



The Political Unconscious  
in the Works of  
Robert E. Howard and Ernst Jünger

PATRICK R. BURGER

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of Robert E. Howard and Ernst Jünger

This work is a PhD Dissertation produced for *Fachbereich 05, Sprache, Literatur, Kultur* (the Faculty of Language, Literature, and Culture), of Justus-Liebig Universität, Gießen.

Dieses Werk ist eine Dissertation des Fachbereiches 05, *Sprache, Literatur, Kultur*, der Justus-Liebig Universität, Gießen.

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**Patrick R. Burger**



**PRE-RAPHAELITE BROTHERHOOD PUBLISHING  
INC.**

Lunenburg, Ontario, Canada

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PRE-RAPHAELITE BROTHERHOOD PUBLISHING INC.  
16497 Willy Allan Road.  
Lunenburg, Ontario  
Canada K0C 1R0

Ordering Information:  
PRE-RAPHAELITE BROTHERHOOD PUBLISHING INC.  
16497 Willy Allan Road.  
Lunenburg, Ontario  
Canada K0C 1R0  
Tel: 613 346-5064

Printed in Canada

Publisher’s Cataloging-in-Publication data Burger, Patrick R.  
The Political Unconscious in the Works of Robert E. Howard and Ernst Jünger  
/ Patrick R. Burger

ISBN: 978-0-9877594-7-4

1. The main category of the book —Comparative Literature —Other category.
2. American Author - Robert E. Howard 3. German Author – Ernst Jünger

First Edition

This is dedicated to Amanda, the love of my life: I could never have done this  
without you!

This is also dedicated to Maria, my mother: without your love and  
encouragement this would never have come to be.

Special thanks as well to Peter van Toorn, for his words of wisdom.



## Foreword

I would like to thank Prof. Dr. Grabes for taking on this project with me, and for supplying me with the crucial concepts of the hierarchies of values in literary texts and the *Veränderungspotential* of texts. I am especially indebted to Prof. Dr. Kurz for the discussions we had about the barbarian discourse; most importantly, his suggestion to take up Schivelbusch's text provided this dissertation with an utterly key component. Thanks also to Prof. Dr. Gymnich for her excellent teaching throughout my IPP experience at Justus-Liebig Universität in Gießen, and for her keen insight and wise advice. It was her question, upon reading draft chapters that included an analysis of *Deutsche Kämpfer in der grünen Hölle Kameruns*, "Why this particular text?", that made me realize that, although the relevance of this text to the discourses addressed by the texts of Howard and Jünger was not questioned either by her or my other advisors, the dissertation did leave itself open to the charge that this text was specifically selected to support an argument that otherwise could not be made. It became necessary, then, to demonstrate the existence of the discourses (that the texts of Howard and Jünger function as utterances within) in a wider selection of texts from the cultural archive to counter any suggestion that the argument is built on strategically selected unrepresentative texts, and I am thankful that she pointed me in that direction.

This project enters a field of Jünger studies epitomized by two major collections of essays that feature some of the leading voices in Jünger research, and this dissertation has taken both of these as a guide. Furthermore Helmut Lethen's *Verhaltenslehre der Kälte*, which is a major theoretical text informing this dissertation, also constitutes an important contribution to Jünger research in itself.

The first major collection referred to here, *Ernst Jünger im 20. Jahrhundert*, was published in 1995 and was edited by leading Jünger scholars, Hans Harald Müller and Harro Segeberg. Müller begins his introductory essay by noting that Jünger research is in a bad state in the early to mid-1990s. Following the ideology criticism debates of the 70s and early 80s, which reduced Jünger to an historical phenomenon, and the aesthetic focus of the late 80s to Müller's present, which inflated Jünger to a timeless and disinterested interpreter of Modernism and Postmodernism, Müller sees few works that reliably inform about Jünger's texts. Müller argues that critical strategies that attempt to homogenize Jünger's work or to isolate aspects of it must be done away with to come to clear interpretations of Jünger.

He criticizes approaches that distill Jünger's texts down to aphorisms or important passages and then claim these as representative of Jünger's entire oeuvre or of his early writings. These critics, including Karl-Heinz Bohrer, in Müller's opinion, accomplish this by an artificial selection and selective contextualization. He also criticizes attempts to interpret Jünger's oeuvre as an Epos of Modernism or Epos of Humanity of the 20th century, particularly



when these totalizing constructs are more concerned with Romanticism than the deconstruction of Postmodernism.

This dissertation occupies a position between the polar opposites that Müller identifies. This dissertation is interested in situating Jünger's work in a diachronic development of historical discourses – but not from an ideology criticism perspective, and certainly not in terms of seeing Jünger as a timeless and disinterested commentator on Modernism and Postmodernism.

This dissertation's focus on the ideology of form identified by Jameson is not an attempt to homogenize Jünger's work but to track its formal developments in order to come to a clear interpretation of his position in the historical stream of discourse – one free from a preconceived ideological judgement of Jünger. Further, this dissertation does the opposite of attempting to distil Jünger's texts. By establishing three layers of form of these texts through a close reading that follows the narrative stages of the text, the entirety of a text is considered in order to determine its mythos, its mode/*Schreibweise* and its genre. Not only is the establishment of these forms significant for an interpretation of Jünger, but the changes in these forms from text to text in a diachronic progression are significant as well. The resultant interpretation does not elevate Jünger's oeuvre to a monument but rather sees it as part of collective discourses and national (and international) meta-narratives within the horizon of history.

The second major collection of Jünger criticism referred to here, Lutz Hagedstedt's 2004 *Ernst Jünger: Politik – Mythos – Kunst* represents an acknowledgement of Müller's criticisms by foregrounding and combining, in its very title, the political (and thus, historical), the narrative and the aesthetic elements of Jünger's work. This dissertation draws heavily from many of the essays from this collection.

Literary criticism and research into Howard's work is by no means as extensive and sophisticated as that of Jünger's. Howard's pulp fiction works were dismissed by academia for decades because of the prejudice against *Trivialliteratur*. Now, with the rise of Howard's fellow pulp fiction writer and correspondent, H.P. Lovecraft, into academic respectability, Howard's works are on the verge of serious academic consideration. To date the field has been dominated by amateur scholarship emerging from the fanzine and press association fields (that existed from Howard's and Lovecraft's time and to which both Howard and Lovecraft, the latter particularly, submitted important theoretical works). Over the decades some of these fanzines and journals, particularly *Amra*, *REH: Two Gun Raconteur* and *The Dark Man* approached the rigour and peer review necessary for an academic journal. *The Dark Man*, as the most prominent of these, has covered issues of inquiry of note.

Central concerns in Howard scholarship revolve around a few major themes. There has been a strong accent on biographical criticism linked to psychological approaches, particularly of the Freudian variety. The themes of race and racism in Howard's work are also major components of the field. As this dissertation demonstrates, Howard's texts represent a differentiated approach to these themes from an author living in a culture deeply affected by,

and invested in, these themes. A third major concern in Howard studies is a generic one. With the Fantasy genre being a relatively recent literary phenomenon, there are on-going attempts to define it and map its conventions and sub-genres. The intersection of the variety of popular genres that Howard wrote in, within the pulp paradigm he worked in, and his association, through the term *Weird Fiction*, with his two major contemporaries and correspondents, Lovecraft and Clark Ashton Smith, is a rich source of generic investigation. To my knowledge however, the field is still lacking the application of major literary theories to this issue. My own investigation of Howard's "Red Shadows" using Frye's archetypal criticism, in *The Dark Man*, remains a relatively isolated contribution.

A noteworthy anthology of essays in the Howard field, including contributions by academics and amateur scholars is *The Barbaric Triumph*. The title underlines a consciousness within the Howard academic community, and the Howard fan community, of the importance of Howard's contribution to the barbarian discourse and the cultural implications of his utterances in this discourse. The anthology is marked by contributions that fit into, and widen, the envelopes of concern cited above.

This project pursues its project of situating the texts of Howard and Jünger in their respective national and international meta-narratives and discourses by applying the following methodological through line.

The methodology is ultimately based on the contention that just about every human utterance implies a narrative. Or, to put it another way, every utterance is an expression of part of a narrative. All utterances are embedded in several narratives simultaneously from national meta-narratives, to small group narratives, to personal narratives. Humans find themselves as agents within these narratives, and humans ultimately derive meaning through narrative. Significantly, and inevitably, all these narratives have form. These forms, as Northrop Frye argues, are archetypal in origin, that is, they are at the core of human consciousness. The archetypal core narrative is given further narrative shape in differing historical and social moments, therefore this methodology suggests that the form of complex utterances like textual narratives consists of several layers of form.

This first layer of form is the archetypal, the mythic. As a writer attempts to respond and contribute to a multiplicity of social discourses, the writer's textual utterance begins to take elemental shape as one of four basic patterns that Frye has identified as mythoi: comedy, romance, tragedy and irony/satire. Having broadly conceived of the textual utterance – whether consciously or unconsciously – in terms of one of these basic patterns, the writer then adopts a mode of writing.

This mode of writing is the second layer of form. Different literary critics, including Frye, have suggested a variety of modes that the writer can adopt to further shape the narrative. A mode is an attitude or a perspective on reality that the writer adopts. Of interest in this dissertation are two modes (*Schreibweise*) of writing discussed by Renate Lachmann, the *Phantastik* and the

*Neophantastik*. These modes refine the basic archetypal pattern that the narrative began as.

A third layer of form is the literary genre. At this stage the writer, who has a basic archetypal pattern and a modal approach to it, consciously adopts the conventions of a literary genre, and thus brings his or her textual utterance to a final narrative form that speaks to the expectations the reader has of a specific genre. In this dissertation we will be particularly interested in the genres of fantasy and science fiction, but the political essay, the war memoir, and various other recognized literary genres will be considered.

In terms of analysis, these different layers of narrative not only serve to provide an aesthetic experience to the reader, but they also yield the cultural meaning of the text.

Finally, in terms of the dissertation's largely bilingual format, it must be noted that there are times when the need to include German quotations within English sentences – i.e. the need to quote the precise words – has resulted in some grammatical awkwardness. In order to highlight this, it seemed that putting German quotations in English-style quotation marks suggested a cultural appropriation and a symbolic assertion that the German words could be treated like English words. However, since the importance of cultural difference is a central aspect of the dissertation, the convention was adopted to use German-style quotation marks to remind the reader of the importance of the culturally-specific insights provided by the quotation.

To conclude, the reader is reminded that this project, in its methodological thoroughness, attempts to demonstrate that existing literary theories (those of Frye and Jameson, primarily), when rigorously applied, yield empirical results that help to overcome the impression, cited by Gymnich, that literary criticism is a discipline dominated by the fact that no two literary theories agree on an interpretation of a given text: in light of this, the focus here is on praxis, on close readings founded on the cultural archive in order to yield results consistent with history itself.





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*The Political Unconscious in the Works of Robert E. Howard and Ernst Jünger*



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# I. Introduction: Robert E. Howard and Ernst Jünger in World Literature and History

## I.1. Comparing Robert E. Howard and Ernst Jünger

The influence of national mythic narrative paradigms on the work of individual authors becomes apparent when we look at the texts of Ernst Jünger and Robert E. Howard. In fact, the influence works both ways; this observation helps to strengthen the argument that the ‘author’ of a text is more than just an individual writer. We see this interweaving of meta-narrative and narrative in the texts of Howard and Jünger, for their texts act as interdiscursive zones for the discourses and meta-narratives of their societies and era. This co-authorship of writer and social discourses is most striking in the relationship of their texts to World Wars I and II, particularly in the social and cultural phenomena arising from the national meta-narratives arising from, and leading to, these major historical moments: what Walter Schivelbusch calls the *Kultur der Niederlage* and what Helmut Lethen calls the *Verhaltenslehre der Kälte*. The discourses that their texts act as utterances in include the discourses of class, race, and, most significantly, the barbarian.

### I.1.1. The Author Problematic in Relation to Howard and Jünger

In the case of the writers Howard and Jünger, we see how their writings and their lives were inextricably interwoven with the meta-narratives that dominated their nations and their world. They and their work are examples of how the terms ‘writer’ and ‘author’ are not synonymous, and that an author is a conceptual space where social discourses and socio-political meta-narratives come together and are ordered in a unique way. Further, in the sense of Fredric Jameson’s argument that an individual’s life story represents a text shaped as a narrative as much as possible by the individual, we see how both writers struggled against the influence of the dominant narrative *mythoi* of their day to shape their personal narratives.

After initially embracing the romance form, Howard later

struggled against its dominance in his society and career. His suicide in 1936 at the age of 30 must be considered in relation to his texts, particularly the romances of Conan the Barbarian that are the basis of his on-going fame. Before his suicide he decried the fact that he could not escape the romance treadmill of American popular pulp fiction that seemed to dictate his career. His inability to become a successful 'serious' author working with other mythic narrative forms calls to mind a quotation from the theorist popularly associated with the concept of the 'death of the author', Michel Foucault:

Das Schreiben ist heute an das Opfer gebunden, sogar an das Opfer des Lebens, an das freiwillige Auslöschen, das in den Büchern nicht dargestellt werden soll, da es sich im Leben des Schriftstellers selbst vollzieht. Das Werk, das die Aufgabe hatte, unsterblich zu machen, hat das Recht erhalten, zu töten, seinen Autor umzubringen. Denken Sie an Flaubert, Proust, Kafka. (Foucault 1008-1009)

Foucault argues that being a writer is tied to a form of sacrifice that is not intended to be presented in the works of the writer, but in the writer's life. The work that was supposed to bring the writer immortality in fact kills the writer. One can argue that this phenomenon arises from the fact that acting as a nexus of social discourses, channelling them as it were, is an overwhelming task, for one cannot really choose the discourses that one must discourse in and this psychological strain either results in death or suggests death as the escape from this prophetic role. In Howard's case, one is reminded of the argument put forward by a character in Dostoyevsky's *The Devils* (a.k.a. *The Possessed*), where suicide is defined as the ultimate and god-like act of self-determination. Indeed, Howard is quoted as saying, " 'I don't want to live to be old. I want to die when my time comes, quickly and suddenly, in the full tide of my strength and health.' A month later, after watching his invalid mother slip into her terminal coma, Howard put a bullet through his brain." (Wagner 289). As much as Howard enthusiasts may decry it, the fact remains that Howard gained for himself a macabre mystique by shooting himself in the head at 30, and yet Howard's suicide is not just a lurid and sensationalistic detail. It was in a very real way a self-chosen closure to his personal narrative. Howard's brief suicide poem was his conclusion:

All fled - all done, so lift me on the pyre –  
The Feast is over and the lamps expire.

Howard, with this final act, attempts to shape his personal narrative as a

tragedy, while the most famous texts he ‘authored’ were romances in harmony with the romance paradigm dominating American society.

Jünger, similarly drawn to the romance, must struggle against the ironic and tragic narrative currents dominating World War I and Weimar Germany. His repeated attempts to frame his texts as romances are stymied by the dominant meta-narrative currents of his society that, in effect, co-author his works. In response, as Müller and Segeberg note in their brief biography of Jünger, Jünger later developed into „einem – so schien es vielen – vor allem in die Lenkung seiner eigenen Wirkungsgeschichte vertieften Autor“ (Müller & Segeberg 287). The writer Jünger’s attempt to re-assert control over the ‘text’ of his life, which was primarily the writing of texts, is not a dramatic and tragic act like a suicide, but a conscious shaping of his own image and the image of his life’s work to represent a „weltweiten Jahrhundertdeutung“ and a „Jahrhundertdiagnose“ (Müller & Segeberg 287). In effect, Jünger, by the end of his life, has composed for himself the anagnorisis of the romance hero by explaining the meaning of the twentieth century and diagnosing its ills, thus proving that he never gave up on his romance project despite the tragic and ironic meta-narrative currents that repeatedly de-railed his romance ambitions.

### I.1.2. Class Discourse

The meta-narrative currents we are discussing here are the social discourses that existed in the Western world in the 1920s and 1930s. Literature, with its particular function as an interdiscursive space, allows each text to become an utterance in one or more discourses, but each text is also determined to a certain degree by the parameters that have been set for the discourse by the multiplicity of voices that have contributed to it. The discourse of class is one such discourse, and in the 1920s and 1930s it is commonly referred to as ‘socialism’. The parameters of this discourse in Howard and Jünger’s day are still largely set by the turning point in philosophy and politics in the 1840s that Marx’ and Engels’ work represents. The petty-bourgeois social origin of both writers is a major factor in what utterances their texts contribute to the class discourse, and how the class discourse is a factor in both their writing and the shaping of their life stories.

### I.1.2.1. Socialism

A major discourse that had been effecting sweeping social, economic, geo-political and cultural changes for almost 100 years by the time Jünger and Howard began to publish was that of philosophical materialism and its political manifestation, socialism. While materialism had been a factor in European discourse for centuries, Marx harnessed its rational, scientific, empirical and earth-based foundations (“the assumption that man is part of Nature” (Rius 58)) with the statement, “Philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it” (Rius 65). Marx’s textual conflict with fellow materialist Feuerbach („Thesen über Feuerbach“, 1845) was later interpreted by Engels as „das erste Dokument, worin der geniale Keim der neuen Weltanschauung niedergelegt ist“ (in Taubert 27). Foucault, like Engels, underlines the significance of Marx when he writes: „Marx ist nicht einfach der Autor des *Manifests*, des *Kapitals*: [Er hat] eine unbegrenzte Diskursmöglichkeit geschaffen“ (Foucault 1022).

This opening up of unlimited discursive possibilities as the turning point in philosophy and politics had far-reaching consequences for Jünger’s world, and also for Howard’s. Not only did socialists and communists become the internal enemies for national-conservatives like Jünger in Germany, but the newly-founded U.S.S.R. became a major player on the world stage. The fear of socialism and communism spread throughout the western world, leading to direct Allied invasion of the Soviet Union in the wake of the Russian Revolution, to events like the Red Scare in Winnipeg, Manitoba, and to American politics in the guise of Roosevelt’s New Deal.

### I.1.2.2. Petty Bourgeois Class Origins of both Writers

A significant factor in the lives and writings of both men is their social origin as, to use the language of the class discourse of their day, petty bourgeois. In fact, both Howard, as the son of a country doctor, and Jünger, as the son of a „Universitätsassistent und späteren Handels- und Gerichchemikers und Apothekenbesitzers“ (Müller & Segeberg 282), could be considered as representatives of the higher levels of the petty bourgeoisie. In the elemental text of Marxism, arguably the leading strain of socialist thought after 1917, the *Communist Manifesto*, Marx and

Engels highlight the precarious state of the petty bourgeoisie. In times of economic and political crisis, they argue, the representatives of the petty bourgeoisie – whose usual tendency is to aspire to become part of the bourgeoisie – are threatened by an erosion of their economic position and face the prospect of becoming part of the proletariat class. The reaction by the petty bourgeoisie to this situation is to side with the proletariat in the ensuing political turmoil, hoping that concessions to the proletariat will also ensure their own petty bourgeois social ambitions, either in a stabilized old order, or in a new order where they will occupy leading roles. The aftermath of WW I, the Hyperinflation in Germany and the Depression that struck all the Western countries, made of both Howard and Jünger sons of an endangered petty bourgeoisie. True to their petty bourgeois origins in a textbook application of Marxist theory, they showed sympathy with the working class in these difficult times. Howard demonstrated this sympathy through his tales of hard-working romance heroes, whether fantasy barbarian warriors, cowboys, or historical adventurers while Jünger supported the political aspirations of his unemployed *Frontsoldat* comrades and the circles they founded, including the early NSDAP. Both men were able to support themselves in petty bourgeois lifestyles through their writing, despite difficult economic times, and both aspired to greater literary success which could potentially lift them into the bourgeoisie.

Fröschle, in particular, concludes that Jünger's political writings in this context allowed him to improve his stature as an artist until he could move exclusively in the professional artist's petty bourgeois – verging on bourgeois – realm. Fröschle provides the following quotation from Goebbels' diary which demonstrates how this strategic political and economic movement on Jünger's part secured for him a social position that made him immune to reprisals even during a Nazi regime which he was overtly not supportive of: „Heute kapselt er sich ab vom Leben, und sein Geschriebenes wird deshalb Tinte, Literatur“ (in Fröschle 143).

Howard, for his part, used the relative economic stability of his petty bourgeois origins to pursue his dream of becoming a writer for the pulps. However, his decision to become a romance writer for the mass market pulps aimed at the petty bourgeoisie and proletariat was to bind him literarily. He achieved this dream, and even during the Depression was able to earn a decent, properly petty bourgeois, living. These pulps reached an audience in the English-speaking world affected by the *Verhaltenslehre der Kälte* that permeated Western society after WWI, and

Howard helped to feed the hunger in this audience for the archetypal romance narrative. Over and over, he served the masses what they wanted (or were told they wanted by the *Kulturindustrie*). And yet Howard imbued his romances with a perspective on civilization strongly affected by the trauma of the war. His attempt to break out of the pulps – and possibly his petty bourgeois class origin – and into a more respected career as a novelist by writing a novel about Conan the Cimmerian, *The Hour of the Dragon*, failed, and he had to content himself with its serialization in the pulp fiction magazine *Weird Tales*. He left a similar attempt at a novel, *Almuric*, abandoned when he committed suicide. Ironically – but not surprisingly – it was completed by an anonymous, uncredited writer hired by the pulp industry to complete it for serialization in the pulps (Roehm 2008:14). Although Howard did not live to see it, he did achieve the breakthrough to being a published author of actual books with *A Gent from Bear Creek* in 1936, for Howard *had*, in fact, found a way to step out of the pulp fiction romance treadmill by writing humorous and satirical stories in the American “tall tale” vein that were initially published in the pulps and yet were attractive to at least one book publisher in England. In these tall tales Howard was able to satirize the romance paradigm of the pulps and of his own stories.

### I.1.3. Race Discourse

The texts of both writers also function as utterances in the discourse on race that was prevalent throughout the Western world in the 1920s and 1930s, but particularly in the American South, where Howard was from, and in Germany. The parameters of the race discourse, being so socially influential and all-pervasive, also served to shape the texts that the two writers wrote and the narratives of their personal lives. As a Texan with slave-holding ancestors and a racially-charged environment, Howard could not escape the race discourse. The German discourse on race – in the absence of very visible minorities – was originally mainly a discourse on anti-Semitism. Alongside this centuries-old anti-Semitism with cycles of varying intensity was the common European assumption of European/white racial superiority vis-à-vis visible minorities, particularly Africans. This second-hand race discourse about Africans becomes intensified with Germany’s late

colonization of parts of Africa. Attitudes toward both visible minorities and Jews become extreme after the loss of World War I because of the use of African and Indian colonial troops against Germany and the scape-goating of Germany's Jewish population through the *Dolchstoßlegende*.

#### I.1.3.1. Race and the American South

Race was a major issue in the American South of Howard's day. The period of the actual slavery of Afro-Americans was only 60 to 70 years in the past, and had only ended with the Civil War in 1865. The Southern institution of slavery was used as a justification for the North's invasion during the Civil War and as the moral trump card to brand the South as the romance villain in the archetypal narrative of that war. The loss of the war, the loss of the slaves as property, and the moral stigma attached to the defenders of slavery intensified racism in the South, and made race a central discourse which made itself felt in all areas of life. In the attempt by the white population to retain control in a new environment with legally free blacks, race became an identifying marker in the narrative of the post-Civil War South, a sign of evil to mark the internal enemies of the South. A further attempt by major portions of the white population to escape identification as a romance villain and put the blame elsewhere, as Walter Schivelbusch notes, was the Lost Cause *mythos* which included the belief that the North had deliberately established and expanded the slave market in order to undermine the South.

This atmosphere surrounded Howard as he grew up, and as a teenager he wrote with apparent pride of his grandfather: "Though he could not count his slaves by the hundreds as his father had done, still he was a prosperous planter, with valuable negroes and rich land" (Howard 2006b: 157); and with apparent chagrin of his forebears generally: "my people had no hand in the very early conquest of the Southwest – they were all Southern slaveholders who drifted West after being ruined by the Civil War" (Howard 2006b: 155). And yet, his many poems and stories set in Africa – or in fantasy settings that are clearly derived from Africa – are utterances that demonstrate an attitude far more nuanced than that of the general tenor of the discourse on race in his culture.

#### I.1.3.2. Race, Colonialism and Germany



Germany's race discourse included a history of anti-Semitism marked by phenomena as varied and interrelated as pogroms, discrimination, ghettoization, and assimilation; and, as part of the European colonization of Africa and Asia in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, operated under the tacit assumption shared by all European colonizers, namely that whites were intrinsically superior. The use of colonial troops against Germany in the European theatre by the French and the British shocked German sensibilities and was apprehended as a racial insult. The search for internal enemies in the process of rejecting the Allied archetypal romance narrative of World War I in which Germany was the romance villain, further inflamed the issue of race. The perennial anti-Semitism took on monstrous proportions, particularly in the wake of Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, and the Nazi movement seized on the race discourse as its main weapon to force its romance narrative to the fore of German culture. In this narrative, Germanic (Aryan) peoples were the heroes of world history and the other races the villains. The race discourse loomed large enough in Jünger's life before World War I to induce him to attempt to flee bourgeois Wilhelmine Germany for Africa.

The romantic vision behind Jünger's flight and other manifestations in his texts and his life, and in Howard's texts and life were differentiated contributions to the discourse on race, and neither man can be portrayed as a rabid racist.

#### I.1.4. The Barbarian Discourse

A major discourse of the 20s and 30s, one that subsumes the discourses of class and race, is the discourse of the barbarian. This discourse is an ancient one, arising in ancient Greece, and it received a renewed impetus with colonialism, with the domination of capitalism, and with the unprecedented industrial slaughter of World War I, including its aftermath and its meta-narrative implications. The opposition to industrial capitalism that began with Romanticism became intensified in this time when the inhumanity of the war had shaken people's faith in 'civilization' and the people of the West began to look with new appreciation at the life of the so-called barbarian. This went hand in hand with an attempt to re-imagine the present as a new expression of the barbarian, a re-imagining that had to take the modern

urban metropolis into account and had to overcome its negative, even satanic, aspects.

#### I.1.4.1. Ancient Origins of the Barbarian Discourse

The discourse of the barbarian begins, from a European perspective, in ancient Greece, yet it manifests throughout European history, and is brought again to the fore in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, ironically, by the discourse of socialism. Marx's theory of an historical succession of economic modes of production begins with 'primitive communism' and ends with communism. This teleological ideology of progress contains within it the idea of a return to a simpler, more natural state that saw human society as inherently social and sharing. Significantly, the primitive communist mode occupies the place in this theoretical history of social and economic development traditionally assigned to 'barbarism'. Historically, the succeeding mode of production, the gens mode of production of ancient Greece, labelled all peoples who had not 'reached' their stage of social and economic complexity, and who retained features of primitive communism, as 'barbarians'. In *Inventing the Barbarian*, Edith Hall expands this process by arguing that the invention of the concept of the 'barbarian' was a political act related to ethnocentrism and patriotism: "The Greeks' sense of collective identity was an element underlying even the earliest epic, but is still in competition with and overshadowed by the group identity attached to individual city-states. The all-embracing genus of anti-Greeks, later to be termed 'the barbarians', does not appear until the fifth century" (Hall 54). In short, the barbarian discourse comes into being with the political agenda of a specific time. In the case of the ancient Greeks, it was an attempt to create unity among the divided Greek city-states in the face of the threat from the east. Hall spells this out when she writes, "The story of the invention of the barbarian is the story of the Greeks' conflict with the Persians" (Hall 56), and, "The conceptualization of the conflict with Persia as a struggle of united and disciplined Greeks against alien violence was one impetus behind the invention of the barbarian" (Hall 58). By the conclusion of the wars against Persia, "The 'barbarian' in the most complete sense, the despotic adversary of free Hellenes everywhere, had well and truly been invented" (Hall 59). In fact, the barbarian discourse in all subsequent ages becomes a vehicle to advance political objectives, and this is true during the time when Jünger and Howard wrote, as it was in cultures even older than

Greece. Hall makes a point of noting that this ‘barbarian-inventing’ process was not limited to Greece:

The notion of the barbarian in his developed form as the ‘other’, the generically hostile outsider just beyond the gates, appears at a similar stage in the history of other ancient cultures. In Egypt it was certainly the experience of founding an empire which created the sense of a unified Egyptian identity, and its corollary, the barbarians of the periphery. In ancient China the process is even clearer. (Hall 60)

This process, however, requires a mythic foundation within the culture, in addition to “ethnic self-consciousness and xenophobia [being] radically heightened as a result both of a particular conflict with an outside people, and of internal political centralization” (Hall 62). This process is at work in the United States during Howard’s lifetime, particularly in the South which is re-integrating with the North as a united nation. What is necessary to complete this re-integration, and for the South to lose its role as mythic romance villain, is precisely ‘a conflict with an outside people’: Germany during World War I. The internal political centralization necessary to complete this process will be symbolized by the first Southerner since the Civil War being president of the U.S. In the Greek case, the central issue of the patriarchal overthrow of the matriarchy was mythically codified as “the anarchy and violence, sacrilege and gynaeocracy of the ‘supernatural barbarians’, the Giants, Centaurs, Cyclopes, and Amazons” (Hall 54), and the invention of the barbarian as a human opponent was accomplished by “The substitution after the Persian wars of foreigners for mythical Amazons and monsters in the antagonistic role in this conceptual framework” (Hall 68), because “The old and familiar mythical conflict was adapted for patriotic ends, thus contributing to the ease with which the new ethnocentric ideology was assimilated” (Hall 68). For both the South and for Germany, the mythos of Christianity will be used in this politically-motivated barbarian creation. The legends of German troops literally crucifying Allied soldiers, and the use by the Nazis of similar Christian imagery to cast the Jews in this role fulfill this function.

And yet, Hall argues, the barbarian discourse is characterized by ambiguity, ambivalence and tension between its terms and poles. We see this in ancient Greece, as in Jünger’s and Howard’s day, and this oscillation has occurred since the conceptualization of the ‘barbarian’ in the first place.

But the Greeks' view of the barbarian was inherently contradictory, for civilization's notion of itself as in a process of linear progression is never unquestioned; the rise, paradoxically, is seen also as a fall. The retrospective vision incorporates the idea not only of primitive chaos, but of a more virtuous era, when men were nearer to the gods. Since the Greek concept of 'the past' overlaps with 'the elsewhere', the notion of the special spirituality of the men of the golden age, before they were alienated by technological progress, can also be produced in narratives depicting utopian barbarian communities. (Hall 149)

In other words, the barbarian discourse always allows for an inversion of its inherent romance narrative, where the villainous barbarian and the heroic civilized man trade places. Precisely this is what we see in the texts of Howard and Jünger, and these utterances in the barbarian discourse allow us to see the political unconscious of their works and the interactions of their narratives with the meta-narratives of their respective societies.

#### I.1.4.2. Impulses to the Barbarian Discourse from turn-of-the-century Capitalism

This positive valuing of the barbarian in the barbarian discourse of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries was spurred to a great degree by the increasingly global domination of capitalism. The colonialism of monopoly capitalism led to capitalism's colonization of the last areas of the Earth outside its hegemonic control, and this closing off of geographical zones free of the capitalist mode of production caused many to lament the passing of 'utopic' barbarian societies. Attempts, like those of French poet Rimbaud, to reach and experience such zones (in his case Africa) were, ironically, themselves harbingers of monopoly capitalism's arrival in such zones. As many modern Marxists have argued, the capitalist mode of production's geographical conquest of the world was paralleled by capitalist colonization of the human mind. The rise of psychiatry is both a symptom of this process and an attempt to defend against its alienating effects. The barbarian discourse surges to the fore of Western society at this historical moment as both a nostalgic reflex and a cry of opposition to this complete capitalist colonization of the inner and outer worlds.

Capitalism's negative impact on nature, as experienced by Europeans since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, becomes an aspect of the barbarian discourse. The re-valuation of the romance narrative implied by the barbarian discourse, wherein the barbarian is now the romance hero, finds particularly fertile ground in literature, for a trait of the romance hero is a connection to nature. The barbarian, traditionally denigrated because of not having "risen" from his natural state – a state traditionally seen as characterized by violence, excessive sexuality, and human sacrifice – now becomes validated for not casting aside a natural state imbued with positive traits like those of natural virtue and spirituality.

#### I.1.4.3. Positive Re-valuing of the Barbarian after World War I

This positive view of the barbarian in the barbarian discourse is given further impetus by the unprecedented industrial slaughter of World War I, its aftermath and its meta-narrative implications. The attempt by the Western allies to label Germany as 'barbarian' fell into the tension between the two poles of the barbarian discourse. On the one hand, as American historian Allen notes, the 'barbaric' slaughter of the war produced at first a dark sense of irony and a social malaise throughout the Western world and many in Germany resisted being labelled as 'barbarian' (Theweleit 1987a: 415). On the other hand, the inversion of the traditional barbarian discourse and its narrative romance poles led many in the West to question 'civilization', and induced many in Germany, in this same spirit, to embrace the barbarian position.

With people's faith in 'civilization' – including capitalism – shaken, the people of the West began to look with new appreciation at the life of the so-called barbarian. This was accompanied by a common perception that civilization – particularly in its manifestation as the Roaring Twenties – was decadent. Civilization – particularly as this modern bourgeois society seemed capable of moving on as if nothing had happened after World War I and preferred conspicuous consumption to soul-searching – became at first an object of satiric attack, as in Brecht's *The Threepenny Opera*, and was branded as something evil in the sense of a romance villain by forces both on the right and the left. Howard and Jünger express this in their work, and their texts constitute utterances in the barbarian discourse of their day. This revaluing of things 'barbaric' and 'primitive' in both countries (Lethen

143-144) was due to the vitality and spiritual purity believed to exist in such cultures. Jünger expresses this particularly in *Das Abenteuerliche Herz* and this ethos was a standard part of the character make-up of Howard's heroes. His championing of the barbarian is unmistakable in his Conan the Cimmerian character.

Jünger and Howard were not alone in contributing such utterances to the barbarian discourse of their day. Helmut Lethen points out that „Die intellektuelle Avantgarde des Zeitraums 1910-1930 liebte den Rückgriff auf vor- und außerbürgerliche Kulturen“ (Lethen 95), and that this was a time influenced by the „These der Entsublimierung als Rückgewinnung von Vitalitätsenergien jenseits der Künstlichkeiten der Gesellschaft“ (Lethen 100). This attempt to regain a vitality commonly ascribed to the barbarian with his closeness to nature and, therefore, to his own body and his animal self, was something that Kindt and Müller argue characterized Jünger's work in this period:

Jüngers Frühwerk feiert die Tier-Natur des Menschen in ständig wechselnden Beleuchtungen und Szenarien. [...] Den Weltkrieg deutete Jünger in diesem Sinne als Befreiung des Menschen aus den Fesseln der Zivilisation: Zwischen 1914 und 1918 „entschädigte sich der wahre Mensch in rauschender Orgie für alles Versäumte. Da wurden seine Triebe, zu lange schon durch die Gesellschaft und ihre Gesetze gedämmt,<sup>1</sup> wieder das Einzige und Heilige und die letzte Vernunft“. An einer solchen Deutung seines Kriegserlebnisses sollte Jünger ebenso beharrlich festhalten wie an der aus ihr abgeleiteten Überzeugung, daß der Krieg das beste Mittel sei, die Tier-Natur des Menschen zu restituieren. [...] Der Krieg galt ihm weiter als reinste Emanation des Lebens; die Modernisierung deutete er kurzerhand vom entscheidenden Hemmnis zum Motor der menschlichen Reanimalisierung um. (Kindt/Müller 195-196)

Jünger thus championed the 're-animalization' of humans. The closeness to our animal nature is a trait associated with the barbarian, and one that, as Jünger argued, could be, and was, restored to men by war, particularly by World War I. Jünger also argued that modern technology was not a hindrance to regaining a barbarian state of being, but an aid.

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<sup>1</sup> Jünger's use of this metaphor lends credence to Theweleit's analysis of the sexual repression of Wilhelmine Germany (and later Nazi Germany) and how erotic and sensual desire was re-routed into the militaristic and the violent.

While Jünger made many of his textual utterances in the barbarian discourse in the context of political and social essays, Howard made barbarians the protagonists of his fiction. Most famously, he created the barbarian character Conan the Cimmerian and imbued him with the positive aspects attributed to the barbarian in the inverse narrative of the traditional barbarian discourse. Significantly, Howard chose to associate this character with Cimmeria. Cimmeria was an ancient nation which was driven from its homeland to become a wandering barbarian horde. This historical nation passed into myth when Homer depicted Cimmeria as the end of the world and the gateway to the underworld in *The Odyssey*. This literary usage enshrined the narrative elements of historical and legendary Cimmeria in all subsequent uses of the term, in effect making the term 'Cimmeria' a motif. For Howard, his adoption of Cimmeria as a major part of the setting of his famous fantasy stories (i.e. the 'Hyborian Age') and as symbolic of his main character's internal dynamic, represents the furthest that Howard could go from the reality of his time. He felt, as did so many contributing to the barbarian discourse throughout the Western world in the 1920s and 1930s, that civilization was corrupt and he posited his Cimmeria and his Cimmerian as the ultimate opposition to his time: a vital, elemental and uncorrupted barbarian reality. Howard set none of his "Hyborian Age" tales in Cimmeria, and his Cimmerian character, Conan, only moves outward from Cimmeria into the rest of the Hyborian Age nations that Howard 'sub-created'. It is noteworthy that Conan's first appearance onto the Hyborian Age stage that Howard prepares for him is in the context of the conflict of barbarism versus civilization. Conan's career as a wandering barbarian warrior begins with his being part of the Cimmerian horde that sacks the outpost of Venarium. Venarium was a strongpoint established by the expanding civilized nation of Aquilonia, the leading nation of Howard's setting, and so Conan's participation in an attack where barbarians successfully push back civilization as the first event of his career sets the tone for Howard's utterances in the barbarian discourse.

Howard's championing of the positive traits of the barbarian in his fantasy fiction paralleled attempts to re-frame the reality of the 1920s and 1930s as a new manifestation of such positive barbarian traits. A contemporary observer suggested that post-World War I man already exhibited aspects associated with the barbarian: "Cured of his transcendental cravings, content with things as they are, accepting the

universe as experience had shown it to be, man would be freed of his soul and, like the other animals, either content or at least desirous of nothing which he might not hope ultimately to obtain” (Krutch 367). This re-animalization of humanity Krutch goes on to argue is evident in, and is a motor of, post-WW I capitalism: “[...] captains of finance and builders of mills, there are those to whom the acquirement of wealth and power seems to constitute a life in which no lack can be perceived. Doubtless they are not new types; doubtless they have always existed; but may they not be the strain from which Nature will select the coming race? Is not their creed the creed of Nature, and are they not bound to triumph over those whose illusions are no longer potent because they are no longer really believed?” (Krutch 367-368). Both Howard and Jünger will echo this sentiment where a spontaneous, vital, animal-like engagement with the material realities of the world is to be preferred over the formal, the ritualistic, the idealistic, the theoretical, and the religiously dogmatic.

Krutch theorizing that such an attitude is at the base of American capitalism is significant not only for the U.S., but also for the Germany of 1920s and 1930s. As Schivelbusch argues, post-Versailles Germany is a *Kultur der Niederlage*, and a major factor in the stages of such a culture is the necessity to learn from the society of the victor. This necessity is socially controversial and is vigorously opposed even by those who are unconsciously adopting the lessons provided by the victor’s society. Lethen discusses the impact of “Americanism”:

Die Leistung des »Amerikanismus« der zwanziger Jahre besteht darin, Phänomene der Massengesellschaft einerseits ohne das tragische Pathos des Verlusts des Subjekts und andererseits ohne die Heroisierung in Rück- und Vorgriffen wahrnehmen zu lehren und in der Darstellung der sittlichen Normen der Gesellschaft das Bewußtsein ihrer Genese aus sozialen Zwängen wachzuhalten.

Der für die deutsche Situation typische Zug ins Heroische hat zwei Gründe: in ihm arbeitet zum einen der von Nietzsche inspirierte Wille, nach dem die Menschen der Zukunft als »Barbaren« zu neuen Ufern der Kultur gelangen können, indem sie sich mutig auf eine ältere Stufe der Evolution zurückversetzen – um das Niveau der Zivilisation zu erlangen; zum anderen die Erfahrung, Held sein zu müssen, weil – da die Hoffnung auf die Schubkraft der Geschichte geschwunden



ist – nichts mehr mit halber Kraft zu machen ist. (Lethen 35)

What Lethen is arguing here is that the lessons arising from the barbarian-like vitality at the core of the American way of living in the modern capitalist world were available without alienation and without the need for tragic or romantic narrative frameworks. Howard's utterances in the barbarian discourse which express alienation and are framed as romance narratives suggest that this Americanism was not barbarian enough, and was itself the expression of a decadent and corrupt civilization. In fact, Howard's Conan expresses precisely the Nietzschean imperative to look to earlier societies; this Nietzschean will to become, in effect, new barbarians in order to advance to a higher level of culture is at the core of both Howard and Jünger's utterances in the barbarian discourse. The desire to frame this new barbarism as heroic, and as a romance narrative, is evident in Jünger's texts even as the meta-narrative of the *Kultur der Niederlage* injects tragic and ironic aspects into those texts. Howard, living in a society awash in a romance meta-narrative, also adopts the heroic posture, but as an expression of alienation from an historical meta-narrative that is a narrative of the mass and threatens precisely the loss of the subject that Lethen argues is not typical of "Americanism". Jünger's response to this same situation is, most strikingly in *Der Arbeiter*, to attempt to fuse the mass into a Gestalt, one that each individual will accept as representing his type, and thus a new post-individual subject. This process is similar to, and parallel to, the Nazi project of social *Gleichschaltung* and the imposition of a national romance narrative in which the collective romance hero is Germany itself.

These various ways, within the barbarian discourse, of re-imagining the present as a return to positive barbarian traits had to account for one of the most evident manifestations of a capitalist mode of production in the late stages of monopoly capitalism: the rapidly growing modern metropolis. Even those who argued, as Jünger did, that the modern technological city in some way represented a positive new barbarism, the unnatural aspects of the city – the newly motorized traffic, the endless noise, the pollution, the over-crowding, the alienation – had to somehow be integrated into the barbarian discourse, despite the fact that these aspects of the modern city were so negative to so many that the modern city earned the epithet of 'satanic'. Jünger argued that these unnatural, satanic-seeming aspects of the city were somehow a natural development that propelled the modern urbanite towards barbarism:

„Der Mensch in den Städten beginnt einfacher, das heißt [...] tiefer zu werden“, so Jünger im *Abenteuerlichen Herzen*: „Er wird zivilisierter, das heißt barbarischer. Die Natur ergreift auf seltsame Weise wieder Besitz von ihm“ (Kindt/Müller 195-196). Jünger saw in the city-dweller, stripped of her/his connection to nature by the capitalist mode of production and forced to cope with a new mechanical wilderness brought about by the total mobilization of productive forces, a new barbarian type which he will designate, using terminology from the class discourse of the day, the *Arbeiter Typus*. Howard, instead of declaring the positive barbarian reborn in the urban, capitalistic Keynesian worker, as Jünger does, will make the ‘satanic’ city a recurring setting in his romance narratives, wherein its corrupt, decadent and monstrous inhabitants are overcome by the pure and vital barbarian. Howard will textually declare the ultimate victory of the barbarian over civilization: “Barbarism is the natural state of mankind”.

#### I.1.5. *Kultur der Niederlage*: Culture of Defeat Definition

These discourses, while common to the Western nations, were particularly important to the cultures within which Howard and Jünger lived. Howard’s South and Jünger’s Weimar Germany were what Schivelbusch terms ‘Cultures of Defeat’. A culture of defeat is marked by various stages in the mass psychological response to a traumatic military defeat. This mass response constitutes a national meta-narrative, and Schivelbusch discovered that this narrative is structurally similar in the three major examples that he investigated: the American South after the Civil War, France after the defeat in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1871, and Germany after World War I. Significantly, the South’s overcoming of its culture of defeat was achieved through Germany being plunged into its own culture of defeat. Although the two writers lived in cultures of defeat at very different stages – Howard, in fact, was a representative of the first post-Culture of Defeat Southern generation – this common experience did shape their textual utterances.

Howard was the inheritor of a romance paradigm reinforced by an American victory in World War I that included Southerners and Northerners alike, while Jünger struggled with the loss of an Imperial Germany founded on the victorious romance narrative of 1871. The Treaty of Versailles represented a seminal text for both writers and their respective cultures. Versailles was a text that highlighted the American

romance paradigm on the one hand, and denied a German romance paradigm on the other; indeed, it decreed that Germany was the romance villain to the romance hero of the Western Allies. The German culture of defeat demanded that the shame of the German collapse in the fall of 1918 be erased. Such *revanche* movements arise in all cultures of defeat, and part of this process was to see the military defeat not as final, or even as actual, but as a test of the nation akin to the Passion of Christ. The defeat is thus narratively expressed as a tragedy, but as one that contains within it the promise of the romance victory to come, i.e. a 'victory in tragedy'. Another major stage in a culture of defeat is social reform through lessons learned from the victorious enemy. While the South learned the importance and decisive power of moral propaganda from the North's successful branding of the South, the defender of slavery, as a romance villain in the Civil War, Germany learned from the barbarian-like vitality of American capitalist society; Germany attempted to overcome its perception of itself and the Western Allies as a confrontation between *Kultur* and *Zivilisation*, and to adopt aspects of this barbarian-like American civilization.

#### I.1.5.1. Howard's and Jünger's Cultures of Defeat

Both writers lived in a similar cultural context heavily marked by a major defeat in war. Schivelbusch describes the common cultural, social and psychological aspects of the *Kultur der Niederlage*, and key to the three cultures of defeat he studies is the rejection in each case by the loser of the role of villain in the archetypal narrative created by the victors to explain the war.

