The Begum's Fortune,* Jules Verne envisioned the use as weapons of, respectively, the submarine, the airship, and poison gas. Albert Robida, whose *La Guerre au vingtième siècle* (1883) Clarke characterizes in *Voices* as "the first major vision of technological warfare ever presented," "foresaw most of what appeared later on: submarines, underwater troops, mines, torpedoes, smoke-screens, automatic small-arms fire, air bombardment of cities, a chemical corps complete with poison shells, a bacteriological warfare company to spray the enemy with microbes, and the blockhaus roulants, the forerunners of Well's land ironclads" (90-91). H. G. Wells employs death-rays in *The War of the Worlds* (1897) and atomic bombs in *The World Set Free* (1914).

As Brian Stableford points out, 1900 was a turning point in the "science fictionalization" of the tale of the future war. "In 1895, . . . Roentgen discovered X-rays and Becquerel described the property of 'radioactivity' in uranium. Both discoveries were widely publicized, and the following year saw publication by Marconi of his work on wireless telegraphy. So dawned, in the popular imagination, the age of miraculous rays and no-longer-unsplittable atoms. These
discoveries provided an imaginative carte blanche for technological fantasies of all kinds, including stories involving weapons of miraculous potency. It was the notions of death-rays and disintegrator-rays which fed the new apocalyptic imagination, together with the less popular but more prophetic notion of atomic bombs. By 1900 it was a great deal easier to imagine that the power to annihilate mankind might one day rest in human hands than it had been in 1894, and it was this expansion of imaginative power which made the year 1900 a genuine fin de siècle. See "Man-Made Catastrophes," in The End of the World, ed. Eric J. Rabkin, Martin H. Greenberg, and Joseph D. Olander (Carbondale, Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press, 1983), 97-138 (here 107). For examples of some of the more fanciful weapons imagined by the popular press during the first three decades of the twentieth century, see Joseph J. Corn and Brian Horrigan, Yesterday's Tomorrows: Past Visions of the American Future (New York: Summit Books, 1984), chapter 5, "The Weapons and Warfare of Tomorrow."

Paul Scheerbart, the bohemian German writer and himself the author of an essay on the air war of the future (Luftmilitarismus, 1909), spoofed the conventions of these technology-oriented future war fantasies in Rakkóx (1900). He envisions, as an alternative to human or robot soldiers, a military consisting of specially trained and equipped animals operating in their natural environments.

6. Clarke, Pattern of Expectation, 106.

7. Ibid., 227. The phrase "great divide" is used on p. 132.

8. I have used the edition published by the Johannes-R.-Becher Archiv of the Deutsche Akademie der Künste zu Berlin in volume 10 of Becher's Gesammelte Werke (Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag, 1969). Volume 10 also contains Becher's Der Bankier Reitet über das Schlachtfeld and an afterword by Tamara Motyljowa. The passage cited is on p. 140. Subsequent references will be made in the text.

9. For a recent general account of Becher's life and works, see the uncritical East German biography by Horst Haase, Johannes R. Becher: Leben und Werk (West Berlin: Das europäische Buch, 1981). For a critical study of Becher, and one which centers on Levisite, see Michael Rohlwasser's subtle and provocative Der Weg nach oben: Johannes R. Becher, Politiken des Schreibens (Frankfurt am Main, Verlag Roter Stern, 1980). Rohlwasser characterizes his
psychoanalytically-oriented analysis as an attempt "die Politik [Bechers] Texte zu entziffern, wo sie nicht von Politik sprechen wollen, und dort, wo sie von 'großer Politik' handeln, auch ihre 'Mikro-Politik' zu lesen, die Strömungen unter der Inszenierung und Legitimation, unter rationalem Verlangen und moralischer Argumentation zu entziffern" (14). Influenced by Klaus Theweleit's study of the 'soldatische Literatur' of the Freikorps (Männerphantasien [Frankfurt a. M., 1977-78]) and by the work of Deleuze and Guattari, Rohrwasser finds that Levisite shares a number of themes, images, and metaphors with fascist literature and suggests that Becher's unconscious motivations were similar to those of völkisch authors. "Das durch die Wahl Bechers entstandene Thema," he writes, "könnte, im polemischen Sinn formuliert, heißen: wie kann ein faschistischer Roman zu einem kommunistischen gemacht werden--und weiter noch: wie kann er als solcher gelesen werden?" (13)