None of these nations accepted the archetypal romance narratives imposed on them (i.e. the slave-holding South as intrinsically evil; France as the declarer of war and illegal possessor of German lands; Germany as solely guilty for the devastation of World War I), and each developed an alternative archetypal narrative to account for the war: tragedy. Schivelbusch describes this process as follows:

Von der Überzeugung, der mit unmilitärischen Mitteln errungene Sieg sei nicht wahr, sondern falsch (unlauter, betrügerisch, erschlichen, gestohlen) und daher nicht anzuerkennen, ist es nur ein Schritt zum Verständnis der Niederlage als dem reinen, erhabenen Gegenbild. Christliche Vorstellungen des Opfers und des Martyriums verbinden sich

hier mit solchen der klassischen Ästhetik. Wo »siegen« zunehmend die Bedeutung von »gewinnen« annimmt, wird es – immer in der Sicht der militärisch geprägten Verliererkultur – zunehmend Sache der »Händler«. Wenn aber der materielle Gewinn an die Stelle des Lorbeers tritt, bleibt dem Helden nur noch die von allem materiellen Interesse freie »beau geste«, einen zwar aussichts-, aber auch tadellosen Kampf geliefert zu haben. Er wird ein Leonidas, ein Makkabäus, ein Brutus, der mit seinen Gefolgsleuten, dem sicheren Tod entgegensehend, die Tragödie zu Ende spielt. So erwirbt der Verlierer in seinem Selbstverständnis eine Würde, die im Zeitalter der falschen Gewinn-siege dem Sieger so unzugänglich ist wie im Neuen Testament dem Reichen des Himmelreich. Die deutsche Formel nach 1918, »Im Felde unbesiegt«, war beides in einem, Selbsttröstung und Selbsterhöhung. Im *Mythos* der »Lost Cause« zelebrierte der amerikanische Süden nach 1865 die Niederlage als zugleich heroisches und sakrales Ereignis. (Schivelbusch 30).

This culture of defeat perspective of the *beau geste* is evident in the textual utterances of both writers.

Not only does 1918 mark the variant of the culture of defeat that informs Jünger's life and work, but World War I is a major contemporary geo-political event in the lives of both authors. Howard is 8 years old when it begins and 12 when it ends. World War I is highly significant in terms of the South's own culture of defeat, for the American entry into World War I – made against the will of its sizeable German population – was decided upon by the first president since the Civil War to be a Southerner, Woodrow Wilson, and it represented, as Schivelbusch argues, the chance to remove the moral stain from the South and transfer it to Germany: „Fünfzig Jahre nach der Niederlage bot sich die Gelegenheit, den moralischen Makel auf den nun aktuellen Weltsünder Deutschland zu übertragen, Seite an Seite mit dem damaligen Sieger gegen den neuen Menschheitsfeind zu Felde zu ziehen und so die schon lange angestrebte Aufnahme ins Siegerlager zu besiegeln“ (Schivelbusch 47). Thus does the South regain the romance paradigm for itself, in union with the North. Moreover, World War I has a textual outcome whose narrative implications, and legal commitments, enshrine the romance narrative built through Allied propaganda during the war, and this romance meta-narrative decisively shapes the lives and the textual

utterances of both authors.

Jünger was born into a Wilhelmine Imperial Germany founded on a romance narrative: the united German victory in the Franco-Prussian war that restored Elsaß and Löthringen (Alsace and Lorraine), first annexed by France in 1648, to Germany. Theweleit argues that this founding romance narrative was omnipresent in the establishment and maintenance of Imperial German male culture, serving to re-direct the sensual desires of German males toward war, an observation that the opening pages of Jünger's *In Stahlgewittern* substantiates. The reality of Germany's subsequent loss of World War I, and a new resulting dominant meta-narrative being propagated throughout German culture – the culture of defeat's tragedy narrative described above – decisively shaped Jünger's subsequent textual utterances, moving them toward the tragic and ironic however much he attempted to frame them as romances.

#### I.1.5.2. The Treaty of Versailles and its Meta-Narrative

The Treaty of Versailles is, therefore, a central text of the cultural archive of texts relevant to the work of Howard and Jünger. Literature's special *interdiscursive* function is also evident in a text like the Treaty of Versailles, for it, too, integrates a host of historical, cultural, legal, political and technological discourses within itself, assigning values to them. It represents a textual conception of reality binding on all the nations that fought WW I (and on many that did not), codifying the romance narrative of the Allies as the 'truth' of the war.

This collective act of remembering was designed to be the "official" memory of World War I and the politics and history that preceded it. This attempt to force a memory of reality onto the people of Germany that clashed with their own memory of themselves as the romance hero fighting against a world of villains, met with great, ultimately catastrophic, resistance. Significantly, although the Southern American president Woodrow Wilson was the public face and apparent architect of the Treaty, it was ultimately never ratified by the government of the United States. Nevertheless, its effect on both nations, and the world, was profound.

The reality Versailles established was an archetypal romance narrative written by the winning nations, including the United States. Central to the Treaty's romance narrative is the quest to restore justice to

Europe, wherein the Allies represent the idealistic romance hero, while Germany represents the evil romance villain (Dillon 458). The opening *agon* (i.e. conflict) stage of this romance narrative consists of Germany's aggression and the valiant and heroic efforts of the Allies to ward this off until the climactic *pathos* (i.e. death struggle): the dramatic – by World War I standards of trench fighting – late summer Allied offensive of 1918, which led to the Armistice of November 11<sup>th</sup>. In the archetypal romance, the death struggle is followed by the *anagnorisis* (i.e. recognition of the hero) stage, which in this case is the signing of the Treaty of Versailles itself, in which the heroes are rewarded (with territory, reparations and colonies) and the villain, Germany, is branded as such, is punished and is forced to pay for its crimes. Although the new Weimar government of Germany signed the Treaty of Versailles, it did so under duress and officially protested its romance implications (Dillon 458; Schivelbusch 268), doing so even before the signing of the treaty as the documents of the German Waffenstillstandskommission attest.

With Versailles as the founding text of the German culture of defeat, the need to regain a national romance meta-narrative began. The first thing that needed to be done was to un-do, or re-write, the shameful event that precipitated the writing and codifying of Versailles, the German collapse in the fall of 1918. As Lethen notes, „Nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg ging es um die »Schande« des Zusammenbruchs, die nach den Regeln eines Männerbundes rückgängig gemacht werden mußte“ (Lethen 219). As the German culture of defeat develops, this imperative will be seen as an opportunity to purify the nation through scapegoating and by the establishment of the ‘stab-in-the-back’ legend whereby the German army was not defeated on the field, but was treacherously undermined by Jews, pacifists, communists and socialists. This legend becomes a *citadelle sentimentale*: „Von der Vorstellung der Niederlage als Akt der Reinigung, der Vergeistigung, der Demütigung und des Opfers im Sinne der Kreuzigung Christi hin zum Anspruch auf geistig-moralische Führung ist es nur ein kurzer Weg, und unsere drei Verliernationen beschriften ihn, indem sie die *citadelles sentimentales* ihrer Sinnggebung zu *Bollwerken* der Menschheit erweiterten“ (Schivelbusch 45). The Nazis will, when they emerge as the leaders of the revanche movement at the core of cultures of defeat, indeed elevate their persecution of Jews and leftists to a ‘holy’ mission intended to rescue humanity.

### I.1.5.3. Victory-in-Tragedy

This victory-in-tragedy perspective permeates the Southern reaction to their defeat in the Civil War, i.e. the *beau geste* and the defence of white racial superiority, and also Jünger's search for meaning in World War I. Jünger will conclude that the war was the cradle of a new man and a renewed nation. The Christian connection to this conception of victory-in-tragedy was established in the discourse of Weimar Germany's popular fiction about the war where, „Hemmungslos werden von allen Autoren religiöse Bilder, Symbole und Motive verwandt, Bibelzitate einmontiert, sakrale Traditionen in Anspruch genommen“ (Prümm 1976: 155). And where:

Begräbnisse von Gefallenen weiten sich zu pomphaften Gruppenschauspielen, die meist romantisch gelegenen Gräber werden zu Kultstätten, zu denen die Überlebenden pilgern, die kitschige Todesverklärung nimmt durchaus die perfektionierten Praktiken des Nationalsozialismus vorweg [...]. Das Massensterben hat in den rechten Frontromanen seinen Schrecken verloren. Dem qualvollen Krepieren, wie es die pazifistische Kriegsliteratur abschreckend wiedergibt, stellen sie monumentale Sterbeszenen entgegen, wo die »Helden« in einem Zustand der Verklärung sanft hinüberdämmern in dem tröstenden Wissen, daß ihr »Opfer« im kollektiven Sinnbezug aufgehoben ist. (Prümm 1976: 146)

Not only does this victory-in-tragedy paradigm characterize a major social element in Weimar, it becomes the institutionalized paradigm during the Nazi dictatorship.

Nahezu alle analysierten Tendenzen der antidemokratischen Frontromane kehren wieder als feste Positionen nationalsozialistischer Ideologie und Politik. Das Frontkollektiv mit seinen sozialen und heroischen Normen, seinen autoritären Strukturen, seinen herausragenden Führern und seiner Willigen Gefolgschaft kann als vorweggenommene Modell der erstrebten »Volksgemeinschaft« gelten. Den romanhaften Idealismus des selbstlosen Opfers wünschte sich auch die NSDAP als kollektiv verbindliche Ideologie. Sie bedurfte des Aggressionspotentials der inneren und äußeren Feindbilder, wie sie von den Frontromanen produziert wurden, des Rassismus als Motivation völkischer Sendung.

(Prümm 1976: 156)

Thus, the narrative form employed by popular fiction authors writing about the war in the culture of defeat that was Weimar Germany, the victory-in-tragedy, functions as a model for the coming Nazi state and strives to re-establish a true romance meta-narrative for Germany through the promise of the victory-in-tragedy. Key to the public acceptance of the victory-in-tragedy narrative was the Christian tradition of Germany. Schivelbusch declares that this Christian aspect often comes in after a defeat where „das Martyrium Christi an die Stelle des aktiven Kriegerhelden tritt“ (Schivelbusch 363); this process will textually recur toward the end of World War II when the Nazi romance has failed and the only thing for the desperate Nazi regime to do is to fall back on the victory-in-tragedy perspective of the culture of defeat once again.

#### I.1.5.4. Learning from the Victor

A further major factor in the development of a culture of defeat is the national need to learn from the victor. This process was complicated in Germany as anti-Americanism was widespread and because a distinction was made between *Zivilisation* and *Kultur*: „Dem deutschen Verständnis von *Kultur* zufolge waren alle drei Westmächte bloß *Zivilisation*, und zwischen diesseits und jenseits des Atlantiks bestand ein nur gradueller Unterschied“ (Schivelbusch 300). The German intellectual and literary movement, *Neue Sachlichkeit* (i.e. New Realism) attempted to convince a German society sure of its high cultural niveau to learn from what was considered ‘mere’ civilization: „In ihr [*i.e. Neue Sachlichkeit* (New Realism)] klingt der heimliche Appell, den Versuch zu wagen, im Verkehr des Zivilisatorischen sich zu bewegen zu lernen, statt in der Tradition der Kultur Kritik dem Phantom eines authentischeren Ursprungs nachzutruern (ein Phantom, das freilich von den Massenmedien künstlich verbreitet wird; [...])“ (Lethen 100). Jünger, interested in the natural and authentic origin symbolized by the barbarian, takes up this New Realist call, arguing for an embracing of the modern technology and modern society brought about by Taylorist capitalist America. However, he, like many Germans, will argue that one must learn from the victor but that this learning is a part of a return to a more vital and natural existence in the tradition of Germany’s deep culture as opposed to the shallow, culture-less inauthenticity of America.



### I.1.6. *Verhaltenslehre der Kälte*: Behavioural Guidelines of Coldness

Whether within the German culture of defeat, or the remnant culture of defeat of the American South, or France, which had also just overcome her culture of defeat, World War I produced dramatic social change across the Western world. Helmut Lethen argues, in *Verhaltenslehre der Kälte. Lebensversuche zwischen den Kriegen*, that a coping mechanism to deal with this new post-World War I world was the adoption of an attitude of emotional coolness and distance. The persona that emerged in such a context Lethen calls the *kalte Persona* – the cold persona. This psychological model, adopted throughout the Western world, but particularly in Germany, manifested in individuals, literature, art, social interactions and political attitudes.

One of the first voices to point out the fundamental psychological and social change that World War I had occasioned was Sigmund Freud, and this already during the war. The social sciences come to the fore of Western thought in this period in an attempt to understand the paradigm-shift within Western culture, and this was particularly true of psychology and anthropology. A theory that combined these latter two fields was the idea that there were two basic psychological forms of society, guilt cultures and shame cultures. Lethen points particularly to the work of Weimar anthropologist Plessner, who posited that society controls and directs the primal motivations of man. In a time when society itself is unstable, as it was throughout the West after World War I, and particularly in Germany, the cold persona is a necessary survival mechanism. Just as artists were fascinated by figures with solid contours, this became a time when people used their exterior as a form of emotional armour, and used their own faces as masks in order to navigate a society which had become – contrary to the Treaty of Versailles's intention to create a guilt culture – a shame culture where being laughable was social suicide. The interest in barbarian cultures was heightened by this social reality, for barbarian cultures were considered shame cultures and their study would be of assistance in navigating the modern version of a barbarian shame culture. Some voices argued, however, that this new barbarian social form was decadent, not a vital barbarian renewal, and that interest in barbarian cultures was a symptom of decadence.

A major facet of these social changes throughout the West was the change in sexual politics that the war brought with it. Women being

required in the workforce during the war represented a fundamental change in gender politics, and the effect of this alteration of women's social position was heightened in Germany, where the men come home not as victors, but as the vanquished who are branded as romance villains. Just as the other social changes wrought by the war had been developing in Western culture for decades, the fear of the feminine that had already been evident, for example, in Victorian England and Wilhelmine Germany, was a major factor in the post-World War I world. While Jünger, like many of his *Frontsoldat* generation and the militaristic Imperial generations before them, manifested the equation of Eros with war, the barbarian discourse suggested another outlet for physical desire in which the sensual was equated with other, 'less advanced' cultures. We see in both Jünger's and Howard's work, and in texts from the cultural archive of their time, this desire being directed at Africa; Africa as the land promising primal freedom – including sexual gratification – becomes a literary motif. Howard, who exhibited traits of the cold persona and celebrated these traits in his characters, was also affected by the sexual dysfunction of his time.

#### I.1.6.1. Psychology and Anthropology

In the same sentence where he underlined the significance of Marx, Foucault also cited Freud as having created „eine unbegrenzte Diskursmöglichkeit“ (Foucault 1022), for it was Freud who initiated the discourse of the individual psyche that influenced the subsequent development of the Western world, by giving the world concepts with which to analyze the individual mind and its relation to society. It was only through the establishment of a concept such as the sublimation of an individual's desires that it became possible for Freud to note that the lifting of social conventions supporting the individual conscience by all nations in World War I – so that the soldiers could fight and kill without compunction – had the effect of releasing those previously sublimated drives. Once unleashed, those drives could not easily be re-leashed, and in order for these unleashed drives to function in a post-war social setting, emotional coolness, distance and decisiveness were prized and developed. Freud assessed these coping mechanisms as symptoms of neurosis. As a way of controlling and counter-acting the social unease that resulted from the introduction of these newly-dominant psychological coping mechanisms, the resulting cold persona became

obsessed with state power and made a fetish of the collective.

### I.1.6.2. Guilt and Shame Cultures

This focus on the collective had implications beyond the extreme left and extreme right on the political spectrum: the social sciences also investigated the collective, and the fields of psychology and anthropology, as noted above, developed the theory of *Schuldskulturen* (guilt cultures) and *Schamkulturen* (shame cultures). This theory, discussed by Freud during World War I<sup>2</sup>, paradoxically received a great push from Versailles' attempts to found a new guilt culture in Germany while suppressing the same in the Allied countries. As Lethen argues, the concept of guilt culture as a whole fell into disrepute in Germany: World War I was implicitly framed by the *Schuldthese* (thesis of Germany's guilt of being solely responsible for World War I) as the failure of a sense of conscience on the part of Germans. The widespread rejection of Versailles and all it implied worked against the establishment of a guilt culture that was an attempt to impose an Allied version of 'conscience' on Germany. As a result, the already burgeoning Modernist interest in so-called primitive cultures – U.S. anthropologists Mead and Benedict claimed to have discovered proof of the existence of shame cultures among 'barbarian' peoples (Lethen 30) – drove the collective German psyche and society toward a shame culture, where the focus is not on internal feelings of guilt, but on dealing with attempts to be shamed coming from the outside.

Freud's concept of the Oedipus complex, particularly the Oedipal triangle consisting of father, mother and child, was theorized as being necessary in order to generate feelings of guilt. The Oedipal triangle was therefore the basis for a personal conscience, and thus for the development of a guilt culture. The social phenomena known as the 'absence of the father' in Weimar Germany was another factor working against the establishment of a guilt culture in Germany. The father was absent for Weimar Germans on the macro-level due to the abdication of the Kaiser (the symbolic father of the nation) in 1918 and to the removal, by the revolution, of political authority from the hands of the patriarchal, feudal Wilhelmine nobility. The father was absent, on the micro-level, due to the many fathers who did not return from the war, or those who,

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<sup>2</sup> *Zeitgemäßes über Krieg und Tod* (1915) (Lethen 29).

as Remarque pointed out, did return but were psychologically destroyed. Even those who survived with an intact psyche had their fatherly authority diminished by their de facto status as losers and by their official branding as romance villains. Intellectuals, including Carl Schmitt, were concerned with the appearance of this “fatherless society” in Germany, and its far-reaching implications.

A shame culture also existed in the United States at this time. F.L. Allen, in his informal 1931 history of 1920s USA, *Only Yesterday*, makes the following comment: “The fashionable posture in 1925 had not been belligerent; it had been the posture of graceful acquiescence in defeat. Now the mood of intellectual disillusionment was passing; the garment of hopeless resignation began to look a little worn at the elbows” (Allen 481). The defeat, disillusionment and resignation that Allen writes of were part of the American reaction to the slaughter of World War I, and expressive of a general cynicism toward civilization, particularly the de facto Western creed inscribed into the Treaty of Versailles which declared all the Western nations blameless for all the atrocities and horrors of the war. When Allen goes on to write that, “This loss of spiritual dynamic was variously ascribed to the general let-down in moral energy which followed the strain of the war; to prosperity, which encouraged the comfortable belief that it profited a man very considerably if he gained a Cadillac car and a laudatory article in the *American Magazine* [...] (Allen 281),” he is describing how the guilt culture that did exist in America in the years immediately following the war, and which was expressed, for example, in the American literature of the day, gave way to a shame culture. The initial ‘let-down in moral energy’ after 1918 was, in fact, the very opposite: it was the moral sense coming to the surface and confronting the self-serving romance meta-narrative propagated by the Western Allies with irony and satire. The failure, however, of this initial guilt culture to take hold, and to then give way to the concerns with the exterior and with the perception of oneself by the other, which are the core of a shame culture, are represented in Allen’s statement: external adornments like a Cadillac and getting one’s name in a magazine are symptomatic of the establishment of a shame culture throughout the Western world following World War I. The contemporary German anthropologist, Helmuth Plessner, attempted to describe the shame culture that existed and to offer guidelines for living within it. Plessner theorized that Man is, by nature, artificial (i.e. *künstlich*), and that only through social pressures can his primal drives

unfold in a human way. In other words, true freedom can only be realized within society. Plessner, like other New Realist intellectuals, suggested an accommodation with the new technology and the changed society within Weimar Germany. If one approached the new urban technological reality with human dignity, society would function properly (Lethen 80-81). This was still, however, a shame culture as Lethen argues: „So begegnen wir in Plessners Grenz-Schrift einem Mantel- und Degenstück der *Schamkultur*. In ihr erlebt das Ich »das Kollektiv der anderen als argusäugigen Kontrolleur«, die Instanz des Publikums hat sich tief in sein Inneres eingegraben“ (Lethen 95). The collective of the shame culture functioned as an all-seeing eye<sup>3</sup> that watched to see that everyone was behaving as they should, i.e. that they had adopted the cold persona so that their primal drives were unfolding properly in accord with the social pressures applied to them. This contradictory sense of freedom will be exploited by the National Socialist regime.<sup>4</sup> The cold persona practiced in society and promoted by thinkers like Plessner was, in fact, just one expression of the cynicism toward civilization felt in the post-war generations on both sides of the Atlantic.

### I.1.6.3. *Der kalte Persona*: The Cold Persona

This sense of being defined from without, or of needing to defend oneself, and thus armour oneself against the outside, was widespread at this time and had actually begun before the war. As Lethen notes, Avant Garde artists and thinkers manifested this sense:

Die historischen Avantgarden der Jahre 1910-1930 sind fasziniert von der Gestalt mit der einfachen Kontur. Frei von komplizierter seelischer Tiefengliederung, als »metallisierter Körper« von Organischem entlastet, tritt sie auf den Schauplatz. Gepanzert bewährt sie sich im »Kraftfeld zerstörender Ströme«. Sie erzielt eine denkbar hohe Mobilität und ist wachsam, »als ob irgendwo im Körper ununterbrochen eine elektrische Klingel« liefe. Öffentliche Gefühlsaufwallungen werden von ihr gemieden [...]. Die Gestalt mit der einfachen Kontur ist zwar »unterkomplex«, hat aber den Vorteil, entscheidungsfähig zu sein. Wozu sie sich

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<sup>3</sup> This would become a motif in literary works by authors marked by this period, including George Orwell and J.R.R. Tolkien.

<sup>4</sup> And satirized by Orwell in *1984*.

entscheidet, bleibt erst einmal abstrakt; sie *will* mobil sein in einem Prozeß, in dem ihr Mobilität aufgezwungen ist. Die Literatur der Avantgarde entwirft ihr Bild und erkundet, wie sie in der organischen Körperwelt funktioniert. (Lethen 53)

The Avant Garde artists were fascinated by forms with simple outlines, forms that were free of psychological depth, forms that exhibited almost metallic bodies devoid of organic limitations. These armoured forms could withstand the destructive currents around them, were highly mobile and alert, and avoided emotional displays. While the form with the simple contour is ‘under-complex’, it is decisive, although what is being decided is less important than the fact of being decisive itself. The Avant Garde placed this form, essentially the cold persona, in the organic world of their works to demonstrate how it could work. By this definition, both Jünger and Howard are part of the Avant Garde, for they write texts in which their protagonists embody precisely these traits.

#### I.1.6.4. Armour and Masks

Both authors focus on, and aestheticize, the warrior – and specifically external characteristics and actions that give a solid outline to the warrior, and whose internal reality serves mainly to reinforce the external contours. The effect is that of an invincibility which gives credence to Lethen’s argument about the 1920s and 1930s being a time of the *gepanzerten Ich*, i.e. the ‘armoured I’, who adopted the cold persona to both contain and channel his own violent drives and to defend himself against those of others.

Howard, who grew up in small town Texas, was bullied as a child, was ridiculed for his writing ambitions, and felt alienated from his fellow citizens in Cross Plains, once wrote in one of his letters that: “Each time a man opens his heart he breaks his armor and weakens his battle might.” (Howard in Szumskyj 2001: 8). Howard manifested this ‘armoured I’ through a self-imposed regimen of body building as his father reported:

I feel sure that had anyone crossed him in an encounter, he would have had tough going with Robert. After a long series of bag punching, bar lifting, spring exercises, and general muscle training, he answered my question as to what the idea was, and said, ‘Dad, when I was in school, I had to take a lot because I was alone and no one to take my part, so I intend to

build my body until when anyone crosses me up, I can with my bare hands tear him to pieces, double him up, and break his back with my hands alone.' (in Price 151)

In these ways Howard built up what Theweleit calls his *Ich-Panzer*, and Howard's main characters are men of massive and muscular build able to withstand incredible wounds and pain. In these texts the cold persona emerges as more than just a personal reaction to bullying, but as a philosophical option, a *Weltanschauung* fully in tune with the shame culture extant in his day.

Lethen argues that this time of the *Verhaltenslehre der Kälte* led to the necessary adoption – by men – of masks in order to function in society. Specifically, they needed to adopt the cold persona to avoid the ultimate social sanction exerted in a shame culture, that of laughability. The society described and promoted by the anthropologist Plessner and other *Neue Sachlichkeit* intellectuals was linked to early barbarian cultures as Lethen describes: „Die Furcht vor der Lächerlichkeit ist einer der wichtigsten Stabilisierungsfaktoren »primitiver Völker«, sie muß die Dauerhaftigkeit von Institutionen garantieren“ (Lethen 87). These very primal principles were thought necessary to construct and navigate the artificial modern society Plessner promotes: „Plessners Sphäre der Künstlichkeit ist von Angebinn sowohl von der *agonalen* Situation der Gesellschaft geprägt, die eine »Rüstung« als Grundausstattung der menschlichen Sphäre nahelegt, als auch von der Gefahr einer Enthemmung des Trieblebens alarmiert, das der Disziplinierung bedarf“ (Lethen 92). In other words, Plessner's theory of the artificial shame culture of his day was stamped by the perceived need for personal emotional armour and the danger of unleashed primal desires. Lethen completes the definition of a shame culture as follows:

»Schamkulturen« wurden von der Anthropologie Kulturen genannt, in denen sich die Menschen konform nur verhalten in bezug auf Zwänge, die von der sozialen Umwelt auferlegt werden. In diesen Gesellschaften spielt die Selbstachtung eine zentrale Rolle, Würde ist ihr Schlüsselwort; beides Kategorien, welche die Person an die Erwartung der Gesellschaft binden. Fremdbewertung, die sich in sichtbaren Handlungen manifestiert, tritt an die Stelle von Selbsterforschung; subjektive Motive haben für das öffentliche Urteil, das den einzelnen bei Fehlritten in tiefe Scham stürzt, kaum Geltung. (Lethen 32)

People in a shame culture behave in conformity to demands from their social environment. A sense of self-respect plays a central role in such societies, and the social watchword is dignity. Both these terms bind a person to the expectations of society. One's estimation by others, which manifests in their visible acts, is more important than self-knowledge, and one's subjective motivations are of little consequence in the face of public judgements that heap shame on individuals felt to have transgressed social expectations. This shame culture that Lethen describes did not apply only to Germany, but also to the populations of the victorious Allies.

#### I.1.6.5. The Shame Culture Sanction of Laughability

The difference in the functioning of a guilt culture and a shame culture is that a sense of conscience based on guilt serves to regulate behaviour in the former while public rituals of shaming keep individuals in line in the latter. In a shame culture there is no need for conscience, just for an awareness of social expectations. The Nazis were able to exploit the structure of a shame culture in their public shaming rituals of those who did not display their allegiance to the Nazi regime. In the Allied nations such pressures to conform to social expectations existed as well – including the social expectation to believe in the national romance meta-narrative. If laughability is the central disciplinary aspect and stabilizing factor of the barbarian cultures that both authors admire, and if it is also the central stabilizing factor of the post-WW I world that functions as a de facto *Schamkultur* with its *Verhaltenslehren* that require masks, armour, the *kalte persona* and the *kalte Blick*, then it is not surprising that a satiric *Weltanschauung* was problematic for both authors. Their early careers were predicated on the attempt to write romance narratives; Jünger resisted the irony that Germany's meta-narrative kept intruding into his textual utterances, and Howard would only come to satirize the romance impulse toward the end of his career. Their fear of being laughable is closely tied to a fear of being abandoned by those that supported their initial romance textual ambitions. Jünger feared being abandoned by the nation he fought for, which is why he makes the *Frontsoldat*, and particularly the unknown soldier, the core of the triumphant *Arbeiter Gestalt*; and Howard feared, as his suicide strongly suggests, being abandoned by his mother who was the biggest supporter of his writing career. In fact, abandonment is central to the laughability



sanction, and thus the ultimate functioning of a shame culture, whether an authentically barbarian one or an artificial one instituted after WW I: „denn die »Furcht und das Grauen vor der Lächerlichkeit« sind im tiefen Grunde »die Furcht vor Verlassenwerden«“ (Lethen 87). It must be noted again that there were those that argued that such a culture was inherently decadent.

#### I.1.6.6. Revolution in Gender Politics

A major factor in the cold persona and the social cult of distance and emotional coolness after the war was a direct result of how fundamentally the war changed gender politics and sexuality. Lethen argues that the male fear of the feminine was at the core of the cold persona:

In allen Spielarten der kalten persona wird ein in der Triebstruktur wurzelndes Zwangsverhalten entdeckt. Das Lob der Kälte, das Einverständnis mit der Entfremdung, der Kult der Distanz und der Mut zur Entscheidung [...] die Eigenschaften der kalten persona erscheinen im Lichte der Freudschen Neurosenlehre als Krankheitssymptome. Ob Staats-Obsession oder Fetischisierung des Kollektivs, hinter beiden verbirgt sich wie einer der Autoren enthüllt – die »tief verwurzelte Angst der Männer vor dem Weiblichen«. Daher die zwanghafte Abgrenzung gegen Phänomene des Chaos und des Flutenden. Es handelt sich dabei keineswegs um eine individuell verschuldete Deformation des Einzelwesens. Die »Panzerung« ist vielmehr das Ergebnis eines zivilisatorischen Prozesses, der den Gedanken der Autonomie an den der Selbstdisziplinierung und »Abkühlung« der Affekte knüpfte. (Lethen 69-70)

All the manifestations of the cold persona are dictated by an attitude connected to primal desire. The praise of coldness, the acceptance of alienation, the cult of distance and the courage to be decisive – all these characteristics of the cold persona are symptoms of a Freudian neurosis. Whether it be the obsession with the state, or the fetishization of the collective, Lethen argues that a deep fear of the feminine on the part of the men of the time was the cause. That was why there was a compulsive attempt to separate the male self from phenomena associated with the feminine: chaos and flowing. This was not, Lethen insists, a deformation

of individual psyches: the emotional armour adopted against the feminine was a civilizing process that associated autonomy with self-discipline and the cooling down of emotions. This entire process is evident in both the textual utterances and the lives of Howard and Jünger.

#### I.1.6.7. Body Oppression

Klaus Theweleit's *Männerphantasien* explores this theme of body oppression, particularly with regard to the history of German upbringing and its effects on German history and German men. Theweleit's observations also include the Western world in general, revealing cultural similarities on both sides of the Atlantic. Theweleit analyzes the Wilhelmine (and, by implication, Victorian) focus on cleanliness, especially dryness, in a childrearing that was founded on corporal punishment, arguing that one of its objectives was to shame the child – particularly boys – into feeling guilt about bodily functions: „Die sogenannte Sauberkeitserziehung zeigt sich also als ein Vorgang der Trockenlegung und der Installation von Schuldgefühlen. [...] Sie erscheint, in ihrem Zwang zur Trockenlegung, als der zentrale Eingriff zur Durchsetzung der Sexualunterdrückung im weitesten Sinn; und, verbunden mit der Installation der Schuldgefühle der Erwachsenen in den kindlichen Körper, als der wesentliche Vorgang zur Erzeugung der Sexualangst“ (Theweleit 1987a: 429). This installation of sexual repression and sexual fear in young boys manifested in the years after the war, and Theweleit discusses Jünger throughout his text as being the type of German man he is describing. The young Jünger admires the freedom of Arab slave drivers in Africa, and objects to the Europeanization of Africa, as part of a sublimated rebellion directed against the whole Wilhelmine apparatus of „Kirche, Schule, die Fabrik, die Verwaltung, das Militär“ (Theweleit 1987a: 432) that adds its oppressive mechanisms to the initial sexual oppression taught in the home. When Jünger's attempt to flee Wilhelmine Germany for Africa fails, he follows the Eros-as-war sublimation that his society inculcated, and yet he still believes he is rebelling against that bourgeois Wilhelmine society, a point which the narrator at the opening of *In Stahlgewittern* makes explicit. This Wilhelmine/Victorian sexual repression-and-violence dynamic will find a continued expression in the cold persona of the post-war years, as both Howard's and Jünger's texts show.

This repression/violence dynamic was an evasion of, or a

compensation for, a fear of the feminine. This fear was anchored in the flowing of bodily fluids and the blurring of bodily borders during sex, for these borders, these hard contours, were absolutely necessary to form a hardened soldier; so the war, fueled by this dynamic, further intensified this fear of the feminine (Theweleit 1987a: 427). The violation of the body's contours and the presence of bodily fluids on the battlefield most often indicated grievous injury or death, thus strengthening that fear associated with women. This fear received an added dimension through the fact that the war transformed the role of women in all the fighting nations. The men of the Front, whose predominant contact with women for years on end had been with officially organized prostitutes (Kogel Franz 98), had not only *not* benefitted from the positive influence of ordinary women in their immediate society, but had hardened themselves against the feminine and were threatened by the newly-emancipated female society when they came home.

Strict social conventions for the cold, hardened male, and the need to return the female to an artificial role as the soft comforter of the warrior, were part of a civilizing process for the unleashed drives of the Front soldiers when they returned. They strove to protect their fragile individual autonomy – which had been suddenly handed back to them after years of surrendering their individuality to the army – through emotional armour, self-discipline and a general coolness of emotion. While this was true in all the combatant nations of WW I, the emotional intensity of this was heightened in Germany. The soldiers had gone out to fight for Kaiser and country in 1914 and had returned not to jubilation and victory as their Allied fellow-soldiers, but to misery, economic hardship and defeat. If all they had fought for in the name of the Kaiser was not to be – then what was the sacrifice for? The answer – as Jünger came to believe – was the creation of a new, hard man – the cold persona:

Ernst Jünger erhebt zu Beginn der dreißiger Jahre in seinem Essay *Über den Schmerz* die Forderung, Menschen unberührt von den Ausstrahlungen ihres Schmerzes, ihrer Leidenschaft oder Klagen als fremde Objekte wahrzunehmen. Die Auskühlung der Wahrnehmung wird, Jünger zufolge, durch Einbeziehung naturwissenschaftlicher Diskurse gefördert, die in der Literatur »Temperaturen unter Null« erzeugen können. »Bei solchen Graden« wiederholt Jünger später in den *Strahlungen*, »verlieren auch das Fleisch und die erotische

Berührung ihr Lüster; ihr physikalisches Verhältnis tritt hervor«. (Lethen 188)

Jünger demanded that one perceive other people as foreign objects and not be influenced by their pain, passion, or complaints. This cooling of perception Jünger supported with reference to science, which was able to be icily objective. From this utterly unemotional perspective, Jünger argued, even the body and its eroticism could be stripped of its emotional lustre so that purely physical interrelationships would come to the fore. This was the perspective that the cold persona was to adopt, and he developed traits that manifested throughout the Western world, including in Howard's Texas where he had photographs of himself taken that embodied the aesthetic of the cold persona, i.e. the hat pulled down low (Lethen 50) and the „gnadenlos sondierendem kalten Blick“ (Lethen 137). Howard's failures in terms of relationships with women demonstrate this fear of the female that is at the heart of the cold persona and mirrors that of the entire generation that had either experienced the war first hand or had grown up during it: „Jüngers Problem ist ein Jahrhundertproblem: Bevor Frauen für ihn eine Erfahrung sein konnten, war es der Krieg“ (Lethen 198).

Although the cold persona developed in response to the new post-war technological shame society, Plessner and other New Realist intellectuals realized that some kind of direct human connection to nature was necessary for true psychological and social well-being. The idea of Woman as natural was promoted by Plessner and others, for it suggested a way of overcoming the fear of the feminine and reconnecting to nature at the same time: women could offer this natural connection to men once they returned home from their social interactions (Lethen 94). There were attempts in the different combatant nations to return women to the home to perform this function after the war, but the flappers of the Roaring 20s, with their almost masculine short hair and flouting of social conventions, indicated that such attempts would ultimately fail, including Nazi Germany's attempt to define womanhood as motherhood.

#### I.1.6.8. Liberation

There were other ways of attempting to direct primal desires to a more natural existence, and the barbarian discourse suggested that “primitive” peoples, barbarians, offered this connection, this freedom.

For both Howard and Jünger, Africa represented this promise of freedom, and the texts of both men exhibit the motif of Africa as the land of primal freedom. In fact, the significance of this motif for Jünger's life and work was so great that it led to the first major decision of his life at 16 to join the French Foreign Legion so that he could go to Africa. This first attempt at 'authoring' his life story will have a lasting effect, evident particularly in *Das Abenteuerliche Herz* and, of course, *Afrikanische Spiele*. Theveleit's work offers insights into this intertwining of the discourses of race and sexuality as a component of the time of the repressed cold persona, and one can argue that Jünger, Howard, and their contemporary, Hans Grimm, take up the motif in order to flee their own body oppression: Jünger in the texts already noted, Howard in his early stories and poems, particularly his "Etched in Ebony" piece and his Solomon Kane stories, and Hans Grimm in *Volk ohne Raum* as its setting of German Southwest Africa (Deutsch-Südwestafrika) suggests.

#### I.1.7. Conclusion of Introduction

To conclude, a comparative analysis of the works of Howard and Jünger is based on the discourses their texts are utterances in, on their common national meta-narratives originating in cultures of defeat, and on their common social atmosphere dominated by the emotional distance and emotional armouring required to regulate the previously sublimated or repressed drives unleashed by World War I. Both writers are examples of how an 'author' is a nexus of social discourses and socio-political meta-narratives. The discourse of class is one that they both consciously and unconsciously react to and contribute to. The discourse of race is a central one of their respective nations and it manifests textually in their work. The age-old barbarian discourse is one that is central to their texts and to their societies' meta-narratives. These meta-narratives have many similarities and parallels for the nations of these authors were shaped by the specific social and psychological dynamics of a culture of defeat. Finally, their texts and their lives were further shaped by their adoption of the cold persona of the post-war years.

## **I.2. Addressing an Objection to Comparing Robert E. Howard and Ernst Jünger**

One issue that a comparative analysis of the works of Howard and Jünger must address before being able to proceed is whether Howard deserves to be considered alongside Jünger. Howard has long been seen as a popular culture writer while Jünger has been acknowledged as a writer of literature for almost a century. In order to put a writer that some would dismiss as a producer of *Trivalliteratur* on the same plane as a literary writer, it is necessary to review how texts function in a culture and how they have a transformative effect on the culture. With this established, we need to consider the objections to analyzing popular culture texts and the arguments in favour of including them under the aegis of literary criticism. With this done, a comparative analysis of Howard's and Jünger's textual utterances can effectively demonstrate the national meta-narrative, discursive, and socio-cultural similarities that they manifest.

For many years it was considered that part of the task of literary criticism was to establish the values of texts. A result of this conception was the building of literary canons and an accent on 'taste' as a criterion for the selection of literary texts to study. In the current paradigm of literary criticism, the accent has been shifted to the functions that texts have in the psychological development of readers, in the development of cultures and in human history as a whole.

### I.2.1 The Transformative Function of Literature

In order to establish a text's function in a culture, it must first be analyzed and interpreted, and any interpretation is based – whether explicitly or implicitly – on a function hypothesis (Gymnich and Nünning 2005a: vii). The problem with this Gymnich and Nünning state as follows: „Trotz der wichtigen Fortschritte, die die Literaturwissenschaft funktionsgeschichtlichen Ansätzen und den von ihnen entwickelten Funktionsmodellen verdankt, steht eine allgemein akzeptierte Klärung der theoretischen und terminologischen Grundlagen bislang weitgehend aus. Ein Grund für ihre bisherige Vernachlässigung ist nicht zuletzt darin zu sehen, dass funktionsgeschichtliche Ansätze selten den Anspruch auf theoretische Geschlossenheit erheben, wie Stratmann

feststellt“ (Gymnich and Nünning 2005b: 7). Despite all the progress in literary criticism in terms of the functions of texts, there is still no consensus on the theory and terminology to be used in analysis. One reason for this is the fact that theories concerned with the functions of texts rarely claim to be universally valid. Gymnich and Nünning suggest the solution to this problem when they note:

Funktionsgeschichtliche Ansätze [...] tendieren dazu, eine Funktion aus dem Spektrum der möglichen Funktionen dominant zu setzen [...] zumeist die sozialen Funktionen literarischer Texte [...]. Für literarische Werke ist aber gerade ein Spektrum potentieller Funktionen sowie eine Pluralität möglicher Interpretationen anzunehmen. (Gymnich and Nünning 2005b: 11)

Theories that focus on the functional history of texts tend to isolate one function from the spectrum of possible functions and treat it as the dominant one, and the function usually chosen is the social function. However, one can assume that a spectrum of possible functions, and a plurality of functions, are relevant to any given literary text. This perspective suggests that arguments about a text's function in a specific context *can* be considered without implying the dismissal of other functions. In fact, one can consider different functions to be interdependent, as Winfried Fluck does when he argues that „gesellschaftliche bzw. soziale Funktionen nur über ästhetische, literarische Strukturen verwirklicht werden können“ (Gymnich & Nünning 6). This concept, that a text's social, political and historical functions are predicated on the aesthetic literary structures it employs, is a way of integrating the earlier literary criticism paradigm with the present one.

Since the Greek *aisthetikos* means perceivable by the senses, literary texts confront the reader with specifics: a specific setting, specific characters and specific events. A writer employs aesthetic strategies to make the reader see, hear, taste, touch and smell these specific things. Literary texts allow the reader the freedom to discover meaning through the aesthetic experience and to decide to what degree this meaning applies to his or her life (Grabes 2004: 136). The freedom of literature to say, literally, anything, gives it a privileged function within a culture for it can re-order the value hierarchies of a culture and invite the reader to identify with these re-ordered value hierarchies. The reader can then take this identification outside the aesthetic literary experience, out into

society at large, thus effecting real change. This transformative function of literature is ideological, whether a writer is conscious of this fact or not. The revelation of ideology in literary works, of the political implications of the value hierarchy presented by a literary text, is the central aim of Fredric Jameson's theory of the political unconscious.

A literary text manifests this ideological and political transformative function when the aesthetic experience it offers crosses its readers' experience borders and reality-constructs, and exposes collective wishes and fears. It shows the readers that their world is only one possibility among many by contrasting the value hierarchy in the work of literature with the value hierarchy in society. The tension between the a text's value hierarchy and the dominant value hierarchy of a society, Grabes suggests, is a measure of 'literature' itself. This implies that what Grabes calls a text's *Veränderungspotential* (i.e. change potential, i.e. a text's ability to change the culture at large) is the function and mark of literature.

### I.2.2. Objections to Literary Criticism of Popular Culture Texts

With the function and definition of literature thus established, one needs to consider whether a given popular culture text fulfills these criteria. The objections to literary criticism considering popular culture texts have centred on both the quality of such texts – for some, a question of taste – and on their social function. For example, it has been argued that, despite the subjective character of the reception of such a text by an individual reader, popular culture texts are based on the repetition of culturally conditioned modes of experiencing the world and of collectively stamped cognitive and emotional prejudices (Grabes 2004a: 86-87). In other words, *Trivialliteratur* is culturally static, reinforces the dominant value hierarchy, and is inherently reactionary.

Works of literary criticism such as Alastair Fowler's *Kinds of Literature* demonstrate resistance to including works of popular culture under the aegis of literary criticism. Fowler argues:

Our age has a great appetite for studies of writing that is hardly worth studying. Thrillers, detective stories, science fiction, advertisements, pop poetry, pornography: these and other kinds of *Trivialliteratur* are accorded a weighty treatment



that nevertheless avoids, somehow, questions of value.<sup>5</sup> In fact, some critics openly express their greater interest in the typical than in the valuable. All this is not to deny a place to sociological and political studies of low culture. But to pass these off as literary criticism endangers the very cause by which they are inspired (Fowler 10).

In other words, *Trivalliteratur* is worthy of study as a sociological phenomenon, but not as literature. By what criteria, one must ask, can the decision be made that the aesthetic experience offered by a text is not aesthetic enough to be literature? If a text crosses a reader's experience borders, challenges the reader's reality constructs by re-ordering the social value hierarchy, and exposes collective wishes and fears – and thus has *Veränderungspotential* – is it not then literature, regardless of whether it is a product of popular culture? The answer to this can only be proposed after a consideration of Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer's 1947 indictment of the popular culture industry, a chapter in their renowned work *Dialektik der Aufklärung*: „Kulturindustrie: Aufklärung als Massenbetrug“.

Adorno and Horkheimer insist that the popular culture industry manipulates its audience – its consumers – into wanting the products of the culture industry, essentially creating a demand and then filling it for the sole reason of producing profit. Most damning, in this respect – and supporting Fowler's position on value – is Adorno and Horkheimer's argument that the worth of a culture industry product is not a function of its artistic or social merit, but is measured by the amount of investment that is put on display in it (Adorno/Horkheimer 145). The factor that drives the culture industry and gives it its power is, as Adorno and Horkheimer note in an example about the „Kapitänen des Films“, the fact that „Ihre Ideologie ist das Geschäft. Soviel ist richtig daran, daß die Gewalt der Kulturindustrie in ihrer Einheit mit dem erzeugtem Bedürfnis liegt...“ (Adorno/Horkheimer 158). This „Bedürfnis“, this need for products of the culture industry that it inflames in its consumers, is, according to Adorno and Horkheimer, the culture industry's *raison d'être*, and „Je fester die Positionen der Kulturindustrie werden, um so

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<sup>5</sup> A cautionary lesson about setting oneself up as an authority on what has value as art and what does not can be taken from Adolf Hitler's decision to see in Dadaism a sign of the fall of German culture (Hitler 1940: 283-284), and his statement, „Um nicht als kunstunverständlich zu gelten, nahm man jede Kunstverhöhnung in Kauf, um endlich in der Beurteilung von gut und schlecht wirklich unsicher zu werden“ (Hitler 1940: 288).

summarischer kann sie mit dem Bedürfnis der Konsumenten verfahren, es produzieren, steuern, disziplinieren“ (Adorno/Horkheimer 166). Adorno and Horkheimer suggest that an individual's surrender to this „Bedürfnis“ for the products of the culture industry leads to the self-hypnotic state „Vergnügtsein heißt Einverständnis“. They argue that this state is not, as some argue, flight from a bad reality, „sondern vor dem letzten Gedanken an Widerstand“ (Adorno/Horkheimer 167); in other words, everyone is an accomplice in the oppression of the masses in the current capitalist mode of production and also an accomplice in their own oppression.

Given that Howard was a writer in the pulp fiction branch of the *Kulturindustrie*, and came to bemoan the fact that that was what he was, it would seem that his texts, designed as they were to feed the *Bedürfnis* for more pulp fiction in the readers, could not be anything but what they were intended to be: profit-generating products re-inforcing the status quo by imaginatively recycling modes of experiencing the world that the readers were already conditioned to expect and by reiterating the cognitive and emotional prejudices stamped into each individual by the *Kulturindustrie* run by the bourgeoisie. Since this *seems* to be the case for Howard it would *seem* that there is no good argument for analyzing Howard's work in a comparative literature study.

Some of the letters sent to one of Howard's main “markets”, the pulp fiction magazine *Weird Tales*, give us an idea of the consumer for which Howard's pulp fiction was intended. Such a group of consumers would not necessarily find themselves on a high level in the hierarchy of society, and „Jeder soll sich gleichsam spontan seinem vorweg durch Indizien bestimmten »level« gemäß verhalten und nach der Kategorie des Massenprodukts greifen, die für seinen Typ fabriziert ist“ (Adorno/Horkheimer 144). Despite the low level of investment evident in the production of pulp fiction and its advertising for relatively inexpensive products, the producers of pulp fiction expect their consumers to be *vergnügt* with the product. This „Vergnügtsein“ implies, as Adorno and Horkheimer insist, „Einverständnis“ (Adorno/Horkheimer 167). The pulp fiction reader who enjoys the medium accepts the way that it is, thus is „Einverständnis“ with the medium, and thus, as Adorno and Horkheimer argue, with the entire culture industry and thus with the monopoly capitalism that controls it. However, the fact remains that the majority of American pulp fiction texts of the 1920s and 1930s have vanished into obscurity, while

Howard's work has endured. There is a definite aesthetic appeal to his romance stories of adventure, and Howard's texts, in fact, do exhibit *Veränderungspotential* in the value hierarchies they present as part of their utterances in the discourses of the day.

### I.2.3. Popular Culture Texts Have *Veränderungspotential*

Howard's texts can be taken as examples of Umberto Eco's argument that popular culture – despite the industry behind it – is socially revolutionary in that the 'masses' participate in determining new value hierarchies for society and see themselves in terms of a romance meta-narrative in the process. In "Apocalypse Postponed" Eco argues that, "The phenomenon known as mass culture comes about at a historical moment when the masses enter the public life of society as protagonists sharing in responsibility for the commonweal" (Eco 1994: 29). This very different perspective on popular culture is a cultural development that cannot be underestimated; Grabes notes: „Hinzu kommt, daß auch von Literaturtheoretikern die Unterscheidung zwischen ‚hoher‘ Literatur und Trivilliteratur in den letzten Jahrzehnten entweder – aus vorwiegend marxistischer Perspektive – als klassenspezifisch zu relativieren gesucht oder im Blick auf die breite Verwendung von stil- und Strukturmustern der sogenannten genre literature in der Literatur der Postmodern für obsolet erklärt worden ist“ (Grabes 86). Literary theorists inspired by Marxism have relativized the distinction between 'high' literature and *Trivilliteratur* by seeing it as a manifestation of the class discourse (Klein 1974: 433), or post-modern literary theorists have declared that distinction obsolete through a focus on the stylistic and structural forms within genre literature. This shift from the aesthetic value judgements of critics like Fowler is the current reigning paradigm, for, „...die Frage nach den historisch und kulturell variablen Funktionen von Literatur [sic] (wieder) in das Zentrum des literaturwissenschaftlichen und gesellschaftlichen Interesses gerückt worden“ (Gymnich and Nünning 2005b: 4).

Howard's pulp fiction romances are not culturally static or reactionary, for although Howard's texts are authored under the aegis of the romance meta-narrative of 1920s and 1930s America, they challenge the value hierarchies of that meta-narrative. Northrop Frye notes the reactionary/revolutionary dynamic at the heart of the romance: "In every

age the ruling social or intellectual class tends to project its ideals in some form of romance, where the virtuous heroes and beautiful heroines represent the ideals and the villains the threats to their ascendancy. [...] Yet there is a genuinely “proletarian” element in romance too which is never satisfied with its various incarnations, and in fact the incarnations themselves indicate that no matter how great a change may take place in society, romance will turn up again, as hungry as ever, looking for new hopes and desires to feed on” (Frye 186). Popular culture texts help to determine what the value hierarchies of a society are, and can be agents of change, as the example of the Fantasy genre makes clear. In fact, J.R.R. Tolkien declares just such a border-crossing and reality-construct-crossing exploration of wishes and fears to be a central aspect of Fantasy.

#### 1.2.4. Conclusion

In conclusion, the current paradigm of literary criticism, *kulturwissenschaftliche Literaturwissenschaft*, i.e. cultural studies, allows us to compare the texts of Howard and Jünger not only from a standpoint of sociological relevance, but as literature. Key to seeing the texts of both men as literature is the aesthetic experience of fictional realities those texts offer while re-ordering the value hierarchies of their respective cultures. It is worthwhile to recall Grabes’ statement about this: „Insofern nämlich literarische Texte die konkrete Imaginierung fiktionaler ‚Welten‘ (bzw. bestimmter Arten des Weltverhaltens) suggerieren, implizieren auch sie ganz bestimmte Werthierarchien, die darüber hinaus durch die ‚Sympathie-lenkung‘ des Lesers noch zusätzlich bewertet werden. Und das Verhältnis solcher fiktionalen Werthierarchien zu jener Werthierarchie, die sich in den außerliterarischen Diskursen der Kultur manifestiert, in der die jeweiligen literarischen Texte entstanden sind oder besonders geschätzt werden, ist für den Literaturwissenschaftler wie den Kulturwissenschaftler gleichermaßen wichtig, weil es über die jeweilige Funktion von Literatur innerhalb der Gesamtkultur Aufschluß gibt“ (Grabes 2004a: 91-92). Literary texts ‘imagine’ fictional worlds and specific ways of perceiving that imply value hierarchies that are insisted upon by steering the sympathies of the reader. The relationship between such fictional value hierarchies and those manifesting in non-literary discourses of the culture within which the literary text was authored is important for both the social scientist and the literary critic because this relationship gives us

insight into the function of literature within a culture. It is this that a comparative analysis of Howard's and Jünger's texts can accomplish.

### **I.3. A Methodology for Comparing Robert E. Howard and Ernst Jünger**

Now that we have established that a comparative literary analysis of the texts of Howard and Jünger rests on a solid foundation, we must establish the methodology for that comparison. Establishing such a methodology does present certain difficulties, but there are guidelines that can be followed. The ordering dynamic of the narrative impulse itself forms the basis of the methodology and suggests a throughline whereby differing stages of narrative organization of the texts in question will be considered. The comparative project as a whole will be structured according to Fredric Jameson's exhortation to "Always historicize!" Finally, the theory and theorists whose work informs this methodology must be considered in detail.

#### **I.3.1. Difficulties in Establishing A Methodology**

The difficulties in establishing a methodology for a comparison of the texts of Howard and Jünger are the same difficulties facing any project of literary criticism. There is little agreement among the representatives of different literary theories, and the lack of theoretical cohesion is a major obstacle to overcome in establishing a methodology. It must be noted that there have been many attempts to ground the act of literary interpretation on the relationship between text and context, and if no one theory has given either a satisfactory account of this relationship or a solid and accepted basis for literary interpretation (as Winfried Fluck notes when he writes, „Die Literaturwissenschaft ist die Wissenschaft von der Interpretation literarischer Texte, aber offensichtlich können sich ihre Vertreter niemals über die Interpretation auch nur eines einzigen literarischen Textes einigen“ (Fluck 29)) – the logical conclusion is to combine ideas and theories, particularly on the text-context relationship, to build a multi-faceted and comprehensive model that can offer guidelines for interpreting texts and the contexts of writing. Such an eclectic approach is precisely what Fredric Jameson advocates.

### I.3.2. Guidelines for Establishing A Methodology

The establishment of an eclectic methodology can be accomplished by following guidelines that have always guided the literary critic. In the 1930s, Jolles defined literary criticism as follows:

Die Literaturwissenschaft ist dreifach gerichtet. In einer etwas abgegriffenen Terminologie heißt das: sie besitzt eine ästhetische, eine historische und eine morphologische Aufgabe. Wollen wir uns deutlicher ausdrücken, so sagen wir: die Literaturwissenschaft versucht eine literarische Erscheinung ihrer Schönheit, ihrem Sinn und ihrer Gestalt nach zu deuten. (Jolles 1)

There is a tri-partite aim inherent in literary criticism: to study and understand the aesthetic, the historical, and the morphological. In other words, literary criticism attempts to explain the beauty, the meaning, and the form of any given literary text.

An influential text in the current cultural studies paradigm of literary criticism demonstrates the continuing validity of this tri-partite approach. Hubert Zapf's article, „Das Funktionsmodell der Literatur als kultureller Ökologie: Imaginative Texte im Spannungsfeld von Dekonstruktion und Regeneration“ supports the criticism of the self-referential theoretical constructs of post-modern literary criticism, and yet points out the danger of any subsequent anti-theory attitude that fails to see texts as aesthetic-cultural sign systems: „Die berechtigte Kritik an den selbstreferentiellen Theoriegebäuden der Postmoderne darf nicht wie in manchen, vor allem früheren Positionen des Ecocriticism zu einer theoriefeindlichen Haltung führen [...] der deutlich hinter den Reflexionsstand der neueren Literaturtheorie zurückfällt und die medialen Besonderheiten der Texte als ästhetisch-kultureller Zeichensysteme nicht angemessen berücksichtigt“ (Zapf 58). By using the term “aesthetic-cultural sign system” Zapf is paraphrasing Jolles' contention that literary criticism is concerned with the beauty (aesthetic) of a literary text, its (cultural) meaning, and its form (sign system).

Following this basic critical logic, we must remember that an aesthetic artefact cannot be divorced from the culture within which it appears (Boetius 114). To account for this relationship we must, as Fluck argues, ground our interpretation of a text's cultural function within a theory of cultural history: „Auch ein funktionsgeschichtlicher Ansatz, der von einer Theorie der ästhetischen Erfahrung ausgeht, ist

somit abhängig von einem umfassenderen kulturgeschichtlichen Erklärungsmodell“ (Fluck 45-46). The theory that the function of a text occurs through the aesthetic experience that it offers is dependent on an all-embracing cultural-historical interpretive method. In the case of a methodology for a comparative study of the texts of Howard and Jünger, Lethen's *Verhaltenslehre der Kälte* and Schivelbusch's *Kultur der Niederlage* provide the socio-historical backing for a political unconscious analysis.

### I.3.3. Establishing the Methodology

The methodology is ultimately based on the contention that just about every human utterance implies a narrative. Or, to put it another way, every utterance is an expression of part of a narrative. All utterances are embedded in several narratives simultaneously, from national meta-narratives, to small group narratives, to personal narratives. Humans find themselves as agents within these narratives, and humans derive meaning through narrative. All these narratives have form. These forms, as Northrop Frye argues, are archetypal in origin, that is, they are at the core of human consciousness. Following from this, this methodology suggests that the form of complex utterances like textual narratives consists of several layers of form.

This first layer of form is the archetypal, the mythic. As a writer attempts to respond and contribute to a multiplicity of social discourses, the writer's textual utterance begins to take elemental shape as one of four basic patterns that Frye has identified as *mythoi*: comedy, romance, tragedy and irony/satire. Having broadly conceived of the textual utterance – whether consciously or unconsciously – in terms of one of these basic patterns, the writer then adopts a mode of writing.

This mode of writing is the second layer of form. Different literary critics, including Frye, have suggested a variety of modes that the writer can adopt to further shape the narrative. A mode is an attitude, a perspective on reality, that the writer adopts. Of interest in this dissertation are two modes (*Schreibweise*) of writing discussed by Renate Lachmann, the *Phantastik* and the *Neophantastik*. These modes refine the basic archetypal pattern that the narrative began as.

A third layer of form is the literary genre. At this stage the writer, who has a basic archetypal pattern which s/he wants to express through

a particular mode or attitude, now consciously adopts the conventions of a literary genre, and thus brings his or her textual utterance to a final narrative form that speaks to the expectations the reader has of a specific genre. In this dissertation we will be particularly interested in the genres of fantasy and science fiction, but the political essay, the war memoir, and various other recognized literary genres will be considered.

In terms of analysis, these different layers of narrative form not only serve to provide an aesthetic experience to the reader, but they also yield the cultural meaning of the text. The tri-partite aim of literary criticism is achieved through the idea that form is ideology: in this conception the cultural and the morphological aims are linked; the third aim, the aesthetic, is bound up with the experience that this ideologically-charged form provides.

The political unconscious of a text can particularly be apprehended through the archetypal base form. It is this base form that the writer selects – or is driven to select by the discourses and national meta-narratives that shape the writer’s reality – in an instinctive attempt to textually express and reconcile the social contradictions of his or her time. This archetypal narrative is fleshed out and given narrative direction by ideologemes that form the core of these social contradictions.

The attitude that the writer brings to this basic form, the mode that she or he chooses to express that basic form, represents a further level of meaning, one that helps to reveal the writer’s position and stance in the on-going cultural revolution.

The genre that the writer chooses completes this picture of the text’s function in the on-going cultural revolution, for the very concept of genre conventions implies a community that connects the writer and the reader. The genre expectations give the writer and reader a cultural common ground, and the text’s faithfulness or degree of unfaithfulness to differing genre conventions is ultimately revelatory of the cultural changes that the community connecting the writer and reader is going through.

Such a focus on the differing layers of form alone cannot, ultimately, explain the cultural meaning of that morphology and that aesthetic experience. To fully understand a textual utterance Fredric Jameson exhorts us to “Always historicize!” Therefore, the methodology will investigate the texts in question chronologically. Such a chronological approach will allow us to see the texts in their synchronic



relationship to the discourses and narratives around them, and will allow us to see the diachronic development of those discourses and narratives, and, particularly, the textual utterances of Howard and Jünger in relationship to those developments.

In order to achieve this synchronic and diachronic analysis, it is necessary to discuss textual utterances besides those of Howard and Jünger. These other texts attain their relevance in a comparative analysis of Howard and Jünger because they are utterances in the same discourses and national meta-narratives that Howard and Jünger react and contribute to, and in some cases are texts that Howard and Jünger were directly affected by. This collection of relevant texts (by no means complete) is known as a cultural archive, and their selection was aided by the cultural-historical studies guiding this dissertation, i.e., those of Lethen and Schivelbusch.

Before we can apply this methodology to the comparative analysis of the texts of Howard and Jünger and their cultural archive, it is necessary to discuss the theories and theorists who contributed to this methodology.

## II. Applying the Cultural Studies Paradigm to the Works of Howard and Jünger

Before discussing the theories and theorists who contributed to this methodology, it is necessary to discuss the theoretical issues out of which this methodology evolves. A pervasive influence on this methodology is the current *kulturwissenschaftliche Literaturwissenschaft* (cultural studies) paradigm, which is itself the outcome of an historical development that parallels the texts of Howard and Jünger.

The discussion of the aesthetic experience and the philosophical implications arising from a comparison of the texts of Howard and Jünger represents the traditional perspective of the humanities and the arts; while respecting this tradition, this dissertation also shows the influence of the current social science perspective in the weight it gives to economic, political and psychological aspects. The basic chronological form of the methodology of this dissertation represents the perspective of a discipline which has itself long been moving from being a philosophical discipline to one that can be counted among the social sciences: history.

The paradigm shift to a social science model of literary criticism, with history playing a central role, was momentous and had far-reaching implications. Nünning and Sommer lay out the controversy surrounding *kulturwissenschaftliche Literaturwissenschaft* as follows: „Während die einen den Paradigmenwechsel von den humanistisch geprägten Geisteswissenschaften hin zu theoretische und methodisch ‚runderneuerten‘ Kulturwissenschaften euphorisch begrüßen, warnen die anderen vor dem Ausverkauf literaturwissenschaftlicher Kompetenzen sowie dem befürchteten Verlust disziplinärer Traditionen und Untersuchungsgegenstände“ (Nünning and Sommer 9). There were those who celebrated this paradigm shift, and others, like Fowler, who warned of the selling-out of literary critical competencies and the loss of tradition and subject matter in the discipline. Nünning and Sommer go on to define this paradigm shift in literary criticism, from a perspective based in the humanities and the arts to a perspective grounded in the social sciences, as follows: „Dieser transdisziplinäre, prozeßhafte und diskursive Charakter [...] ist das eigentlich Innovative an der kulturwissenschaftlich orientierten Auseinandersetzung mit Literatur. Die kulturwissenschaftliche Literaturwissenschaft ist ein Ergebnis der seit

den 1980er Jahren zunehmend liberalisierten und pluralisierten Theorie-  
debatten in den Geistes- und Gesellschaftswissenschaften und zugleich  
eine dem (pragmatische) Geist ihrer Zeit entsprechende  
Begleiterscheinung der fortschreitenden Annäherung von  
Wissenskulturen“ (Nünning/Sommer 10-11). The trans-  
disciplinary, process-oriented and discursive character of the new  
paradigm of literary criticism is the essence of the innovation offered by  
the social science approach to literature. This *kulturwissenschaftliche  
Literaturwissenschaft* is the end-result of the increasingly liberalistic and  
pluralistic theory debates in the humanities, arts and social sciences, and  
is simultaneously a manifestation of the on-going rapprochement of  
various knowledge-cultures. This trans-disciplinary interconnection of  
scholars was a way of attempting to prevent any future isolation and  
suppression of scholarship, such as occurred in Germany during the Nazi  
regime.

Thus, the *kulturwissenschaftliche Literaturwissenschaft* paradigm shift  
was part of an international meta-narrative that recognized that  
scholarship had a social responsibility, and that scholars should not hide  
within their disciplines when the society around them was faced with  
overt oppression as in Nazi Germany, or with less overt forms of  
hegemonic control as in other states. In the 1930s and 1940s – with  
theories Rusterholz identifies as „Vorstufen“ (Rusterholz 344) – and into  
the 1950s, *Werkimmanent Kritik* dominated in Germany. One of its  
foremost practitioners, Staiger, argued in „Die Kunst der Interpretation“,  
„Das Wort soll aus dem Wort verstanden werden“, which expressed his  
position: „Sie setzt einen unbeschränkten Glauben an die Freiheit des  
Menschen und des Dichters voraus, dessen Werk sich absolut frei und  
nicht im dialektischen Spiel von individueller Schöpfung und  
historischem Gattungszwang entfaltet, von anderen Zwängen gar nicht  
zu reden“ (Rusterholz 348). Texts were to be understood without  
recourse to information outside the text itself. *Werkimmanent Kritik* had  
its parallels in New Criticism in the U.S., *Explication de texte* in France, and  
Russian Formalism. All these theories had Staiger’s attitude in common,  
and what Bressler writes of New Criticism in the U.S. applies to the  
situation in Germany, France and Russia as well: “Because they concern  
themselves primarily with an examination of the work itself and not its  
historical context or biographical elements, the New Critics belong to a  
broad classification of literary criticism called **formalism**” (Bressler 39);  
and, “trying to place a poem in its social or political context will tell us

much social or political history about the time when the poem was authored; although such information may indeed help in understanding the poem, its real meaning cannot reside in this extrinsic or outside-the-text information” (Bressler 42). Such positions were challenged and largely overthrown with the cultural studies paradigm shift of the 1960s, precisely because literary theory’s previously de-politicized and de-contextualized reality offered no resistance to totalitarianism and world war. Thus, in Germany, for example, we can interpret „...die Wendung der Germanistik zur Werkimmanenten »Methode« als Flucht aus den ideologischen Verstrickungen des Nationalsozialismus, als bequemes Ausweichen vor der unbewältigten Vergangenheit“ (Rusterholz 346). In other words, the *Vorstufen* or forerunner theories of *Werkimmanente Kritik* were too easily appropriated by the NS regime, or were too socially and politically ineffective to offer resistance, and the theorists involved preferred to head further into a completely de-politicized and de-historicized realm after 1945 than address the failures of literary criticism in the 1930s and 1940s. In stark contrast, the current cultural studies paradigm argues as, for example, Foucault does, that it is the culture itself that authors texts. The variation in value hierarchies evident in these texts results from the polyphonic fact of culture: there are many voices, but the many are dominated by hegemonic voices and value hierarchies.

A text’s author, then, becomes the central argument for the validity of a social science approach. Goldmann’s 1969 summation of the debate over the author term reflects the general consensus that if a text is truly authored by a multitude of social voices and forces, then society should be the centre of any textual criticism. Goldmann notes, „Im Lichte der zeitgenössischen Humanwissenschaften erscheint die Idee eines Individuums als des letzten Autors eines Textes, besonders eines wichtigen und bedeutsamen Textes immer unhaltbarer. Seit einigen Jahren hat eine Anzahl von konkreten Analysen tatsächlich gezeigt, dass man, ohne das Subjekt oder den Menschen zu negieren, gehalten ist, das individuelle Subjekt durch ein kollektives oder transindividuelles Subjekt zu ersetzen“ (Goldmann in Foucault 2001: 1032). This argument that the author of a text is a collective, or transindividual, manifestation which is ‘channeled’ through a writer, underscores the primacy of the social science paradigm in literary criticism, but has also been misunderstood. Foucault himself did not deny the very existence of the traditionally-conceived author:

Außerdem: ich habe nicht gesagt, dass der Autor nicht

existierte. Ich habe es nicht gesagt, und ich bin erstaunt, dass meine Rede zu einem solchen Widersinn geführt haben sollte. Kommen wir noch einmal ein wenig darauf zurück.

Ich habe von einer bestimmten Thematik gesprochen, auf die man sowohl den Werken wie in der Kritik trifft, und die, wenn Sie so wollen, darin besteht: Der Autor soll zugunsten von spezifischen Formen des Diskurses zurücktreten oder soll beiseite geschoben werden. Vor diesem Hintergrund lautete die Frage, die ich mir stellte: Welche Entdeckung ermöglicht uns diese Regel des Verschwindens des Schriftstellers oder des Autors? Sie ermöglicht uns die Entdeckung des Spiels der Autor-Funktion. (Foucault 2001: 1037)

Foucault specifies that the traditional individual writer-author indeed exists, but that the social science approach allows one to push the traditionally sacrosanct writer-author aside, so that one can observe the various social discourses at work in a text more clearly. What such a perspective allows is an investigation of the author-function itself. This author-function behind society's traditional view of a particular writer as the author of a particular text allows us to see how various social voices and discourses crystallize in the text of a particular writer. As noted above, this 'crystallization' occurs in three layers of form, and each of these layers, the mythic, the modal perspective, and the literary genre are themselves manifestations of social phenomena.

Moreover, the cultural studies paradigm of literary criticism is particularly apt for a study, like this one, that includes the work of a writer of popular fiction. One can draw this conclusion when one considers Culler's definition of the cultural studies paradigm:

Cultural studies dwells in the tension between the analyst's desire to analyse culture as a set of codes and practices that alienates people from their interests and creates the desires that they come to have and, on the other hand, the analyst's wish to find in popular culture an authentic expression of value. One solution is to show that people are able to use the cultural materials foisted upon them by capitalism and its media industries to make a culture of their own. Popular culture is made from mass culture. Popular culture is made from cultural resources that are opposed to it and thus is a culture of struggle, a culture whose creativity

consists in using the products of mass culture. (Culler 45)

In other words, the attempt to bring Howard's texts into a critical literary context is an attempt to appropriate a product of mass culture as an expression of popular culture's struggle with, and against, the current capitalist mode of production. This appropriation occurs while acknowledging the contradiction inherent in Howard's work, wherein the escapism and vicarious experiences his texts offer can lead to a state of *Einverständnis* that exists side-by-side with an apprehension that the value hierarchies those texts present, in terms of the discourses of class, race and the barbarian, re-create and further stimulate cultural change.

In order to speak about cultural change within the cultural studies paradigm, we logically need a definition of culture itself. Common to cultural studies conceptions of culture is a definition of culture as a heterogeneous space occupied by a multiplicity of forces and positions in ideological and political conflict (Grabes 2004b:131). Grabes comments that „Am fruchtbarsten erscheint mir die Konzeption von Kultur als ein äußerst komplexes, mythenähnliches Artefakt, ein konkurrierende Welt- und Menschenbilder konstituierendes und dominante, emergente wie residuale Bewertungshierarchien implizierendes Ensemble von Signifikaten, das nur von außen, über die produzierten Signifikanten zugänglich ist“ (Grabes 2004b: 132). This conception of culture as a myth-like artefact which is an ensemble of signifieds representing dominant, emergent and residual value hierarchies that project competing views of the world and of humanity – but which is only accessible or perceptible through the signifiers that this ensemble called culture produces – reveals the semiotic, meaning-oriented and constructivist nature of this conception of culture. „Demzufolge wird Kultur als den von Menschen erzeugte Gesamtkomplex von Vorstellungen, Denkformen, Empfindungsweisen, Werten und Bedeutungen aufgefaßt, der sich in Symbolsystemen materialisiert“ (Nünning and Sommer 18). Culture, conceived as a total complex of preconceptions, thought-forms, ways of feeling, values and meanings, materializes in symbol systems.

It is these symbol systems – these signifiers – that reveal the competing value hierarchies extant in a culture; further, the specific symbol systems of literature, history, myth, and religion – and everyday interdiscursive practice – arise from a common source, namely the symbolic resources of collective consciousness/collective memory (Erll 121). An example of how a symbol system – representing specific value hierarchies – arises from collective consciousness and finds cultural

expression is the inherited codes that connect works in a specific genre of literature (Fowler 42). In other words, the cultural phenomenon of a genre of literature is an inherited symbol system (or a set of signifiers or codes) which represents a specific set of value hierarchies.

Thus the focus of *kulturwissenschaftliche Literaturwissenschaft* is to discover, through an awareness of value hierarchies, how culture changes and how texts contribute to this change. As Gymnich and Nünning point out, „Literatur ist nicht bloß Zeugnis für etwas, sondern stellt eine aktive, Antwort' auf sich wandelnde kulturelle Kontexte dar“ (Gymnich and Nünning 2005b: 13); an active answer to changing cultural contexts implies that literature has a role in those changes. Grabes explains literature's role when he writes, „Dabei geht es um die Ermittlung rekurrenter Wertvorstellungen in den vielen Subcodes einer Gesamtkultur, die über die Konstitution von Werthierarchien das Denken, Fühlen und Verhalten steuern“ (Grabes 2004a: 91). In other words, the many codes existing in a culture – including those making up a literary genre, to take Fowler's example – combine, interact and are disseminated in such a way as to constitute value hierarchies that steer thinking, feeling and acting within a culture. The individual text can re-order those value hierarchies; this is accomplished in part by selectively employing codes and subcodes (i.e. the choice of one genre over another, the choice of subject matter, the choice of theme, and so on), each choice combining specific codes and sub-codes to establish value hierarchies derived from the culture, but uniquely re-configured and presented within the literary text. Since value hierarchies steer thinking, feeling and acting – and since texts suggest, and often instigate changes in the cultural value hierarchies by their configuration of value hierarchies – literary texts can change the culture as a whole. This textual reconfiguration and representation of value hierarchies through the form and the content of a text (form informing content and content informing form, as we shall see) is an expression of ideology.

What this ideological conception of culture suggests, as praxis, is a study of the cultural signs occurring in texts. The focus on this aspect of the social science paradigm shift in literary criticism is termed cultural semiotics. The importance, within such a semiotically-inspired approach, of linguistic and extra-linguistic codes cannot be understated, and Grabes notes that Roland Barthes interpreted these „Codes als Manifestationen von Bewertungshierarchien“ (Grabes 2004a: 91). (Of parenthetical significance here is the fact that Barthes called these codes “myths”.)

Kristeva, in fact, speaks of text as a manifestation of a multiplicity of semiotic codes. Whereas Saussurean semiotics and later developments in semiotics put emphasis – for example in a linguistic analysis – on the most minimal meaningful units of language, i.e. morphemes, or on the mental representation of sounds, i.e. phonemes, or on applying a semiotic approach more generally to look for the smallest meaningful units in what is being discussed, i.e. semes, this dissertation, and its concern with revealing the ideology of the texts analyzed, will focus on the smallest core of ideology, namely ideologemes.

## **II.1. Marxism: Materialism and History**

Having firmly situated this methodology, with its focus on ideology, in the current cultural studies paradigm of literary criticism, it is necessary to outline the specific principal theoretical underpinnings of this dissertation. These begin with Marxism, include the psychological and anthropological work of Jung and Lévi-Strauss which influenced Frye, and, because Frye, Jung and Lévi-Strauss all influenced Jameson, focusses on Jameson's theory of the political unconscious. This social science perspective is then twinned with the critical perspectives arising from the work of Propp, Jolles, Lachmann and Tolkien.

The decision to use Marxism as a theoretical basis for this dissertation's methodology is in keeping with the current *kulturwissenschaftliche Literaturwissenschaft*, particularly because of its Hegelian roots. While Marx and later Marxists rejected the absolute Idea behind Hegel's philosophy („Alles was ist, ist vernünftig!“ Hegel wrote (Lambert/Olschewski 44)), Hegel's dialectical method was not only in agreement with Darwin's discoveries, but is still the dominant paradigm for analyzing phenomena in a variety of disciplines: „Hegels Dialektik faßt die Welt und das Geschehen nicht als fertige Einheiten, sondern als ununterbrochene Prozesse, in denen alles, Wirklichkeit und Gedanke, der ständigen Veränderung des Werdens und Vergehens unterworfen ist“ (Lambert/Olschewski 44). The world and all things that occur in the world are not finished products, but are processes whereby both reality and the thought that seeks to understand it are subject to the constant change of being and passing away. The social sciences are grounded in such a perspective, and the current paradigm in literary criticism is reflected in such manifestations as eco-criticism, where thinkers like Zapf liken society and literature to an ever-changing ecosystem. This



“organic” functioning of literature in culture leads Zapf to see in literature – in his article „Literatur als kulturelle Ökologie“ – an ecological cultural-evolutionary function: „Eine zweite Prämisse ist die Akzeptanz der *Evolution* als einer nicht nur natürlichen, sondern auch kulturellen Gegebenheit, und damit die Sicht der Realität nicht als statischer Größe, sondern als ständig sich verändernder und sich selbst transformierender *Prozess*“ (Zapf 60). This statement hearkens back to Hegel, and while its conclusion is already implicit in the cultural studies paradigm, it was perhaps necessary for Zapf to underline that evolution does not only characterize the natural world, but also our cultural world as well, with literature playing a key role in that cultural evolution.

Hegel’s dialectics became the core of Marx’s (and thus Marxism’s) analytical method. The main goal of this Marxist usage of the dialectic Kolakowski lays out as follows: “The dialectic, in other words, enables us to discover the full extent of the potential consciousness of a particular class in particular historical conditions” (Kolakowski 327). The interest in class consciousness, and the concomitant imperative to act upon that consciousness, is what distinguished Marxism from purely academic or philosophical theories. It was, however, not the dialectic alone that gave Marxism its impetus, but also materialist philosophy. Materialism was a great influence on Marx, but he interpreted the materialism of his day as a product of, and a justification for, bourgeois society.

Taubert, in her analysis of Marx’ and Engels’ early work *Die heilige Familie*, explains at length the revolutionary force that Marxism was able to generate (or appropriate) by combining Hegelian dialectics stripped of the absolute idea, with materialism stripped of bourgeois political interests.

Die neue Qualität gegenüber der *Heiligen Familie* bestand vor allem darin, daß Marx den bisherigen Materialismus einschließlich Feuerbach an die Entstehung und Rechtfertigung der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft band. „Der Standpunkt des alten Materialismus ist die bürgerliche Gesellschaft, der Standpunkt des neuen die menschliche Gesellschaft oder die gesellschaftliche Menschheit“. Zweitens erkläre der alte Materialismus „die Sinnlichkeit nicht als *praktische*, menschlich-sinnliche Tätigkeit“, „die Wirklichkeit, Sinnlichkeit [...] nicht aber als *sinnlich menschliche Tätigkeit, Praxis*“, und Feuerbach vor allem „faßt die menschliche

Thätigkeit selbst nicht als *gegenständliche* Thätigkeit“, die die Veränderung der Natur zum Inhalt hat, sondern anerkannte nur das theoretische Verhalten als dem Wesen des Menschen adäquat. Marx dagegen bestimmte aus der Anerkennung der praktischen Tätigkeit der Menschen deren aktive Rolle bei der Veränderung der Umstände, bei der sie sich selbst verändern werden. Drittens deckte Marx einen Hauptmangel des Feuerbachschen Humanismus auf, der das Wesen des Menschen von der geschichtlichen Entwicklung abstrahiere und deshalb dieses Wesen als „Gattung“, als eine „die vielen Individuen *natürlich* verbindende Allgemeinheit“ definiere und nicht sehe, daß jedes Individuum „einer bestimmten Gesellschaftsform angehört“. Marx hielt dem entgegen, daß das „menschliche Wesen“ „das ensemble der gesellschaftlichen Verhältnisse“ sei. Viertens entwickelte Marx daraus Gedanken über die „*revolutionaire Praxis*“, über ihre Bedeutung in der geschichtlichen Entwicklung und für den Erkenntnisprozeß. (Taubert 27-28).

What made *Die heilige Familie* remarkable, as Taubert points out, was that Marx was able to break with a philosophical materialism whose basis was bourgeois society and posit a new materialism founded on human society/social humanity. Marx, in contrast to Feuerbach, insisted on the practical, nature-changing imperative of the sensual aspect of materialism; he underlined how practical sensual activity by humans could change circumstances and how these changing circumstances would in turn change humanity as well. Marx also corrected a major flaw in Feuerbach's humanistic approach whereby the nature of humanity was abstracted from humanity's historical development. Where Feuerbach wrote of individuals being naturally bound by a common reality as humans, Marx insisted that every individual was bound to a particular social form. In fact, Marx insisted – foreshadowing the current approach to the author-function – that each person was an ensemble of social relationships. Finally, Marx insisted on revolutionary practice arising from a class consciousness of the historical development of humanity.

These central discoveries by Marx and Engels – the properly Marxist interpretation of history and society – , regardless of their handling by the subsequent 150 years of academics and politicians, were major discursive currents in the world of the 1920s, 30s and 40s. So much so that, in Germany, it was a cornerstone of this discourse to claim

that the working class and Marxism were inextricably entwined. One, in fact, existed because of the other, as *Die Rote Fabne* insisted defiantly on February 26-27, 1933, in the face of the Nazi seizure of power: „Die Herren da oben verkünden als ihr Ziel die Ausrottung des Marxismus. Da müßten sie zuerst die gesamte Arbeiterklasse ausrotten“ („Es lebe der Kommunismus“: 1). This perception of Marxism’s intimate connection with the working class prompted Hitler and the Nazis to make a cornerstone of the Nazi project the need to disassociate the working class from Marxism and to substitute National Socialism in its place. This struggle was the epicentre of the age, defining both the internal dynamic of Germany and then of the world as this struggle spilled out into World War II. The entry of the Red Army into Germany in 1945 assured that the association of the working class with Marxism would continue into the Cold War.

The Marxist conception of human culture rooted in dialectical materialism finds definite expression in Marx’s theory that human history can be broken down into a sequence of modes of production – from hunter-gather “primitive communism”, to kin-based tribal societies, to slave-holding, to feudalism and finally to capitalism. This basic schema was developed – and critiqued – by subsequent generations of Marxists, particularly in light of the charge that this Marxist conception of culture was deterministic and implied that culture was merely a function of economics: i.e. that one’s social and economic class determined one’s cultural expression. Kolakowski, in his critical discussion of prominent Marxist thinkers Lucien Goldmann and Georg Lukács, explains how this charge is not accurate:

However, the explanation of cultural phenomena by class origin does not mean ‘reducing’ culture to economic behaviour. On this point, too, Goldmann agrees with Lukács. Human communities are integral wholes, and only by abstraction do we distinguish different ‘factors’ and spheres of life. There is not really any separate history of economics, politics, religion, philosophy, or literature: there is a single concrete historical process, manifesting itself in various forms of behaviour. The true subject of humanistic study is not a cause-and-effect relation between economics and culture. The ‘primacy’ of economics in Marx’s theory is not a law of history; it merely reflects the fact that human beings through the ages have had to devote most of their time to satisfying

elementary material needs. [...] Hence cultural activities are neither mere 'effects' or by-products of economic history, nor are they simply means of pursuing other interests and aspirations which, supposedly, are the only real ones. On the contrary, class structures may be studied through their expression in literature or philosophy. (Kolakowski 327-328).

This statement reaffirms what thinkers like Grabes have noted, mainly that the current *kulturwissenschaftliche Literaturwissenschaft* received its impetus from such Marxist thought. Fredric Jameson will conclude from this that Marxism is compatible with all subsequent theoretical approaches to literature, for Marxism, in a sense, made all those that followed possible. Jameson argues, "Marxism is here conceived as that "untranscendable horizon" that subsumes such apparently antagonistic or incommensurable critical operations, assigning them an undoubted sectoral validity within itself, and thus at once cancelling and preserving them" (Jameson 1994: 10). While this may smack of partisanship, the methodology of this dissertation attempts – following Jameson's own example of incorporating the work of Frye, Jung and Lévi-Strauss – to establish precisely this kind of eclectic theoretical structure founded on some basic Marxist positions.

While Jameson at one points insists on a knowledge of Marxist critical insights as a semantic precondition for the ability to intelligibly analyze texts, he does acknowledge that this insistence "needs a certain specification: in particular we will suggest that such semantic enrichment and enlargement of the inert givens and materials of a particular text must take place within three concentric frameworks, which mark a widening out of the sense of the social ground of a text through the notions, first, of political history, in the narrow sense of punctual events and a chroniclelike sequence of happenings in time; then of society, in the now already less diachronic and time-bound sense of a constitutive tension and struggle between social classes; and, ultimately, of history now conceived in its vastest sense of the sequence of modes of production and the succession and destiny of the various human social formations, from prehistoric life to whatever far future history has in store for us" (Jameson 1994: 75). While one might feel that Jameson's use of the term 'inert' is unfortunate in the light of Zapf's idea of literature as part of a constantly developing and changing cultural ecology, the analytical process of three horizons of reading that Jameson suggests for textual analysis is, in practice, a cultural studies and cultural

semiotic approach. Jameson's concept of these three horizons of reading (this model itself eclectically adapted from medieval Christian hermeneutics) is the foundation of the methodology of this dissertation. This methodology ultimately attempts to uncover the 'political unconscious' of the texts of Howard and Jünger to discover how their aesthetic appeal is linked to their ideological nature.

The applicability of a methodology of the political unconscious that makes use of an eclectic Marxist-inspired approach incorporating other theories that have flourished in the current cultural studies paradigm of literary criticism becomes evident when one considers Umberto Eco's definition of ideology: "But ideology is a partial and disconnected world vision; by disregarding the multiple interconnections of the semantic universe, it also conceals the pragmatic reasons for which certain signs (with all their various interpretations) were produced. This oblivion produces a false conscience" (Eco 1979: 297). In other words, ideology is inherent in all texts (and all thinking), because it is simply impossible to see all the interconnections of what Eco calls the semantic universe. Texts exhibit a partial and disconnected world vision because of their very limitations; even if the author of a text is a unique crystallization of social voices and discourses, even these voices and discourses cannot represent the entire semantic universe. This 'false conscience' is unavoidable because even if one is part of the whole, as Nietzsche argues, one cannot conceive of, or speak for, or represent the conscience of the whole. Beyond this basic limitation that ideology is unavoidable, ideology can also be consciously chosen – and unconsciously chosen. Eco explains the presence of both conscious and unconscious ideology in texts as follows: .

Ideology as conscious code-switching<sup>6</sup> is what Engels called "a process that the so-called thinker accomplishes consciously but with false conscience. The true moving forces that determine him remain unknown (otherwise it will not be an ideological process)" (*Letter to Mehring*). Ideology as unconscious code-switching is described by Jaspers as "the complex of thoughts and representations appearing as an Absolute Truth to the thinking subject for the interpretation

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<sup>6</sup> "The ideological discourse endeavors to conceal (...) various options, and must therefore involve a rhetorical labor of code shifting and overcoding" (Eco 1979: 297). Codes can be concealed deliberately or unconsciously (Eco 1979: 295-296).

of the world ... producing a self-deception, a concealment, an escape (from reality)” (*Die geistische Situation der Zeit*). On the other hand the Marxist ‘positive’ sense of ‘ideology’ as an intellectual and political ‘weapon’ serving the social purpose of active modification of the world does not contradict the preceding negative definition; in this sense an ideology is taken without denying its one-sidedness and without concealing what it refuses; except that a previous system of premises has clarified what one wants to get and what one prefers, on the basis of a given theory of society and of material needs. (Eco 1979: 312)

What can be interpreted as a political leaning or as an archetypal expression of collective consciousness can also be explained as a transmission of codes: a transmission which is necessarily limited, thus a false conscience, thus necessarily favouring some codes over others. This favouring creates de facto hierarchies of values. All this is ideology; what is particularly fascinating about **unconscious** code-switching – i.e. the political unconscious – is that an analysis revealing this sort of false conscience offers an insight into what discourses and what archetypes were so prevalent that it was seemingly impossible for a given writer (or a given cultural phenomenon) to not reference them, or not incorporate them into a given text. It is in this sense that discourses can be seen to ‘author’ texts, and that individuals will necessarily come forth to allow these discourses to find expression. Equally fascinating in terms of **conscious** code-switching is the realization that certain writers, individuals, social institutions and cultural phenomena are cognizant of the fact that denying or suppressing certain codes in their social and cultural expressions will alter the flow of discourse and have an impact on unconscious code switching by others.

Uncovering these ultimately ideological processes – whether through unconscious code-switching or conscious code-switching – and how they manifest in texts is the goal of Jameson’s Marxist political unconscious method of analysis. Jameson expands the traditional Marxist premises – the previously cited semantic preconditions – by incorporating Frye’s archetypal narrative theory into his own theory, unconcerned with the ahistorical implications of the Jungian psychology Frye is drawing from. The result is that the narrative pattern is not only proof of Jameson’s dictum that form is content – in other words, ideology – but that the textual manifestation of such an archetypal

pattern, ideological as it already is, is an interdiscursive phenomenon linking the text to other “equivalent” texts in the cultural archive. Furthermore, this archetypal framework becomes a unique text not only due to its interdiscursive referencing and influences, but also due to the literary techniques that flesh out its skeleton with plot and characterization informed by specific ideologemes and shaped by further interdiscursive literary elements like the motifs that generate the plot and characters. In the present case it will be argued that the motifs of Africa as the land of primal freedom, the freeing of the slaves motif, the Cimmerian motif (a.k.a. the warrior of a doomed race motif), and the Ragnarok motif are interdiscursive elements already coded with ideology that play a major role in generating and shaping the plot and characters of Howard’s and Jünger’s works, while the interdiscursively introduced archetypal pattern of a particular text gives the ideological coding of the entire text a unique complexity.

Finally, with Marxism’s insistence on history as the untranscendable horizon of understanding, Marx’s conception of history as a sequence of modes of production required subsequent generations of Marxists to pay particular attention to the transition from one mode of production to the next. What became apparent in this development is that there is no definitive jump from one mode of production to another, and the problem of such “transitions” is a central concern of Marxist discussions of the modes of production (Jameson 1994: 96-97); this problem was addressed by realizing that differing economic impulses co-exist during these transitional periods, and Jameson termed these periods ‘cultural revolution’<sup>7</sup>. In order to theoretically reconcile the concept of ‘cultural revolution’ with the reality that vestiges of several modes of production can co-exist at a particular historical moment (i.e. a synchronic reality) while the historical conception is of a sequence of modes of production (i.e. the diachronic movement of time), cultural revolution must be understood as an on-going process intertwined with the unceasing economic activity of humanity. Therefore, the overtly “transitional” moments of cultural revolution are the coming to the surface of the on-going process of co-existing modes of production

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<sup>7</sup> “We will therefore suggest that this new and ultimate object may be designated, drawing on recent historical experience, as *cultural revolution*, that moment in which the coexistence of various modes of production becomes visibly antagonistic, their contradictions moving to the very center of political, social, and historical life” (Jameson 1994: 95)

(Jameson 1994: 97). In other words, cultural revolution is, in conception and in practice, another term for the cultural ecology that Zapf argues for, and is in keeping with the Hegelian concept at the core of the current social science paradigm: it is another term for our on-going cultural evolution.

Therefore, with the suitability of Marxism – particularly Jameson’s interpretation of Marxism – for a *kulturwissenschaftliche Literaturwissenschaft* methodology established, terms deriving from this Marxist discourse are appropriate when analyzing texts of a time when this discourse was prominent (i.e. the 1920s to the 1940s). Even if some would find the terms dated or even superseded today, the terms had cultural power at the time that Jünger and Howard wrote, and were widespread cultural indicators for cultural phenomena. Given this, the Marxist definitions of social classes are of interest to this dissertation, for they represent the ideologemes (i.e. classes in interaction represented or symbolized by characters and plot events) that help to further shape the basic archetypal narrative of a text into a true plot.

The bourgeoisie is defined by Marx as “An oppressed class under the sway of the feudal nobility, an armed and self-governing association in the mediaeval commune; here independent urban republic (as in Italy and Germany), there taxable ‘third estate’ of the monarchy (as in France), afterwards, in the period of manufacture proper, serving either the semi-feudal or the absolute monarchy as a counterpoise against the nobility, and, in fact, corner-stone of the great monarchies in general, the bourgeoisie has at last, since the establishment of Modern Industry and of the world-market, conquered for itself, in the modern representative State, exclusive political sway. The executive of the modern State is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie” (Marx 37). Such a definition of the bourgeoisie was far from being outdated during the 1920s, 30s, and 40s and was, in fact, generally agreed upon in the political discourse of the day, particularly on the extreme left and extreme right where such a definition constituted the *Feindbild* of their common political opponent.

The petty bourgeoisie is a key class in both Marxist conception and in this dissertation as Jünger and Howard can be argued to have petty bourgeois class origins. Marx and Engels suggest the basic social niche of the petty bourgeois as being that of “the shopkeeper” (Marx & Engels 44), and make this an explicit definition of the petty bourgeoisie (Marx & Engels 55). As far as traditional Marxism is concerned, this is a



particularly unstable social class to be born into, for “The lower strata of the middle class – the small tradespeople, shopkeepers, and retired tradesmen generally, the handicraftsmen and peasants – all these sink gradually into the proletariat, partly because their diminutive capital does not suffice for the scale on which Modern Industry is carried on, and is swamped in the competition with the large capitalists, partly because their specialised skill is rendered worthless by new methods of production” (Marx & Engels 42). This social instability in the face of capitalism, particularly during the Hyperinflation in Germany and the Great Depression throughout the Western world, is why handicraftsmen like writers champion the discourse of the proletariat. This is particularly evident in terms of Jünger’s life and career:

The lower middle class, the small manufacturer, the shopkeeper, the artisan, the peasant, all these fight against the bourgeoisie, to save from extinction their existence as fractions of the middle class. They are therefore not revolutionary, but conservative. Nay more, they are reactionary, for they try to roll back the wheel of history. If by chance they are revolutionary, they are so only in view of their impending transfer into the proletariat, they thus defend not their present, but their future interests, they desert their own standpoint to place themselves at that of the proletariat. (Marx & Engels 44)

Jünger, as a nationalist conservative who flirted with the proletarian revolution that was the National Socialist movement, is a textbook case of the social dynamic Marx and Engels describe. Howard’s symbolic championing of the barbarian also reveals conservative and pro-proletarian revolutionary impulses. Both men, clinging to a petty bourgeois existence as a particular type of craftsman, writers, do both textually and socially “desert their own standpoint to place themselves at that of the proletariat” precisely out of the fear that their petty bourgeois identities as writers is endangered by the economic crisis they are experiencing and which threatens their “impending transfer into the proletariat”. Marx and Engels make it clear that while the writer, or scribe, traditionally emerges from among the artisans and is thus also a niche within the petty bourgeoisie, the intellectuality associated with this skill opens the possibility of finally escaping the instability of the petty bourgeoisie and rising to the ranks of the bourgeoisie as an “ideologist” (Marx & Engels 44) or as “philosophers, would-be philosophers, and

beaux esprits” (Marx & Engels 56).