10. For an excellent brief history of the KPD in the Weimar Republic, see Ben Fowkes, Communism in Germany under the Weimar Republic (New York: St. Martin's, 1984). Fowkes observes that, notwithstanding the serious setbacks suffered by the Party in the fall of 1923, "the resolutions of the Ninth Congress [April 1924] were couched in tones of inappropriate revolutionary optimism" (117). He cites the belief of one German Communist leader "that there is no evidence for a collapse of the revolution, that on the contrary all factors point to a sharpening of the situation" as well as Zinoviev's view that "the present breathing-space gained by the German bourgeoisie will hardly last any longer than one to two years." Both quotes are on p. 117.

11. In addition to Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism, see "On the Slogan for a United States of Europe" (August 1915), "Socialism and War" (Fall 1915), and "The Military Programme of the Proletarian Revolution" (October 1917). I have consulted the versions of these contained in Lenin's Collected Works, vols. 21, 22, and 23 (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1960-70). For a brief overview of Lenin's thoughts on imperialism and war, see the excerpts from his writings published by Saul N. Silverman in Lenin (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1972), chap. 1, "On Marxism and Imperialism: Some Foundations of Leninism."

12. On this see Franz Schonauer, "Die Partei und die Schöne Literatur. Kommunistische


17. Ibid., 230, 223, and 234.

18. Ibid., 233.

19. Ibid., 234.

20. In the preface to the 1926 Russian translation of Levisite, Becher writes: "Dieses Buch ist ein Experiment. Es erscheint mir nicht übertrieben, wenn ich es als ersten und einzigen Versuch bezeichne, in Deutschland einen kommunistischen Roman zu schreiben . . . ." The novel can be viewed as experimental not just in terms of its political ideology but also in terms of its use of certain modernist formal techniques. "Und dann: in meinem Roman habe ich in breitem Umfang die Methode der Photomontage angewandt. Man versteht darunter die Zusammensetzung eines Bildes aus verschiedenen Photographien. Deshalb enthält das Buch Dialoge, Reden und Beschreibungen, die Zitate sind und genau der Wirklichkeit entsprechen."
The photomontage was popular among left-wing artists during the Weimar Republic, and one of its leading practitioners, John Heartfield, designed the dust-jacket for Levisite. This is reproduced in Wieland Herzfelde, John Heartfield: Leben und Werk, dargestellt von seinem Bruder, 2d ed. (Dresden: Verlag der Kunst, 1970), plate 43. The 1926 preface is reprinted, along with one to a planned 1936 Russian edition, in the appendix to Volume 10 of the Gesammelte Werke, 554-556. The first quote is on p. 555, the second on p. 556.

22. Ibid., 228.
23. Ibid., 233.
24. Ibid., 231.

25. On the critical attitude of the German Communists towards "bourgeois" pacifism and pacifistic literature during the twenties and early thirties, see Eckhardt Mommer, 's ist Krieg! 's ist Krieg! Versuch zur deutschen Literatur über den Krieg, 1914-1933 (Berlin: Das Arsenal, 1981). On the position of Becher and his Kharkov comments within the context of the KPD's Pazifismus-Kritik, see pp. 80-81.