With the political discourse of the 1920s, 30s, and 40s so fixated on the proletariat, it is necessary to provide the Marxist definition of the proletariat. Marx and Engels insist that the proletariat is inextricably linked to the bourgeoisie and the capitalist mode of production: “In the proportion as the bourgeoisie, i.e., capital, is developed, in the same proportion is the proletariat, the modern working class, developed – a class of labourers, who live only so long as they find work, and who find work only so long as their labour increases capital. These labourers, who must sell themselves piecemeal, are a commodity, like every other article of commerce, and are consequently exposed to all the vicissitudes of competition, to the fluctuations of the market” (Marx & Engels 41). Interestingly, a theory that is predicated on this proletarian class and particularly on this class becoming class conscious and thus the major factor in moving the world from the capitalist mode of production to the socialist mode of production is vulnerable precisely because of such a predication.

The disappointment of generations of Marxists and revolutionaries in discovering that the working class, on average, has no interest in developing a class consciousness, but seems *Einverstanden* with its exploited social position and seems more interested in sports, sex, scandals and alcohol, forced later Marxists – significantly, with petty bourgeois origins – to abstract the concept of proletarian consciousness to a level not unlike that of Hegel’s absolute idea. Kolakowski criticizes just such a conception of proletarian consciousness stemming from Lukacs:

The ‘proletarian consciousness’ is not to be understood as that of the empirical working class, nor as a sum or average of individual consciousnesses. There must always be a gap between the empirical consciousness of actual workers and the ‘true’ class consciousness of the proletariat. The former will never quite catch up with the latter, yet it is this ‘true’ consciousness that is the motive power of history. (Kolakowski 280-281)

This is a valid criticism and it would suggest that the proletariat, and its historical significance, is a construct of the petty-bourgeoisie (including Marx and other intellectuals) that exists solely to prevent the petty bourgeois from descending to that very rung on the social ladder by claiming to be the voice of that ‘proletarian consciousness’.

Acknowledging the validity of such a criticism is not tantamount to negating all of the critical insights of Marxism, but does challenge its teleological claims, and insists instead on its existence as a textual ideologue and an influential meta-narrative woven through many discourses in the time of Jünger and Howard.

Finally, Marx and Engels define the lowest social class that they conceive of, the lumpenproletariat. They describe this class in the most negative manner; Engels speaks of them as: “The *lumpenproletariat*, this scum of depraved elements from all classes” (Engels 240). Marx and Engels insist on this negative assessment in *The Communist Manifesto*, where they speak of the lumpenproletariat as “The ‘dangerous class,’ the social scum, that passively rotting mass thrown off by the lowest layers of old society” (Marx & Engels 44). In *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* Marx is similarly vitriolic about this class but offers a more thorough definition: “Alongside decayed *ronés* with dubious means of subsistence and of dubious origin, alongside ruined and adventurous offshoots of the bourgeoisie, were vagabonds, discharged soldiers, discharged jailbirds, escaped galley slaves, swindlers, mountebanks, *lazzaroni*, pickpockets, tricksters, gamblers, *maqueareaus*, brothel keepers, porters, *literati*, organ-grinders, rag-pickers, knife grinders, tinkers, beggars – in short, the whole indefinite, disintegrated mass, thrown hither and thither, which the French term *la bohème*” (Marx 137). Marx and Engels’ vitriol against this class becomes understandable when one considers the social role that the lumpenproletariat plays. According to Marx, the lumpenproletariat is inherently reactionary, and just as the petty bourgeoisie tends to side with the proletariat in times of economic crisis (for strategic reasons of their own), the lumpenproletariat tends to allow itself to be bought or manipulated by the bourgeoisie in reaction against the revolutionary forces propelling the petty bourgeoisie-proletariat alignment.

With the Marxist conception of history and of the classes thus established, and with the realization that these concepts were cultural frames of reference throughout the Western world in the time of Howard and Jünger – even for those who were violently opposed to the conclusions and aims of Marxism – we can move on to other theoretical influences on Jameson’s Marxist political unconscious mode of literary analysis before considering Jameson’s work itself.

## II.2. Theories of the First Layer of Form

### II.2.1. Jung's Collective Unconscious

As Foucault and Stern argue, Marx and Freud were pivotal figures in the cultural evolution of the world because of the new discursive possibilities they opened up. The methodology of this dissertation reflects that fact by using both Marxist critical insights and Jung's expansion of Freud's theories to analyze literature. C.G. Jung's expansion of Freud's concept of the personal unconscious to include that of the collective unconscious is actually an essential development for the existence of the current cultural semiotic and cultural studies paradigm in literary criticism. Only with such a concept is the idea of the transference of semiotic codes through discursive practices possible, for no individual could consciously remember all of these codes and discourses that, in fact, shape her or his self and life.

Jung developed a model in which the psyche was divided into the personal conscious, the personal unconscious and the collective unconscious. Jung argued that not all human actions were based on sex but that many were influenced by racial memories of humanity's past that lay deep in our collective unconscious: "These memories exist in the form of **archetypes**: patterns or images of repeated human experiences such as birth, death, rebirth, the four seasons, and motherhood, to name a few, that express themselves in our stories, dreams, religions, and fantasies" (Bressler 154). In brief, the collective unconscious is a common human store of archetypes, i.e. "tendencies to form universal images" (Snider 2010).

The Jungian concept of archetypes that spring from the collective unconscious takes as its basic premise that any given "individual" has access to, and is – arguably – actually shaped by these archetypes that have developed with human culture from the beginning. An example of Jung's assessment of this process can be seen in terms of the creation myth taught by the early Gnostic Christian leader, Valentinus: "He tells how the world originated when Wisdom, the mother of all beings, brought it forth out of her own suffering" (Pagels 149). The Gnostic creation myth attempted to ascribe meanings to common archetypal images: the earth, for example, represented Wisdom's confusion; the air was her grief; water was her terror; and fire was the ignorance inherent in an origin where the world was born out of suffering. Valentinus

attempted to teach the early Gnostic Christians that there was no God the creator (i.e. a demiurge) and that man was the creator of religion. This is reflected in the myth when the Mother says to Ialdabaoth, the demiurge, that he is not the creator nor the highest, and that Anthropos and the Son of Anthropos are higher. Pagels explains Jung's analysis of this myth as follows:

The psychoanalyst C.C. [sic] Jung has interpreted Valentinus' creation myth as a description of the psychological processes. Valentinus tells how all things originate from "the depth," the "abyss" – in psychoanalytic terms, from the unconscious. From that "depth" emerge Mind and Truth, and from them, in turn, the Word (Logos) and Life. And it was the word that brought humanity into being. Jung read this as a mythical account of the origin of human consciousness. (Pagels 149)

The necessity for positing a collective unconscious to account for the recurrence of archetypes has been challenged, however: "Some archetypal critics have dropped Jung's theory of the collective unconscious as the deep source of these patterns; in the words of Northrop Frye, this theory is 'an unnecessary hypothesis,' and the recurrent archetypes are simply there, 'however they got there.'" (Abrams 13). While Frye, according to Abrams, found the collective unconscious an unnecessary hypothesis, Jameson's theory of the political unconscious operates by an implicit adaptation of the concept, as does the idea of the cultural archive. What this leads to in terms of literary analysis is that any cultural text reveals itself not to be the utterance of an individual solely, but rather the utterance of an individual as a representative of, and embedded within, a culture.

Jung's contribution to the methodology does not solely rest with the fact of Frye's and Jameson's adoption, or adaptation, of archetypal criticism. Some of Jung's observations stemming from his theory are also of interest, for the height of fascination with this Jungian discourse was contemporary with the works of Howard and Jünger. For example, "Jung believed this 'unnatural' civilized society imposed chains of repression upon the individual" (Connors 104). In other words, Jung's theories themselves form part of the barbarian discourse of the day. In fact, Jung wrote a pamphlet that was a major utterance in the barbarian discourse and thus extremely relevant to the works of Howard and Jünger, namely, *Wotan* of 1937. In this pamphlet Jung describes Wotan in language reminiscent of Jünger's presentation of the *Arbeiter* Gestalt,

and argues that Wotan represents an archetypal figure of central importance to Germanic people. Connors, in his own argument about the relevance of German utterances in the barbarian discourse to the works of Howard, quotes Jung's description of Wotan (while adding an italicized emphasis) "as 'a fundamental attribute of the German psyche, an irrational psychic factor which acts on the high pressure of civilisation like a cyclone and blows it away. *The Wotan-worshippers seem to have judged things more correctly than the worshippers of reason*'" (Connors 107). It is significant that the Wotan factor that Jung describes as being decisive in the mid-1930s is present in the barbarian discourse on both sides of the Atlantic, as Howard wrote poems about Wotan (i.e. Odin) and modelled the god of his most famous character on Wotan.

Given all this, theories directly indebted to Jung's concepts of the collective unconscious and archetypes, like Frye's and Jameson's, strongly suggest themselves in a dialogic sense as analytical tools to interpret the texts of Howard and Jünger.

## II.2.2. Lévi-Strauss and Mythic Narrative

Interestingly, while Jameson lists both Frye and Lévi-Strauss as major influences on his work, Lévi-Strauss was also critical of Jung. Lévi-Strauss' "The Structural Study of Myth" is, in essence, an anthropological attempt to isolate simple forms in the narratives of mythology. While he states that the language in myth exhibits specific properties which "are only to be found *above* the ordinary linguistic level, that is, they exhibit more complex features than those which are to be found in any other kind of linguistic expression", he still expresses these "gross constituent units" as (simple) forms that he calls *mythemes* (Lévi-Strauss 210-211). Despite a common interest in simple, constituent forms, Lévi-Strauss criticizes Jung's conception of archetypes (and, implicitly, Jünger's vowel theory which will be discussed later):

It is easy to see, moreover, that some of the more recent interpretations of mythological thought originated from the same kind of misconception under which those early linguists were laboring. Let us consider, for instance, Jung's idea that a given mythological pattern – the so-called archetype – possesses a certain meaning. This is comparable to the long-supported error that sound may possess a certain affinity with a meaning: for instance the "liquid" semi-vowels with water,

the open vowels with things that are big, large, loud, or heavy, etc., a theory which still has some supporters. (Lévi-Strauss 208-209).

We can take Lévi-Strauss' "correction" of Jung's "error" as a friendly amendment and strengthen this dissertation's use of Frye's theories accordingly: "If there is a meaning to be found in mythology, it cannot reside in the isolated elements which enter into the composition of a myth, but only in the way those elements are combined" (Lévi-Strauss 210). Lévi-Strauss' reference to these "isolated elements" suggests they recur, which suggests again an affinity with the concept of archetypes or some similar universal elements (like the concept of 'mother' or 'fire', etc.); in other words, Lévi-Strauss suggests that we focus not on the individual archetypes, but on the way they are combined to form a narrative. Such narratives, Frye argues, can be categorized into four broad archetypal patterns. By establishing such archetypal narratives – which Frye calls *mythoi* – we can determine much of the ideology these narratives express; this is a conclusion that Jameson came to as well. In this light, Frye's archetypal criticism remains the foundation for an analytical methodology in that the over-arching categories it provides are narrative structures as a whole (as opposed to functions of a narrative or "isolated elements"), and what Jameson termed Frye's narrative "emplotments" are synonymous with categories of ideology (Jameson 1994: xvii).

### II.2.3. Frye's Archetypal Criticism

Firstly, Frye's development of Jung's thought allows us to establish that human attitudes, modes of thinking and feeling, and our values and meanings are deeply rooted in the ancient past of the human race and are encoded into enduring archetypes and mythic narrative patterns. Using such an approach to analyze cultural products gives one insights into the mental processes involved and provides a foundation for considering the social dimension as well. The increasing complexity of the social dimension as humanity developed throughout history – in which human societies moved through a series of modes of production – requires, as Jameson realized, a further methodological tool that can take account of this movement from the mythic to the more properly political. Frye is the pivotal link in this combination of Jungian

psychology and Marxism that culminates in Jameson's work

In *Anatomy of Criticism* Frye attempts to create broad archetypal categories of literature, and then to sketch out the parameters of each of these categories. While Frye names these categories *mythoi*, Jameson, in *The Political Unconscious*, argues that what Frye had achieved in his categories was essentially a new and more comprehensive theory of literary genres (Jameson 1994: 106).

Are there narrative categories of literature broader than, or logically prior to, the ordinary literary genres? There are four such categories: the romantic, the tragic, the comic, and the ironic or satiric [...] We thus have four narrative pregeneric elements of literature which I shall call *mythoi*, or generic plots. (Frye 162).

Frye, in establishing this framework for all literary texts along the lines of the archetypal racial memories in our collective unconscious, argues that literature fulfills a psychological need in humanity, and that literature (unconsciously or consciously) follows these deeply ingrained mythic structures of narrative and symbolic patterns. Jameson's suggestion that this constitutes a new generic theory is accounted for in this methodology through the concept explained in the previous chapter whereby a text has three layers of form, and the *mythos* is the text's first and foundational layer of form. Each of the four *mythoi* identified by Frye – comedy, romance, tragedy, and satire – must, in Frye's theory, account for all human literary production, and so they of necessity contain within themselves a great number of variations on their basic structure. Frye names these variations "phases," and for each *mythos* he supposes 6 phases: e.g. a phase 1 tragedy is a different expression of the basic tragic narrative structure than a phase 6 tragedy. Of course, 6 phases of 4 *mythoi* would only allow for 24 basic narrative possibilities, which again does not reflect the near infinite variation of story-telling; therefore Frye makes clear that his phases are not pigeonholes with solid borders, but parts of a spectrum that not only blend into neighbouring *mythoi* (e.g. spring/comedy blends into summer/romance as either a romantic comedy – i.e. a phase of comedy tending towards the romance – or a comic romance – i.e. a phase of romance tending towards the comic), but blend into each other within a particular *mythos*. For example, although phase 3 of each *mythos* in Frye's schema is considered the pure form of the *mythos* in question, a phase 3 romance, for example, could, in fact, contain aspects of any of the other five phases of the romance



*mythos* – which is the case, for example, with Howard’s “Red Shadows”, as we shall see. This blending of the phases within a *mythos* brings us beyond a limited schema of 24 narrative possibilities and allows for the near infinite variabilities of story-telling that we know. Just as Frye’s cyclical theory of the four basic *mythoi* is based on the metaphor of the seasons – in which each season blends into the next and demonstrates aspects of the season before it and the season after it,<sup>8</sup> for example the first phase of comedy (the *mythos* of spring) is the “most ironic phase of comedy” (Frye 177), irony being the *mythos* of winter, the season preceding spring – so, too, is this gradual transition between seasons represented within individual exemplars of each *mythos*, for they exhibit this spectral nature in the unique way they blend the six phases within the *mythos*.

### II.2.3.1. The Comedy *Mythos* (and Jünger’s *In Stablgenittern*)

In this dissertation the comedy *mythos* is of interest primarily in terms of Jünger’s early work, *In Stablgenittern*. It is necessary to establish the terms used in the archetypal analysis of Jünger’s text by reviewing Frye’s definition of this *mythos*, its central character types as manifestations of the Aristotelian *alazon* – an impostor, someone who pretends or tries to be something more than he is (Frye 39) – and *eirone* – the man who deprecates himself (Frye 40) – and by considering the phases of the *mythos* that will be applied to *In Stablgenittern*.

Frye lays out the basic archetypal pattern of what he calls the *mythos* of spring by founding it on the desire of a young man for a young woman. This desire encounters resistance, often paternal, but in the end plot twists allow the comic hero to achieve his desire. However:

In this simple pattern there are several complex elements. In the first place, the movement of comedy is usually a

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<sup>8</sup> This basic metaphor, or theme, of the seasons is reinforced in many ways in Frye’s theory, one of which, for example, being in the characters of the *mythos* that Frye terms the ‘*mythos* of summer’, i.e. romance. Frye writes, “The enemy is associated with winter, darkness, confusion, sterility, moribund life, and old age, and the hero with spring, dawn, order, fertility, vigor and youth” (Frye 187-188). It is not, in fact, a contradiction that in the *mythos* metaphorically linked with summer that the hero of this *mythos* is associated with spring and not summer; the romance, essentially, represents the archetypal battle between winter (vilified because of its life-threatening nature) and spring (i.e. the deliverance from the threat of winter): summer is the ultimate victory of the life-renewing spring over the sterility of winter.

movement from one kind of society to another. At the beginning of the play the obstructing characters are in charge of the play's society, and the audience recognizes that they are usurpers. At the end of the play the device in the plot that brings hero and heroine together causes a new society to crystallize around the hero, and the moment when this crystallization occurs is the point of resolution in the action, the comic discovery, *anagnorisis* or *cognitio*. The appearance of this new society is frequently signalized by some kind of party or festive ritual, which either appears at the end of the play or is assumed to take place immediately afterward [...] The obstacles to the hero's desire, then form the action of the comedy, and the overcoming of them the comic resolution. The obstacles are usually parental, hence comedy often turns on a clash between a son's and a father's will. Thus the comic dramatist as a rule writes for the younger men in his audience, and the older members of almost any society are apt to feel that comedy has something subversive about it. (Frye 163-164).

In other words, the association of comedy with spring rests in its archetypal portrayal of young physical desire as a social renewal that parallels the biological renewal. Frye insists that comedy is subversive in the mere fact of thematizing the biological fact of the changing of the guard, whereby older men are supplanted by younger men in the process of biological renewal. The conflict in comedy arises from this natural process.

Comedy, Frye goes on to argue, places higher importance in social judgement than some of the other *mythoi*. If one recalls Nietzsche's statement about morality being in direct relation to social necessity and not to any absolute universal value, this implies a hierarchy of moral values being expressed in comedy that support the changing-of-the-guard-dynamic. Frye notes that "In tragedy, pity and fear, the emotions of moral attraction and repulsion, are raised and cast out. Comedy seems to make a more functional use of the social, even the moral judgement, than tragedy, yet comedy seems to raise the corresponding emotions, which are sympathy and ridicule, and cast them out in the same way" (Frye 177). In other words, comedy has much in common with a *Schamkultur* and uses shaming rituals to reinforce the fundamental social sympathy with the biological process of renewal.

In terms of *In Stablgewittern*, we will see the *alazons* as the older men ruling Wilhelmine Germany, and the *eirons* as the young men who go to war both to satisfy their desire – a desire which has been socially redirected from physical love to war as Theweleit argues – and to ostensibly fulfill the commands of the Wilhelmine *alazons*. *In Stablgewittern* is archetypally a comedy, but it is a text whose lack of comic tone and narrative lacunae strongly bring in the events and society surrounding it, making of it a prime example of how a text is authored by social discourses, and also a key text demonstrating the establishment of the *Kultur der Niederlage* in Weimar Germany. The impostor which is Wilhelmine Germany and its military elite, with its boast of being able to fight a ‘world of enemies’, is exposed, ridiculed, and beaten by the revolution and the establishment of the Weimar Republic. This is only underlined by the turning away from the monarchy by right-wing nationalist elements like Jünger and the Nazis. This part of comic archetypal narrative structure is not explicit in the text, but is part of the text’s composition, reception and influence.

The analysis of *In Stablgewittern* as a comedy will focus on what Frye calls the “total *mythos* of comedy” where an initially stable and harmonious order is disrupted by the folly, obsession, forgetfulness, pride and prejudice of the ruling old men (i.e. *alazons*). It is the hero then, and the society that coalesces around him, that rebels “against the society of the *senex* [...] and triumphs, but the hero’s society is a Saturnalia, a reversal of social standards which recalls a golden age in the past before the main action of the play begins” (Frye 171). Of significance to Jünger’s text – and providing an explanation for the contradiction between the young German soldiers (i.e. *eirons*) feeling that they are rebelling against the *alazon* Wilhelmine rulers while at the same time obeying the Kaiser’s command to go to war, and providing an explanation for the central role of the medal given in the name of the Kaiser, the *Pour le mérite*, in the text’s conclusion – is a further character identified by Frye: “Often there is a benevolent grandfather, so to speak, who overrules the action set up by the blocking humor and so links the first and third parts” (Frye 171). In other words the Kaiser himself takes this role in the text’s narrative and in the national meta-narrative of which the text forms a part. In time, the person of the Kaiser fades behind those, like Jünger, who feel they have come to both incorporate the Kaiser’s authority and to transcend it to something even more powerful and compelling.

Frye identifies six phases of comedy, and how “The first three phases of comedy are parallel to the first three phases of irony and satire, and the second three to the second three of romance” (Frye 177). Most significant in terms of *In Stablgewittern* is the first phase: “The first or most ironic phase of comedy is, naturally, the one in which a humorous society triumphs or remains undefeated” (Frye 177). In other words, the “humorous society” in the post-war *Kultur der Niederlage* national meta-narrative helping to shape *In Stablgewittern* is the laughable (for Nietzsche, Jünger and the Nazis), security-obsessed, bourgeois Wilhelmine society, which is considered to have survived under a faux-revolutionary guise in Weimar Germany, a sentiment that Theweleit confirms: „Die «Republik» wird als *Fortsetzung* des wilhelminischen Friedens, der «materialistischen Eiszeit», des «Zeitalters kleinbürgerlicher Interessen» empfunden: wieder dreht sich das zivile Leben um Kreditwürdigkeit, Zahlungsfähigkeit, das System bürgerlicher Geschäfte und Repräsentationen, das im Krieg vorübergehend nicht mehr spürbar gewesen war“ (Theweleit 1987b: 348). As will be argued, the war itself, particularly in its final phase characterized by the new storm troops whose independence of action and command structure was a de facto break with Wilhelmine militaristic hierarchy, represented the Saturnalia of the young men. And it is the loss of this Saturnalia, of the war itself, that motivates many of the returning *Frontsoldaten* to form into a movement culminating with Nazi Germany and precipitating World War II: the reinstatement of the Saturnalia.

### II.2.3.2. The Romance *Mythos*

The romance *mythos* is of central importance to this dissertation as the bulk of Howard’s work are romances and Jünger’s work is characterized by a yearning for romance that is stymied by the meta-narrative of the Germany of his day. Several texts will be analyzed extensively from the perspective of the romance *mythos* in this dissertation, including Howard’s “Red Shadows”, and so it is necessary to be conversant with the specifics of Frye’s definition of this pivotal *mythos*.

The romance *mythos* is socially significant for it exists in a tension between the ruling class and the repressed class. The ruling class attempts to use the romance to project its ideals, while the repressed class attempts to express its own interests by appropriating the romance or by renewing it. This class conflict inherent in romance is reflected in its very form. Frye notes:

The central form of romance is dialectical: everything is focussed on a conflict between the hero and his enemy, and all the reader's values are bound up with the hero. Hence the hero of romance is analogous to the mythical Messiah or deliverer who comes from an upper world, and his enemy is analogous to the demonic powers of a lower world. The conflict, however, takes place in, or at any rate primarily concerns, *our* world, which is in the middle, and which is characterized by the cyclical movement of nature. (Frye 187)

This properly mythic structure is symbolic of social contradictions, and the roles of hero/Messiah and enemy/demon represent class conflict, for these roles function as ideologemes, i.e. characters representing specific classes in conflict. Frye indicates this conflation of the mythic and the political when he relates the central dragon-killing theme of romance to the Biblical monster, the Leviathan. The Leviathan represents social sterility, and the natural sterility of the fallen world of sin, death and tyranny. The Messiah then comes and kills the Leviathan, releasing the people (Frye 189). In other words, far from being inherently reactionary, the romance narrative has great subversive potential, and it is precisely in the predilection for popular culture texts to take on the romance *mythos* as their basic form that this subversive potentiality arises. Jameson underlines the popular and revolutionary nature of this *mythos* when he writes:

The association of Marxism and romance therefore does not discredit the former so much as it explains the persistence and vitality of the latter, which Frye takes to be the ultimate source and paradigm of all story-telling. On this view, the oral tales of tribal society, the fairy tales that are the irrepressible voice and expression of the underclasses of the great systems of domination, adventure stories and melodrama, and the popular or mass culture of our own time are all syllables and broken fragments of some single immense story. (Jameson 1994: 105)

Logically, then, the characters of romance are determined by their role in this conflict-based, dialectical narrative form. Frye notes: "The characterization of romance follows its general dialectic structure [...]. Hence every typical character in romance tends to have his moral opposite confronting him, like black and white pieces in a chess game" (Frye 195). While this structural necessity for the characters of a

romance narrative to express black and white moral positions has led many literary critics to see the romance as a lesser literary form, it is precisely in this kind of characterization that the romance *mythos* expresses social conflict.

The hero of romance can represent the ruling class and its ideals, or the repressed class and its struggle against the tyranny of the ruling class. In practice, the first variant is often undermined by the archetypal roots of the romance hero's role, and the second variant is similarly strengthened, so that romance is, more often than not, subversive. This arises out of the mythic origins of the hero, and Frye writes of "the mysterious rapport with nature that so often marks the central figure of romance" (Frye 197). This connection to nature and its unending process of change and renewal strengthens the identification of the romance hero with change and renewal, thus tending to counteract the attempts of ruling classes to appropriate the romance hero to permanently enshrine themselves and their ideals.

The villain of romance, then, is often symbolic of the tyranny of the upper classes, but can also represent the threat of the repressed class to the order of the ruling class. Frye describes the romance villain as follows: "The enemy may be an ordinary human being, but the nearer the romance is to myth, the more attributes of divinity will cling to the hero and the more the enemy will take on demonic mythical qualities. [...] The enemy is associated with winter, darkness, confusion, sterility, moribund life, and old age, and the hero with spring, dawn, order, fertility, vigor and youth" (Frye 187-188). The struggle at the core of the romance *mythos* is the social struggle of determining what the divine hero symbolizes and what the demonic enemy symbolizes.

Beyond these two central characters of romance, Frye identifies several more, his definition of many of them informed by Jung's archetypal theories. The king and queen of the black pieces are the archetypal evil magician and witch. Frye stipulates that, "The latter is appropriately called by Jung the 'terrible mother', and he associates her with the fear of incest" (Frye 196). The king and queen of the white pieces are the opposites of the black king and queen. Frye also posits a deeper level of complexity to these basic character oppositions, and begins by noting that, "Romance has a counterpart to the benevolent retreating *eironeia* of comedy in its figure of the 'old wise man', as Jung calls him, like Prospero, Merlin, or the palmer of Spenser's second quest, often a magician who affects the action he watches over" (Frye 195).

Thus, this 'old wise man' is the white king and he "has a feminine counterpart in the sibylline wise mother-figure, often a potential bride like Solveig in *Peer Gynt*, who sits quietly at home waiting for the hero to finish his wanderings and come back to her. This latter figure is often the lady for whose sake or at whose bidding the quest is performed" (Frye 195). The white queen occupies an interesting double role in symbolizing both the wise mother and the potential bride, and this may explain why romance has traditionally been the narrative of choice for young men: i.e. males in transition from the mother to the bride.

There is one final character type that usually stands outside the usual dialectical structure of romance: "The characters who elude the moral antithesis of heroism and villainy generally are, or suggest, spirits of nature. They represent partly the moral neutrality of the intermediate world of nature and partly a world of mystery which is glimpsed but never seen, and which retreats when approached" (Frye 196). The neutrality of these spirits of nature characters in romance can be changed by the hero's afore-mentioned affinity to nature. Frye indicates this when he speaks of these nature-spirit characters as follows: "Such characters are, more or less, children of nature, who can be brought to serve the hero, like Crusoe's Friday, but retain the inscrutability of their origin. As servants or friends of the hero, they impart the mysterious rapport with nature that so often marks the central figure of romance" (Frye 196-197). These seemingly peripheral characters have a significant symbolic role, as we shall see in the analysis of Howard's "Red Shadows".

With the characters of romance established, we now move to the basic narrative form of the romance *mythos*, the quest. Frye defines it as "a sequence of minor adventures leading up to a major or climacteric adventure, usually announced from the beginning, the completion of which rounds off the story. We may call this major adventure, the element that gives literary form to the romance, the quest" (Frye 186-187). Central, then, to the romance *mythos* and its appeal is the fact that "The essential element of plot in romance is adventure" (Frye 186). Frye goes on to stipulate that the quest has four main stages in works in all phases of the romance, and uses terminology, originally supplied by Aristotle, to define them, namely: the *agon* (conflict), the *pathos* (death struggle), the *sparagmos* (tearing to pieces) and the *anagnorisis* (discovery – recognition of the hero). The *agon* stage is that "of the perilous journey and the preliminary minor adventures" (Frye 187). The *pathos* stage is

“the crucial struggle, usually some kind of battle in which either the hero or his foe, or both, must die” (Frye 187). The sparagmos stage is “the disappearance of the hero, a theme which often takes the form of sparagmos or tearing to pieces” (Frye 192). And the concluding stage, the anagnorisis, is “the exaltation of the hero” (Frye 187).

The romance quest with its four stages (sometimes the *sparagmos* stage is absent) has mythic symbolism. Frye notes this mythic dimension when he writes that “Translated into ritual terms, the quest-romance is the victory of fertility over the waste land. Fertility means food and drink, bread and wine, body and blood, the union of male and female” (Frye 193). This last point about romance’s ritual re-enactment of the union of male and female reveals that, just as comedy is, at base, about basic biological realities, so is the romance. Drawing on Jungian psychology, Frye argues, “Translated into dream terms, the quest-romance is the search of the libido or desiring self for a fulfillment that will deliver it from the anxieties of reality but will still contain that reality” (Frye 193). This is reflected in the fact that the romance hero, who carries the values of the reader and thus represents the reader – typically the young male – completes his quest because “the reward of the quest usually is or includes a bride” (Frye 193). Frye characterizes this bride-figure as follows: “She is often to be found in a perilous, forbidden, or tabooed place, like Brunnhilde’s wall of fire or the sleeping beauty’s wall of thorns, and she is, of course, often rescued from the unwelcome embraces of another and generally older male, or from giants or bandits or other usurpers. The removal of some stigma from the heroine figures prominently in romance” (Frye 193). As we shall see, this is a central concern of Howard’s texts, and finds sublimated expression in Jünger’s.

The quest, beyond symbolizing such an individual biological/psychological transition, also represents a larger social myth, as Frye’s connection of the Leviathan to the romance villain indicates, particularly the symbolic association of the romance villain with death. Frye argues, “Lastly, if the leviathan is death, and the hero has to enter the body of death, the hero has to die, and if his quest is completed the final stage of it is, cyclically, rebirth, and, dialectically, resurrection” (Frye 192). In this way the romance hero transcends a purely personal identification with the reader and takes on a larger religious role. Frye notes that certain objects that figure in the romance quest symbolize both the personal psychological associations of romance and the social ritual associations: “The precious objects brought back from the quest, or



seen or obtained as a result of it, sometimes combine the ritual and psychological associations” (Frye 193-194).

With the romance quest explained in its stages and psychological and social symbolism, it is necessary to consider how this quest, and the romance characters, are expressed in the six different phases of the romance that Frye identifies. The first phase is the myth of birth of the hero. The second phase is the innocent youth of hero. This second phase is characterized by a theme of a sexual barrier (Frye 200). The third phase is the most important one in terms of literary analysis, for it is a pure expression of the quest romance outlined above. The fourth phase, Frye argues, is analogous to the fourth phase of comedy. Frye defines this ‘Assault of Experience’ phase as follows: “In romance the central theme of this phase is that of the maintaining of the integrity of the innocent world against the assault of experience” (Frye 201). The fifth phase “is, like the second phase, an erotic world, but it presents experience as comprehended and not as a mystery” (Frye 202). Frye writes that the fifth phase “is a reflective, idyllic view of experience from above, in which the movement of the natural cycle has usually a prominent place. It deals with a world very similar to that of the second phase except that the mood is a contemplative withdrawal from or sequel to action” (Frye 202). Finally, Frye states that the sixth phase of romance is related to the sixth phase of comedy. This is the *penseroso* phase, which “marks the end of a movement from active to contemplative adventure” (Frye 202).

Regardless of which phase (or phases) of romance make up the archetypal layer of form of a text, Frye insists that all the phases have a narrative feature in common, the point of epiphany which “is the symbolic presentation of the point at which the undisplaced apocalyptic world and the cyclical world of nature come into alignment” (Frye 203). The climactic moment of a romance quest represents a point of epiphany which is a prominent physical setting. “As long as poets accepted the Ptolemaic universe, the natural place for the point of epiphany was a mountain-top just under the moon, the lowest heavenly body”(Frye 204). Although the Ptolemaic universe has been superseded in science, in literary symbolism it still resonates, as the conclusion of Howard’s “Red Shadows” demonstrates.

### II.2.3.3. The Tragedy *Mythos*

The *mythos* of tragedy is, with that of romance, a central focus of this dissertation, for a great many of Jünger's works can be gainfully analyzed with reference to this *mythos*. The tragic meta-narrative of *Kultur der Niederlage* Weimar – and then Nazi – Germany was all-pervasive and was decisive in Jünger's archetypal shaping of his texts *Auf den Marmorklippen* and *Heliopolis*. The relationship between romance and tragedy is apparent not only in the romance impulse behind Jünger's life and work, but also the romance impulse in the culture around him. The transformation of this romance drive into a tragic national meta-narrative can be traced back to the enshrining of a specific phase of tragedy through the *Kultur der Niederlage* dynamic of Weimar Germany. How the attempt to erase this tragic meta-narrative through a compromised romance meta-narrative is illustrated by Hitler's *Mein Kampf* and the subsequent history of Nazi Germany and World War II.

As Frye explains, tragedy represents a central archetypal function in human society. He argues:

Anyone accustomed to think archetypally of literature will recognize in tragedy a mimesis of sacrifice. Tragedy is a paradoxical combination of a fearful sense of rightness (the hero must fall) and a pitying sense of wrongness (it is too bad that he falls). There is a similar paradox in the two elements of sacrifice. One of these is communion, the dividing of a heroic or divine body among a group which brings them into unity with, and as, that body. The other is propitiation, the sense that in spite of the communion the body really belongs to another, a greater, and a potentially wrathful power. (Frye 214)

Thus, the downfall of the tragic hero represents a ritual sacrifice. Those participating in the sacrifice feel drawn together by the sacrifice and are simultaneously aware of a greater power to which they are subject. The tragic heroes of Jünger's later texts invite the community of readers to feel a sense of unity, but to realize that even their community – one that implicitly does not support the National Socialist regime – will suffer under the same wrathful power that denies Jünger the ability to shape his texts as romances.

The instinctive objection to such a statement, particularly in terms of the historical realities of Nazi Germany, that impersonal forces somehow beyond conventional morality were at work, must be seen in the light of Frye's insistence that the tragedy *mythos* does, in fact, function

in this way. Frye warns us against seeing purely moral and ethical factors at work in tragedy; “the narrative trajectory of tragedy conforms to natural law”, he argues, and the tragic hero – whether provoking or inheriting the situation of enmity – has disturbed the balance of nature, an invisible order, that must right itself (Frye 209), and “the logic of events [...] happens impersonally, unaffected [...] by the moral quality of human motivation involved” (Frye 209). What needs to be emphasized here are Frye’s terms, ‘natural law’ and ‘invisible order’. Despite the fact that some individuals in Germany, like the Hitler Youth Alfons Heck, for example, initially believed that measures taken against the Jews were morally correct in order to save the German people, the attempt to eradicate an entire people was a de facto violation of natural law and an upsetting of the natural order, which carried with it its own consequences.<sup>9</sup>

Frye criticizes two reductive formulas often applied to tragedy. One is that “all tragedy exhibits the omnipotence of external fate” (Frye 209). Frye corrects this – and in so doing acknowledges the kind of moral reaction the reader of *Auf den Marmorclippen* experiences – by pointing out that fate “becomes external to the hero only after the tragic process has been set going” (Frye 210). Thus, the tragic hero is not a helpless pawn of fate but his or her initial act that violates the natural order sets a sequence of events in motion. The tragedy *mythos* has a complex relationship to both morality and the determinism implied by the concept of fate. This is reflected in Frye’s own conclusion that “Tragedy, in short, seems to elude the antithesis of moral responsibility and arbitrary fate, just as it eludes the antithesis of good and evil” (Frye 211). Such a conclusion may be morally and emotionally unsatisfying, but Frye does assure us that “the hero’s act has thrown a switch in a larger machine than his own life, or even his own society” (Frye 211). Thus, the national meta-narrative of Germany affects Jünger’s texts in obliging Jünger to shape his narratives according to the *mythos* of tragedy despite his own romance inclinations, as we shall see.

A major difference between the *mythoi* of tragedy and romance is that there is no distinct hero versus villain dialectic in tragedy. While there is opposition to the tragic hero, this opposition is seen, as noted above, as a consequence of the tragic hero himself having set great

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<sup>9</sup> While forms of warfare within species, like wolves, have been noted, no attempt by a species to completely exterminate a large sub-grouping of itself is known to this author.

impersonal forces in motion. Frye specifies that, “The tragic hero is very great as compared with us, but there is something else, something on the side of him opposite the audience, compared to which he is small. This something else may be called God, gods, fate, accident, fortune, necessity, circumstance, or any combination of these, but whatever it is the tragic hero is our mediator with it” (207). The tragic hero’s own greatness becomes the source of his or her opposition, as Frye explains: “The tragic hero is typically on top of the wheel of fortune, half-way between human society on the ground and the something greater in the sky. [...] Tragic heroes are so much the highest points in their human landscape that they seem the inevitable conductors of power about them, great trees more likely to be struck by lightning than a clump of grass” (Frye 207). The tragic hero’s mediatory role between ordinary humans and the greater powers (whether these be perceived in terms of religion or history) is what selects the tragic hero as the ritual sacrifice. The tragic hero, in effect, volunteers for this role because “The tragic hero usually belongs of course to the *alazon* group, an impostor in the sense that he is self-deceived or made dizzy by *hybris*” (Frye 217). This *hybris*/*hubris* is evident not only in the protagonist of *Auf den Marmorlippen*, but also in the rulers of Nazi Germany.

Beyond this central *alazon* character, there is another prominent character role in the *mythos* of tragedy, namely one connected with the concept of *nemesis*. Frye explains that “the righting of the balance is what the Greeks called *nemesis*” (Frye 209). *Nemesis*, believed by the ancient Greeks to be a divine being springing from the union of Night and Erebus (Graves 33), may manifest in a variety of ways in the tragedy *mythos*: “the agent or instrument of *nemesis* may be human vengeance, ghostly vengeance, divine vengeance, divine justice, accident, fate or the logic of events, but the essential thing is that *nemesis* happens, and happens impersonally, unaffected [...] by the moral quality of human motivation involved” (Frye 209). *Nemesis*, therefore, is the power that re-rights the balance of nature that the tragic hero disrupts: “The source of *nemesis*, whatever it is, is an *eirone*, and may appear in a great variety of agents, from wrathful gods to hypocritical villains” (Frye 216). This *eirone* type that is the manifestation of *Nemesis* is, through “the sense of awfulness belonging to an agent of catastrophe [...] something more like the high priest of a sacrifice” (Frye 216). Significantly for the tragedies we will consider in this dissertation, this last statement underlines the importance of the Wotan archetype in the 1930s and 40s, particularly in

light of Frye's assertion about the relationship between the characters of tragedy and comedy: "We have the tragic counterpart to the withdrawn *iron* in the god who decrees the tragic action" (Frye 216).

Having considered the archetypal purpose of the *mythos* of autumn and its characters, it is now necessary to specify the narrative form that this *mythos* takes. The basic narrative form of this *mythos* follows a cause and effect logic. Frye describes it thusly:

The hero provokes enmity, or inherits a situation of enmity, and the return of the avenger constitutes the catastrophe. The revenge-tragedy is a simple tragic structure, and like most simple structures can be a very powerful one, often retained as a central theme even in the most complex tragedies. Here the original act provoking the revenge sets up an antithetical or counterbalancing movement, and the completion of the movement resolves the tragedy. (Frye 208-209)

The revenge-tragedy is thus a major expression of the tragedy *mythos*, and significant for this dissertation, particularly in terms of the effect of national meta-narratives on textual narratives, is the fact that "Often, as in revenge-tragedy, it is an event previous to the action of which the tragedy itself is the consequence" (Frye 216). Whether the hero provokes the enmity or inherits it, the structure of the tragedy is based on the hero's disturbing a natural order, which brings on the counterbalancing movement known as nemesis. This chronological cause-and-effect dynamic is suffused with the concept of nemesis for there exists "the feeling that nemesis is deeply involved with the movement of time, whether as the missing of a tide in the affairs of men, as a recognition that the time is out of joint, as a sense that time is the devourer of life" (Frye 213). This feeling gives *Auf den Marmorklippen*, for example, its melancholy and inevitable tone, and hints at the sense of resignation that followed World War I throughout the Western world. There is a pivotal moment in the tragedy narrative, something Frye labels with the German term *Augenblick*, where "the road to what might have been and the road to what will be can be simultaneously seen. Seen by the audience, that is: it cannot be seen by the hero if he is in a state of hybris, for in that case the crucial moment is for him a moment of dizziness, when the wheel of fortune begins its inevitable cyclical movement downward" (Frye 213). The attempt to pin-point this *Augenblick* is a central feature of both *Auf den Marmorklippen* and *Heliopolis*. Jünger only vaguely disguises the fact in *Auf den Marmorklippen* that the

protagonist-narrator's ruminations about the reason for the catastrophe that will destroy Große Marina in the course of the story is an analogy to the process that doomed real-life Germany to destruction. In *Heliopolis* Jünger is even more direct, and he isolates a symbolic moment on the deck of the Blaue Aviso, when the passengers have spied a corpse on the beach, as indicative of the decisive moment on Germany's historical road in the early 1930s. In *Auf den Marmorlippen* Jünger hints that he has found that *Augenblick* in German history, but the tragic hero of the actual story does not recognize the crucial moment that dooms his fantasy setting, in part due to his meta-narrative hybris in transcending the events of the fantasy narrative to ruminate symbolically on the events in Jünger's Germany.

Although, realistically speaking, there are countless variations on the simple tragedy pattern we have just described, Frye has divided this 'mythos of autumn' into six phases:

The phases of tragedy move from the heroic to the ironic, the first three corresponding to the first three phases of romance, the last three to the last three of irony. The first phase of tragedy is the one in which the central character is given the greatest possible dignity in contrast to the other characters, so that we get the perspective of a stag pulled down by wolves. [...] The second phase corresponds to the youth of the romantic hero, and is in one way or another the tragedy of innocence in the sense of inexperience, usually involving young people. [...] The third phase, corresponding to the central quest-theme of romance is tragedy in which a strong emphasis is thrown on the success or completeness of the hero's achievement (Frye 219-220).

Frye notes that this third phase of tragedy "is often a sequel to a previous tragic or heroic action, and comes at the end of a heroic life" (Frye 221). Of central importance to Jünger's texts and to the dynamic of a *Kultur der Niederlage* is this third phase of tragedy which Frye designates the 'victory in tragedy'. Frye notes that,

The Passion belongs here, as do all tragedies in which the hero is in any way related to or a prototype of Christ, like *Samson Agonistes*. The paradox of victory within tragedy may be expressed by a double perspective in the action. Samson is a buffoon of a Philistine carnival and simultaneously a tragic hero to the Israelite, but the tragedy ends in triumph and the

carnival in catastrophe. Much the same is true of the mocked Christ in the Passion. (Frye 220-221).

This idea of a tragedy ending in triumph is a core concept of the *Kultur der Niederlage* which was Weimar Germany, particularly from the perspective of right wing revanchists like Jünger and the Nazis. As has already been noted, major forces within the cultures of defeat that Schivelbusch investigated all used Christ as an analogy or model for their situation, and all promised a messianic national resurrection. As the quotation above implies, however, a phase three tragedy is often the sequel to a previous tragedy; therefore, despite that attempt to perceive things from this victory-in-tragedy perspective, often a new tragedy occurs despite the brief promise of a transition to a romance narrative. Precisely this happened in Germany's historical meta-narrative.

The last three phases of tragedy are phases where the concept of victory in tragedy is absent. "The fourth phase is the typical fall of the hero through hybris and hamartia [...]. In this phase we cross the boundary line from innocence to experience, which is also the direction in which the hero falls" (Frye 221). The fifth and sixth phases of tragedy are characterized by the spectral shift of the mythoi, in this case toward irony. In the fifth phase the sense of irony increases while that of heroism decreases, and the sixth phase presents "a world of shock and horror" (Frye 222).

#### II.2.3.4. The Irony/Satire *Mythos* (and Howard's "A Elkins Never Surrenders")

This brings us to Frye's final archetypal *mythos*, the *mythos* of winter which he designates with the double-term, irony/satire. We will consider only the first three phases of this *mythos*, for it is they that apply in a close-reading of Howard's "An Elkins Never Surrenders", a text which demonstrates Howard's late critical position on the romance *mythos* and, by implication, the romance meta-narrative in the United States of his time. This *mythos* is also a decisive influence on Jünger in that his attempt to forestall or deny the satiric and the ironic – even when he learned from it as during his reading of *Tristram Shandy* in the shell craters of the front of World War I – is a factor in his decision on the archetypal structuring of his texts. His willful romance interpretation of *Don Quixote* as a youth is emblematic of how his romance yearnings attempt to deny the presence of irony. This is a dynamic we see throughout his

life's work: Germany's meta-narrative, laden as it is with irony, deflects his romance drive away from the *mythos* of summer, but Jünger makes sure that the mythic spectral shift never goes all the way to the *mythos* of winter, settling instead into the *mythos* of autumn, tragedy.

Frye's mythic category links two terms – Irony and Satire – and he explains the distinction thusly: “The chief distinction between irony and satire is that satire is militant irony: its moral norms are relatively clear, and it assumes standards against which the grotesque and absurd are measured. Sheer invective or name-calling (“flyting”) is satire in which there is relatively little irony: on the other hand, whenever a reader is not sure what the author's attitude is or what his own is supposed to be, we have irony with relatively little satire” (Frye 223). In other words, the two terms are intimately linked and represent strategic shifts in focus on the part of the author to achieve a similar effect. Frye goes on to say, “Irony is consistent both with complete realism of content and with the suppression of attitude on the part of the author. Satire demands at least a token fantasy, a content which the reader recognizes as grotesque, and at least an implicit standard, the latter being essential in a militant attitude to experience” (Frye 224). Both Howard and Jünger avoid a purely ironic perception; for Jünger, such a cold, neutral and realistic perception would forever destroy his romance yearning, and the alternative, the tragic, at least offers an expression of an heroic, if doomed, perception; for Howard, the virtuously romance writer, such a dispassionate approach offers little chance to express his formidable imagination, and so he takes the route of fantasy in his satiric works, including in “A Elkins Never Surrenders”. Frye clarifies the components of satire when he insists: “Two things, then are essential to satire; one is wit or humor founded on fantasy or a sense of the grotesque or absurd, the other is an object of attack” (Frye 224). Both of these are evident in Howard's satires, and it is precisely a sense of the grotesque or absurd that Jünger strives to avoid by insisting on a romantic, or tragic, perception. (He does this even when explicitly criticizing a romantic perception, as he does in *Der Arbeiter*, a work that responds to the irony in Germany's meta-narrative by constructing a sober-seeming and dispassionate Gestalt, *der Arbeiter*, whose role, however, is the explicit role of a romance hero who will win the world.)

The afore-mentioned intertwining of the two concepts of satire and irony is evident when Frye states that, “As structure, the central principle of ironic myth is best approached as a parody of romance: the



application of romantic mythical forms to a more realistic content which fits them in unexpected ways” (Frye 223). Parodying romance is precisely what Howard is doing in a text like “A Elkins Never Surrenders”, while Jünger, unknowingly, comes close to parodying the romance in a work like *Der Arbeiter* where he approaches his subject with philosophical gravity in order to defend his romance construct against charges of romanticism. Jünger’s problem is highlighted when Frye contrasts the *modus operandi* of the philosopher and the satirist:

His [*i.e. the philosopher’s*] attitude is dogmatic; that of the satirist pragmatic. Hence satire may often represent the collision between a selection of standards from experience and the feeling that experience is bigger than any set of beliefs about it. The satirist demonstrates the infinite variety of what men do by showing the futility, not only of saying what they ought to do, but even of attempts to systematize or formulate a coherent scheme of what they do. Philosophies of life abstract from life, and an abstraction implies the leaving out of inconvenient data. The satirist brings up these inconvenient data [...] (Frye 229)

Precisely for this reason does Jünger eschew the ironic or satiric, for *Der Arbeiter* does attempt to systematize or formulate a coherent view of the world of 1932. The inconvenient data that he overlooks in that case is the absurdity that the ignorant and brutal are about to seize control of the lofty dynamic that he describes.

The first three phases of this *mythos* are directly applicable to a close-reading of Howard’s text, whereas it is the function of the *mythos* as whole which is applicable to Jünger in his very avoidance of it. Frye defines the first phase of the *mythos* as follows:

It takes for granted a world which is full of anomalies, injustices, follies, and crimes, and yet is permanent and undisplaceable. Its principle is that anyone who wishes to keep his balance in such a world must learn first of all to keep his eyes open and his mouth shut. Counsels of prudence, urging the reader in effect to adopt an *airon* role, have been prominent in literature from Egyptian times. What is recommended is conventional life at its best: a clairvoyant knowledge of human nature in oneself and others, an avoidance of all illusion and compulsive behaviour, a reliance on observation and timing rather than aggressiveness. (Frye 226)

Howard’s text is a text-book expression of this perspective. The illusion

and compulsive behaviour that Elkins represents, and its destructive impact on society, underline the validity of Frye's insistence about the attack function of the *mythos* and that, "To attack anything, writer and audience must agree on its undesirability" (Frye 224).

The second phase of satire must be considered in this dissertation as well. Frye writes,

[...] social convention is mainly fossilized dogma, and the standard appealed to by low-norm satire is a set of conventions largely invented by dead cranks. The strength of the conventional person is not in the conventions but in his common-sense way of handling them. Hence the logic of satire itself drives it on from its first phase of conventional satire on the unconventional to a second phase in which the sources and values of the conventions themselves are objects of ridicule. (Frye 229)

This is applicable to Howard's tale, as Elkins presents himself as a defender of social conventions. The cultural evolutionary effect of Howard's text is highlighted when Frye writes, "The cultural effect of such satire is not to denigrate romance, but to prevent any group of conventions from dominating the whole of literary experience. Second phase satire shows literature assuming a special function of analysis, of breaking up the lumber of stereotypes, fossilized beliefs, superstitious terrors, crank theories, pedantic dogmatisms, oppressive fashions, and all other things that impede the free movement (not necessarily, of course, the progress) of society" (Frye 233). Frye's differentiation between 'free movement' and 'progress' points to the preference in the current cultural studies paradigm for the term 'evolution', as evolution represents a natural development that is not primarily seen in terms of positive and negative. Frye adds, "The central theme in the second or quixotic phase of satire, then, is the setting of ideas and generalizations and theories and dogmas over against the life they are supposed to explain" (Frye 230).

The third phase of this *mythos* finds expression in the tradition of the American tall-tale that Howard takes up, and is particularly manifest in the boasting of his main character, Elkins. Affirmation that Howard is taking up a known American form of satire comes when Frye highlights the verbal tempest of this phase of satire, and the character of Elkins is reflected in the comment that "In American culture it [*i.e. the third phase of satire*] is represented by the "tall talk" of the folklore boaster" (Frye 236). This third phase is the final one before the *mythos* becomes more ironic,

and the heroic fads.

The characters of this *mythos* change with this movement toward the purely ironic, which Frye terms the high-norm. The low-norm phases are those which we are most concerned with. In terms of Howard's "A Elkins Never Surrenders", we have a clear attack on the conventions of the romance, without, to recall Frye's statement quoted above, any attempt to denigrate it per se. Frye notes, "Where attack predominates, we have an inconspicuous, unobtrusive *ieron* standard contrasted with the *alazons* or blocking humours who are in charge of society" (Frye 227). We see this in Howard's tale, where the ostensible hero, Elkins, who sees himself as hero, is in fact an *alazon* who forcibly takes charge of society. Howard's textual strategy unfolds according to Frye's definition of this *mythos*, particularly how the *ieron* characters act as a foil for the *alazon*: "the satirist may employ a plain, common-sense, conventional person as a foil for the various *alazons* of society. Such a person may be the author himself or a narrator, and he corresponds to the plain dealer in comedy or the blunt adviser in tragedy" (Frye 227). Tellingly, in Howard's tale, all the characters except for Elkins are *ieron* characters who attempt to stop the chaos that Elkins creates. By creating this kind of character opposition, Howard can present his questioning of the romance hero without removing that hero from the text – he just makes the hero an *alazon* figure. With this questioning of the hero, he upholds the fact that "one of the central themes of the *mythos* is the disappearance of the heroic" (Frye 228). Frye's further description of this archetypal *mythos* paraphrases the action of Howard's story: "This situation has for its archetype an ironic counterpart of the romance theme of giant-killing. [...] In low-norm satire the *alazon* is a Goliath encountered by a tiny David with his sudden and vicious stones, a giant prodded by a cool and observant but almost invisible enemy into a blind, stampeding fury and then polished off at leisure" (Frye 227-228).

#### II.2.3.5. The *Mythoi* as Part of the Total Quest Myth

Of final significance to Frye's archetypal theory, which this dissertation is adopting as the first layer of form – a layer of form where cultural meta-narratives and discourses most clearly make their presence and their textual co-authoring role felt, is the cycle of the *mythoi* itself, and the unity implied by the seasonal metaphor on which they are based. This cycle Frye terms the "total quest myth" and he links it explicitly to

Christianity. This perception of a Christian linkage of all the *mythoi*, and thus of the archetypal first layer of forms of texts, is entirely in keeping with this dissertation, as the texts being considered are all generally informed by the Christian tradition of Europe and the Americas, and are specifically informed by the explicit Christian metaphor at the base of the *Kultur der Niederlage*, as Schivelbusch notes of the American South, late 18<sup>th</sup> century France, and Weimar Germany: „Neben der stets offenkundigen Anlehnung an die Leidensgeschichte Christi stellt der Brückenschlag in die Geschichte dabei eine wichtige Stütze dar. [...] Von der Vorstellung der Niederlage als Akt der Reinigung, der Vergeistigung, der Demütigung und des Opfers im Sinne der Kreuzigung Christi hin zum Anspruch auf geistig-moralische Führung ist es nur ein kurzer Weg, und unsere drei Verlierernationen beschriften ihn, indem sie die citadelles sentimentales ihrer Sinnggebung zu Bollwerken der Menschheit erweiterten“ (Schivelbusch 43-45). The cultural meta-narratives, in which the works of Howard and Jünger are embedded, are fully informed by such a Christian cultural perspective, a fact which often comes to the fore in the texts themselves, be it Jünger’s praise of St. Anthony in *Das Abeneteuerliche Herz*, or Howard’s adaptation of the Biblical Garden of Gethsemane scene in his tale, “The God in the Bowl”.

The logical attempt by those in the meta-narrative of a *Kultur der Niederlage* to seize upon Christian parallels after their national romance narrative has become a tragedy is founded in Christianity’s vision that the way beyond tragedy is accomplished through comedy. It is for this reason, for example, that we can speak of Jünger’s *In Stahlgewittern* as essentially comic in archetypal structure, particularly when we focus on the comic protagonist’s struggle against the usurper, and the happy ending establishment of a new social order around the protagonist. Frye explains this process thusly:

If we are right in our suggestion that romance, tragedy, irony and comedy are all episodes in a total quest-myth, we can see how it is that comedy can contain a potential tragedy within itself. [...] Christianity, too, sees tragedy as an episode in the divine comedy, the larger scheme of redemption and resurrection. The sense of tragedy as a prelude to comedy seems almost inseparable from anything explicitly Christian. (Frye 215).

Jünger’s metaphysical conception of reality is in keeping with this awareness of, or belief in, such a cyclical process. We will see how

Jünger's texts, and the *Weltanschauung* of cultures of defeat in general, do correspond to the third phase of tragedy, one characterized by "the paradox of victory within tragedy" and which includes "all tragedies in which the hero is in any way related to or a prototype of Christ" (Frye 220). That key phase of that one *mythos* is the impetus to see the entire spectrum of narrative possibilities in terms of a Christian cycle.

#### II.2.3.6. In Defense of Frye's Archetypal Criticism

To conclude this rather lengthy overview of the Jungian-inspired archetypal theory proposed by Frye, it is necessary to defend such a sharply-defined view of textual form. In order to establish a methodology using four basic archetypal narrative forms as the first layer of textual meaning, it means defending a view of literary categories that fell out of fashion after Frye. After Frye, literary critics availed themselves of Wittgenstein's concept of a family of resemblances (Abrams 110) to reject any attempt to define literary genres, a development represented prominently by Alastair Fowler, who wrote that he would treat "genres not as permanent classes but as families subject to change" (Fowler i). In fact, little has changed in the roughly thirty-five years since Knapp wrote, „Die Frage nach den Gattungen oder Grundformen und, damit weithin verbunden, die Frage nach den geistigen Grundlagen literarischer Produktion wurde bislang keineswegs eindeutig, endgültig und unbestreitbar beantwortet“ (Knapp 1974: 258). However, the concept itself of categories of literature, whether referred to as *Grundformen*, as Knapp does, or as genres, endures, as Abrams notes: „generic distinctions remain indispensable in literary discourse“ (Abrams 110). Therefore, since Frye's archetypal or mythic narrative structures arise from experiences that have been part of human cultures since the dawn of humanity, let us then perceive them as the broad background against which all literature – indeed, all culture and cultural products – can be placed. With all texts founded on a basic form derived from these archetypal *mythoi*, we can see how the texts are further shaped through the second layer of form provided by the *Schreibweise*, while a third layer, the modern literary genre, gives each archetypally-based text its final unique form. Therefore, not only does writing in a modern, recognized literary genre propagate the basic *Weltanschauung/Weltbild*/ideology of the *mythos* which provides a narrative with its first layer of form, but this methodology argues that reading, writing and participating in history are

also done from an archetypal perspective; in other words, the national, international, and cultural meta-narratives are implicitly perceived in these mythic, archetypal terms. This does not, to clarify, exclude competing archetypal perspectives from co-existing at the same time.<sup>10</sup> In fact, the struggle at the heart of cultural evolution is in large part a struggle between differing social forces to definitively establish the *mythoi* of the great meta-narratives and discourses.

#### II.2.4. The Formalism of Propp and Jolles

Before concluding this methodology's outline of the first layer of form, it is necessary to note that there are other theories that can be subsumed under this first layer. Not only was the Jungian discourse contemporary with the works of Howard and Jünger being analyzed, but Jung's concept of archetypes in psychology was only a symptom of the systematic disposition of other fields (like physics and chemistry, for example) to establish a repertoire of forms that generate – or account for – more complex structures. In literary criticism, attempts to identify the smaller elements – simple forms, if you will – that make up narrative structures anticipated Frye's work by thirty years, as evidenced by the work of Vladimir Propp and André Jolles.

##### II.2.4.1. Propp's Narratemes

Propp, it can be argued, took an archetypal foundation for narrative as a given, and focussed instead on how the archetypal narrative itself was constructed. This aim motivated Propp, in 1928, to come up with a theory focussed on the "functions", or narratemes, of narrative that he claimed were the smallest generic units of the narrative grammar of Russian folktales. The fact that the great majority of folk tales and fairy tales are romances makes the observation that "all folk or fairy tales are based on 31 fixed elements, or what Propp calls "functions," which occur in a given sequence" (Bressler 97) interesting for this methodology.

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<sup>10</sup> For example, the George W. Bush administration of the United States projected a definite Romance perspective – at least publicly – on its own actions: America (the hero) is winning the war on terror (the villain). This did not preclude other strands of the American cultural discourses from seeing things from a tragic, comedic or satirical perspective, although it is clear that relations of dominance between these perspectives existed.

Propp, like Greimas after him, distinguishes between narrative functions and narrative characters or between narrative unities and actants. This is a conception that goes beyond the characters evident on the surface of a text and posits three groups of actants: 1) Sender/Receiver, 2) Subject-Hero/Object-Value, and 3) Auxiliary/Villain. Even if this methodology will not use Propp's terminology, Propp's theory confirms the archetypal structures that Frye defines in that Propp argues that such basic narratives are characterized by a specific sequence of plot events and by specific types of characters. Propp's work on the Russian folktale is relevant to narratives generally and the quest-romance, i.e. phase three of Frye's romance *mythos*, in particular. Propp's work sheds light on the structure of the romance *mythos* when one applies his schema directly to the romance. This archetypal structure, which is deeply imbedded in culture, provides a ready form to texts, and one can reformulate or rewrite the episodes of romance according to Propp's fixed fairy tale form. The four constants that Propp identifies (i.e., functions of characters serve as stable, constant elements in a tale, independent of how and by whom they are fulfilled; the number of functions known to the fairy tale is limited; the sequence of functions is always identical; all fairy tales are of one type in regard to their structure) are congruent with Frye's theory. In them we see the applicability of the metaphor of character roles being akin to black and white chess pieces, and we see a more-detailed breakdown of the four-stage romance structure that Frye identifies.

This is not to say that Propp's theory does not have its critics. Jameson notes that Lévi-Strauss criticized Propp's model and concludes, "it becomes clear that what is ultimately irreducible in Propp's analysis is simply narrative diachrony itself, the movement of storytelling in time. To characterize this movement in terms of 'irreversibility' is then to produce not a solution, but rather the problem itself" (Jameson 1994: 120-122). The point here is that the establishment of the structure of the romance *mythos*, or the fairy tale/folk tale, is not in and of itself truly meaningful. The meaning of an analysis that establishes, for example, that a text's first layer of form is the archetypal romance only comes when one asks the question, "Why?" Why is a given text structured, on its most basic level, like this? The answer, as has been suggested throughout this introduction, has as much to do with cultural meta-narratives, hierarchies of values, and dominant discourses as it does with the writer of the text, and thus this dissertation will focus – as Jameson does – on

the ideological implications of not only this first layer of form and its semiotic codes, but also on the ideology expressed by the second and third layers of form.

Propp's attempt, in the same 1920s when Jünger and Howard wrote, to shift narrative theory away from character and onto an, arguably, archetypal structural level with his focus on narrative functions, speaks to the applicability of this kind of approach to the texts of Howard and Jünger and the cultural archive of the time. Propp's lack of consideration for factors like narrative personality and an analogous lack of interest in the psychological dimension of characters, which led Marion Gymnich, in the context of a workshop on Possible Worlds theory, to point out the weakness and incompleteness of Propp's theory (Gymnich 2004), only serves to underline Jameson's criticism of Propp and the need to investigate not merely the facts of form, but the ideology of form.

#### II.2.4.2. Jolles' Simple Forms

André Jolles, in his 1930 work, *Einfache Formen*, demonstrates the cultural dynamic toward the archetypal and proceeds similarly to Propp. Just as Frye later attempted to create archetypal categories to account for all narrative structures, so did Jolles before him. Jolles identified the "simple forms" of *Legende, Sage, Mythe, Rätsel, Spruch, Kasus, Memorabile, Märchen*, and *Witz* and Belke explains that „Jolles' Fragestellung zielt auf den Prozeß der Gestaltwerdung, auf den Weg, der von der Sprache zur geschlossenen und autonomen Form führt“ (Belke 269). Jolles' interest was similar to Propp's but aimed at an even more primal level, namely to investigate the process by which language arrives at basic narrative forms. When one looks at the simple forms that Jolles identified, one can argue that four of them are usually manifestations of the romance *mythos* (i.e. *Legende, Sage, Mythe, and Märchen*), while three of them are arguably manifestations of the irony/satire *mythos* (*Rätsel, Spruch* and *Witz*). In this light, one can consider Jolles' work, like that of Propp, as a more detailed look at types of archetypal narrative *mythoi*. Of further interest is the implication from Jolles' work that such simple, elemental forms generate narrative and are themselves inherited semiotic codes. This is highlighted particularly when one notes of Jolles' theories, „Die »Einfachen Formen« sind keine Gattungen im Sinne der normativen Poetik, sondern vorgegebene Gestalten, »die sich, sozusagen ohne Zutun



eines Dichters, in der Sprache selbst ereignen«“ (Belke 269). This again gives credence to the argument that the authoring of a text is a function of codes and concepts that exist in the culture and which a writer cannot help but employ. Lévi-Strauss’s work, in fact, goes so far as to suggest that archetypal narrative forms like myths are prerequisites for human thought. Leach suggests as much when he investigates the implications of one of Lévi-Strauss’ controversial statements: “Nous ne prétendons donc pas montrer comment les hommes pensent dans les mythes mais comment les mythes se pensent dans les hommes, et à leur insu” (in Leach 51-53).

Jolles explained his understanding of the process of language leading to form as follows:

Das, was in dem Wirrsal der Welt gehäuft liegt, besitzt nicht in dem Sinne wie die verschiedenen Samen, eine Erbse oder eine Bohne, schon von vornherein eigene Form, sondern, was hier unterscheidend geschieden wird, nimmt erst während es in der Zerlegung sich zusammenfindet, eigene Form an. [...] Gleiches gesellt sich zu Gleichem, aber es bildet hier keine Haufen von Einzelheiten, sondern eine Mannigfaltigkeit, deren Teile ineinander eindringen, sich vereinigen, verinnigen, und so eine Gestalt, eine Form ergeben – eine Form, die als solche gegenständlich erfaßt werden kann, die, wie wir sagen, eigene Gültigkeit, eigene Bündigkeit besitzt.

Wo nun die Sprache bei der Bildung einer solchen Form beteiligt ist, wo sie anordnend, umordnend in eine solche Form eingreift, sie von sich aus noch einmal gestaltet – da können wir von literarischen Formen sprechen. (Jolles 17-18)

Jolles thus explains the formation of narrative forms in a very organic and evolutionary way. He argues that forms do not arise from something akin to a seed, but that there are very tiny particles of meaning that have some similarities and that find their way to each other, enter into each other, and thus create a form that we can then identify as a distinct form. In the cases where language is involved in such a process (Jolles implies here that meaningful forms can be created without spoken language, and in this case we can think of mental and sensual processes that do not require spoken language, like body language, like conclusions derived from sensual data like heat, cold, etc.), and where language enters into such a particular movement toward form and decisively shapes it, *then* we

can speak of literary forms. The process by which the human mind creates form with/in language requires differentiated responses to phenomena, and Jolles terms such responses as „Geistesbeschäftigung“ (mind occupations). Under the aegis of the *Geistesbeschäftigung* of a particular time and place, the multiplicity of being and happening is concretized into particular *Gestalts* by the play of language. These indivisible units, informed as they are by the *Geistesbeschäftigung* under which they come to be, are termed by Jolles, „Sprachgebärde“ (speech/language gestures). The simple forms Jolles identifies are then the products of particular *Geistesbeschäftigungen*, that are articulated in speech/language gestures: „Einfache Formen ergeben sich also unwillkürlich als Produkte bestimmter Geistesbeschäftigungen, die sich in Sprachgebärden artikulieren“ (Belke 270). The simple forms Jolles identifies are expressed in speech gestures which occur under the aegis of a hegemonic mind-occupation similar to Jameson’s episteme or master code, or even a hegemonic hierarchy of values. Therefore, „Der Wirkungsbereich der Einfachen Form ist nicht auf volkstümliche Urformen beschränkt“ (Belke 271); the presence and effect of these simple forms is felt throughout history and throughout the full range of human expression, not only in myth and folklore. In this Jolles echoes the universalism implied by Frye’s *mythoi*, for both the simple forms and the *mythoi* recur throughout the ages, and Belke therefore criticized theorists like Petsch who assumed that more complex developed forms like genres necessarily descended in a hierarchical manner from Jolles’ simple forms (Belke 272). Belke emphasized the on-going cultural renewal and re-use of simple forms noted above by stating „die Einfache Form entsteht also nicht »von selbst«, sondern ist das Ergebnis der Interdependenz zwischen Erzähler und Gemeinschaft“ (Belke 273). In this statement we see how Jolles’ theory agrees with the idea of genre as a social convention between writer and audience, and thus its inherent agreement with the idea of a text being composed of layers of form that gain their meaning from the interaction between reader and text. We can therefore see Jolles’ theory as a subset of Frye’s archetypal *mythoi*, in agreement with the collective unconscious base idea of Frye’s theory, namely that such simple forms have a universal, archetypal basis as Belke notes: „Die sogenannte Anthropologische Schule (Edward Tylor, Joseph Bédier, Hans Naumann) führt die globale Verbreitung der Einfachen Forme auf gemeinsame, urtümliche Menschheitsideen zurück“ and, „Kurt Ranke erklärt die Ubiquität der Einfachen Formen damit, daß

sie einem ursprünglichen Bedürfnis des Menschen entsprachen“ (Belke 273).

## II.2.5. First Layer of Form Conclusion

To conclude, the concept of a basic archetypal layer of form to narrative texts was a result of an international cultural movement largely expressed in the barbarian discourse and generated by the impulses it received from capitalism and World War I. Freud's psychological theories, and their development by Jung, mirrored this cultural interest in returning to the primal origins of all things, which was expressed in literary criticism in an interest in the structure of basic narrative forms, as the contemporary work of Propp and Jolles shows. Frye, two decades later, brought these various discursive strands together in his archetypal criticism. His concept of narrative *mythoi* based in archetypal characters and plots represents what this methodology proposes as a first layer of narrative form.

## II.3. Theories of the Second and Third Layers of Form

In a manner reminiscent of Jolles, Eco's work can be seen to support this methodology's premise that seeing form as a series of layers is consistent with the conception behind semiotics: "Semiotics suggests a sort of molecular landscape in which what we are accustomed to recognize as everyday forms turn out to be the result of transitory chemical aggregations and so-called 'things' are only the surface appearance assumed by an underlying network of more elementary units" (Eco 1979: 49). Eco is here echoing the approach of Propp and Jolles, and Frye's concept of narrative archetypal *mythoi*, and implicitly supporting this methodology's premise that the form of a text is a unique and transitory combination of its three layers of form, all of these layers being shaped by the codes within cultural discourses and meta-narratives. The prevalence or influence of these codes, and the discourses and meta-narratives they form, can be usefully conceived of through Grabes' concept of hierarchies of value, for, as Eco argues, "the codes, insofar as they are accepted by a society, set up a 'cultural' world which is neither actual nor possible in the ontological sense; its existence is linked to a cultural order, which is the way in which a society thinks, speaks and,

while speaking, explains the ‘purport’ of its thought through other thoughts” (Eco 1979: 61). It is the function of literature to help to evolve this cultural world, and this is accomplished, in the second layer of form, through the adoption of a mode of writing.

### II.3.1. Lachmann’s *Schreibweisen* as the Second Layer of Form

The mode of writing (*Schreibweise*) is the second layer of form, and there are a variety of modes that the writer can adopt to further shape a narrative. A mode is an attitude or a perspective on reality that the writer adopts, and the choice of mode is also subject to cultural and historical forces. Of interest in this dissertation are two specific modes of writing discussed by Renate Lachmann, the *Phantastik* and the *Neophantastik*. These modes refine the basic archetypal pattern that is the foundation of a narrative.

Various literary critics have identified several modes of writing, and Frye himself, in his essay “Historical Criticism: Theory of Modes”, discusses modes that he identifies as myth, romance, the high-mimetic, the low-mimetic and the ironic (Frye 33-34). Although this dissertation does argue that there are four basic archetypal narrative structures at the base of all narratives, it is not the purpose of this dissertation to determine the precise number of modes, and it is not a contradiction of this methodology when Frye identifies romance as a mode. In fact, it is consistent with this methodology’s approach when a text whose archetypal base structure is that of the romance *mythos* is further shaped by a properly romance perspective on reality, i.e. by a romance mode of writing. It is at the point of the second layer of form that this methodology begins to specialize, for the two modes investigated by Lachmann (among many possible modes) are of particular interest to the texts being discussed.

The primary *Schreibweise* that Renate Lachmann investigates, the *Phantastik*, is a narrative strategy that can make use of any of the basic archetypal narrative structures. This second layer of form can then be brought into harmony with the conventions and expectations of several recognized literary genres (i.e. the third layer of form). In Lachmann’s *Erzählte Phantastik* she also refers to this *Schreibweise* as a discourse in its own right, and then goes on to describe how in certain eras this mode of writing ‘consolidates’ into specific genres: „Auch der phantastische Diskurs weist in Vorromantik, Romantik und Postromantik

epochenspezifische genremäßige Konsolidierungen auf“ (Lachmann 2002: 12). The attitude toward reality implicit in the *Phantastik* mode of writing is a discourse unto itself, and leads those texts exhibiting this reality as their second layer of form to take on the conventions of literary genres that arise in specific eras as their final layer of form.

Lachmann's work is, to a certain degree, a response to Tzvetan Todorov's groundbreaking text, *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre* in which he argues that the fantastic is a genre, and that this genre is marked by 'hesitation' between a natural or supernatural explanation of an uncanny textual event (Todorov 31). Lachmann, however, avoids the term genre, and discusses the *Phantastik* as a literary "mode" which cuts across genre lines, acknowledging that literary works may exhibit fantastic elements or use fantastic strategies in narration to varying degrees (Lachmann 2002: 12). Yet, like Todorov, her meditations on the *Phantastik* focus on what she calls the „Unschlüssigkeitsproblem in phantastischen Texten“ (Lachmann 2005). This hesitation, or *Unschlüssigkeit*, is a major feature of texts commonly considered part of the Gothic and horror genres (to name two), and is a factor in the texts of Howard and Jünger in a manner which demonstrates the historical and cultural transition from the prevalence of the *Phantastik* mode to a second mode that Lachmann is forced to consider, the *Neophantastik*. As Lachmann noted in her 2005 lecture in Gießen, there is a cultural shift when „es geht nicht mehr um die Durchlöcherung der Realen Welt“ (Lachmann 2005) and when the object is to present the not-yet-thought and the not-yet-seen as textually real. We see this in Howard and Jünger's texts when the textual representation of the extra-textually "non-real" does not occur in order to evoke „Unsicherheit“, „Unschlüssigkeit“ or hesitation.

Lachmann identifies several functions of the *Phantastik* and the texts that use this narrative strategy. Firstly: „Zum Fremden wird auch das, was die Kehrseite einer Kultur, ihr Anderes, Verleugnetes, Verbotenes, Begehrtes ist. Es scheint, als sei es allein die phantastische Literatur, die sich mit dem Anderen in dieser Doppelbedeutung beschäftigt und etwas in die Kultur zurückholt und manifest macht, was den Ausgrenzungen zum Opfer gefallen ist“ (Lachmann 2002: 9). One function of the *Phantastik* mode of writing is to bring back into the reader's view things that have been marginalized, denied, or forbidden. This function is also a characteristic of the *Neophantastik*; the fact that there is no hesitation effect in a *Neophantastik* text suggests that the

denied, forbidden or marginalized aspects of a culture that such a text makes manifest are not additionally burdened with uncertainty or ambivalence. Secondly: „Die Phantastik wird geradezu zum Gradmesser für die in der geltenden Kultur herrschenden Beschränkungen. Das Irreale, das der phantastische Text favorisiert, stellt die Kategorie des (vereinbarungsgemäß) Realen auf die Probe“ (Lachmann 2002: 10). The *Phantastik* mode serves as a measure of the limitations of a culture and puts social consensus reality to the test. The *Neophantastik* achieves the same questioning of consensus reality, not by demonstrating uncertainty about consensus reality, but by positing another reality altogether. Finally, Lachmann notes: „Die Aufdeckung des Anderen der Kultur bedeutet sowohl die Projektion alternativer Welten als auch die Wiedergutmachung von Mängeln, die aus den Zwängen der faktischen Kultur entstehen“ (Lachmann 2002: 11). The role of the *Phantastik* mode in uncovering the ‘Other’ of a culture and projecting alternative worlds is an attempt to symbolically resolve the flaws and weaknesses resulting from the pressures on the actual culture. The *Neophantastik*, even more definitively than the *Phantastik*, creates alternate worlds (which is a prime feature of two genres that utilize *Neophantastik* strategies, Fantasy and Science Fiction), and, in so doing, the *Neophantastik* – to refer back to Grabes – reorders cultural value hierarchies in such a way that they actually can, through transmission in the mental and social dimensions of culture, contribute to a *Wiedergutmachung* of the lacks of their societies. Lachmann explains:

Die literarische Tatsache, daß die Unschlüssigkeit in der Neophantastik aufgegeben und nur bei einigen Vertretern des Neo-Gothic und der Science-fiction eine gemäßigte Doppelrolle spielt, bedeutet zum eine, daß das hermeneutische Spiel erklärlich-unerklärlich (natürlich-übernatürlich) ausgereizt ist und sein innertextliches Spannungsmoment verloren hat, zum andern, daß der Verzicht auf lebensweltliche Plausibilität die unumwundene Einstellung auf die andersgesetzliche Ordnung verlangt, in die die Realien und die normalen Verhältnisse eingespannt sind. Die Neophantastik ist weder mit Caillois’ noch mit Todorovs Kriterien zu fassen. (Lachmann 2002: 95).

The *Neophantastik*’s refusal to depict mundane plausibility (i.e. depicting the world we know – consensus reality), and demand that the reader accept a textual new order based on its own laws (e.g. the *andersgesetzliche*

geography, history and politics in *Auf den Marmorklippen*), fulfills the same *Phantastik* functions Lachmann describes, but is subversive and culturally evolutionary in a new way: „Die Neophantastik hat diese Argumentationsnöte hinter sich gelassen, sie verzichtete auf jede Art von plausibilisierender Vermittlung“ (Lachmann 2002: 108), and „Weder Held noch Erzähler befragen die Vorgänge und Phänomene des Irrealen“ (Lachmann 2002: 109). As we shall see, this may – as in Jünger’s case – have definite political motivations (i.e. allowing an author to both camouflage the marginal, repressed and taboo aspects of the text while at the same time making them textually present in no uncertain manner), or be part of a larger cultural discourse – as in Howard’s case – in which concepts of civilization are questioned and the longing for the barbarian and the primal are expressed.

For practical purposes, the central *Schreibweise*/mode this methodology will focus on is the *Neophantastik*. The *Phantastik* is still of significance where we see texts of Howard’s and Jünger’s that waver between the two *Schreibweise*, or deliberately invoke both. Lachmann sums up the *Neophantastik Schreibweise* as follows:

In der Neophantastik, die sich vom Legitimationszwang hinsichtlich ihrer Phantasmen befreit hat, werden Verfahren der Verwandlung, der Umerfindung und der Erfindung ohne erklärende Rahmung ins Textspiel eingebracht. Die Welt wird aus ihrem Sosein herausgeführt, und ihre Möglichkeiten werden durch Unmöglichkeiten *übertroffen*. Aus der Metamorphose, der mnemonischen Wahrnehmung der Welt und der Verkehrung ihrer Wirklichkeit in eine zweite, doppelgängerische Wirklichkeit entstehen Phantasmen, die in stärkerem Maß als die vermittelten und quasi legitimierten der »klassischen« Phantastik Verwunderung, vielleicht Befremden hervorrufen. Menschliche Gestalten und Gedankenfiguren erhalten ungesehene und unvorgedachte Konturen, die nicht mehr in einem Widerspiel von natürlich und übernatürlich erscheinen und das Unschlüssigkeitskriterium außer Kraft setzen. (Lachmann 2002: 335)

The *Neophantastik* mode has freed itself from the need to legitimize its phantasms and its processes of metamorphosis, and both re-invention and invention are brought into the textual game without an explanatory framework. The world is guided out of its actual being, and its possibilities are trumped by impossibilities. Through metamorphosis,

mnemonic perception of the world and the conversion of its reality into a second, doppelgänger reality, phantasms arise that, to a stronger degree than the traditional and quasi-legimitized phantasms of the ‘classic’ *Phantastik* mode, call forth amazement and possibly alienation. Human figures and thought constructs receive unforeseen and un-forethought contours and they no longer appear in the back-and-forth game of natural-supernatural: thus the irresolution criterium of the *Phantastik* is rendered impotent. As we shall see in the texts of Jünger and Howard, all these characteristics of the *Neophantastik* mode are present and decisively shape the political unconscious of the texts.

It must be remembered that the *Neophantastik Schreibweise* is a narrative strategy that cuts across genre lines. Texts like those of Jünger and Howard under consideration do make use of *Neophantastik* narrative strategies as part of their second layer of form, but use different genres as their third layer of form. The *Phantastik* and the *Neophantastik* are not genres in and of themselves, and these *Schreibweisen* lend themselves to various genres arising from differing historical and cultural factors. The rejection of the *Phantastik Unschlüssigkeit* in favour of the wholesale textual supplanting of the “real” (or primary) world, as is the central feature of the *Neophantastik*, is a precondition in order to produce the modern genres of Fantasy and Science Fiction.

### II.3.2. Genre: The Third Layer of Form

This third layer of form, the genre itself, has long been a central focus of literary criticism, and there are respected literary critics, like Alastair Fowler, who have argued that the concept of literary genres is untenable. A major problem with Fowler’s argument is one that is of great significance in the social dimension of the semiotic model of culture, namely the concept of institutions. Jameson argues that literary genres are social institutions with a set of conventions that readers expect – and desire – to encounter (Jameson 1994: 106); Grabes, too, speaks of „gattungsgebundene Leserwartungen“ (Grabes 2004b: 136). The fact that readers have expectations of certain exemplars of narrative and seek out certain narrative conventions is a common sense argument against Fowler’s position that there are no defining characteristics that could establish a genre. And yet Fowler calls such definition a ‘chimera’ and cites Kames to support his position: “So Kames, ridiculing the chimera of definition, observes that ‘literary compositions run into each other,



precisely like colours: in their strong tints they are easily distinguished; but are susceptible of so much variety, and take on so many different forms, that we never can say where one species ends and another begins” (Fowler 37). Fowler doesn’t realize, however, that the very argument he cites to justify his objection to genre definition supports Frye’s spectral approach to literary classification, and Fowler’s argument in favour of the concept of the family-resemblance approach to genre – “Literary genre seems just the sort of concept with blurred edges that is suited to such an approach” (Fowler 41) – is built into Frye’s concept of the six fluid phases of each of the four basic archetypal narrative structures that he describes. If we can therefore empirically establish a first layer of form, and then find that there are narratives that exhibit narrative strategies specific to specific modes of writing like the *Phantastik* and *Neophantastik*, we can confidently also define a third layer of form and identify literary genres through the institutionalized conventions that readers seek out.

The current popularity of ‘Possible Worlds’ theory in literary criticism would seem to some another objection to the ability to define literary genres. Howard and Jünger availed themselves of the Fantasy genre’s convention of sub-creation, and Jünger also employed the science fiction genre convention of the novum; the term ‘sub-creation’ was used by J.R.R. Tolkien to refer to the self-contained setting of the modern Fantasy genre which is a *Neophantastik* fantasy world textually removed from our consensus reality; novum is a term used by Darko Suvin to describe how the *Neophantastik* setting of science fiction is derived from extrapolation; yet Possible Worlds theory argues that *every* literary text projects its own universe outside of extra-textual realities: “Fictional worlds are not imitations or representations of the actual world (*realia*) but sovereign realms of *possibilia*; as such, they establish diverse relationships to the actual world, situate themselves at a closer or further distance from reality” (in Gymnich 2004: 1). This would seem to question the genre-specificity of the concepts of sub-creation and the novum, but the fact is that science fiction and fantasy have settings that *cannot in any way* be mistaken for the ordinary reality of the reader or any reality that the reader knows from history; to use the language of Possible Worlds theory, they are knowledge-worlds at a very great remove from mundane reality and this marks the concepts of sub-creation and the novum as identifiable genre conventions. The fact that both Howard and Jünger wrote texts with such settings, and employed the conventions

of these genres, is significant for the political unconscious analysis of their texts.

As a pulp fiction writer, Howard wrote in an impressive variety of genres, including crime thriller, western, spicy adventure, boxing, and oriental adventure stories. All of these genres feature knowledge-worlds that are relatively close to the reality of the 1920s and 1930s North American pulp fiction reader, some set in the contemporary present, and others (like westerns) set in the recent quasi-historical past. Although Howard once dabbled in science fiction, his enduring fame comes from his work in the Fantasy genre, particularly the stories of Conan the Cimmerian. The sub-created world that Conan's adventures are set in Howard named 'The Hyborian Age'. Against this detailed geographical backdrop, Conan's adventures play out, and the metaphoric and symbolic significance of the nations and events that occur in this sub-creation will establish another affinity between Howard and Jünger, namely a concern with the post-Versailles world that results, in their writing, in similarly prophetic textual gestures.

While Jünger's knowledge-worlds are close to the mundane reality of his readers in his early World War I accounts and in his political essays that deal directly with the political reality of his readers, at the outbreak of World War II he published a fantasy work, *Auf den Marmorklippen* (*On the Marble Cliffs*). The symbolic and metaphoric significance of the sub-creation he establishes for his narrator demonstrates both the prophetic nature of Jünger's thought and his affinity with Howard. Jünger's first post-WW II novel, *Heliopolis* (1949), was science fiction, and the novum he establishes there is a development of the fantasy sub-creation of *Auf den Marmorklippen*. In this engagement with extrapolatory forms of fiction he again shows a kinship with Howard.

### II.3.2.1. The Fantasy genre (and its Sister Genre) as a Third Layer of Form

While this dissertation will consider texts from a wide variety of genres, including science fiction, westerns, and memoirs, its central focus is on the Fantasy genre. The relative lack of modern literary criticism of works in the Fantasy genre is attributable in part to the reluctance to consider *Trivalliteratur*, and is highlighted in the fact that both Todorov's and Lachmann's theories of the "fantastic" ignore the fact that a

popularly recognized genre called “Fantasy” exists.

The Fantasy genre, as it crystallized in the work of William Morris, especially *The Story of the Glittering Plain*, demonstrates in its structure and conventions that it has gone beyond the *Phantastik* mode’s convention of the irreal irrupting into a textual situation meant to represent mundane reality. The Fantasy genre eschews any textual representation of, or reference to, mundane reality and therefore presents a textual situation that is a function of its properly *Neophantastik Schreibweise*. Fantasy, despite having its antedecedents in works evidencing the *Phantastik* mode, establishes, with the pioneering work of Morris and Dunsany, its own conventions based on two essential components. These, as noted, were theorized by Tolkien to be the supernatural and the sub-creation.

While this genre was arguably initiated by William Morris at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it is in the time period of this cultural archive (i.e. the 1920s, 30s and 40s) that it becomes established in popular culture, first with the work of Lord Dunsany, and, most importantly, with the work of Howard himself. The Pre-Raphaelites, particularly the “second beginning of Pre-Raphaelitism” (Gaunt 72), were spiritual forerunners of the Fantasy genre in English-speaking countries. The Pre-Raphaelites were consumed by the romantic medievalism that was to become a central feature of the Fantasy genre, and one of its most influential members, Edward Burne-Jones, evoked the medieval atmosphere of the genre when he recalled “pictures of the old days, the abbey and long processions of the faithful, banners of the cross, copes and crosiers, gay knights and ladies by the river bank – and all the pageantry of the golden age” (in Gaunt 72-73). This “imaginary Middle Ages into which the *Morte d’Arthur* had been an introduction” (Gaunt 138) was the basis for the new literary genre. Following the same guiding lights as the Pre-Raphaelites – who themselves followed Malory and Tennyson (Gaunt 74) – J.R.R. Tolkien not only became a major writer in the Fantasy genre, but he also attempted to define the genre and its conventions. The label that he gave the genre, “fairy stories”, found little popular or academic acceptance, but the genre conventions that he put forth were in fact those of the social institution popularly known as the genre of Fantasy.

Tolkien begins his essay “On Fairy Stories” by making clear that he is trying to answer three questions about this genre: the first question is about genre definition, the second is about genre history and the third is a question about the function of this genre (Tolkien 11).

Tolkien begins his definition of the Fantasy genre by emphasizing the necessary convention of the supernatural and by clarifying what sorts of texts are not to be considered part of the genre. By denying that Swift's "A Voyage to Lilliput" and Wells' *The Time Machine* are part of the genre, he begins to establish the parameters of the genre and thus that of neighbouring genres like science fiction. He implies that texts that employ the *Phantastik* or *Neophantastik* mode of writing are not necessarily exemplars of the Fantasy genre. This becomes more apparent when he notes that texts that deny the textual reality of the supernatural convention of fantasy – as texts employing the *Phantastik Schreibweise* often do – are not to be considered part of the genre. He insists that the narrative of the Fantasy genre "should be presented as 'true'. [...] it cannot tolerate any frame or machinery suggesting that the whole story [...] is a figment or illusion" (Tolkien 19).

Tolkien, in his definition, discusses how the human faculty of fantasy, or imagination, is necessary for the second convention of the genre, sub-creation. Lachmann notes how the artist's role is akin to that of a creator, particularly when she quotes a Russian symbolist who argued „Der Künstler ist Schöpfer des Universums. Die künstlerische Form ist die geschaffene Welt ... Der Künstler ist Gott seiner Welt“ (in Lachmann 344); Tolkien, as a devout Catholic, does not go quite so far in his terminology to express the sentiment Lachmann describes, and so adopts a term coined by Coleridge<sup>11</sup> to reflect the artist's god-like role, particularly in the *Neophantastik*-imbued Fantasy genre. He writes, "in such 'fantasy', as it is called, new form is made; Faërie begins; Man becomes a sub-creator" (Tolkien 25). He specifies what he means as follows:

What really happens is that the story-maker proves a successful 'sub-creator'. He makes a Secondary World which your mind can enter. Inside it, what he relates is 'true': it accords with the laws of that world. You therefore believe it, while you are, as it were, inside. The moment disbelief arises, the spell is broken; the magic, or rather art, has failed. You are then out in the Primary World again, looking at the little abortive Secondary World from outside. (Tolkien 36)

Thus he establishes, after the supernatural, the second major convention

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<sup>11</sup> This term, according to Maren Bonacker's presentation during the 10th meeting of the *Sektion „Phantastische Welten“* (Wetzlar, 12.02.06), was coined by Coleridge, adopted by MacDonald, and finally also used by Tolkien in "On Fairy-Stories".

of the Fantasy genre proper, sub-creation. He specifies how these two major conventions must be employed: the supernatural is always presented as textually true (in keeping with the *Neophantastik Schreibweise*), and the sub-creation presents a world that is not intended to represent our primary consensus reality but is textually treated as thoroughly real, with no hesitation or *Unschlüssigkeit*.

Having established this, he moves on to consider the function of this genre of literature. He suggests that texts of this genre, which foreground an unabashed connection to the primal and archetypal, have four primary functions: “Fantasy, Recovery, Escape, Consolation” (Tolkien 43).

The fact that Tolkien identifies fantasy as both a mental faculty necessary for the establishment of this literary genre and an effect it has on its readers, suggests why he reached for another term to label the genre itself. However, the centrality of this human mental faculty in the make-up of this literary genre does, in fact, underline why it is popularly known as the Fantasy genre today. Tolkien argues that one of the functions of the Fantasy genre is to encourage fantasy in its readers, which he regards as a positive exercise of the human spirit:

Fantasy is a natural human activity. It certainly does not destroy or even insult Reason; and it does not either blunt the appetite for, nor obscure the perception of, scientific verity. On the contrary. The keener and the clearer is the reason, the better fantasy will it make. If men were ever in a state in which they did not want to know or could not perceive truth (facts or evidence), then Fantasy would languish until they were cured. (Tolkien 50)

In *Erzählte Phantastik* Lachmann documents the manifold historical objections to the mental faculty of fantasy that Tolkien is responding to here, including, for example that of Locke: „Die sprachkunstfeindliche Position Lockes erscheint als die rigoroseste in der Verurteilung einer nicht realitätsgerechten Phantasietätigkeit, die dem eigentlichen Vermögen, *judgment* weicht“ (Lachmann 2002: 65). Locke’s position in favour of judgement is fundamentally antagonistic to the art of language and is most rigorous in damning any fantasy that does not conform to reality; in the above quotation, Tolkien speaks to precisely such an objection and counters it. Lachmann also reveals the important function of fantasy – and thus of the genre of which it is a necessary component – when she notes that it is „eine Fähigkeit, Abwesendes zu

vergegenwärtigen“ (Lachmann 2002: 49), which, as we shall see, is integral to Fantasy’s ability to alter value hierarchies and contribute to the evolution of human culture.

The function of ‘Recovery’ Tolkien defines as a “re-gaining of a clear view” (Tolkien 52). Wytenbroek argues that the Fantasy genre (along with science fiction) has an experimental function which allows the Fantasy author – in the spirit of the *Phantastik* and *Neophantastik* – to question consensus reality and, in effect, to offer new perspectives on that reality, and therefore the possibility to change it. Tolkien puts it thusly: “We need, in any case, to clean our windows; so that the things seen clearly may be freed from the drab blur of triteness or familiarity – from possessiveness” (Tolkien 52). The very distance from consensus reality that the Fantasy genre establishes through its *Neophantastik* strategies allows for this clear view of consensus reality, and thus offers possibilities for change.