27. Clarke, Voices Prophesying War, 164.

29. Ibid., 230.

30. A good example of this is the description of the torture and murder of a Black by a frenzied mob in Ohio: "Eine Menge von zehntausend Personen. Geballte Fäuste, blutunterlaufene Augen, Fluchen und Schimpfen. Mit Stöcken, Pechfackeln, Revolvern, Besen, Stricken, Messern, Scheren, Schirmen, Vitriol bewaffnet. Inmitten dieser entsesselt und immer wachsenden Truppe ein schwarzer Klumpen, einmal nach links, einmal nach rechts gestoßen, geschlagen, niedergetreten, zerrissen, blutbedeckt, beinahe tot . . . " (199). Becher doubtless intends the murder of the Black to exemplify the brutal nature of American society and, by implication, of all capitalist societies. However, it raises questions about mob violence and
human aggressiveness and irrationality which Becher refuses to acknowledge. As a doctrinaire Communist, he cannot accept what an anonymous bourgeois in the novel refers to as "das Urböse im Menschen, die Bestie, der Satan . . ." (200).

31. In the Communist apocalyptic, economic disasters and intensified "social contradictions" take the place of plagues and natural disasters.


33. The representative epithets applied to capitalism by Lenin are taken from "Imperialism and the Split in Socialism," *Collected Works*, vol. 23, 105.

34. In her afterword to the *Levisite*, Tamara Motyljowa notes that Becher was not interested in realistic, psychologically subtle characterizations. He was concerned rather to emphasize "das klassenmäßig Wesentliche" and this he did by means of caricature. "In 'Levisite' erinnern uns die Vertreter der herrschenden Gesellschaftsschichten . . . an die bekannten satirischen Zeichnungen von Georg Grosz" (543).

35. In 1924, Zinoviev charged "that the leaders of German Social Democracy have become Fascists through and through" (quoted by Fowkes, *Communism in Germany*, 114). On the KPD's struggle against the SPD under the slogan of "Social Fascism," see Fowkes, 153-166. For representative expressions of the "Social Fascism" theory, see the "Thesen der KPD über den Sozialfaschismus," reprinted in *Der deutsche Kommunismus*, ed. Hermann Weber (Cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1963), 182-186. On the earlier rifts and tensions in the Left between reformist and revolutionary elements, see Fowkes' first chapter, "The Prehistory of
German Communism,” 4-15.

36. The messianic role (and self-understanding) of the Party is clearly mirrored in the rhetoric of certain Spartacist/Communist documents of the period. In the 1918 program of the Spartakusbund, for example, the words "Kreuziget ihn!" are put in the mouths of the enemies of the Spartacists, whereby the pronoun refers to "Spartakusbund." And in KPD draft program from 1922, party members are assured that "Sein Reich hat bereits begonnen," the antecedent of "sein" being "der Kommunismus." Both documents are reprinted in Der deutsche Kommunismus, 34-42, 43-44. The quotes are on pp. 41 and 44.


39. E. g., Peter Friedjung's conversation with a bourgeois intellectual in a cafe, after which Peter scornfully reflects: "Das Besondere, das Origenelle, das Interessante, das ist bei diesen sensationslüsternen, pseudo-dämonischen Individual-Säulen die Hauptsache!" (246).


41. On the psychological roots and totalitarian implications of Becher's machine metaphors, see Rohrwasser, Der Weg nach oben, 234-241.

42. The first two quotes are from Becher's 1930 radio debate with Gottfried Benn, the third is from "Einen Schritt weiter!" an article published in Die Linkskurve. Both debate and
article are reprinted in *Zur Tradition der sozialistischen Literatur in Deutschland*, 148-153, 175-182. Quotes are on pp. 149 and 175.


44. The authorities were unsettled enough by *Levisite* and some of Becher's other writings to confiscate the novel in early 1926 and to charge Becher with high treason. The indictment provoked a protest on Becher's behalf by left-wing writers and intellectuals both inside and outside Germany; among his supporters were Gorki, Brecht, Barbusse, Rolland. The case never came to trial: after repeated postponements of the trial, charges against Becher were dropped in 1928 as part of a general amnesty. On the treason trial, see Alfred Klein, "Der Hochverratsprozeß gegen Johannes R. Becher und die Herausbildung der proletarisch-revolutionären Literatur," in *Aktionen, Bekenntnisse, Perspektiven: Berichte und Dokumente vom Kampf um die Freiheit des literarischen Schaffens in der Weimarer Republik* (East Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag, 1966), 23-63.