The third function of the Fantasy genre, ‘Escape’, pits Tolkien against the ingrained prejudice against escapism in traditional literary criticism we have seen in the likes of Fowler and Adorno and Horkheimer. Instead of acknowledging – as Adorno and Horkheimer insist – that escapism represents an acceptance of one’s own oppression, a collaboration with the status quo, or a knowing complicity with injustice, Tolkien argues that the function of escape is, in fact, subversive. He states:

I do not accept the tone of scorn or pity with which ‘Escape’ is now so often used: a tone for which the uses of the word outside literary criticism give no warrant at all. In what the misusers are fond of calling Real Life, Escape is evidently as a rule very practical, and may even be heroic. In real life it is difficult to blame it, unless it fails; in criticism it would seem to be the worse the better it succeeds. Evidently we are faced by a misuse of words, and also by a confusion of thought. Why should a man be scorned, if, finding himself in prison, he tries to get out and go home? Or if, when he cannot do so, he thinks and talks about other topics than jailers and prison-walls? (Tolkien 54)

Tolkien underlines the subversion implicit in the Escape function of Fantasy when he adds: “For it is after all possible for a rational man, after reflection (quite unconnected with fairy-story or romance), to arrive at the condemnation, implicit at least in the mere silence of ‘escapist’

literature, of progressive things like factories, or the machine-guns and bombs that appear to be their most natural and inevitable, dare we say ‘inexorable’, products” (Tolkien 56). In other words, Fantasy’s *Neophantastik* refusal to give textual reality to “the real world” is in fact a condemnation of what Tolkien elsewhere calls the ‘Morlockian horror’ of our industrial reality. This is not, however, to deny Adorno and Horkheimer’s arguments altogether; the fact that opposition to capitalist industrial reality is harnessed by capitalist industrial reality for the sake of profit is one of the contradictions at the heart of both our current mode of production and the Fantasy genre itself.

The fourth function that Tolkien argues that the Fantasy genre fulfills is Consolation. His definition of this function again brings to mind Adorno and Horkheimer’s arguments that escapist culture-industry products re-inforce the status quo. However, we can see a therapeutic wisdom related to both Recovery and Escape that does not cancel the subversive aspect of escapism but re-connects the potential subversive to consensus reality and its real human limitations:

There are hunger, thirst, poverty, pain, sorrow, injustice, death. And even when men are not facing hard things such as these, there are ancient limitations from which fairy-stories offer a sort of escape, and old ambitions and desires (touching the very roots of fantasy) to which they offer a kind of satisfaction and consolation. [...] And lastly there is the oldest and deepest desire, the Great Escape: the Escape from Death. Fairy-stories provide many examples and modes of this – which might be called the genuine *escapist*, or (I would say) *fugitive* spirit. (Tolkien 58-59)

In effect, Tolkien declares a border-crossing, reality-construct-crossing exploration of wishes and fears as a central aspect of Fantasy, and ‘Fantasy’, ‘Recovery’, ‘Escape’ and ‘Consolation’ are, in fact, the very functions of the Fantasy genre. If Grabes is right in arguing that high literature is an impetus to change, Tolkien’s Fantasy genre may well generate the same impetus to change, an impetus arising precisely out of its four functions.

Tolkien’s comments on the content of the genre in light of the genre’s exploration of primal wishes and fears re-connects the Fantasy genre to the archetypal. This is most evident when he speaks of Fantasy’s sources in the “Cauldron of Story” and the “Soup” that it contains: the stories, legends and spirituality of our ancestors – and

significantly, of our pagan ancestors. In this context he discusses Arthur and Beowulf, for example, for within their stories one recognizes the sources – and thus content – of the modern Fantasy genre. These stories, and others like them, (for example the mythic stories of the god Thor that Tolkien cites in his essay) offer up the archetypes that characterize the Fantasy genre, and reveal why fantasy's first layer of form is most often that of the archetypal romance *mythos*. What emerges from the "Soup" are not archaic narratives that leave the modern reader cold, but an important – and, as argued above, subversive – re-valuing of archetypes and value hierarchies (Tolkien 32).

It is in the interplay between Fantasy's two major conventions that the genre's cultural *Veränderungspotential* becomes evident. Fantasy's "sub-creation" convention is inherently subversive when we consider Lachmann's statement that „Die Phantastik zelebriert das Andere der Kultur, indem sie Gegenwelten oder alternative Welten entwirft“ (Lachmann 2002: 81). Since the *Neophantastik* arguably represents an intensification of the *Phantastik*'s subversive characteristics, and since *Neophantastik* narrative strategies are necessary for the Fantasy genre to come about, Fantasy's sub-creation convention gains its ability to help evolve culture through an intensification of an effect that – to recall the base position of Possible Worlds theory – literature in general already has: „Literarisches Welterzeugen ist also erinnerungskulturell, weil es eng mit den symbolischen Ressourcen kollektiver Gedächtnisse verbunden ist“ (Erl 122). Fantasy can tap these symbolic resources of collective memory, or the collective unconscious, in a more openly archetypal way than any other genre. This is significant for this dissertation, for the sub-creations Jünger and Howard use in their Fantasy fiction and the archetypal *mythoi* that structure their accessing of the symbolic resources of collective memory are strong links that draw the two authors together in their common – modern, culture of defeat and *Verhaltenslehre der Kälte* – environments.

Tolkien's argument that the sub-created Secondary World be textually divorced from the primary world does not mean that Tolkien's, Howard's and Jünger's sub-creations offer absolutely no gateways back to the primary world – they do: Tolkien's term "Middle Earth" is taken from *Mittelgart/Midgard*, i.e. the Germanic term for the primary world, and Howard's Hyborian Age is explicitly described as occurring between Ice Ages that occurred in the primary world. Jünger, in keeping with his politically-conscious allegorical motivations, is also not interested in



keeping these gateways completely hidden either.

Finally, to widen the scope of this genre discussion, the two essential conventions of Fantasy correspond to two similar conventions in fantasy's sister genre, science fiction. Lachmann, as noted, suggests that the majority of science fiction stories are also written using the *Neophantastik* Schreibweise (Lachmann 2002: 95), and it is interesting that these two popular contemporary genres utilizing the *Neophantastik* Schreibweise have parallel structural conventions. Consider Suvin's definition of science fiction: "SF is distinguished by the narrative dominance of a fictional novelty (novum, innovation) validated both by being continuous with a body of already existing cognitions and by being a 'mental experiment' based on cognitive logic" (Suvin 45). In other words, Fantasy's sub-creation parallels SF's novum (i.e. a new world), and Fantasy's supernatural parallels SF's extrapolation (i.e. a mental experiment following internally consistent logic). The current popularity of these genres is to be explained by their subversion of the consensus reality of our primary world by textually positing completely other worlds. Fantasy's textual rejection of our 'Morlockian horror' in favour of a return to an earlier mode of production, i.e. the popular medieval setting of fantasy sub-creations, and science fiction's exploration of the social implications of scientific advances, and the consequences of technological innovations, are significant symptoms of the contradictions of our contemporary world. The fact that these are sister genres, and that many writers have often worked in both genres, suggests a dialectical solution to the contradictions facing our world, one involving elements of the symbolic resolutions both genres put forward.

It needs to be noted as well that there is room for quite a bit of variation in the Fantasy genre once one has respected the two central structural conventions: Fantasy, like other genres, has sub-genres. Sub-genres obey the basic conventions of the genre, but have additional conventions; in the case of Fantasy one can distinguish the sub-genres of Sword and Sorcery, and High Fantasy. While both are true to the stipulations of sub-creation and the supernatural, the former accents adventure and the relating of episodes dominated by battle, usually single combat, while the latter accents the sub-creation itself and deals much more with the history and details of the sub-creation.

#### **II.4. Conclusion about the Three Layers of Form**

These three layers of form combine to express a text's unique and properly political *Weltanschauung*. The archetypal *mythoi*, with their origin in the Jungian collective unconscious, represent the basic *Weltanschauung* implied by each season of Frye's seasonal metaphor. From these basic *Weltanschauungen* more specific political trajectories take shape as the *Schreibweise* fleshes out each basic mythic narrative pattern. The *Phantastik* and *Neophantastik*, as we have seen, have a social and cultural function in thematizing the marginalized, taboo, and suppressed, and this thematizing is ultimately political. Finally, the third layer of form, the genre which gives the story its final shape and direction – and identifies it as part of a social institution, also implies a political trajectory. For example, Howard's Conan the Cimmerian stories, whose third layer of form is the modern Fantasy genre, express a political perspective that builds on the sense of heroic mission inherent in the romance *mythos*, on the culturally subversive alternate world suggestions of the *Neophantastik* mode, and on the Fantasy genre's offer of escape and recovery from the limitations and horrors of the capitalist mode of production. These processes – archetypal *mythos* as basic narrative 'line', *Schreibweise* as approach to/conditioning of that narrative line, and genre as completed form of the narrative – reveal their accretion of meaning through Fredric Jameson's political unconscious method of analysis.

## **II.5. The Ideology of Form and the Political Unconscious**

This overview of this dissertation's methodology concludes with the political unconscious theory of literary analysis proposed by Fredric Jameson. The Marxist conception of history and of class struggle establishes a cultural frame of reference valid not only in the time of Howard and Jünger, but also in our day. Jameson does acknowledge, in a properly post-modern way, that the ideas of Marx and Engels and other Marxists no longer suffice to sufficiently analyze the inner workings of culture and he compensates for this lack by appropriating aspects of the psychological, anthropological, myth critical and literary theories we have just outlined. Jameson's theory is proposed as the core of this methodology because of its insistence on the primacy of history in literary analysis, and because of Jameson's insights on how form and ideology are inextricably interwoven. Jameson's three horizons of reading reveal how the three layers of form considered in this dissertation can reveal their ideological implications.

## II.5.1. History as the Untranscendable Horizon of Understanding

As is to be expected from a Marxist, Jameson insists that history is the untranscendable horizon of understanding. This strikes one as a logical approach, in that everything that has ever happened on this planet and within human society can be perceived within an historical framework. Jameson is careful, however, to differentiate the implications of the term “history”. Jameson insists that history “is not a text, for it is fundamentally non-narrative and nonrepresentational” (Jameson 1994: 82). This, in fact, is the “real” untranscendable horizon of history: an accumulation of events with no consciousness to interpret or guide them. Of course, such an horizon is not accessible to the human mind, and Jameson makes it clear that any attempt to interpret or understand operates under the “proviso that history is inaccessible to us except in textual form, or in other words, that it can be approached only by way of a prior (re)textualization” (Jameson 1994: 82). Any attempt to understand, order, interpret or present history occurs through text, and as such is a narrative subject to the same common human archetypal impulses to understand reality through a mythical ordering of it.

In the current cultural studies paradigm of literary criticism, a text’s status as an autonomous work of art is challenged, for history is perceived as the interrelationship of discourses, and these discourses manifest – in a unique hierarchy – in any given text. It follows from this that authorship itself is seen in this paradigm as a cultural construct, for a text is the manifestation of a plurality of semiotic codes. The illusion of unity is achieved by the fact that the interaction of discourses in any given historical era is dependent on an episteme, which is a unifying pattern, or what Jameson calls the dominant paradigm. The apparently unified self, that is the writer, is unconsciously manifesting the historical interaction of discourses governed by an episteme in the text that the writer constructs with the semiotic codes that she or he has unconsciously received.

Jameson acknowledges that there is a complex relationship between a text and reality, and that the reality the text responds to is, to some degree, an historical construct that it helps to create. Jameson’s response to Kenneth Burke’s insistence that the symbolic act, that is a text, is merely symbolic explains the nuances of a text’s relationship to reality:

The literary or aesthetic act therefore always entertains some

active relationship with the Real; yet in order to do so, it cannot simply allow 'reality' to persevere inertly in its own being, outside the text and at distance. It must rather draw the Real into its own texture, and the ultimate paradoxes and false problems of linguistics, and most notably of semantics, are to be traced back to this process, whereby language manages to carry the Real within itself as its own intrinsic or immanent subtext. Insofar, in other words, as symbolic action – what Burke will map as 'dream,' 'prayer,' or 'chart' – is a way of doing something to the world, to that degree what we are calling 'world' must inhere within it, as the content it has to take up into itself in order to submit it to the transformations of form. The symbolic act therefore begins by generating and producing its own context in the same moment of emergence in which it steps back from it, taking its measure with a view toward its own projects of transformation. The whole paradox of what we have here called the subtext may be summed up in this, that the literary work or cultural object, as though for the first time, brings into being that very situation to which it is also, at one and the same time, a reaction. It articulates its own situation and textualizes it, thereby encouraging and perpetuating the illusion that the situation itself did not exist before it, that there is nothing but a text, that there never was any extra- or con-textual reality before the text itself generated it in the form of a mirage. (Jameson 1994: 81-82)

In other words, the paradox that Jameson is trying to describe is the fact that each text is a unique historical intersection of discourses, a unique historical moment and perspective that, in effect, creates the history that it responds to through its textualization of history. Since every text is unique and history is only accessible through texts (all cultural artifacts being here conceived of as 'text'), each text does, in fact, textualize history in a way that has not been done before. At the same time, with the 'author' of a text being this intersection of discourses and social forces with its nexus in the person of the writer, the text is a part of history in the untranscendable sense of events that are not ordered by narrative; in other words, the text is part of a pre-existing whole, and cannot be considered separately, regardless of how much the text suggests that it is a whole in and of itself.

In this light, even Jameson's eclectic appropriation of the psychological theories of Freud and Jung, the anthropological theory of Lévi-Strauss, and the mythic literary theory of Frye occurs under the aegis of history. The romance perspective that Jameson acknowledges as informing Marxism in its heroic quest to liberate humanity from the exploitation of the capitalist mode of production can be seen at work in Jameson's theoretical bricolage. In other words, the conflict, or *agon*, for a Marxist critic in the 1970s and 1980s, when Jameson was coming to critical prominence, were precisely those failings of official Marxism in the world, and the theoretical gaps in Marxist theory that failed to address facets of reality. The response was not to ignore all evidence of this as official Marxism did, or to engage in torturous re-interpretations of Marx to account for this evidence, but to avail oneself of the ideas necessary to successfully resolve the quest, for, "for Hegel as for Marx, Reason was not a transcendental observer of the world with its own rules independent of the course of history, but was itself a factor, aspect, or expression of history; and that the progress of mankind towards 'rationality' was not a matter of gradually assimilating ready-made rules of thought, but of a growing sense of community and acknowledgement of rationality in others. For that purpose it was necessary that human beings should cease to function as commodities, and this was Marx's principal message" (Kolakowski 178).

## II.5.2. The Ideology of Form

Jameson's focus on the ideology of form unlocks the historical function of literary texts. As indicated by Eco, ideology is inherent in any communication, as any communication is necessarily limited and thus revelatory of a conscious or unconscious bias in favour of certain concepts (be they considered codes or values). This dissertation will argue that the ideology of form is apparent when one considers the first, archetypal, layer of form, the second, modal, layer of form, and the third, generic, layer of form, as all of these layers shape a narrative. Jameson argues that the ideology of form consists of the "**dynamics of sign systems** of several distinct modes of production [*that*] can be registered and apprehended [*and that*] these dynamics – the newly constituted "text" of our third horizon [*of reading/interpretation*]- **make up what can be termed *the ideology of form***, that is, the **determinate contradiction**

of the specific messages emitted by the varied sign systems which coexist in a given artistic process as well as in its general social formation” (Jameson 1994: 96-97). This dissertation suggests that the ideology of a narrative may also be apprehended in earlier stages of the analysis, and the practical demonstration of this will be shown during the textual analyses that follow this introduction.

These *explications de texte* must, however, be historicized, as Jameson insists any critical operation must do. This dissertation’s chronological structure has a built-in reflexive dimension: history itself, particularly the narrative textualizations that individuals, societies and cultures see in it and create in it, can be conceived in terms of archetypal *mythoi*. This position, in fact, counters objections to Jameson’s (and Marxism’s) conception of history like the one expressed by Hutcheon: “And the implication is that there can be no single, essentialized, transcendent concept of ‘genuine historicity’ (as Fredric Jameson desires), no matter what the nostalgia (Marxist or traditionalist) for such an entity” (Hutcheon 89). Any human conception of history – since it will, as Eco argues for communication in general, necessarily be limited – is inevitably ideological, and its events are inevitably ordered by humans in terms of narrative. The narrative structures chosen are these four basic archetypal/mythic structures that precede conventionalized genres of narrative (as Schivelbusch’s work, for example, demonstrates). As noted earlier, Jameson himself notes Marxism’s relationship with romance and thus acknowledges its necessarily archetypal human narrative interpretation of history, and yet Jameson’s – and Marx’s – exhortation to historicize all facets of knowledge reflects the endeavour to gather as much empirical knowledge as possible *before* the inevitable human succumbing to narrative. Marxism’s romance trajectory is something that it shares with Christianity, for example, and its quest to free humanity from exploitation and suffering is a noble one; since, inevitably, all positions are ideological, this position is, in fact, better than most. Hutcheon herself acknowledges the limitations on all human perceptions of history when she correctly states that history is yet another discourse and when she adds, “In other words, the meaning and shape are not *in the events*, but *in the systems* which make those past ‘events’ into present historical ‘facts.’ This is not a ‘dishonest refuge from truth’ but an acknowledgement of the meaning-making function of human constructs” (Hutcheon 89). It is the purpose of this dissertation to demonstrate the systems at work in the texts of Howard and Jünger, and how the form of

their narratives were interwoven with the narrative form of the textualizations of history current in their day.

Stephen Greenblatt, commonly associated with the beginnings of the New Historicism school of literary criticism that is at the base of the current cultural studies paradigm, noted that New Historicist critical practice –

challenges the assumptions that guarantee a secure distinction between ‘literary foreground’ and ‘political background’ or, more generally, between artistic production and other kinds of social production. Such distinctions do in fact exist, but they are not intrinsic to the texts; rather they are made up and constantly redrawn by artists, audiences, and readers. These collective social constructions on the one hand define the range of aesthetic possibilities within a given representational mode, and, on the other, link that mode to the complex network of institutions, practices, and beliefs that constitute the culture as a whole. In this light, the study of genre is an exploration of the poetics of culture. (Greenblatt 1981: 6)

If this is true of genre – i.e. that aesthetic possibilities are intimately tied to collective social constructions – it is even more true of the *mythoi* which present a basic archetypal narrative not only to literary authors, but to all social producers (i.e. everyone in a society) in the complex network that constitutes the culture as a whole – as Schivelbusch convincingly argues in terms of the “cultures of defeat” that he considers.

What makes the Marxist position in this context interesting, and thus Jameson’s theory worth considering, is the fact that the narrative form given to history and to aspects of social discourses is a process bound up with intense social struggle. Jameson describes the relationship of the Marxist concept of class struggle with this narrative one: “For Marxism, however, the very content of a class ideology is relational, in the sense that its ‘values’ are always actively in situation with respect to the opposing class, and defined against the latter: normally, a ruling class ideology will explore various strategies of the *legitimation* of its own power position, while an oppositional culture or ideology will, often in covert and disguised strategies, seek to contest and to undermine the dominant ‘value system’” (Jameson 1994: 84). This struggle, for example, suggests the attraction of the *Phantastik* or *Neophantastik* as a narrative’s second layer of form, for the role of the *Phantastik* is to highlight the ‘Other’, the repressed, the taboo of a culture and to project alternative worlds in an

attempt to symbolically resolve the flaws and weaknesses resulting from the pressures on the actual culture.

Finally, the discussion of three layers of form will be misleading if one does not recall Eco's statement about the unique "chemical" composition of any coming together of semiotic codes: Jameson's three horizons of reading do not correspond directly to the three layers of form, but allow us to make observations within each horizon of reading culled from one or more of the layers of form.

### II.5.3. The Theory of the Political Unconscious

The importance of the political unconscious for cultural studies literary criticism derives from Jameson's accomplishment in linking literary form with ideology, which is acknowledged by the academic and critical community: „Fredric Jameson hat in Zusammenhang mit der kulturellen Funktionen literarischer Texte die Vorstellung einer ‚ideology of form‘ geprägt, welche besagt die Form sei ‚immanently and intrinsically an ideology in its own right‘“ (Gymnich and Nünning 2005b: 12). Foregrounding the ideological in the historical interaction of discourses and semiotic codes is not only logical – if we recall Eco's definition – it is indispensable for an analysis whose central focus is how the works of Howard and Jünger manifest and re-write the value hierarchies of their societies, or, to speak more plainly, the ideologies of their societies.

Jameson presents his full list of influences in the preface to *The Political Unconscious*: “It should meanwhile be obvious that no work in the area of narrative analysis can afford to ignore the fundamental contributions of Northrop Frye, the codification by A.J. Greimas of the whole Formalist and semiotic traditions, the heritage of a certain Christian hermeneutics, and above all, the indispensable explorations by Freud of the logic of dreams, and by Claude Lévi-Strauss of the logic of ‘primitive’ storytelling and *pensée sauvage*, not to speak of the flawed yet monumental achievements in this area of the greatest Marxist philosopher of modern times, Georg Lukács” (Jameson 1994: 12-13). In fact, Jameson achieves a synthesis of Frye's, Lévi-Strauss', Propp's, and other structuralist and semiotic theories by pointing out in his foreword to an English translation of Greimas' semiotic work that one must take a *bricolage* approach to literary criticism, in that one adopts and adapts the



salient features of theoretical constructs in order to better be able to perform an analysis of literature (Jameson 1987: viii). He insists, in the face of the scientific claims of Greimassian semiotics, that it is not, in fact, necessary “to *convert* to the entire Greimassian code (and to abandon the other ones as so many false religions and false gods)” (Jameson 1987: viii). This dissertation shares Jameson’s concern about the reduction of narrative to a series of semiotic codes (Jameson 1994: xi) by foregrounding large narrative patterns rather than their smaller components. These larger units – Frye’s archetypal *mythoi* – and their transference, adoption and adaptation at differing moments of the diachronic historical record are fruitful for a political unconscious analysis which takes the complete form of the text (i.e. all three layers of form) as its central interest. Jameson himself suggests the validity of this focus when he notes, “Frye’s archetypal criticism was historically epochmaking in its reassertion of the centrality of narrative” (Jameson 1994: xii).

Jameson acknowledges his debt to Frye in *The Political Unconscious* and proposes a mode of analysis that he terms three horizons of reading. True to the Marxist tradition Jameson emerges from, these three horizons of reading focus on the social dimension of culture and read the text being analyzed as, firstly, a symbolic individual attempt to resolve social contradictions; secondly, as an utterance in the antagonistic class discourse of the day; and, thirdly, as a window on the on-going cultural revolution in human society. Jameson bases his methodology of the three horizons of reading in part on the medieval Christian hermeneutic of Augustinus von Dakien who proposed four horizons of reading for the Bible: historical, allegorical, moral, and eschatological (Rusterholz 1974a: 89). Able to re-work a notion that subordinates history to Christian metaphysics by making the Marxist conception of history-as-a-succession-of-modes-of-production the third and final horizon of reading, Jameson is similarly undaunted by Frye’s foray into the archetypal, and in *The Political Unconscious* Jameson draws on the essay on mythical criticism where Frye proposes his four archetypal *mythoi* of narrative. Jameson puts this into practice in, for example, his chapter “Magical Narratives”; in this chapter Jameson discusses Frye’s definition of romance, referring to it variably as ‘mode’ or ‘genre’ until he begins to speak of “generic modes” (Jameson 1994: 115). While Jameson does have some reservations about Frye’s definition of romance (Jameson 1994: 113), he still implicitly accepts the statement that Frye’s literary

categories are “broader than, or logically prior to, the ordinary literary genres”. Jameson’s three horizons of reading offer perspectives on not only this first mythical layer of form, but the other two layers of form that this dissertation investigates.

As to how the three horizons of reading function in terms of literary analysis, Jameson explains that each “horizon governs a distinct reconstruction of its object” (Jameson 1994: 75-76). In terms of the first horizon of reading, he states that “within the narrower limits of our first, narrowly political or historical horizon, the ‘text’, the object of study, is still more or less construed as coinciding with the individual literary work or utterance” (Jameson 1994: 76). The text is seen as a cultural artifact displaying a conscious and unconscious hierarchy of values in the context of the immediate historical and political ‘reality’ (which is itself, be it remembered, an interdiscursive social construct). In the second horizon of reading one is specifically conscious of the discursive elements and semiotic codes carrying the markers of class (i.e. the dialogical class discourse (Jameson 1994: 84)). In this second horizon, the organizing categories are social class and a central facet of a second horizon reading are the ideologemes that a text presents. Jameson defines the ideologemes as both the smallest perceptible units of ideology that the form of the narrative makes evident, and as class narratives with certain characters representing or portraying specific class positions. In the third horizon of reading one turns one’s attention to the historical interaction of discourses and the epistemes themselves. The critic remains alert for large-scale paradigm shifts in the hierarchies of discursive elements and semiotic codes responsible for, and symptomatic of, changes in the mode(s) of production. The process perceivable through a third horizon reading/re-writing of a text Jameson terms ‘cultural revolution’; this same thing Zapf would term cultural evolution. Grabes ascribes to literary discourse a prominent role in cultural revolution, and in doing so he is offering a dynamic view of Jameson’s third horizon of reading: while Jameson presents his third horizon with the seemingly static metaphor of a “window” on cultural revolution, Jameson’s own analyses of works of literature imply that literary discourse has an influence on cultural revolution particularly in terms of value hierarchies. This is made evident when Jameson notes of this third horizon of reading “that at this level ‘form’ is apprehended as content” (Jameson 1994: 99) and that it is “possible to grasp such formal processes as sedimented content in their own right, as carrying ideological messages

of their own, distinct from the ostensible or manifest contents of the works” (Jameson 1994: 99). The analysis presented throughout this dissertation occurs primarily from the perspective of such a third horizon reading with the proposal and examination of three levels of form (*mythos*, *Schreibweise*, genre). This third horizon analysis is informed by Jameson’s contention that “generic specification and description can, in a given historical text, be transformed into the detection of a host of distinct generic messages – some of them objectified survivals from older modes of cultural production, some anticipatory, but all together projecting a formal conjuncture through which the ‘conjuncture’ of coexisting modes of production at a given historical moment can be detected and allegorically articulated” (Jameson 1994: 99). Jameson’s use of the term ‘generic’ needs the specification provided by the argument that texts, in fact, exhibit three layers of form – the first two of which are not truly “genres”.

Any text can be read, or interpreted, according to these three horizons of reading. While medieval Christian theologians interpreted the Bible on four horizons (1: as history, 2: the New Testament as fulfillment of the prophecies of the Old, 3: as a means of personal salvation, 4: as a prophecy of the ultimate fate of humanity), Christ as Saviour informed all the horizons and the Bible yielded its deepest meaning in the final horizon; Jameson insists on cultural revolution being central to his third and highest horizon of reading/interpretation where the ideology of form – explored and established in the first two horizons in terms of hierarchies of semiotic codes and discourses – becomes the focus (Jameson 1994: 96-97). In the third horizon of reading the text will be found to reveal semiotic signs specific to the different modes of production co-existing at the time of the text’s composition. The very form of the text thus represents an ideology: i.e an attempt to reconcile the contradictory messages emanating from the various modes of production co-existing at that time and funnelled through the artistic process itself. That this is the case for all cultural texts is implicit in Jameson’s following statement, thus providing further justification for the analysis of texts commonly dismissed as escapist:

From this perspective the convenient working distinction between cultural texts that are social and political and those that are not becomes something worse than an error: namely, a symptom and a reinforcement of the reification and privatization of contemporary life. Such a distinction

reconfirms that structural, experiential, and conceptual gap between the public and the private, between the social and the psychological, or the political and the poetic, between history or society and the “individual,” which – the tendential law of social life under capitalism – maims our existence as individual subjects and paralyzes our thinking about time and change just as surely as it alienates us from our speech itself. (Jameson 1994: 20)

This last is a significant point and underlines the activist nature of Marxist criticism in general and Jameson’s work in particular – and the activist intent of this dissertation. The attempt to situate texts by Howard and Jünger in the great discursive movements of their day is done with the hope of counteracting the reification of contemporary life that Jameson speaks of, and of revealing the full historical and cultural implications made manifest even in texts dismissed as escapist *Trivialliteratur*.

## **II.6. Methodological Conclusion**

To conclude, Jameson’s theory of the political unconscious, which includes the psychological, anthropological, myth critical, and literary criticism theories it incorporates, is the core of the methodology of this dissertation because of its ability to help analyze the texts in question in terms of their literary and historical significance, and in terms of demonstrating, through them, literature’s transformative function in culture. Understanding literature’s transformative function in culture has implications for the future of our culture(s) because the pursuit of the history of the literary discourse and its cultural functions can make the boundaries of our culture visible and give us the chance to draw those boundaries differently in the future (Graves 2004: 142). The final line of Jameson’s *The Political Unconscious* parallels such a pro-active approach to literary criticism: “It is only at this price – that of the simultaneous recognition of the ideological and Utopian functions of the artistic text – that a Marxist cultural study can hope to play its part in political praxis, which remains, of course, what Marxism is all about” (Jameson 1994: 299).

Finally, this overview of the methodology has been laden with quotations from the theories being used to ensure that the close-readings of the texts which form the body of the dissertation will not be burdened

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with lengthy quotations, as the reader has benefited from this prior, detailed introduction to these concepts.

### III. Aesthetic *Wirkungsstruktur*

#### III.1. Aesthetic *Wirkungsstruktur*: Introduction

Although the current cultural studies paradigm of literary criticism accents the social, political and historical functions of texts, the aesthetic dimension cannot be overlooked. It is perhaps a symptom of the dominance of this paradigm that this one chapter is devoted to the aesthetic dimension of the texts of Howard and Jünger, and yet this entire analysis would not be possible without the purely literary and aesthetic attraction that these texts have, since „soziale Funktionen der Literatur letztlich, nur über eine ästhetische Wirkungsstruktur realisiert werden“ (Gymnich and Nünning 2005b: 12). It is necessary to consider the aesthetic qualities of the works of Howard and Jünger if the argument that their works had a social function and did indeed re-value the value hierarchies of their societies and contribute to the evolution of their cultures is valid. Grabes defines how the literary discourse uses the aesthetic to achieve its social function:

Im literarischen Diskurs begegnen wir hingegen v.a. dem Besonderen: besonderen Orten, Augenblicken, Figuren mit Eigennamen, spezifischen Rede- und Handlungsweisen, Arten des Denkens und Fühlens. Dieser Diskurs ist deshalb ästhetisch im Sinne von ‚*aisthetikos*‘, d.h. von sinnlich Wahrnehmbarem: Was er anbietet und motiviert, ist eine imaginative Erfahrung des Besonderen als physischer Erscheinung und / oder inneren Konkretheit anstelle abstrakter Begrifflichkeit. Dies erlaubt uns nicht nur ein kognitives und / oder emotionales Sympathisieren mit oder Distanzieren von einem anderen. Vor allem läßt es uns weitgehende Freiheit hinsichtlich der Entscheidung, inwieweit und wie wir das Besondere auf uns beziehen, ob wir es für typisch oder sogar allgemeine gültig ansehen oder für lediglich individuell und idiosynkratisch. (Grabes 2004b: 136)

In contrast to the discourse of philosophy, in literary discourse we encounter, among other things, the specific: specific places and moments, characters with personal names, specific modes of speaking and acting, thinking and feeling. This discourse is therefore aesthetic in the sense of ‚*aisthetikos*‘, i.e. perceivable by the senses: what motivates this discourse and what it offers is an imaginative experience of the specific as

a physical phenomenon and/or an inner concreteness instead of abstract concepts. This allows us not only a cognitive and/or emotional sympathizing with, or distancing from, an Other, but, above all, it gives us the freedom to decide to what extent we will refer the specifics we are presented with to ourselves: whether we find it typical or even generally valid, or rather only individual and idiosyncratic. The aesthetic experience of this specific other, and the extent to which a reader relates to it, leads to a text's social functioning. If the aesthetic experience is of low quality, it will not be experienced, and thus will have no social functioning. Both Howard's and Jünger's texts fulfill the above criteria, particularly the intense physical and emotional experience of stories like Howard's Conan tales and Jünger's *Auf den Marmorlippen*. As Grabes notes later in his article, the active participation of writer and reader in re-shaping a culture's value hierarchy must be acknowledged.

Fluck, in fact, argues that the aesthetic function of a text is the dominant one (Fluck 33) because it is the aesthetic dimension of a text that allows it to survive the historical era that gave it birth. He writes, „Das ist auch die Erklärung dafür, warum literarische Texte und ästhetische Objekte über ihren Entstehungszusammenhang hinaus wirksam bleiben können. Der Sinn des Textes mag längst ‚von gestern‘ sein, und dennoch kann der Text für uns interessant sein, weil wir mit ihm Erfahrungen zu machen vermögen, die uns anderweitig nicht in gleicher Form möglich sind“ (Fluck 33). It is clear, as contemporary readers continue to discover and seek out the works of Howard and Jünger, that the experiences their texts offer are still emotionally fulfilling and socially relevant even after the deaths of their authors. Fluck explains how this process works: „Die fiktive Welt des Textes kann erst durch den Transfer imaginärer Anteile Gestalt und Nachhaltigkeit der Wirkung gewinnen; auf der anderen Seite eröffnet sich aber auch für den Leser die Möglichkeit, ein noch gestalt- und strukturloses Imaginäres zu artikulieren, indem sich Bilder, Stimmungen und Körperempfindungen in parasitärer Weise an die Darstellung fremder Welten heften können. Es ist diese Doppelungsstruktur, die als die eigentliche Quelle ästhetischer Erfahrung angesehen werden kann“ (Fluck 36). The fictional world of the text demonstrates its aesthetic success when a reader is able to transfer – and feel articulated in the text – images, feelings, and bodily reactions. When the reader is personally invested in the imaginary world then the aesthetic experience is a success and the transfer of ideas from the text to the reader occurs.

### III.1.1. The Aesthetic Affinities of the Texts of Howard and Jünger

What links the aesthetic experience offered by the texts of Howard and Jünger to each other is the fact that they employ similar motifs and exhibit a vivid linguistic command of the sense experiences of armed conflict. They express these martial experiences through their command of description, characterization, setting, and an exciting and inexorable plot movement. Compare, for example, the following excerpt from Jünger's *In Stablgewittern (Storm of Steel)* –

Die Engländer wehrten sich wacker. Es wurde um jede Schulterwehr gerungen. Die schwarze Bälle der Mill-Handgranaten kreuzten sich in der Luft mit unseren gestielten. Hinter jeder genommenen Schulterwehr trafen wir Leichen oder noch zuckende Körper an. Man tötete sich, ohne sich zu sehen. Auch wir hatten Verluste. Neben der Ordonnanz fiel ein Stück Eisen zu Boden, dem der Mann nicht mehr ausweichen konnte; er brach zusammen, während sein Blut aus vielen Wunden auf den Lehm sickerte.

Über seinen Körper hinweg sprangen wir weiter vor. Donnerkrachen zeichnete unseren Weg. Hunderte von Augen lauerten in dem toten Gelände hinter Gewehren und Maschinengewehren auf Ziel. Wir waren schon weit vor den eigenen Linien. Von allen Seiten piffen uns Geschosse um die Stahlhelme oder zerschellten mit hartem Knall am Grabenrand. Jedesmal, wenn einer der eiförmigen Eisenklumpen über der Horizontlinie auftauchte, wurde er vom Auge mit jener Hellsichtigkeit erfaßt, deren der Mensch nur der Entscheidung auf Leben und Tod gegenüber fähig ist. Während dieser Augenblicke der Erwartung mußte man einen Standort zu gewinnen suchen, von dem aus möglichst viel vom Himmel zu sehen war, denn nur gegen seinen blassen Hintergrund zeichnete sich das schwarze Riffeisen der tödlichen Bälle mit genügender Schärfe ab. Dann warf man selbst und sprang vor. Den zusammengesackten Körper des Gegners streifte kaum ein Blick; der hatte ausgespielt, ein neues Duell begann. (Jünger 2001: 241)

– with the following from Howard's Conan the Cimmerian story, "The Phoenix on the Sword":

With his back to the wall he faced the closing ring for



a flashing instant, then leaped into the thick of them. He was no defensive fighter; even in the teeth of overwhelming odds he always carried the war to the enemy. Any other man would have already died there, and Conan himself did not hope to survive, but he did ferociously wish to inflict as much damage as he could before he fell. His barbaric soul was ablaze, and the chants of old heroes were singing in his ears.

As he sprang from the wall, his ax dropped an outlaw with a severed shoulder, and the terrible back-hand return crushed the skull of another. Swords whined venomously about him, but death passed him by breathless margins. The Cimmerian moved in a blur of blinding speed. He was like a tiger among baboons as he leaped, side-stepped and spun, offering an ever-moving target, while his ax wove a shining wheel of death about him. (Howard 2002: 21)

The tone and the dynamic descriptive movement of the two pieces is similar, and it is remarkable that Howard, a man who never experienced life-and-death combat, could evoke it like Jünger, a man who had. Weilnböck underlines this central aesthetic achievement of Jünger's work when he noted of critical reactions „Dass Jünger Gewalt ästhetisiert und/oder poetisiert hat, scheint einen minimalen Konsens darzustellen“ (Weilnböck 431). As the representative quotation from Howard's work above demonstrates, Howard too aestheticized violence. Not only was this aestheticized violence a major reason for the success of both authors in terms of their reading public, this aesthetic experience is central to understanding the power and attraction of their texts, and thus the first and most important point of connection between these two authors.

In works like Jünger's *In Stahlgewittern* (1920), *Der Kampf als Inneres Erlebnis* (1922), *Das Abenteuerliche Herz* (1926), *Der Arbeiter* (1932), *Auf den Marmorklippen* (1939), *Heliopolis* (1949) and Howard's "Red Shadows" (1929), "The Phoenix on the Sword" (1932), "The God in the Bowl" (1933), "Queen of the Black Coast" (1933), *The Hour of the Dragon* (1935), "A Elkins Never Surrenders" (1936) and *Almuric* (1939), this aestheticized violence always plays a central role; furthermore, these works reveal their authors' ideological stances, and these stances in turn demonstrate the similarities in their cultures – and the crucial differences – that serve to bring about World War II.

In the fantasy story "Queen of the Black Coast", for example, the hero Conan enters into a relationship with Bêlit, a white, female captain

of a pirate ship crewed by men from the fantasy sub-creation's Black Kingdoms. In a dialogue that takes place after the characters' initial lovemaking, Conan says the following in answer to Bêlit's question about his beliefs:

I have known many gods. He who denies them is as blind as he who trusts them too deeply. I seek not beyond death. It may be the blackness averred by the Nemedian skeptics, or Crom's realm of ice and cloud, or the snowy plains and vaulted halls of the Nordheimer's Valhalla. I know not, nor do I care. Let me live deep while I live; let me know the rich juices of red meat and stinging wine on my palate, the hot embrace of white arms, the mad exultation of battle when the blue blades flame and crimson, and I am content. Let teachers and priests and philosophers brood over questions of reality and illusion. I know this: if life is illusion, then I am no less an illusion, and being thus, the illusion is real to me. I live, I burn with life, I love, I slay, and am content. (Howard 2002: 133)

While this is a passage in Howard's work where he explicitly addresses issues of metatextual significance, it is its aesthetic effect that makes it attractive to the reader in the first place, and it was such writing that prompted the editors of *Weird Tales* to feature Howard's Conan stories on the often lurid covers of the magazine to improve sales. Howard's writing – infused with his warrior philosophy and possessing a distinct aesthetic attraction – engaged the 1930s reader of *Weird Tales* and continues to engage readers today.

It is Howard's use of literary techniques and devices that makes his writing so attractive. For example, the alliteration of “l”, “r”, “b” and “c” in the central portion of the excerpt above gives a seemingly crude barbarian's utterance a poetic power, a compelling rhythm and a beauty despite the amorous relationship to war that is its climax. This *Weltanschauung*, this philosophy that both informs Howard's words and is given form by them, is given even greater force by the subsequent repetition of the word “illusion”. Its appearance four times within two sentences – as opposed to the single appearance of “reality” – points to an oppressive omnipresence of illusion, points to the lack of a stable reality, points to a reality literally (i.e. syntactically) over-powered by illusion. This brief and brilliant evocation of such a psychological state sets up the final line of this dialogue to stamp a seal of authority on the

philosophy the character Conan is expressing. This line re-emphasizes those few things that one may be certain of in existence: states of being and emotion that one can hold onto in the face of the oppression of illusion. Beside the insistent repetition of “I”, the re-appearance of the alliteration of “I” – with all the sensuality implied by its sound – gives this final line a simple yet steady rhythm, and conceptually links the words (three verbs and a noun) being alliterated: the verb ‘live’, the noun ‘life’, the verb ‘love’ and – significantly – the verb ‘slay’. That the alliteration of the final term shifts the alliteration away from the first letter of the word seems an acknowledgement that the connection being made through the alliteration is not perfectly congruous; it is somewhat “off”. And yet, the conclusion of this line, given a steady rhythm and unity by the repetition of “I” and by the alliteration of a soft consonant sound, is formed by the reappearance of the adjective “content”, with its three hard consonant sounds. This word, in exhibiting the only hard consonant sounds in the sentence, acts as a definitive punctuation, a *point final* which cannot be overlooked or denied.

The characterization of Conan presented in the excerpt from the dialogue above has an effect beyond the aesthetic. Not only does the excerpt present the character’s philosophy in a compelling manner but, because Conan is the romance protagonist, he is at the same time the carrier of the values of the reader<sup>12</sup>; therefore, the aesthetic transfer and articulation of unexpressed desires that Fluck describes to explain the reader’s interaction with a text implies that this philosophy, coloured and carried by its aesthetic presentation, is also that of the reader. Or, if we are to anticipate the discussion of how works of literature can re-organize the hierarchy of values extant in a society, Conan’s philosophy at the very least represents one level in the reader’s internal hierarchy of values. Howard’s text raises the value of the warrior, and the *Weltanschauung* congruent with the warrior, among his readers; thus, because each reader is in turn part of his or her culture, Howard’s text helps to raise the value of the warrior in the culture at large, in this case 1930s U.S.A.

Ernst Jünger, who was, by anyone’s definition, a warrior – and recognized as such through his receiving of the *Pour le mérite*, Germany’s highest award for bravery in battle –, also presented the attraction of “the mad exultation of battle” to his readers in his long essay, *Der Kampf als inneres Erlebnis*.

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<sup>12</sup> “...all the reader’s values are bound up with the hero” (Frye 187).

Und die Stunde kam für jeden, wo es aufbraute, dunkel, unbestimmt, aus der Tiefe, gerade, wenn man am wenigsten daran gedacht. Wenn die Felder leer waren wie an hohen Festtagen, und doch ganz anders. Wenn das Blut durch Hirn und Adern wirbelte wie vor einer ersehnten Liebesnacht und noch viel heißer und toller. Wenn man dem tosenden Lärm da vorn immer näher und näher rückte, die Schläge immer dröhnender, immer hastiger sich jagten, wenn vor der Überfülle hetzender Gedanken rings die Ebenen erglühten, wenn man so Gefühl war, das Landschaft und Geschehen später nur dunkel und traumhaft der Erinnerung enttauchten. Die Feuertaufe! Da war die Luft von so überströmender Männlichkeit geladen, daß jeder Atemzug berauschte daß man hätte weinen mögen, ohne zu wissen warum. O, Männerherzen, die das empfinden können! (Jünger 2007: 77)

In the essay form, Jünger addresses his early 1920s German readers directly – readers that likely had experienced the war on the front that Jünger described – and so the mediatory role of a character to express values that author and reader share is not necessary. While it is the reader's admiration for the strength, confidence, determination and ability that characterizes a martial romance hero like Conan, and which gives the *Weltanschauung* that such a character expresses authority and attraction, Jünger's narrative voice in the essay gains its authority from the fact that it is the voice of an author who was awarded the *Pour le mérite* for the martial events he experienced and now describes.

In the descriptive passage above, Jünger achieves the same juxtapositions that Howard does, but whereas characterization and dialogue are the central techniques that Howard builds on, Jünger relies on images that he evokes by infusing the setting with physical and emotional intensity. He accomplishes this by juxtaposing the same oppositions as Howard – life, death, love, war – in order, on the one hand, to appeal to values the average reader will accept as positive, and on the other, to extend that positive valuing and that instinctive *Bejahung* to the concepts those values are opposed to. Jünger sets this up at the very beginning of the passage with a syntactical formulation that calls to mind the coming of the hour of one's death („Und die Stunde kam für jeden“) and the reader imagines the scene of an execution. But then this scene is expanded and likened to the empty fields of a high Holy Day; this resulting pastoral, sacred setting – which is ominously prepared for

with darkness and uncertainty arising from the depths – is offered to the reader as an opening to achieve the transfer Fluck writes of, so that the reader can imagine himself there in that hour. Jünger then offers that articulation of feeling Fluck sees as central to the transfer when Jünger describes the whirl of blood in the veins and brain, and likens it, as Howard did, to the excitement of love – but hotter and wilder. It must be remembered that Jünger is writing in the past tense, is recalling or recreating experiences, and that the invitation to transfer is not intended as some cheap sleight of hand to create the illusion of being there, but he is instead beseeching the reader, calling out to those men who can viscerally understand what he is presenting, and what he himself saw and experienced.

While the juxtapositions mentioned above are the necessary precondition to communicate the ecstasy of battle – and to communicate how what seemed at first to be the chiming of the hour of death was instead the *Auftakt* of a baptism, a baptism of fire – Jünger needs to provide a sensory experience to recreate the moment where „jeder Atemzug berauschte“. He accomplishes this through a sentence of rhythmic repetitions, wherein he interweaves three words – all of which are carriers of suspense: „wenn“, „immer“ and „näher“ – in a manner that produces a breathless sense of speed. The rapidity with which the sense impressions of sound and sight are thus apprehended by the reader leads precisely to the „Überfülle hetzender Gedanken“ Jünger evokes, and thus the difficulty in clearly remembering the moment. Jünger reinforces the difficulty of mentally coping with the intensity of the experience by writing a sentence in which the rhythmic bombardment of sense impressions is carried by repeated words of suspense, and these still resonate when the helpless seeming coda evoking memory is immediately followed by the brief, joyous five-syllable outburst, „Die Feuertaufe!“

Here is the exultation amidst the sensory overload which is the madness of battle, and it is followed by a sharpening of the image of the setting with a description of the air. Having vicariously, breathlessly, witnessed fire and explosions, the reader can almost smell the acrid dust and smoke, but Jünger enriches this sensory experience with another olfactory sensation that seems both metaphor and pure description at the same time when he writes that the air was laden with „überströmender Männlichkeit“. The reader can imagine the feeling of manliness that comes from witnessing terrible destruction and yet exulting in one's

ability to experience it as a *Feuertaufe* but, almost as an after-thought, the realization comes that this might not be (solely) metaphor: now the reader smells, too, the sweat of the soldiers about to go into battle. The intensity of Jünger's olfactory evocation leaves no doubt that „jeder Atemzug berauschte“, and in the reader's acceptance of this communal and comradely *Rausch* the emotional dams open and the reader understands the desire to cry without knowing why. Through the aesthetic experience of the passage, the reader is articulating feelings he may never have known that he had, and when Jünger's narrative voice cries out, „O, Männerherzen, die das empfinden können!“ the reader knows that Jünger is speaking to him, for he has felt what Jünger is describing.

Not only does this passage demonstrate the aesthetic attraction of Jünger's writing, and the experience of transfer and articulation it offers – and its kinship with Howard's writing – it also offers a powerful insight into Jünger's role as a sort of spokesman for the generation of *Frontsoldaten* that shared the experiences he describes.

The *Feuertaufe* represents an initial Dionysian experience of war, and yet implies an element of spectatorship; Jünger could, however, also evoke the Dionysian ecstasy of battle joined – „Man war ja ein Träger des Krieges, rücksichtslos und verwegen, hatte manchen umgelegt, über den man weitergeschritten war mit starken Gefühlen in der Brust“ (Jünger 2007: 81). As one who saw its horrors first hand, he could also express the compensatory Dionysian excess, that gusto for life that Howard's Conan exhibits, as part of the inner dynamic of war and the warrior:

Zu lyrischem Sinnen, zur Ehrfurcht vor der eigenen Größe hatte der Graben keinen Raum. Alles Feine wurde zermahlen und zerstampft, alles Zarte überflammt von grellem Geschehen.

Auch in den kurzen Tagen der Ruhe war keine Zeit zur Hingabe an solche Stimmungen. Da stürzte man sich ins Leben, packte es mit beiden Fäusten, jagte es durchs Hirn in geballten Räuschen, als ob man den Galeeren entronnen wäre. Da konnte man begreifen, warum eine sinkende Mannschaft die Pumpen verläßt, die Rumfässer zerschlägt und die Flamme der Sinne noch einmal bis an den Himmel schießen läßt. Zuzeiten wurde das Bedürfnis Zwang, die schwarzen Dämme zu sprengen, mit denen der Graben die Gewässer des Daseins umkesselte, und der ständig drohenden Hammerfaust im

Rausche zu spotten. (Jünger 2007: 89)

What is particularly interesting to note before going on to investigate Jünger's aesthetic strategies in this passage is how the metaphysical humility and ambivalence that provides its tone recalls the quotation from Howard's work above. Reading these words of an actual warrior and seeing the parallels with the work of an author who had not gone to war is an attestation to the mastery of Howard's characterization of his barbarian warrior, in that Howard knew – somehow – that the Dionysian ecstasy of battle MUST be accompanied by a complementary and compensatory hedonistic Dionysian plunge into life.

Jünger's passage also appeals to a sonic sensibility through its alliteration. The alliterative rhythm begins with the aggressive, hard German consonant sound "z" which hints at the liquid slide of the English usage with its split-second transition to a plosive puff, like the firing of a bullet – or at least this is what Jünger's alliterative use of this consonant in the first two sentences of this passage suggests. The concluding alliteration of "g" in both sentences acts as the impacts of those bullets, thus punctuating with grim finality the lethal negation of existence that was trench warfare. The reader, after a transition sentence – made relentless through an absence of internal punctuation – to the short times away from the fighting, is plunged into the warrior's Dionysian excess by Jünger's rhythmic use of parallelism propelled by verbs that express the physical and psychic desperation of the warrior temporarily away from the front: „stürzte“, „packte“, „jagte“. Jünger's experience allows him (or is an imperative) to colour this Dionysian reality more tragically than Howard. He explains the warrior's state by presenting the metaphoric image of the sinking ship and the doomed sailors wringing a final pleasure from approaching death. The last sentence in this passage begins with a dense web of alliteration that recalls the alliteration of the first two sentences through the repetition of "z" and "g", but it also weaves in a pervasive stuttering "d" sound that evokes the psychological narrowness that Jünger describes, like that of machine gun fire still lingering hauntingly in the mind. The verbs „zu sprengen“ and „zu spotten“ illustrate both the need for the *Rausch*, and the *Rausch*'s ability to burst through the physical and psychological constraints that war forces on the warrior.

The success of both authors in aesthetically allowing a reader to experience the reality of the warrior reveals the attraction of the warrior concept to both the authors and their audiences. In fact, both authors

evoke a spiritual purity, an almost religious discipline that they see in the warrior, and contrast this to the decadence, the moral and physical decay, they see in the civilization around them. Although their aesthetic strategies differ in the passages that follow, Howard and Jünger bring very similar attitudes across to their readers.

In *Almuric*, a work left almost complete at Howard's death in 1936 and subsequently anonymously completed and published in 1939, the hero, Esau Cairn, is an Earthman whose prodigious strength and unfettered Dionysian attitude to life lead him beat someone to death in a boxing match. In order to escape a lifetime in prison, he allows himself to be teleported to the distant planet, Almuric; in first person narration, Howard presents the struggle of the hero, Cairn, to survive in this new environment, and Howard broaches again themes he evokes many times in his writing.

I was living the life of the most primitive savage; I had neither companionship, books, clothing, nor any of the things which go to make up civilization. According to the cultured viewpoint, I should have been most miserable. I was not. I revelled in my existence. My being grew and expanded. I tell you, the natural life of mankind is a grim battle for existence against the forces of nature, and any other form of life is artificial and without meaning.

[...] I was fully alive. That phrase has more meaning than appears on the surface. The average civilized man is never fully alive; he is burdened with masses of atrophied tissue and useless matter. Life flickers feebly in him; his senses are dull and torpid. (Howard 1977a: 28-29)

The aesthetic approach of this passage is primarily a stylistic one whose purpose is to serve characterization: there is a simplicity in style that reflects, and embodies, the simplicity being praised. The core of this first part of the excerpt – the core that anchors it and gives it its authority – are the short, emphatic lines of three and eight syllables. These lines are Cairn's declaration of his strength and his vital existence, and these provide – through their anchoring effect – Cairn's longer, more philosophical lines a foundation for their declarative authority. The second passage of this excerpt functions similarly in that its shortest sentence, the six syllable "I was fully alive", is the impetus for what follows and serves as the authoritative frame of reference for Cairn's statements about civilization. Howard aesthetically underscores Cairn's



narration through an alliteration of soft consonant sounds in the first clause of the final sentence under consideration. The “P” and “I” sounds – tied as they are to the meanings of the words they appear in – feel sluggish and inarticulate, and they contribute to a slowing of the syntax so that the second clause of this sentence seems to lumber to its heavy-footed conclusion in the tired adjectives “dull” and “torpid”.

As is evident in the quotation from *Almuric* above, the opposition of barbarism to civilization is a recurring theme in Howard’s work, and thus makes his work a significant contribution to the barbarian discourse of the day. For example, in the 1933 Conan the Cimmerian story, “The Tower of the Elephant”, the young Conan is introduced to the civilization of Zamora in the following manner:

He had entered the part of the city reserved for the temples. On all sides of him they glittered white in the starlight – snowy marble pillars and golden domes and silver arches, shrines of Zamora’s myriad strange gods. He did not trouble his head about them; he knew that Zamora’s religion, like all things of a civilized, long-settled people, was intricate and complex, and had lost most of the pristine essence in a maze of formulas and rituals. (Howard 2002: 64)

In Howard’s work it is the savage, the barbarian, that is valued over the civilized. Frequently, particularly in the fantasy stories he is best known for, lost cities become the metaphoric carriers of the motif of the superiority of barbarism, for in these lost cities the survivors of a once-mighty and advanced civilization have literally become monsters through ages of moral decay.

Jünger echoes this sentiment of Howard’s in a work declared a key to Jünger’s thought by Joseph Furnkäs (Furnkäs 59) and Michael Klett (Klett 9): the 1929 *Erste Fassung* of *Das Abenteuerliche Herz*:

Daher haftet den Erscheinungen und Menschen der absoluten Zivilisation auch etwas seltsam Konserviertes an; sie erinnern an jene Mumienköpfe, die mit polierten metallischen Masken überzogen sind. [...] Wie kommt es, daß diese herrlichen Frauenkörper, trainiert, sonnengebräunt und mit allen Mitteln der Kosmetik in Form gebracht, für den Appetit so fade wie kalifornische Äpfel sind? [...] Diese völlige Neutralität, diese totale Farbenblindheit der Zivilisation, die sich unter anderem in der Verwechslung der Verbrechens mit der Krankheit, der Werte mit den Zahlen, des Fortschrittes mit der Erlösung

offenbart, ist dennoch eine letzte Konsequenz des Bösen, wenn dieses auch nicht mehr virulent vorhanden ist [...]. Diese moralische Kastration, die völlige Ausschneidung des moralischen Bewußtseins bringt einen seltsamen Zustand hervor, in dem der Mensch aus einem Diener des Bösen in eine Maschine des Bösen verwandelt wird. Daher kommt es, daß das Individuum einen mechanischen, das ganze Getriebe einen satanischen Eindruck erweckt. (Jünger 2000: 58-59)

Jünger's aesthetic strategy in the excerpted passages is also to syntactically and sonically underscore the meaning of his words. While some of the elements that will be pointed out in what follows may appear to some readers as unconscious or coincidental, one can never underestimate to what extent Jünger – a *Handwerker* of language to use Jörg Sader's term (Sader 387) – was aware of, and was actively shaping, the aesthetic effect of his words. In fact, elsewhere in the *Erste Fassung* of *Das Abenteuerliche Herz*, Jünger presents an analysis of words, vowels and consonants that attempts to explain the magic inherent in language (Jünger 2000: 58-59), and Sader, in his own investigation of Jünger's understanding of vowels and consonants, writes the following of Jünger's approach: „Um sich dem zeitlosen Kern des Worts anzunähern, muß es zerlegt, gewissermaßen chemisch in eine ‚Elementarsprache‘ aufgeschlossen werden, die sich hinter der Umgangssprache verbirgt und (ähnlich einer musikalischen oder mathematischen Universalsprache) atomistisch strukturiert ist: erst ihre Elemente – Konsonanten und Vokalen – gewähren Einblicke in die ‚überzeitlichen‘ Bewegungen des Sprachgeists“ (Sader 391). That Jünger did have such a finely tuned sensibility to sounds, and to the symbols that express them, supports the supposition that the following observations about Jünger's excerpted text may well have been consciously intended effects; this is particularly true when one considers Sader's quoting of Jünger's description of his own thought processes during writing as the „Umsatz kleinster Teilchen, durch Osmose und Filterung“ (Sader 390).<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> This is not to imply that Jünger felt every use of language was calculable to the last degree. As Sader writes of Jünger's art: „Obwohl das Wort durch seine Offenbarung (wie nach einem physikalischer Vorgang) ‚hörbar, teilbar, [...] zu Wörtern [wird], so wie das farblose Licht durch die prismatische Teilung sich in den Farben des Regenbogens offenbart‘, bleiben ihm ein keimender Rest, flechtende, verhüllende Elemente, ‚Streuungen von unberechenbarer Art‘, die nicht aufzuklären oder allenfalls – in der (kommunikativen) Mittellage des Worts – zu bestimmen sind als Regeln eines Sprachspiels“ (Sader 390).

In the first sentence of the excerpt, the nouns carry the meaning almost independently of the rest of the sentence, or, one could say, reaffirm it by stating it again. The German convention of capitalizing nouns creates, in effect, a visual shorthand that “resonates” in the eyes of the reader – and to which one may add the capitalized adverb that begins the sentence – so that one gets the following subliminal sequence: (*Daher Erscheinungen Menschen Zivilisation Konserviertes Mumienköpfe Masken*). This formula, this major part of what Sader calls the ‘bone structure’ of Jünger’s sentences (Sader 391), represents the inner dynamic of the logic of the passage as a whole (ellipted clauses and sentences notwithstanding).

The next of the excerpted sentences presented above follows the cue given by the first sentence in presenting a comparison that illustrates the dynamic outlined. In fact, the comparison between women’s bodies of the Weimar *Sportkultur* and California apples is also replete with allusions that reveal attitudes that Jünger incorporates into his work. He presents here an objectified view of women, focussing explicitly on their bodies. This portrayal of woman as object to be consumed is not only strongly suggested by the comparison of women’s bodies to apples, but is insisted upon by the noun that links these two ‘objects’: *Appetit*. A further divorcing of women’s bodies from the feminine “I” that insists upon subjecthood as opposed to objectification, is Jünger’s use of the male-derived adjective, *herrlich*. Although *herrlich* in German has in the course of time taken on a common meaning equivalent to “wonderful”, its roots are still in the word *Herr* (i.e. ‘Lord’). This suggestion of an incongruous masculinity is, most likely, intentional on Jünger’s part, and one can see (or taste) Jünger’s distaste for the manifestations of the Weimar German civilization he lives in. Schivelbusch describes the situation of the time as follows, one which implicitly applies to Jünger, a soldier returning from the lost war:

Heimkehrende Sieger sind ihren Frauen gegenüber in einer stärkeren Position als die Verlierer. Jenen können diktieren, diese müssen sich arrangieren. Der deutsche Girlismus der 20er Jahre war ein Resultat solchen Arrangements: einerseits die Anerkennung der Machtverschiebung zwischen Mann und Frau zugunsten der letztern, zugleich aber Entschärfung für den Verlierer dadurch, daß die Sache nicht als deutsch, sondern als amerikanisch, das heißt als Emanation der Siegermacht, verstanden und benannt wurde. (Schivelbusch

327)

Jünger would see in this a Weimar Germany “corrupted” by the ideals of American democracy, which in promoting the equality of the sexes leads to the dynamic expressed by the first sentence of the Jünger excerpt. That there is a political connotation in this second sentence of the excerpt is suggested not only by Schivelbusch’s description of the male-female relationship of the time and its being ascribed to American influence, but by the fact that the apples in question come from California. This adjectival insistence on Californian apples carries with it an ensemble of Jünger’s attitudes to the United States, attitudes not only common to the ‘class’ he was part of, i.e. the returning *Frontsoldat*, but to large segments of German society.

Berggötz highlights Jünger’s relationship to the United States and notes how Jünger’s career paralleled the Americanization of the world and how Jünger experienced „seit den zwanziger Jahren in erster Linie die kulturellen Konsequenzen dieser weltpolitischen Entwicklung: das rasche Vordringen verschiedenster Elemente der amerikanischen Kultur in Deutschland und Europa“ (Berggötz 57). He notes, interestingly for the last sentence of the above passage from Jünger, „Schon lange vor Ausbruch des Ersten Weltkriegs 1914 waren die USA aus Sicht vieler europäischer Intellektueller zur Chiffre für die moderne Maschinenwelt – in erster Linie für deren negative Seiten – geworden“ (Berggötz 58). Berggötz argues that Jünger’s attitude to the US is largely derived from Nietzsche, who presented the U.S. as the most negative expression of the future and as a symbol for materialism and „Geistlosigkeit“ (Berggötz 62). And it must also be remembered that, in Germany, a distinction was made between *Zivilisation* and *Kultur*. „Dem deutschen Verständnis von *Kultur* zufolge waren alle drei Westmächte bloß *Zivilisation*“ (Schivelbusch 300). All these aspects of perception of the US are actually present in Jünger’s one reference to California apples: American culture thus represents to Jünger – as embodied by this comparison – a material focus and a resulting artificiality which strengthens the concept of things *seltsam konserviert* (the women’s bodies and the bland apples that survive the long journey from California to Germany), and mask-like<sup>14</sup> (the reference to cosmetics and the “impostor” apples themselves).

There is here, too, as elsewhere in Jünger’s work, a Biblical allusion, namely to Eden, and to Eve offering Adam the apple. Just as

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<sup>14</sup> In fact, Jünger wonders elsewhere in *Das Abenteuerliche Herz* „ob die Amerikaner Menschen sind“ (Jünger 2000: 82).

one has to ask why they have to be *kalifornische* apples, one also has to ask why Jünger chooses to compare an appetite for women's bodies to apples in the first place. The answer to this – based on Jünger's frequent references to Christian and Biblical figures and events – is that this is an allusion to the story of Adam and Eve, and that Jünger is implying that the same fateful choice is offered to his reader: accept these women's bodies, accept these California apples, and you will fall from grace.

While this one allusion-drenched comparison seems to be all this sentence needs as an aesthetic experience to appeal to the reader, elements of Jünger's theories on vowels and consonants are also apparent in the key adjective, *kalifornische*. Sader points out that Jünger admitted that a systematic and internally consistent theory of vowels had eluded him<sup>15</sup> and that his various writings on vowels and consonants were *Annäherungen*, and that it was not his purpose to provide an objective theoretical foundation for phonemes and morphemes, but that he was interested in „den Aufweis von ‚Gleichnissen und Schlüsseln‘ in denen sich die ‚Ordnung der sichtbaren Dinge nach ihrem unsichtbaren Plan spiegelt“ (Sader 399). That noted, some of Jünger's observations that Sader discusses can illuminate the sonic reasons for Jünger's choice of *kalifornische*. Sader quotes Jünger's shorthand of meanings from *Lob der Vokale*: „Das A bedeutet die Höhe und Weite, das O die Höhe und Tiefe, das E das Leere und Erhabene, das I das Leben und die Verwesung, das U die Zeugung und den Tod. Im A rufen wir die Macht, im O das Licht, im E den Geist, im I das Fleisch und im U die mütterliche Erde an“ (Jünger in Sader 395). In the first instance, then, the a-i-o-i-e pattern of vowels in the word (vowels being, according to Jünger, the expression of an ineffable metaphysical truth (Sader 391, 394)) – gives us the following pattern of meanings<sup>16</sup>: the high and wide, followed by life and decomposition, the high and deep, followed by life and decomposition, and the whole concluded by emptiness and the exalted. Furthermore, following Jünger's second sequence of meanings, we have a pattern of calls to, or invocations of: power, the flesh, light, the flesh and the spirit or mind. Since Jünger elsewhere situationally determines which of the oppositions is valid – („Generell bestätigt das O die Bedeutungsvertikalität aller Laute: es klinge ‚Anruf nach oben‘, als ‚Spott- und Hohngelächter‘ dagegen ‚nach unten“ (Sader 396) – the context

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<sup>15</sup> Lévi-Strauss critiqued just such a project (Lévi-Strauss 210).

<sup>16</sup> Jünger uses *bedeutet*, but the word's root, *deuten*, to point or indicate, suggests that it is perhaps more accurate to speak of a pattern of indications rather than meanings.

within which the word carrying these vowels appears must be decisive in determining where in the vertical line of meaning the vowel stands; in this we should be guided by Sader's noting how expressionistically Jünger proceeded with his affective ascription of meaning to vowels: „Jüngers vokalische Dämonisierung wird hier reiner Expressionismus: die Laute der großen Städte (‚meist trauriger und gefährlicher Natur‘) seien ‚fast alle auf U oder I gestimmt. Der Ton der Sirenen, die zur Arbeit rufen, könnte von Dämonen erfunden sein“ (Sader 394). Taking all the above into account, *kalifornische*, the key word in the sentence and the one from which the comparison and the allusions draw their meaning, could be interpreted as follows: the kingly call to power and the accompanying claim on the high and the wide is immediately countered by the sad vision of the decomposition of the flesh; a second, slightly more modest but still aristocratic call to light and the accompanying claim on loftiness and depth is again countered by the sadness of the decomposition of the flesh; the concluding vowel-impulse is a call to the spirit or mind, but this last tone is characterized by emptiness. What is interesting about this tentative essay to plumb the ineffable (but, in the spirit of Jünger's *Vokallehre*, implied) meaning of Jünger's word choice is how the persistent image of fleshly decay and its downward momentum is precariously balanced by the other vowels that represent an upward movement and by the consonants that hold all the vowels „gefaßt“ (Sader 391), in effect reiterating the dynamic of conservation leading to a mask-like deception that in fact hides a monstrous mummification.

(Again, the skeptical reader must be reminded that these musings on Jünger's aesthetic strategies represent *Annäherungen* themselves, but ones informed by the literary techniques and devices evident in the text and by Jünger's own theorizing – and by Sader's commentary on those theories.)

The next sentence in the excerpt adopts a political or preaching tone, building on the preceding sentence with an insistent rhythmic parallelism driven by the adjective „diese“ and a close sonic relative in the phrase „die sich“. The repetition of *diese* introduces value judgements on the civilization represented by, for example, the women's bodies and the California apples already mentioned: neutrality and colour blindness. These rather mild-seeming judgments are the first two gears in a sentence initially powered by the repetition of „diese“, yet it is the sonically almost identical „die sich“ that maintains the rhythm of the repetition and simultaneously represents a shift into a higher gear wherein the bland

faults of neutrality and colour blindness are merely the starting points for confusion and a mixing up of very serious terms: *Verbrechen/Krankheit, Werte/Zahlen, Fortschritt/Erlösung*. These oppositions are hammered home in rhythmic succession, building to a crescendo in the concept of evil, i.e. „des Bösen“. Jünger then compares this process to a biological one in a clause ellipated in the quotation above; after this very brief digression (comprehensible primarily to readers sharing Jünger's interest in zoology), Jünger again takes up his initial rhythmic instrument, the pronoun „diese“, and continues to drive home his point about the dynamic he is discussing. What began with neutrality has become moral castration, and when the rhythmic function passes fully to the repeated word „Bösen“ the conclusion of Jünger's meditations on the „Erscheinungen und Menschen der absoluten Zivilisation“ is powerfully punctuated by presenting the ultimate, conserved, mask-like, artificial existence: the machine. The person existing in such a civilization, the person accepting that California apple and all it implies, has become not merely a servant of evil, but a machine of evil. Jünger labels the end result of this transformatory dynamic (which is, as noted above, also the source for many of Howard's romance villains) with the ultimate monstrous epithet, *satanisch*.<sup>17</sup>

Jünger, in effect, presents the same metamorphosis of the civilized to the monstrous that forms the basis for the antagonists in Howard's romance stories. It must be noted that, while both men critique civilization from a similar Nietzschean standpoint, their focus is somewhat different. In Howard, the literally romanticized way of the warrior – as manifested by the martial combat forming the *pathos* of his romance tales – and the Dionysian instinct that facilitates the return to an Ur-man state (Arend 28) are presented as correctives for the corrupting influence of civilization. Jünger, who achieved the warrior and personally experienced the Dionysian ecstasy of war (both pre-, during, and post-battle), and also suffered defeat in war, has a similar antipathy to civilization, and yet, because of Germany's defeat in World War I, he

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<sup>17</sup> As a foreshadowing of the discussion of motifs that will follow, let it be noted that elsewhere in *Das Abenteuerliche Herz* (and in other writings), Jünger applies this satanic epithet specifically to the city -- „An den Gesichtern und besonders an den Farben der Großstadt läßt sich Entsprechendes beobachten. Die Hölle selbst könnte nicht mit giftigeren Prunklichtern ausgestattet sein“ (Jünger 2000: 70) -- and since the forbidden city haunted by demonic monsters is a major recurring setting in Howard's work, one can speak of a common satanic city motif in their works.

undergoes a psychological process that Schivelbusch describes in societies having suffered such major collapses: the losing nation at first sees itself as the valiant warrior defeated only by the unfairness of its opponents, then sees this defeat as a prelude to a more glorious victory to come, and finally chooses to learn from the victor by adopting various aspects of the victor's culture.

Howard, in the excerpt from *Almuric*, focusses on the atrophy, useless accretion and sluggishness of civilization and contrasts it, through the aesthetic form of his writing, with the vitality and simple vigour of his archetypal romance hero. The artificiality and meaninglessness of civilization is opposed to the inherent meaning of a warrior's life, and a barbarian's struggle to survive. Thus the poles of Howard's morality are established, where the good is the vigorous warrior and the bad the artificial civilization which will take on literally monstrous shapes through the dialectical imperative of the romance form Howard employed throughout his career.

For Jünger there is also something static about civilization – in fact conserved and mummified, even though it may have the appearance, and have included the process, of physical activity, as in the trained bodies of the women. As in Howard, there is something artificial about civilization, and Jünger spells out the meaninglessness – so authoritatively stated by Howard's Esau Cairn – that leads to the mixing up of what should be (in Jünger's estimation) clear moral lines. This decadence, to use the term implied by both authors when they each in their own way write of decay (whether as atrophied muscles or mummification), leads with Jünger not to the monstrous perversions of humanity in the form of the ape-like cannibals and the cruel flying people found in Howard's tales, but to a robotic evil.

To turn from this aspect of the barbarian discourse to again consider the most apparent affinity in the work of Howard and Jünger, we need to understand the historical significance of a sense of liberation through violence. It is not surprising that two writers of opposing nations, living in an era marked by two unprecedentedly massive eruptions of war divided by what Eugen Weber calls a re-arming period, would share a concern with the warrior. The philosophies of life and death expressed by Howard and Jünger in this context further underline their similarities. These similar philosophies give their work a power, an aesthetic effect that enthalls the readers who are drawn to these authors. We can observe these similarities, as we have seen, in the speech by



Conan the Cimmerian in “Queen of the Black Coast” and in excerpts from Jünger’s *Der Kampf als inneres Erlebnis*. Both writers present their readers with warriors, and the manner of this presentation champions the very conception of a warrior, raising up war-like attributes to the status of moral or ethical guidelines.

The aestheticization of violence strikes even the casual reader as a common characteristic in the works of both authors. What established both men as writers in their lifetimes, and what is largely responsible for the continued popularity of their work, is the aesthetic experience they offer their readers, a vicarious experience of the thrill of violence. This is the central aesthetic function of much of their work and the source of their fame. Furthermore, as Lethen points out, this aesthetic is in keeping with a form of social behaviour that characterized the period between the wars, one that Lethen termed the *kalte persona*. The cold persona was an expression of Avant Garde modernism’s interest in *Gestalten* with simple outlines. One finds these *Gestalts* with simple outlines in the work of both Jünger and Howard: they are free from psychological complexities; they, and their bodies, seem metallic and armoured both in description –

“He was a tall man, long-armed and iron-muscled...” (Howard 1978: 80); “Kane shrugged his broad shoulders and had unconsciously touched the black butts of his heavy pistols, the hilt of his long rapier and the dirk in his belt. Kane felt no fear as an ordinary man would feel, confronted with the Unknown and Nameless. Years of wandering in strange lands and warring with strange creatures had melted away from brain, soul, and body all that was not steel and whalebone. He was tall and spare, almost gaunt, built with the savage economy of the wolf. Broad-shouldered, long-armed, with nerves of ice and thews of spring steel, he was no less the natural killer than the born swordsman” (Howard 1979: 51); „Ab und zu, beim Schein einer Leuchtkugel, sah ich Stahlhelm an Stahlhelm, Klinge an Klinge blinken und wurde von einem Gefühl der Unverletzbarkeit erfüllt“ (Jünger 2001: 113); „Gehämmerte und Gemeißelte sind wir, aber auch solche, die den Hammer schwingen, den Meißel führen, Schmiede und sprühenden Stahl zugleich, Märtyrer eigener Tat, von Trieben getriebene“ (Jünger 2007).

– and in the amount of physical punishment they are able to endure; they

are highly mobile and they want to be that way –

“The jungle! Dark and brooding – over leagues of blue salt sea she has drawn me and with the dawn I go to seek the heart of her. Mayhap I shall find curious adventure – mayhap my doom awaits me. But better death than the ceaseless and ever-lasting urge, the fire that has burned my veins with bitter longing” (Howard 1979: 2); „Ach, nur nicht zu Haus bleiben, nur mitmachen dürfen!“ (Jünger 2001: 7); “A hunger in his soul drove him on and on, an urge to right all wrongs, protect all weaker things, avenge all crimes against right and justice. Wayward and restless as the wind, he was consistent only in one respect – he was true to his ideals of justice and right. Such was Solomon Kane” (Howard 1978: 102).

they are alert –

„Ich hatte vielmehr ein Gefühl des höchsten und angespanntesten Wachseins“ (Jünger 2001: 7); „Dieser Griff aus der Tiefe des Schlafes heraus zur Waffe war etwas, das im Blute lag, eine Äußerung des primitiven Menschen, dieselbe Bewegung mit der der Eiszeitmensch sein Steinbeil packte“ (Jünger 2007); “Solomon Kane started up in the darkness, snatching at the weapons which lay on a pile of skins that served him as a crude pallet” (Howard 1979: 104).

they rarely display their emotions publicly, especially not feelings of pain or sorrow, and they are decisive and react with split-second speed.

Their compelling aesthetic expressions of a mode of social interaction that was common throughout the post-Versailles world was a further reason for the success of the authors. Their presentation of war as a Dionysian Saturnalia was founded in the myths of Dionysus himself; and, significantly within a specifically Germanic context, the chief god, Wotan, was, as Jung argued, making himself felt as an archetypal force in the collective unconscious of Germans and Germanic peoples. The aesthetic significance of this, as both Jünger and Howard specifically evoke Wotan/Odin, must be considered in light of the fact that this decisive archetypal factor in the time of the authors was not only understood as a war god, but also as the god of poetic ecstasy.

As we see in the preceding discussion, the aesthetic functions of the texts of both authors – their poetics – are expressive of their social and political functions as well; the aesthetic appeal of their works is intimately coupled with their meaning. An aesthetic element related to

those poetics that is particularly revealing of the political unconscious in Howard's and Jünger's works is that of the motif. Knapp notes that a motif is a smaller unit of plot with a unity of form (Knapp 1974: 200-201), and this unity of form allows it an existence outside the immediate textual context and therefore the ability to be "translated" into other textual contexts, something which Greimas terms the "intertextual migration of motifs" (Greimas 115). The presence of a motif in a text has contextual effectivity: in other words, it helps to shape the plot of the text. Both men – and other authors in their contemporary cultural archive – make use of the motif of Africa as the land of primal freedom.

Africa is the setting for Robert E. Howard's 1928 tale, "Red Shadows" and figures prominently in several sections of Jünger's *Das Abenteuerliche Herz* (notably in relation to a pivotal moment in Jünger's biography when the youthful Jünger attempted to flee his petty bourgeois family environment and join the French Foreign Legion in the hope of attaining 'Africa': „Es ist ein wunderlicher Vorgang, wie die Phantasie gleich einem Fieber, dessen Keime von weither getrieben werden, von unserem Leben Besitz ergreift und immer tiefer und glühender sich in ihm einnistet“ (Jünger 1951: 5)); Africa indeed functions as a 'motif' in the texts in which Africa is presented as the land of primal freedom, and this apprehension of Africa is iconic. This usage of Africa recurs throughout the texts in a way that establishes a formula in which the same character constellation and plot constellations recur, particularly that of the male character whose desire for freedom brings him into confrontation with the reality of Africa, which either has an overtly sexual aspect, or a sublimated one that manifests through violence. We can see this also in other tales from the cultural archive like Edgar Rice Burroughs' *Tarzan* tales from the turn of the century, Grimm's 1926 *Volk ohne Raum* and Bruno Schwietzke's 1938 tale, *Deutsche Kämpfer in der grünen Hölle Kameruns*.

The motif that helps to shape the plot of these texts is a by-product of their respective societies' emphasis on the discourse of race, which involved a spectrum of attitudes that attempted to – consciously or unconsciously – define or establish what Africa meant to the "whites" (i.e. Europeans and their descendents) who colonized, enslaved and lived with her peoples.

This example of the technique of a motif in the work of both authors – and there are other motifs that they use, like the freeing the slaves motif, the Cimmeria motif and the Ragnarok motif – reinforces

the supposition that the aesthetic appeal of their texts is inextricably linked to their social function. It is the intention of this dissertation to reveal this function through a political unconscious analysis aided by the concepts of archetypal criticism and of a conceptualization of textual form as consisting of three layers.



## IV. The Cultural Archive 1870-1920: Texts and Events Relevant to the Works of Howard and Jünger

As we have seen with Chapter 3's brief look at the poetics of the works of Howard and Jünger, ideology is a large part of their aesthetic appeal. A political unconscious interpretation of their works implies, through the three horizons of reading proposed by Jameson, that their texts are inextricably interwoven with their historical, political and social 'context'. The problematic nature of the concept of 'context', as Jameson notes, makes it more instructive to turn to the concept of the cultural archive for equivalent, or relevant, texts that participate in the discourses that we find prominently expressed in the works of Howard and Jünger.

The cultural archive is a central concept of the cultural studies paradigm of literary criticism. The cultural archive is the sum total of all the books, pamphlets, manuscripts, records, tapes and other cultural products – all the 'texts' produced by a culture – of a certain time period and it is a de facto interdiscursive space. The interactions between the texts of the cultural archive help to form the mental dimension of culture by expressing values, prejudices, and self-images held by its people. In fact, these texts represent competing value hierarchies at play in the mental and social dimensions of a culture. This implies that any text of a given time period has some relevance to any other text of the time; from this cultural archive, literature draws its substance in its capacity, as Lessing argued, to master and reorganize reality.

Since the cultural archive is vast, there is no avoiding selectivity in choosing cultural texts that have a bearing on the analysis of the works in question.

According to Baßler, the archive is defined as the sum of all (accessible) texts of a particular culture. Within this synchronic textual corpus, there are texts or parts of texts which can be characterized as *equivalent*, or, to put it differently, which form an intertextual structure of equivalence. Following Baßler's notion that discourses are (analyzable as) intertextual relations, all these *equivalent* texts or parts of texts, which belong to the archive, can be regarded as representing a particular discourse. (Butler)

This leads to a related central concept of cultural semiotics, namely the concept of the *Interdiskurs*. While the term *Interdiskurs* is used by Zapf to indicate the literary discourse as a whole (Zapf 71-72) – i.e. a discourse that borrows concepts and ideas from discourses that tend to remain far more homogenous and specialized<sup>18</sup>, thus creating a unique interdiscursive space – other discourses can function in this way as well. The political discourse, in fact, is one such *Interdiskurs* in the sense that it must deal with just about any and every facet of social, cultural and environmental life. In the case of Howard and Jünger – and German and American, and, indeed, much of Western civilization’s discourses in general – the political discourse of their time has precisely such a function and there is a text that acts as a crystallization and nexus of a multitude of international discourses: the Treaty of Versailles itself. The aesthetic common ground evident in Howard’s and Jünger’s texts demonstrates how concepts from a multitude of broader cultural discourses, including the barbarian discourse and the discourse of race, find expression in a properly literary, interdiscursive way. Zapf describes this process as a necessary element of culture in general (i.e. a process whereby concepts from one discourse can be transferred to another, thereby allowing for a linkage of discourses), one which highlights „die Funktion von Literatur als reintegrativer Interdiskurs“ (Gymnich & Nünning 19). Precisely this is what makes the cultural studies paradigm of literary criticism a fascinating and fruitful avenue of research, for one is able to see the literary texts as momentary crystallizations of the social and cultural discourses of the day. In order to track the development of these discourses before they are crystallized in a particular work of literature, one needs recourse to the cultural archive. In order to assess the social functioning of works of literature, one needs again to access the cultural archive and see how shifts, new directions and new voices within these discourses occur after the crystallization evident in a literary text.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> „Die Bemühungen, dem Spezifischen der Literatur durch ihren Charakter als kultureller ‚Interdiskurs‘ näher zu kommen, zeigen Parallelen zu diesem dritten Aspekt des hier vorgeschlagenen kulturökologischen Modells. Nach Foucault bezeichnen Diskurse spezielle Wissensbereiche, deren Ordnung durch die Grenzen zwischen dem, was innerhalb ihrer Normen gesagt werden kann, und dem, was nicht gesagt werden kann, bestimmt wird“ (Zapf 71-72).

<sup>19</sup> The term ‘crystallization’ is being used consciously as a reflexive element related to Jünger’s own interest in crystals and crystalline structures and to the central role played

In this spirit, texts from the time period of 1870 to 1949 will be presented and linked to those of Howard and Jünger. These texts will be discussed not only in terms of the social discourses that they are expressions in, but also in terms of the archetypal, modal and generic characteristics they present. A central argument of this dissertation, which builds on Jameson's statement that history is only accessible through textualization, is the position that all these textualizations of history have an archetypal *mythos* as their first layer of form. Thus the social discourses are themselves formed by these mythic perceptions, and thus exert a strong archetypal influence on literary texts that draw such discourses into themselves in an interdiscursive manner. This is exemplified by a 1938 German pulp fiction text by Schwietzke which demonstrates not only many of the major discourses considered in this dissertation, but also clearly demonstrates the interdiscursive effect of the Treaty of Versailles, the functioning of the *Kultur der Niederlage*, the presence of the *Verhaltenslehre der Kälte*, and the plot-generating effect of two of the major motifs under consideration: the Cimmerian motif and the motif of Africa as the land of primal freedom. All the texts that will be drawn from the cultural archive exhibit the equivalence to the texts of Howard and Jünger that Baßler's theory requires, for they are all part of relevant discourses such as the grand geo-political discourse leading to WW I and following from it, the modernist discourse of the Avant Garde, and the barbarian discourse.

Although one could go back very far in history to find texts relevant to the works that Howard and Jünger wrote in the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s, 1870 suggests itself as a suitable starting point. 1870 was the year of the Franco-Prussian War – a war whose tactics were in part a result of Prussian study of the American Civil War – and this war sets in motion a dynamic of the cultures of defeat that Schivelbusch studies which will shape the worlds, textual and real, of both writers. The *revanche* at the heart of France's culture of defeat will lead to World War I, and this will allow the American South to break out of its culture of defeat – one which Howard inherited – and will cause the ensuing German *Kultur der Niederlage* that will come to dominate the 1920s and 1930s, and thus lead to World War II. The Franco-Prussian war is also significant because two writers who were to have great intellectual impact

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by crystals and gems in several of Howard's texts, including "The Tower of the Elephant" and *The Hour of the Dragon*.



on the world, and thus were direct and indirect influences on Howard and Jünger, were eye-witnesses to the events of the war, Friedrich Nietzsche and Arthur Rimbaud.

#### IV.1. The Epochal Influence of Nietzsche

The decision to begin the cultural archive with Nietzsche is a testament to his influence, an influence that his biographer Stern places on the same level as the thinkers named by Foucault: “Friedrich Nietzsche belongs among those very few thinkers – Karl Marx and Sigmund Freud are the others – whose standing as modern masters is undoubted: had they not lived, the life of modern Europe would be different. Among all the other modern masters they are unique: the influence of their speculative thinking touches on every aspect of our experience” (Stern 17). It is Nietzsche, along with Marx and Freud, who helps bring to the fore the discourses and concerns that will dominate the 20th century and which are central to the works of Howard and Jünger. Consequently, the cultural archive of texts relevant to, or equivalent to, the texts of Howard and Jünger and the texts that are dialogically linked with them, whether hermeneutically or poetically, begins with the works of Nietzsche. Many analyses of Jünger’s work discuss his indebtedness to Nietzsche’s ideas, and Jünger textually confirms this in many texts, particularly in *Heliopolis*, as we shall see; and, in terms of Howard, Connors is one who argues that Howard was influenced by Nietzsche (Connors 104).

The central concepts that Nietzsche introduced, or promoted, in the social and cultural discourses are those of the disunified self, the misunderstood but paradigm-shifting “God is Dead” concept, the re-valuing of values, the centrality of the Dionysian-Apollonian conflict, the eternal return and the superman, and the tragic vision and its resulting influence on the German national narrative.

##### IV.1.1. The Psyche as Disunified Self

One of Nietzsche’s most influential concepts in terms of the current cultural studies paradigm of literary criticism was one of his earliest revelations: „eher ein ‚Dividuum‘ als eine Individuum zu sein“ (Türcke 2000). This idea, that the individual psyche is a composite, that

the self is essentially disunified, is at the core of the cultural studies perception of many factors and discourses being the source of any “individual” personality or any “individual” textual utterance. This disunity is reflected in the works of many thinkers influential in the cultural studies paradigm, and they are all relatable to Nietzsche’s statement that “there is nothing but the whole” in *Twilight of the Idols* (Nietzsche 2010: 37) and his insistence that “The fate of his being cannot be separated from the fate of all that was and all that will be” (Nietzsche 2010: 37). With such a statement Nietzsche laid the foundations for concepts like the cultural archive, which implicitly argues that no text can be understood divorced from other texts, and implicitly argues for concepts like Frye’s archetypal *mythoi* which suggest that no narrative exists apart from all the narratives that once were.

#### IV.1.2. God is Dead

One of Nietzsche’s main targets was Christianity; his attacks on Christianity can be perceived in light of the barbarian discourse that Nietzsche himself provides a powerful impulse to. Nietzsche’s objective with these attacks was twofold: firstly, to decry the effect of Christian values on a concept of psychological development rooted in the barbarian discourse and the Dionysian man; and secondly, to underline the fact that Christianity’s hold on the Western world was already fading with his famous ‘God is dead’ implication. What, in Nietzsche’s dramatic fashion, was meant as a statement of fact, was taken as a cultural provocation, which Nietzsche’s biographer Stern emphasizes when he writes “Taking no warning from Greek tragedy, Nietzsche has no fear of hubris” (Stern 104). In other words, Nietzsche was living the tragic vision he described, and dared to take positions that were not only decades, if not a century, before their time, but helped to push the current of discourse in that direction. Stern suggests that Nietzsche’s mental collapse was in part due to taking such momentous positions, and Nietzsche underlined his own forerunner, or prophetic, role by terming himself a “posthumous man”.

The implications of his attacks on Christianity were many, and included a paradigm shift for literature itself. Nietzsche’s work accents the role of artist as creator, a concept, as Lachmann notes, important in many twentieth century artistic movements. Stern put it thusly: “if God is dead, the artist will be god and Nietzsche will proclaim his theodicy”

(Stern 140). Nietzsche's statement – or rather, his apprehension of this imminent paradigm shift – accounts for the appearance of the *Neophantastik Schreibweise* and how it, and literary genres operating in this mode, like fantasy, make no textual concession to a reality outside the text. Nietzsche's brilliance – or hubris – in questioning cultural values themselves, and arguing that they had no objective root but were the result of historical expediency and thus could be re-formulated through an effort of will, was a manifestation of this god-like creativity: this god-like facility to establish tables of values through what Nietzsche terms the will to power is the core of the Fantasy genre's concept of sub-creation, and of the *Neophantastik Schreibweise's* textual rejection of consensus reality. This last point – when we come to consider Howard's and Jünger's Fantasy genre texts – is important to keep in mind, for the tables of values in a fantasy story are more profoundly than elsewhere an expression (or sublimation) of an author's will to power.

#### IV.1.3. The Genealogy of Values

The consequence of the insight that cultural values were historically – and not objectively and metaphysically – rooted is materialist in nature, and it allowed Nietzsche to reject the Manichaeism (i.e. the archetypal good/evil opposition of the romance *mythos*) that informed not only traditional religious *Weltanschauungen* but also that of the architects of the French Revolution, of Rousseau, of English political economists, of international socialism, of Schopenhauer, of Hegel and of Kant (Stern 136). In effect, he voiced his opposition to seeing the world in terms of the romance *mythos* and its concomitant protagonists and antagonists, arguing instead for a re-valuing of values in a fashion that allows him to be considered a forerunner of postmodernism. The resonance and lasting impact of his discourse on values is noted by writers like Hesse in *Der Steppenwolf* and is manifest in current literary theory. Grabes' conception of hierarchies of values that are the core of society and which literature re-orders is only possible after Nietzsche makes the argument about the historical mutability of values.

Nietzsche's observations about the profound paradigm shift occurring in his time (and helped along by him) become major currents in the discourses of modernism and materialism. And yet Nietzsche's *déracinement*, which Jameson identifies as a dominant code of the era, puts

him at odds with both discourses.

His opposition to modernism rests with the prevalence of the Socratic spirit in the modern impulse, particularly in the works of Schopenhauer and Wagner. The Socratic spirit, Nietzsche argued, arose from a degeneration or devaluing of human instinct,

[...] so daß Sokrates als fortgeschrittenster Krankheitsfall die Trias von Vernunft, Tugend und Glück als vermeintliches Heilmittel anbieten konnte, wonach so viele gierig griffen. Doch Rationalität und Moralität mit derart unreiner Herkunft sind für Nietzsche pathologisch bedingt; denn der wachsende Widerstand gegen erkrankte Instinkte ist selbst nur Symptom einer Krankheit. Ein gesundes Dasein bekämpft keine Instinkte, sondern läßt sie gelten – allerdings nur, wenn diese gesund sind. (Pütz 193).

Modernism adopted the same Socratic solution for the degeneration of human instinct, namely to promote reason, virtue and happiness. But a rationality and morality from such an impure source was pathologic, as far as Nietzsche was concerned. Resistance against degenerate instincts was only a symptom of the sickness; a healthy being did not fight instincts, but accepted them – when they were healthy instincts. This decadence in modernism Nietzsche called the ‘Wagnerian sickness’ and it was characterized by an addiction to narcotics, the brutal, the artificial and the innocent (Pütz 204).

Nietzsche stresses such a situation-specific origin of values – whether moral or otherwise – that a people consider “natural” or god-given. These values result from a political necessity to maintain a given society, and it is for this reason that Nietzsche feels the necessity to expose these values as not based on a moral standard, but on socio-political expediency. He advocates an open-eyed approach to values, and the ability to establish values “beyond” the dubious terms “good” and “evil”. Moreover, Nietzsche demonstrates how values that were at one time necessary to preserve a society from outside enemies<sup>20</sup> become, at a later more settled historical stage, threats to the society and thus are devalued. Nietzsche here demonstrates how a hierarchy of values can be changed, and the fact that he links the change to, in effect, political and

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<sup>20</sup> Nietzsche is implicitly evoking a “barbarian” era here, and we see here how the barbarian discourse is a continual point of reference for Nietzsche, and that Nietzsche is continually adding such insights into the barbarian discourse of his day, arguing, in effect, for the Dionysian barbarian attitude.

economic factors affecting the society supports Jameson's Marxian view of cultural revolution. As Stern explains, "man's being in this, his only world, is inextricably involved in valuations: being *is* the setting up of tables of values and judging in accordance with them. They in turn are products of man's willing: manifestations of the will to power" (Stern 93). Those who are not authentic and not self-realized (whom Stern argues Nietzsche classed as 'slaves') either submit to the tables of values expressed by a Superman's will to power, or, more likely, as in the case of Christianity, band together and declare their very weaknesses as the reigning tables of values. Nietzsche describes this dynamic as follows:

When the highest and strongest drives, breaking passionately out, carry the individual far above and beyond the average and lowlands of the herd conscience, the self-confidence of the community goes to pieces, its faith in itself, its spine as it were, is broken: consequently it is precisely these drives which are most branded and calumniated. Lofty spiritual independence, the will to stand alone, great intelligence even, are felt to be dangerous; everything that raises the individual above the herd and makes his neighbour quail is henceforth called *evil*; the fair, modest, obedient, self-effacing disposition, the *mean and average* in desires, acquires moral names and honours. (Nietzsche 1982: 104-105)

The tables of values – Grabes' hierarchies of values – are a concomitant of existence and the Superman, who is authentic, self-realized and aware of his self-becoming, expresses his will to power in rejecting the values of the mean and the average and proposes his own tables of values. Seen this way, it is no surprise that one of the few people that Nietzsche expressly bestows the title of 'Superman' on is a writer, one of those god-like beings establishing his own hierarchy of values (as we shall see below).