45. Becher, Preface, 557.

46. I. e., the end of the period of revolutionary insurrections which occurred throughout Germany in early 1919 with the bloody suppression of Munich Soviet Republic by the Freikorps in May, 1919; the defeat of the "Red Army of the Ruhr" in April, 1920; and the failure of the "March Action" in March, 1921. On these, see Fowkes, *German Communism*, 24-34, 44-48, and 63-68.

47. Ibid., 109.

48. Ibid., 124. The persecution of communists, writes Fowkes, "was at its height in 1924 and early 1925. Between January 1924 and August 1925, 6349 workers were sentenced to a total of 4572 years imprisonment." Becher alludes to these sentences several times in his novel, such as in the scene where Max is walking home with two fellow workers: "Die drei betrachteten schweigend ein eben angeklebtes Plakat. Ein Gefangener, der mit ausgemergelten Fingern in die Eisenstäbe eines Gefängnisgitters hineingreift. Blutrot war die ganze Gestalt. Das verzerrte Gesicht: eine irrsinnige Grimasse. Darunter stand nichts als die Zahl: 7000" (126).
Conclusion

In fantasies of grand destruction, of world-endings, of Götterdämmerung, two quite
different, indeed contradictory stances towards the historical reality symbolized by the doomed or
threatened fictional world may be distinguished. In the one case, the imagined Weltuntergang is
rooted in disaffection and disenchantment, in dissatisfaction with the historical present, and
gratifies the wish to see destroyed, on the level of compensatory fantasy at least, a world which
has offended, thwarted, and abused.¹ This is the fantasy of the Zu-Kurz-Gekommenen and their
advocates; it is a fantasy of vengeance and retribution, a fantasy, in the final analysis, of justice,
however perverse the particular forms of this justice may sometimes be. In the other, opposite
case, the attitude that underlies the fantasy of cataclysm is, on a conscious level at least, one of
fundamental assent to and identification with the world whose destruction or near destruction,
metaphorically displaced, is envisioned.

Of the works discussed here, only two, In purpurmer Finstemìß and Levisite, manifest a
profound animus towards their historical present. Though different in ideology, both works
embody the same, "classic" apocalyptic-millenarian paradigm. Each, that is, offers a vision of
judgment, of retributive destruction, and of final redemption and rebirth. The paradigm of
world-destruction followed by regeneration is present, too, in Rapanui. Strikingly absent in this
case, however, is the axiological element, the notion of judgment and justice. What remains is the
"sublime" spectacle, bereft of all moral meaning, of the end of one cosmic cycle and the
beginning of another. In Planetenfeuer and Der Tunnel, finally, the apocalyptic pattern of
destruction and renovation disappears entirely. In their fundamental agreement with their
respective historical presents, these novels stand at the opposite end of the scale from such
retributive fantasies as In purpurmer Finstemìß and Levisite. They tell not of the destruction of the
world but only of its near destruction. Their message is, as we have seen, one not of change but
of continuity, indeed of survival.

The motivation of the use of catastrophist themes and motifs is perhaps more clear-cut and
transparent in the case of works which are written from a position of radical refusal vis-à-vis
the existing world than it is in the case of those whose stance towards the status quo is
fundamentally an affirmative one. Why, to put it more concretely, does a comfortably situated, well-integrated Bildungsbürger such as Max Haushofer set loose, in his imagination, the forces of chaos, death, and destruction upon the fictive counterpart of his world? One possible answer is to read the motif of cataclysm, of near Weltuntergang, as a metaphorical expression of the anxiety and uneasiness experienced during a period of profound social and cultural upheaval by a social class whose world was in peril. This reading complements and is indeed implied by the view that an important subliminal message of a work such as Planetenfeuer is the ultimate survivability of the bourgeois world. It is, after all, only the anxious who need reassurance.

The assumption of complete, unreserved assent which we have made in the case of Haushofer is, of course, simplistic. For within even the most fully assimilated individual there are occasional, indeed perhaps even chronic, "low-grade" feelings of discontent, resentment, frustration, and restlessness. Thus, in our earlier discussion of Planetenfeuer, we noted the pervasive strain of cultural pessimism in the novel, its recurrent indictment of modern life as overcivilized, artificial, enervated, and inauthentic. We suggested that here, in this sense of the shallowness and vapidity of modern life and in the concomitant longing for intense, authentic experience, was to be found a further motive for the novel's catastrophism. Within the context of the novel's Zeitkritik, that is, catastrophe, as an extreme situation which could effect an "Erneuerung unserer besten Eigenschaften" and an "Aufklingen herrlichsten Heldentums," appears as an almost welcome alternative to the "furchtbare Leere im Gemütstleben der modernen Gesellschaft." In this regard, the "Establishment figure" Haushofer stands closer to the "rebel" and "heretic" Conrad than one might at first suspect. Both experience contemporary existence as inauthentic, enfeebled, and devoid of meaningful content; for both the alternative involves, on the level of fantasy and rhetoric at least, violence, destruction, and death.

Like real-life disaster, the literary depiction of catastrophe gives rise to the question of theodicy, to the question of the meaning and justification of the anomic event. The writers whose works we have examined in this dissertation respond to this implicit question in two different ways. Conrad and Becher invoke a secularized analogue of Christian Heilsgeschichte in which the cataclysms and suffering envisioned in their novel are subsumed and justified by the progressive movement of either history (towards communism) or of die Erlöserin Natur (towards
higher stages of development). For the remaining authors, Haushofer, Kellermann, and Mayer, the cataclysmic events which they depict have no such "metaphysical" meaning or justification. They are simply brute, senseless happenings, although this meaninglessness is not thematized or reflected upon in any of the narratives. Writing within the tradition of "heroic pessimism" (Hof), these authors attempt to situate meaning not in catastrophe per se but in man's heroic response to it, in the "Aufflammen herrlichsten Heldenums" in the face of death and destruction.

Finally, we should remind ourselves that, questions of meaning and motivation aside, fantasies of destruction and death on a large-scale are a source of aesthetic pleasure.\(^3\) Catastrophist fiction falls squarely within the tradition of the sublime. What concerns us here, however, is not the nature of this aesthetic pleasure but the fact that in works such as Planetenfeuer and Rapanui death and destruction are aestheticized, are transformed into a "prächtiges Schaustück" (Haushofer), into "das herrlichste aller Schauspiele . . . , die große Zerstörung" (Mayer). This is perhaps the final and most problematic response of the catastrophist writer to the question of theodicy to which his fantasies of destruction give rise: "the justification of the world as an aesthetic phenomenon" (Nietzsche). The disturbing concomitant of this aestheticization of the anomic is an indifference to the live experience of human suffering, the refusal to confront without evasion the grim realities implied by easy invocation of violence and death in the abstract.
Notes

1. Writing of modern science fiction with its predilection for catastrophist themes, G. Legman refers to a "profound and ambivalent willingness to see the world go up in flames, and oneself along with it" which he views as a "measure of the disaffection of an ever-increasing portion of the world's population from the life that must now be lived on that world." Quoted in Martin Schäfer, *Science Fiction als Ideologiekritik? Utopische Spuren in der amerikanischen Science Fiction-Literatur, 1940-1955* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1977), 121.


3. In a well-known essay on the science-fiction film, Susan Sontag refers to the "aesthetics of destruction" and to the "peculiar beauties to be found in wreaking havoc, making a mess." She shrewdly notes that the catastrophes depicted in the modern science-fiction film do not "differ in aesthetic intention from the destruction scenes in the big sword, sandal, and orgy color spectacles set in Biblical and Roman times." See "The Imagination of Disaster," in *Against Interpretation and Other Essays* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1966), 214-215.
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