#### IV.1.4. Celebrating the Dionysian

Nietzsche, in *The Birth of Tragedy* provides a compelling account of the eternal struggle between what the gods Apollo and Dionysus symbolized, and Nietzsche argued that this struggle was the motor at the centre of Greek culture. Nietzsche describes Apollo as follows:

He, who (as the etymology of the name indicates) is

the “shining one”, the deity of light, is also ruler over the fair appearance of the inner world of fantasy. The higher truth, the perfection of these states in contrast to the incompletely intelligible everyday world, this deep consciousness of nature, healing and helping in sleep and dreams, is at the same time the symbolical analogue of the soothsaying faculty and of the arts generally, which make life possible and worth living. But we must also include in our picture of Apollo that delicate boundary, which the dream-picture must not overstep – lest it act pathologically (in which case appearance would impose upon us as pure reality). We must keep in mind that measured restraint, that freedom from wilder emotions, that philosophical calm of the sculptor-god. His eyes must be “sunlike,” as befits his origin; even when his glance is angry and distempered, the sacredness of his beautiful appearance must still be there. (Nietzsche 1995: 3)

Then Nietzsche explains the essence of the god Dionysus, and thus the Dionysian mindframe, as follows:

Under the charm of the Dionysian not only is the union between man and man reaffirmed, but Nature which has become estranged, hostile, or subjugated, celebrates once more her reconciliation with her prodigal son, man. Freely earth proffers her gifts, and peacefully the beasts of prey approach from desert and mountain. The chariot of Dionysus is bedecked with flowers and garlands; panthers and tigers pass beneath his yoke. Transform Beethoven’s “Hymn to Joy” into a painting; let your imagination conceive the multitudes bowing to the dust, awestruck – then you will be able to appreciate the Dionysian. Now the slave is free; now all the stubborn, hostile barriers, which necessity, caprice or “shameless fashion” have erected between man and man, are broken down. Now, with the gospel of universal harmony, each one feels himself not only united, reconciled, blended with his neighbor, but as one with him; he feels as if the veil of *Mâyâ* had been torn aside and were now merely fluttering in tatters before the mysterious Primordial Unity. (Nietzsche 1995: 4)

The Apollonian-Dionysian conflict is a conflict between the mental ordering and requisite restraint and freedom from wild emotions that is

the Apollonian, and the ecstatic and chaotic breaking down of barriers to expose the primordial unity that is the Dionysian, and this conflict is central to both Howard's and Jünger's work, and, indeed, is a core aspect of the barbarian discourse itself. The Dionysian is defined by Nietzsche through a positive valuing of the barbarian, and this positive valuing subsequently enters the cultural discourses in Nietzsche's wake. Drawing on the internal logic of the Greek myths, Nietzsche conceptualized the Apollonian-Dionysian conflict as follows:

The individual, with all his restraint and proportion, succumbed to the self-oblivion of the Dionysian state, forgetting the precepts of Apollo. Excess revealed itself as truth. Contradiction, the bliss born of pain, spoke out from the very heart of Nature. And so, wherever the Dionysian prevailed, the Apollonian was checked and destroyed. But, on the other hand, it is equally certain that, wherever the first Dionysian onslaught was successfully withstood, the authority and majesty of the Delphic god exhibited itself as more rigid and menacing than ever. For to me the Doric state and Doric art are explicable only as a permanent citadel of the Apollonian. For an art so defiantly prim, and so encompassed with bulwarks, a training so warlike and rigorous, a political structure so cruel and relentless, could endure for any length of time only by incessant opposition to the titanic-barbaric nature of the Dionysian. (Nietzsche 1995: 12)

In this brief excerpt Nietzsche characterizes the Dionysian state as one of self-oblivion, as one wherein truth was sought through excess, and one that accepted that the natural world was one rife with contradiction and pain. The Apollonian, in contrast, is characterized as a state ruled by precepts and rigid authority, one where stability was ensured through structure and violence. Nietzsche concludes the passage by pointing out that the Apollonian state can only be maintained by active opposition to the barbaric nature of the Dionysian, suggesting that the barbarian is the natural state and that civilization, which is what the Apollonian state de facto represents, is an unnatural state that can only be maintained by attempting to suppress the natural Dionysian perception. Howard, for example, will echo precisely this sentiment in "Beyond the Black River" where he has his barbarian hero declare that barbarism is the natural state of mankind and that it will always ultimately triumph over civilization. Nietzsche explains the essence of the Dionysian impulse as „einzig

erklärbar aus einem *Zuwiel* von Kraft“ (Nietzsche 1999: 143), and this excess of strength is something that characterizes not only Howard’s Conan the Cimmerian character, but also the aesthetic appeal of both Jünger’s and Howard’s writing. Both men, in fact, promote the Dionysian perspective on life in their texts, and this is conditioned by the national meta-narratives and the grand social discourses of their day.

The true Dionysian, as Nietzsche reminds us in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, does not reject the reality beyond the veil of *Mâyâ* and does not crumble in terror at realizing the purposelessness of the cosmos that Apollonian civilization denies. In the section of his *Zarathustra* entitled, “The Intoxicated Song” the following revelation occurs among Zarathustra’s followers.

‘My assembled friends,’ said the ugliest man, ‘what do you think? For the sake of this day – *I* am content for the first time to have lived my whole life.

‘And it is not enough that I testify only this much. It is worth while to live on earth: one day, one festival with Zarathustra has taught me to love the earth.

‘ “Was *that* – life?” I will say to death. “Very well! Once more!”

‘My friends, what do you think? Will you not, like me, say to death: “Was *that* – life? For Zarathustra’s sake, very well! Once more!”’ (Nietzsche 1969: 326)

Here Zarathustra’s followers have embraced the Dionysian perspective, for they have found truth through excess, and have reconciled themselves to the contradiction at the heart of nature. They have faced the purposelessness of existence in imagining that death is upon them, and in understanding that death will reveal to them that their lives were all that there is, they will take the step that Nietzsche argues that the Superman must take, namely to accept the life that one lives as the template for eternity. This is the theory of the eternal return.

#### IV.1.5. The Eternal Return and the Superman

This revelation is Nietzsche’s famous theory of the Eternal Return, which arises from a Dionysian perspective. In section 9 of “The Intoxicated Song” Zarathustra, in his Dionysian ecstasy says, “Joy, however, does not want heirs or children, joy wants itself, wants eternity, wants recurrence, wants everything eternally the same” (Nietzsche 1969:



331). A man who comes to this realization, becomes, in Nietzsche's sense, beyond good and evil; he is the Superman, the one who can stand the test of the Eternal Return without his soul quailing (Taylor 196). Indeed, he welcomes the Eternal Return of his life with joy. And as the Superman can joyously relive his life over and over without change and without remorse, he announces an endless yes to existence. Howard's Conan character expresses this sort of attitude, and it is likely no coincidence, particularly when viewed from the perspective of the cultural archive of the 1930s, that Conan's *kalte persona* characterization may have been a template for the Superman comic book character (and all subsequent super-heroes) who appeared in print only a few years later.

Nietzsche presents the prerequisites of his Superman throughout his work, but rarely endows an historical figure with this title. Interestingly, Nietzsche does argue that Goethe was a Superman. Not only does Nietzsche say that Goethe is the last German that he has reverence for (Nietzsche 1999: 139), but he also credits Goethe for conceptualizing,

[...] einen starken, hochgebildeten, in allen Leiblichkeiten geschickten, sich selbst im Zaume habenden, vor sich selber ehrfürchtigen Menschen, der sich den ganzen Umfang und Reichtum der Natürlichkeit zu gönnen wagen darf, der stark genug zu dieser Freiheit ist; den Menschen der Toleranz, nicht aus Schwäche, sondern aus Stärke, weil er das, woran die durchschnittliche Natur zugrunde gehn würde, noch zu seinem Vorteil zu brauchen weiß; den Menschen, für den es nichts Verbotenes mehr gibt, es sei denn die *Schwäche*, heiße sie nun Laster oder Tugend... Ein solcher *freigewordner* Geist steht mit einem freudigen und vertrauenden Fatalismus mitten im All, im *Glauben*, daß nur das Einzelne verwerflich ist, daß im Ganzen sich alles erlöst und bejaht – *er verneint nicht mehr*... Aber ein solcher Glaube ist der höchste aller möglichen Glauben: ich habe ihn auf den Namen des *Dionysos* getauft. – (Nietzsche 1999: 137)

The Superman must believe in the Dionysian – but not in an Apollonian way through precepts, rules, external discipline and dogma – but through his own existence. The Superman that Goethe represents is a man that Nietzsche characterizes as strong, highly educated, and physically accomplished, a man who has himself under control, a man who respects himself, and who dares to enjoy the full palette and richness of all that is

natural, a man who is strong enough for this freedom; a man who is tolerant, not through weakness, but through strength because he knows how to use to his own advantage what destroys the average person; a man for whom nothing is forbidden except weakness, whether that weakness be labelled as sin or virtue. Such a *freed* spirit stands with joyful and trusting fatalism in the middle of space in the belief that only the individual can be overthrown, but that in the whole all is saved and affirmed: such a man no longer denies anything. Such a belief is the highest of all beliefs, and Nietzsche has baptized this belief in the name 'Dionysos'.

The Dionysian is thus the core of Nietzsche's teaching, which is how he characterizes his philosophic method elsewhere in his oeuvre. The power and attraction of this Dionysian perspective influences Howard and Jünger, and Nietzsche explains what Dionysian art, and Dionysian artists, attempt to do:

Dionysian art, too, wishes to convince us of the eternal joy of existence: only we are to seek this joy not in phenomena, but behind them. We are to recognize that all that comes into being must be ready for a sorrowful end; we are forced to look into the terrors of individual existence – yet we are not to become rigid with fear: a metaphysical comfort tears us momentarily from the bustle of the transforming figures. We are really for a brief moment Primordial Being itself, feeling its raging desire for existence and joy in existence: the struggle, the pain, the destruction of phenomena, now appear to us as a necessary thing, in view of the surplus of countless forms of existence which force and push one another into life, in view of the exuberant fertility of the universal will. We are pierced by the maddening sting of these pains just when we have become, as it were, one with the infinite primordial joy in existence, and when we anticipate, in Dionysian ecstasy, the indestructibility and eternity of this joy. In spite of fear and pity, we are the happy living beings, not as individuals, but as one living being, with whose creative joy we are united. (Nietzsche 1995: 60)

Jünger hints at just such a meaning behind the surface phenomena of life, particularly with his conception of a planetary consciousness coming into existence with the *Arbeiter Gestalt*, and his idea that one can discover the primordial reality behind surface manifestations in the "runes" that are

inscribed on these surface phenomena.

Nietzsche pointed out artists who he felt were practicing Dionysian art, and he recognized this perspective arising within France's culture of defeat following the Franco-Prussian War. He writes, in 1875, of Bizet's *Carmen* in just such a fashion, writing that Bizet's music is wicked, refined, and fatalistic; it has the refinement not of an individual, but of a whole race; it has a cheerfulness that is neither French nor German, but African; it is music that has fate hanging over it, its happiness is short, sudden and without mercy. Nietzsche writes that he is jealous of Bizet's courage to express such a sensibility which has hitherto had no language to express it in the cultivated music of Europe, and he characterizes this sensibility as a more southern, a browner, and a more burned sensibility. Nietzsche concludes by praising Bizet's evocation of love as fate, love as fatalistic, cynical, innocent, cruel – and precisely therefore as natural! He further praises Bizet's evocation of love whose means is war and which is based on the undying hatred of the sexes for each other (Nietzsche 1988: 375). By ascribing to Bizet's music the criteria of Dionysian art, he reveals that all these Dionysian traits which he has been promoting are intimately connected to the barbarian discourse, and, more specifically, to the idea of Africa as the manifestation of such a natural and vital Dionysian barbarism.

Nietzsche's evocation of the motif of Africa as the land of primal freedom points the way to Africa for those exhibiting the Dionysian impulse; it is where Rimbaud has already gone for Dionysian reasons, where Jünger will attempt to go as a 16 year-old and, in a textual sense, where Howard will repeatedly go. Such individual attempts at self-actualization through Africa were part of larger national meta-narratives such as France's renewed colonial vigour after the Franco-Prussian war (i.e. *Kompensativen Imperialismus* (Schivelbusch 423)). Although the Dionysian impulse in such a case is overlaid with the Apollonian, this renewed colonialism was a symptom of the culture of defeat's attempt to regain prestige by tapping into the power promised by the Dionysian perception of Africa.

#### IV.1.6. The Tragic Vision

By attempting to harness, and account for, the same inherent contradiction in nature that was fueling the dialectical perception of

Marxism<sup>21</sup>, Nietzsche in fact was advocating a tragic perception of reality – but one, significantly, that points to the victory-in-tragedy implicit in the Dionysian superman's acceptance of the eternal return. With this Nietzsche was attempting to apply a corrective to what he perceived as his scientific age's romance perception of itself and its capabilities, and as a corrective to the romance teleology inherent in all the thinkers and movements Stern lists above. Nietzsche explains why this tragic perception is necessary, and the pivotal role art has in this dynamic in *The Birth of Tragedy*:

But now science, stimulated by its powerful illusion [*i.e.* “*This illusion consists in the imperturbable belief that, with the clue of logic, thinking can reach to the nethermost depths of being, and that thinking can not only perceive being but even modify it*” (Nietzsche 1995: 53)], hastens irresistibly to its limits, on which its optimism, hidden in the essence of logic, is wrecked. For the periphery of the circle of science has an infinite number of points, and while there is still no telling how this circle can ever be completely measured, yet the noble and gifted man, even before the middle of his career, inevitably comes in contact with those extreme points of the periphery where he stares into the unfathomable. When to his dismay he here sees how logic coils round itself at these limits and finally bites its own tail – then the new form of perception rises to view, namely *tragic perception*, which, in order even to be endured, requires art as protection and remedy. (Nietzsche 1995: 54-55)

This tragic perception that Nietzsche endorsed had profound effects on the world, particularly on Germany's national meta-narrative, where thinkers across the political spectrum professed admiration for Nietzsche's great lessons of facing the abyss instead of wallpapering it (as Behn argued civilization does). That this archetypal mythic perception, this tragic vision of time, was linked to, and could drift into, the next

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<sup>21</sup> Nietzsche criticizes, however, those who use the dialectic in no uncertain terms: „Man wählt die Dialektik nur, wenn man kein andres Mittel hat. ... Sie kann nur Notwehr sein, in den Händen solcher, die keine andern Waffen mehr haben. Man muß sein Recht zu erzwingen haben: eher macht man keinen Gebrauch von ihr. Die Juden waren deshalb Dialektiker; Reinecke Fuchs war es: wie? und Sokrates war es auch? –“ Nietzsche's implication here is that apprehending the contradiction in the heart of nature should free the superman to full self-actualization instead of leading to a line of argumentation meant to win over others.

archetypal *mythoi* on Frye's spectrum – irony – was a further dynamic in the discourses of the age. Frye notes that “The extraordinary treatment of the tragic vision of time by Nietzsche's Zarathustra, in which the heroic acceptance of cyclical return becomes a glumly cheerful acceptance of a cosmology of identical recurrence, marks the influence of an age of irony” (Frye 214). The exhortation to the tragic and the heroic as a response to the ironic that is bound up in Nietzsche's influential vision explains the often violent resistance to the ironic and the satiric not only in Jünger's texts, but also in the NS regime itself. One finds this manifested, for example, in the official banning of *entartete Kunst*, much of which was archetypally ironic and satiric. Jünger, it could be argued, tries to break out of an ironic age with a romance vision that is, inevitably, subject to the tragic perception affecting Germany's meta-narrative; this can be symbolically apprehended, for example, in the narrator's reading of both *Tristram Shandy* and Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* in *In Stahlgewittern*. Howard resists the ironic age with repeated romances until he, too, embraces the satiric vision toward the end of his life.

#### IV.2. Rimbaud as a Voice of France's Culture of Defeat

The texts of Rimbaud are a crucial part of the cultural archive for they parallel the development of the culture of defeat in France and exhibit aspects of the barbarian discourse that both Howard and Jünger will also express. Rimbaud's own personal experience of the Africa as the land of primal freedom motif foreshadows Jünger's textual and personal usage of it, as well as Howard's textual usage of it, showing that they are all equivalent expressions within the race and barbarian discourses of their day. Significantly, Klett positions Jünger in relation to Rimbaud, Baudelaire and Poe (Klett 8-9) while Guillaud's citing of Howard's admiration for one of the writers of this constellation, Poe (Guillaud 80), suggests a larger textual affinity that the following look at Rimbaud's texts in the cultural archive should help to substantiate.

Rimbaud, Jünger and Howard were writers writing within a culture of defeat, and their texts give insight into each of the three nations Schivelbusch analyzes in his book, and into the overall dynamic of a *Kultur der Niederlage*. Significantly, Howard is the one chronologically most distant from the “ground zero” of his variant of the culture of defeat, while both Rimbaud and Jünger lived the establishment of the culture of defeat in the society around them. While the contemporaries

Rimbaud and Nietzsche strike the Dionysian tone at the same time, the culture of defeat re-routes Rimbaud's thinking. Nietzsche criticizes the pompous and self-important aspects of Imperial Germany, going against the national romance narrative derived from the defeat of France in 1871. Rimbaud, however, is swept along precisely by that culture of defeat, and its influence on his textual utterances will be demonstrated below.

#### IV.2.1. The Race and Barbarian Discourses in France's Culture of Defeat

Where Nietzsche can, in the context of the discourse on race, insist that the Superman is an individual – not a racial – phenomenon, Rimbaud's poetic narrators link the race discourse to the communal culture of defeat. In his texts from 1870-1871 one finds statements like “Il m'est bien évident que j'ai toujours été race inférieure” (Rimbaud 1993: 119) and “La race inférieure a tout couvert – le peuple, comme on dit, la raison, la nation et la science” (Rimbaud 1993: 119). Here Rimbaud suggests that the culture of defeat is an historical judgement marking the French as an inferior race, and that this state of being an inferior race affects all aspects of national life. The barbarian discourse is necessarily engaged in order to plumb this textual suggestion, and Rimbaud does so by evoking the ancestral Gauls:

J'ai de mes ancêtres gaulois l'oeil bleu blanc, la cervelle étroite, et la maladresse dans la lutte. Je trouve mon habillement aussi barbare que le leur, mais je ne beurre pas ma chevelure.

Les Gaulois étaient les écorcheurs de bêtes, les brûleurs d'herbes les plus ineptes de leur temps.

D'eux, j'ai: l'idolâtrie et l'amour du sacrilège; – oh! tous les vices, colère, luxure, – magnifique, la luxure; – surtout mensonge et paresse. (Rimbaud 1993: 118)

Differently from Howard, who engages the barbarian discourse to accentuate the positive aspects of the barbarian, Rimbaud accentuates the ineptitudes of the Gauls in combat and culture, and evokes the idea of the barbarian as the source of decadence. Rimbaud uses the terminology of the Dionysian to attempt both to validate the primal earthy drives emanating from the barbarian and to acknowledge the culture of defeat

as an ironic judgement on the French barbarian heritage. And yet one senses the Dionysian nobility that Rimbaud is striving to evoke despite the unavoidable weight of the defeat (i.e. “maladresse dans la lutte”). In this we see how a national meta-narrative, in this case the culture of defeat that will come to be framed as a tragedy, a victory-in-tragedy, affects the first layer of form of Rimbaud’s poem.

Denied the romance by the cultural dynamic of the time, and too iconoclastic to readily adopt the ‘official’ myth of culture of defeat France, Rimbaud is, in his prophetic forerunner role, ironically prefiguring the validation the Gauls were to receive in post-1871 France. Schivelbusch notes: „Erst die »republikanische« Republik nach 1880 entdeckte Vercingetorix und machte ihm zum Symbol ihres »gallischen« Frankreichs, das heißt des Frankreichs des Volkes, das sie dem »fränkischen« Frankreich der Könige und des Adels entgegenstellte“ (Schivelbusch 200). When the French 3<sup>rd</sup> Republic was sufficiently purged of monarchistic anti-republican elements, Vercingetorix and the Gauls were portrayed as positive barbarian ancestors and thus as symbols for the French people. Schivelbusch goes on to note that the Gauls not only came to symbolize the class struggle in France, but also the culture of defeat dynamic of symbolizing the necessity of defeat in order to rise stronger and more capable of *revanche* (Schivelbusch 201): the essence of the victory in tragedy phase of tragedy.

#### IV.2.2. Evocation of the Victory in Tragedy

Rimbaud symbolizes this idea of the nation resting and growing stronger with an image from the early stages of the Franco-Prussian war. About a month after the Battle of Sedan and the declaration of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Republic, most likely during the siege of Paris, Rimbaud evokes in “Le dormeur du val” the dead soldier as sleeper, symbolizing the defeat and the possibility of reawakening: “Il dort dans le soleil, la main sur la poitrine / Tranquille. Il a deux trous rouges au côté droit.” (Rimbaud 1993: 45). The writing of this poem occurs during Gambetta’s call for the “Défense nationale” (Schivelbusch 20) of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Republic, a phenomenon Schivelbusch terms the *levée en masse* and which is an important step during the culture of defeat<sup>22</sup>, one that is connected to the

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<sup>22</sup> One whose immediate absence in 1918 Germany was criticized by Hitler and powered his movement (Schivelbusch 20).

defeated nation's unwillingness to accept the defeat as a military one, but rather as one achieved through dishonourable means, whether through an advantage in material, manpower, technology or money. Again, although Rimbaud the rebel and iconoclast paints the *dormeur du val* with a good deal of irony, the word 'sleep' calls to mind the legends of Arthur and Barbarossa and suggests that the sleeper will rise to fight again. As Schivelbush notes:

Wie der Sieg als unreelles Gewinnen keinen Anspruch auf Ruhm und Ehre hat, so ist sein Resultat für den Verlierer nicht anzuerkennendes Recht, sondern abzuwehrenden Unrecht. Nach der notgedrungenen Kapitulation beginnt daher sein Kampf ums Recht, eine Art moralischer und juristischer »levée en masse«, in der der Verlierer, indem er sich als vergewaltigte Unschuld darstellt, den Sieger ins Unrecht zu setzten und moralisch zu besiegen sucht. (Schivelbusch 30)

Since the enemy's victory is an invalid one the loser must reject this injustice, and the victory gives the enemy no fame or honour. After the unavoidable capitulation, now the fight for justice must begin with a sort of moral and legal *levée en masse* whereby the loser portrays himself as the violated innocent and attempts to paint the victor as unjust in an attempt to wring a moral victory. Rimbaud demonstrates just this attempt of the culture of defeat to cast the victor in an unjust and immoral light in "Soir historique" where a tourist with "vision esclave" sees "l'Allemagne s'échafaude vers des lunes" (Rimbaud 1993: 176). The German superiority in material and technology that led to its *unreelles Gewinnen* is given a metaphoric Tower of Babel doomed futility, thus linking that Biblical blasphemy with Germany's own blasphemous claim of having defeated France.

#### IV.2.3. The Class Struggle within France's Culture of Defeat

Schivelbusch notes that a culture of defeat often begins with a regime change that, to a certain degree, sees in the outer enemy an ally to oust a despotic home regime. The French bourgeoisie was able to oust Napoleon III with the aid of the outer enemy, i.e. Prussian-led Germany, but France's culture of defeat was marked by the rising of the Paris Commune which protested this new republican regime's connection with the outer enemy. This was, in fact, a case of class struggle, where the



Paris workers realized the common class interests of the French bourgeoisie and the bourgeois-influenced German monarchies. Rimbaud demonstrates his sympathies for the Commune, and his disparagement of the new bourgeois republican government that vowed to destroy the Commune,<sup>23</sup> by mocking the republican forces in a sing-song tone in “Chant de guerre parisien” (Rimbaud 1993: 53-55). Although Rimbaud’s texts are marked and shaped by the culture of defeat, Rimbaud expresses an independent and ironic perspective, unlike most French intellectuals (Schivelbusch 139). This independent stance is directly based on his support for the Commune which he expresses in “L’orgie parisienne ou Paris se repeuple”. In it he mocks the return of the bourgeoisie to Paris after they had the Commune massacred, explicitly equating the Communards to barbarians, thus implying that the barbarian is something vital, primal and praiseworthy, while the representatives of ‘civilization’ are to be mocked. Rimbaud contrasts proletarian barbarian nobility with the decadence of the Paris bourgeoisie in the variant of the barbarian discourse in which the barbarian is seen as heroic. This perspective was not limited to Rimbaud, but was also suggested by contemporary bourgeois commentators whom Marx quotes in “The Civil War in France” (Marx 302).

Such attempts, like Rimbaud’s, to paint the Commune with a positive Dionysian barbarian brush, or to hold it up as a signal example of the class struggle, as Marx did, were no match for the dynamic of a culture of defeat, which requires an internal enemy. It is this internal scapegoating – analogous to that of African-Americans in the post-Civil War South and of Jews and Communists in Weimar and Nazi Germany – , and the role of this scapegoating in the national meta-discourse, which prevents a free and full linkage of the Commune with the Dionysian in Rimbaud’s work. Instead, unable to cast the Commune in a fully Dionysian/victory-in-tragedy light, Rimbaud puts an ironic focus on the bourgeoisie, as when he notes, “Vos ventres sont fondus de hontes, ô Vainqueurs” (Rimbaud 1993: 63). His Dionysian vision is further deflected by the culture of defeat dynamic from the Bacchante to the whore; he paints Paris as a whore and yet one still capable of exhibiting a truer, more Dionysian side. The narrator characterizes the returning

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<sup>23</sup> „Adolphe Thiers, 1848 einer der Befürworter der blutigen Niederschlagung der proletarischen Revolte und jetzt Chef der neuen Regierung brachte sein Programm auf die Formel: »Frieden schließen und Paris unterwerfen«“ (Schivelbusch 135).

Paris bourgeoisie as “Syphilitiques, fous, rois, pantins, ventriloques” (Rimbaud 1993: 63) and Paris as a whore who will free herself from them: “Elle se secouera de vous, hargneux pourris” (Rimbaud 1993: 63). One can see how the culture of defeat has had Rimbaud take his earlier image (presumably written before the massacre of the Commune) of the Dionysian man drinking from Cybele’s breast (Rimbaud 1993: 22) and recast it to describe Paris as “La rouge courtisane aux seins gros de batailles” (Rimbaud 1993: 64).

The struggle to uphold a Dionysian tragic vision, in the face of the romance-inspired scapegoating within a culture of defeat, is central to “Les mains de Jeanne-Marie”. Here Rimbaud is able to express the Dionysian vision in a manner wholly reminiscent of (or prefiguring) Nietzsche when he writes of this Jeanne-Marie’s hands:

Elles ont pâle, merveilleuses,  
Au grand soleil d’amour chargé  
Sur le bronze des mitrailleuses

A travers Paris insurgé! (Rimbaud 1993: 67)

The ironically inspired, yet tragically grand image of the loving sun glinting off the machine guns during the massacre of the Commune is an instance of what Nietzsche terms Dionysian art.

#### IV.2.4. The *Revanche*

Another important aspect of the culture of defeat is the *revanche*, the desire for revenge and the willingness to fight again. As to be expected, Rimbaud presents this sentiment with irony (Rimbaud 1993: 125), and yet, in “Les corbeaux” the narrator exhorts the ravens, “Sois donc le crieur du devoir” (Rimbaud 1993: 89); this *devoir* being the yearned for *revanche* which was already announced as the goal of the Republic in the *Revue des deux mondes* in May of 1871 (Schivelbusch 197). And yet Rimbaud – Commune sympathizer – can still write “Et toute vengeance? Rien!” (Rimbaud 1993: 112) In this, he echoes Gambetta, the public spokesman of the *Revanche*, who expressed his private reservations: „Dachte er an die *Revanche* dann nur als eine hoffnungslose, ja gefährliche Illusion“ (Schivelbusch 178). In 1914, however, the First World War was greeted by many in France as finally presenting this possibility for *Revanche*; the events of 1940, however, underline the ironic near-futility of Rimbaud’s prophetic utterance.

A most relevant reason for including Rimbaud with Nietzsche at

the head of the cultural archive of the works of Jünger and Howard is precisely this role of political prophet. Just as Nietzsche predicted that the twentieth century would be a time of unparalleled horrors, Jünger played the role of political prophet in his texts of the 1920s and 30s, as did Howard in his 1934-1936 text *The Hour of the Dragon*. Rimbaud, in “Les Corbeaux”, has his narrator speak both of France’s mission and of its grim future (Rimbaud 1993: 89). Rimbaud uses the poet’s accession to the role of political prophet to chilling effect when he predicts of the future: “la planète emportée, et des exterminations conséquents, certitudes si peu malignement indiquées dans la Bible et par les Nornes et qu’il sera donné a l’être sérieux de surveiller” (Rimbaud 1993: 176). Rimbaud is also prophetic in his citing the fate-weaving Norns of Germanic mythology, for this spiritual heritage will play a central role in the barbarian discourse of Jünger’s and Howard’s day, leading not only to textual references to it in the works of both men, but to major impacts on the national and international meta-narratives affecting both writers and their work.

#### IV.2.5. Death to God and the Barbarian Discourse

The correlations between Rimbaud and Nietzsche, and the significance of beginning the cultural archive of this dissertation with their texts, are symbolized by graffiti<sup>24</sup> attributed to both writers. One of the earliest textual expressions linked to Rimbaud foreshadows one of Nietzsche’s most famed, most misunderstood, and most transcribed-into-graffiti statements. As a youth Rimbaud wrote “Mort à Dieu” on the walls of Paris (Rimbaud 1993: 7) and Nietzsche would pen the conclusion to this narrative imperative with the provocative formula, ‘God is dead’. This was an expression of their time, a time Frye has characterized as an age of irony, but one also heavily marked by the tragic perception Nietzsche presented to the age. Nietzsche observed that the modern European man lived as though God did not exist (Taylor 195) and Rimbaud gave textual expression to the increasing pace of man’s dominance (and torture) of the natural world and his desire for ever more power – indeed, his desire to usurp the position of God. Rimbaud writes: “– Et pourtant, plus de dieux! plus de dieux! l’Homme est

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<sup>24</sup> The cultural significance of “writing on the walls” of the urban environment is underlined by the title of the magazine that Jünger later co-founded, *Sgraffito*.

Roi./L'Homme est Dieu!" (Rimbaud 1993: 22).

For Rimbaud, as for Nietzsche, this talk of the death of God and the apotheosis/deification of man is done within the Christian paradigm which both authors resist and criticize. Both – as a consequence of the barbarian discourse extant in their cultures – champion paganism but are unable to lose the figure of Jesus entirely: “Le sang païen revient! L'Esprit est proche, pourquoi Christ ne m'aide-t-il pas en donnant à mon âme noblesse et liberté” (Rimbaud 1993: 123). In asking Christ for nobility and liberty he implies that the freedom and purity imputed to the pagans by the barbarian discourse of the day offers a potential liberation from the consequences of Christianity – like Hell – but even Rimbaud, who joyfully announces the return of the pagan spirit, feels trapped within the Christian paradigm:

Je me crois en enfer, donc j'y suis. C'est l'exécution du catéchisme. Je suis esclave de mon baptême. [...] L'enfer ne peut attaquer les païens. (Rimbaud 1993: 126)

This attraction to the barbarian, to the pagan, to the non-Christian, and to the Dionysian, leads Rimbaud – like Nietzsche – to emphasize barbarian and pagan aspects of Jesus and to identify Christ with Dionysus (i.e. the two resurrected gods) (Rimbaud 1993: 184-185). This oscillation between the pagan barbarian and the still-towering figure of Christ also figures in the texts of Howard and Jünger. Both writers bring Christianity into the *Neophantastik* sub-creations of their fantasy texts, Howard implicitly representing the worshippers of Mitra in his Hyborian Age setting as Christians, and Jünger bringing Christianity into *Auf den Marmorlippen* in violation of the sub-creation convention, using the Christian Pater Lampros to create a *Phantastik* hesitation effect that forces the reader to relate Christian precepts to the political analogy that Jünger is otherwise cloaking with the *Neophantastik*.

Placing the texts of Nietzsche and Rimbaud at the chronological beginning of the cultural archive of texts equivalent to those of Howard and Jünger is further justified when one considers such parallel concerns in their texts and their metatextual realities. In fact, all four writers are linked by the discourse of Modernism. Rimbaud acknowledges the irresistible historical current of Modernism when he states, “Il faut être absolument moderne” (Rimbaud 1993: 143). And yet he echoes Nietzsche's criticism of a modern world where bigness and bombast replace substance when he implies that what makes a modern city modern is its tastelessness (Rimbaud 1993: 163). The pull of such an

urban reality is painted by Rimbaud in language that also highlights, in a manner similar to Jünger's, the ambiguity of the term "barbarian" and the idea that the modern city dweller is a manifestation of the barbarian:

L'Acropole officielle outre les conceptions de la barbarie moderne les plus colossales. Impossible d'exprimer le jour mat produit par ce ciel immuablement gris, l'éclat impérial des bâtisses, et la neige éternelle du sol. On a reproduit dans un goût d'énormité singulier toutes les merveilles classiques de l'architecture. (Rimbaud 1993: 166)

The very barbarism of this *Metropolis*-like vision of the city, its raw, often ugly yet grim power is echoed by Jünger when the latter argues that the people living in such barbaric surroundings have indeed become barbarians in the positive sense, for they learn to survive and navigate a hostile and deadly world.

#### IV.2.6. Cimmeria, Africa and *Une saison en enfer*

As we have seen, Rimbaud participates in the barbarian discourse, shares Nietzsche's Dionysian outlook, and is affected by France's culture of defeat. The culture of defeat and the barbarian discourse lead him to adopt, in his most famous text, a motif we will designate as the Cimmeria motif. This thematic element suggesting plot movement is rooted in the legendary Cimmerians, particularly as evoked by Homer and described by Herodotus. This motif of the doomed warrior people has been employed by writers like Voltaire and Goethe, and Rimbaud's use previews important metatextual accents relevant to Howard's use of the motif, and the barbarian discourse as it develops in Germany.

As noted above, Rimbaud engages the barbarian discourse by acknowledging the Gauls as his ancestors, yet in an ironic way congruent with the meta-narrative influence of France's 1871 culture of defeat. Still, Rimbaud writes of "cette pureté des races antiques" (Rimbaud 1993: 142) and finds in "Vagabonds" that the ideal of a man is to "le rendre à son état primitif de fils du soleil" (Rimbaud 1993: 166). This purity historically associated with the barbarian in the positive sense combines with the meta-narrative of the 1871 French culture of defeat and suggests the Cimmeria motif to Rimbaud. Yet, for him, as poet, the motif is

employed in a context of spiritual rather than military combat.<sup>25</sup>

In Rimbaud's poem, *Une saison en enfer*, the textual encounter with Cimmeria is reminiscent of Homer. Just as Odysseus must go to the end of the world and enter Cimmeria, the land of the dead, to commune with the dead to discover the way to return safely home, so does Rimbaud's narrator. Through danger and weakness he comes to Cimmeria when he is ripe for death, and only then, like Odysseus, does he take again to the sea in the direction of salvation – in this case toward the cross of comfort (Rimbaud 1995: 45, 47). Cimmeria is a turning point in the narrator's spiritual journey in *Une saison en enfer*. Once the narrator, whose emotional torment simultaneously horrifies and captivates the reader, reaches the borders of Cimmeria, he turns back and begins his paradoxical healing, his return to a grimmer, yet more balanced state.

Ma santé fût menacée. La terreur venait. Je tombais dans des sommeils de plusieurs jours, et, levé, je continuais les rêves les plus tristes. J'étais mûr pour le trépas, et par une route de dangers ma faiblesse me menait au confins du monde et de la Cimmérie, patrie de l'ombre et des tourbillons.

Je dus voyager, distraire les enchantements assemblés sur mon cerveau. Sur la mer, que j'aimais comme si elle eût dû me laver d'une souillure, je voyais se lever la croix consolatrice. J'avais été damné par l'arc-en-ciel. Le Bonheur était ma fatalité, mon remords, mon ver; ma vie serait toujours trop immense pour être dévouée à la force et à la beauté. (Rimbaud 1995: 44, 46)

The spiritual encounter with Cimmeria is an epiphany for the narrator, who is, one strongly suspects, Rimbaud himself. Rimbaud's narrator, similarly to Odysseus, has literally come to death's door – carried there by the emotional anguish that is wracking him and provoking physical ills in him – and it is there that he sees the cross of comfort which will, eventually, guide him out of his personal hell. The piece is strongly autobiographical and is marked by an attempt to give it the form of an archetypal romance. Both the culture of defeat, and the age of irony, are

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<sup>25</sup> “Le combat spirituel est aussi brutal que la bataille des hommes” (Rimbaud 1993: 146); that Rimbaud is attracted to the Cimmerian motif – the concept of the doomed warrior race or nation – is evident, for example, in his positive citation of Paraguay's heroically-doomed Guarani: “propres encore à recevoir la musique des anciens” (Rimbaud 1993: 173).

further determiners in the archetypal trajectory of the narrative, and the poem represents the deepest Rimbaud will go into himself. The French culture of defeat's colonial impulse, and the desire to experience the primal freedom promised by Africa – a drive to escape the self-satire and irony attending the romance national meta-narrative of France – will, in fact, cause Rimbaud to abandon this inward-leading literary trajectory.

This later, largely non-textual, life was, in a sense, Rimbaud writing his existence as a narrative emerging from both the culture of defeat and from the discourses Rimbaud had engaged with textually: they all pointed to Africa. Rimbaud's post-literary life was a personal narrative decisively shaped by the motif of Africa as the land of primal freedom. He attempted to escape culture of defeat France – ironically by pursuing the same compensatory imperialistic colonial impulse – and live freely in Ethiopia. That Africa embodied this primal, Dionysian, barbarian freedom is revealed by poems that he wrote prior to taking that step: “Je reviendrai, avec des membres de fer, la peau sombre, l’œil furieux: sur mon masque, on me jugera d’une race forte” (Rimbaud 1993: 120).<sup>26</sup> The sojourn in Africa would make of him a barbarian: a man with limbs of iron, dark skin, a furious eye, and all who would look upon him would judge him as being of a strong race. Thus, the self-satire of the French culture of defeat, and its victory-in-tragedy stylings, would be shaken off in a properly Nietzschean and Dionysian way: by becoming the barbarian. Rimbaud's narrator goes on to fully embody the Africa-as-the-land-of-primal-freedom motif by identifying himself as a negro and charging others – the marchand, the magistrat, the général and the empereur – that “Vous êtes de faux nègres” (Rimbaud 1993: 122).

Rimbaud finally did indeed go to Africa; the fact that his father had been stationed in Algeria (Rimbaud 1993: 7) perhaps made the step easier for him. Ironically, the primal freedom he found in Africa – like Jünger's Arab slavers and the slavers that Howard's Solomon Kane character fights – was the freedom to exploit Africa: he worked as a trader in Ethiopia, in Aden, around 1880. Paradoxically, his return to Europe – not stronger, but physically weaker and ill – proved to him that

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<sup>26</sup> Recall the evocation of the cold persona as an expression of Avant Garde modernism's interest in *Gestalten* with simple outlines in the previous chapter on the aesthetics of Howard and Jünger: as noted there, one finds these *Gestalts* with simple outlines – i.e. figures free of psychological complexities, their bodies seeming metallic and armoured, able to take pain, being alert and mobile – in the work of Howard and Jünger, and one sees Rimbaud's connection to both writers in this quotation.

he had found the freedom he had been looking for in Africa. He was determined to return there to die: “Il veut mourir en Éthiopie, pays où il a trouvé la sérénité” (Rimbaud 1993: 9). Dying, he made his way to Marseilles and “Son dernier message est adressé au directeur des Messageries Maritimes: «Dites-moi à quelle heure je dois être transporté à bord»” (Rimbaud 1993: 9). A final irony for an age of irony, or a victory-in-tragedy for a poet canonized as one of the greats of world literature?

#### IV.2.7. Conclusion and The Author Problematic

To conclude this view of Rimbaud’s role in the cultural archive it should be noted that Rimbaud, along with Nietzsche, can be considered an impetus to the current cultural studies paradigm of literary criticism, particularly in terms of the problem of authorship. Rimbaud stated in a letter to Paul Demery on the 15<sup>th</sup> of May in the fateful year of 1871, “L’intelligence universelle a toujours jeté ses idées, naturellement; les hommes ramassaient une partie de ces fruits du cerveau: on agissait par, on en écrivait des livres: telle allait la marche, l’homme ne se travaillant pas, n’étant pas encore éveillé, ou pas encore dans la plénitude du grande songe. Des fonctionnaires, des écrivains: auteur, créateur, poète, cet homme n’a jamais existé!” (Rimbaud 1993: 192) In his final line here, Rimbaud insists that there is no author, no creator, no poet. Being a writer is to be a functionary, to be one who – in a sense fully congruent with the problematic of the author in the cultural studies paradigm – transcribes ideas that have been disseminated by a universal intelligence. Rimbaud underlines the point that the cultural archive of texts is not the production of individual authors so much as those writers – those functionaries of the whole or the universal intelligence – are the products of their cultures in evolution; it is the purpose of this dissertation to place the works of Howard and Jünger in precisely this light.

### **IV.3. Imperial Germany: The Colonial Romance and the Race Discourse**

The victory of the Prussian-led coalition of German states over France led to the founding of the German Empire. The Franco-Prussian war was portrayed as a romance narrative, with the crowning of the Prussian King as Kaiser of Germany in the palace of Versailles as the *anagnorisis* of that national narrative. The German, and Germany, could



now stride onto the world stage as a romance hero, and thus needed new quests to pursue. One of these was to participate in the European project of colonizing the world, and the implicit and explicit rationales for that project – that the European, particularly those of Germanic descent, was supreme among human races and represented positively valued civilization versus the negative barbarian in the barbarian discourse – were embraced.

#### IV.3.1. The Irangi Expedition of 1898

A document from that colonial romance that suggests itself as part of the cultural archive relevant to the texts under consideration contains within it the dynamic cultural processes found in the work of Nietzsche, Rimbaud, Jünger and Howard. From modernism to the cultures of defeat, to the Dionysian, and to the European colonialism that is a *de facto* statement in the traditional barbarian discourse – wherein the European represents the good of civilization and the African the bad of barbarism –, and to the Africa-as-the-land-of-primal-freedom motif, the legal proceedings in 1898 in the German colony of Deutsch-Ostafrika following from the famed Irangi Expedition highlight all of these intertwined cultural and narrative currents.

The central issue, in the extract of the documents considered here, is the attempt by the colonial German court to discover who was responsible for killing women held captive by the Irangi Expedition; the discourses involved here – from the legal discourse, to the colonial discourse, to the discourse of race – can be subsumed under the terms of the barbarian discourse. Fundamentally, at issue in these hearings following the Irangi Expedition is who is the negatively-valued barbarian, and thus responsible for the killing of the women? Is the German representative of civilization taking advantage of the barbarian freedoms offered by Africa – as Rimbaud did, as the Arab slavers in Jünger and Howard do – by giving the order to kill the women, or are the Askaris – the native troops recruited by the German Empire – fulfilling the traditionally negative barbarian role?

The reality of Africa as the land of primal freedom – particularly as it relates to Germany – can be seen in Deutsch-Ostafrika in 1898. If French colonialism in Africa after 1871 can be seen as a compensatory imperialism in the context of the French culture of defeat, then German

colonialism in Africa is an expression of entitlement after the establishment of the German Empire in 1871 – an expression of freedom. The discourse of race set the parameters for this colonialism: the white man was superior and the Africans were inferiors who would benefit from European colonialism. And yet the impulse of colonialism as an expression of freedom would – in the African context itself – mingle with this primal freedom that the European felt at being away from the regimented society and landscape of Europe. The African, meanwhile, because of a true Dionysian relationship with nature, or, more often and more realistically, as a result of European destruction of native structures – cultural and moral – which left a vacuum that could be filled by ‘primal’ drives that were without proper social controls (because the European could not establish them fully in this new setting, or because the European destroyed the existing ones), suddenly unleashed his or her own “primal freedom”. We see this dynamic in the legal proceedings resulting from the Irangi Expedition. In the proceedings we see how either the Germans, or the Askaris, or the Arab slaving society the expedition was in contact with, are attempting to exploit this primal freedom which indeed runs through the narrative of the recorded proceedings as a motif.

There are ironic aspects to the idea of Africa as the land of primal freedom; firstly, we see the Europeans arrive with the determination to impose civilized order on this purportedly ‘primal’ or barbarian state. In the narrative of the proceedings, Lt. Werther is the one embodying this role; ironically, in his attempt to fulfill this role, it is possible that he succumbed to the lure of this freedom to transgress European conceptions of civilized behaviour – which is what the proceedings are trying to determine. The most troubling incident of the expedition is the shooting of unarmed Kinamu women.

Sol Abdul-Menem, an Askari, stated in his statement to the proceedings:

Als ich wieder zurückkam, waren im Lager bei der Wache 4 gefangene Kinamuweiber – eine Mutter mit 2 erwachsenen und 1 unerwachsenen Tochter – Als die Expedition weiter marschierte, ging ich voraus, um Lager aufzusuchen, dann kam Herr Lieutenant Werther mit den Soldaten, hierauf das Gepäck, dann die gefangenen Weiber, die an einem Strick zusammengebunden waren, und am am [sic] Schlusse wieder einige Askaris. Unterwegs rissen sich die beisen [sic]

erwachsenen Mädchen los und liefen weg und versteckten sich im Gras. Ferusi und Schindano folgten ihnen nach.

Lieutenant Werther und ich waren bereits im Lager, ebenfalls Herr von Tippelskirch.

Die Mädchen liefen ungefähr 400 Meter vom Lager entfernt weg. Als Lieutenant Werter davon hörte, dass die Weiber weggelaufen seien, forderte er die Askari auf, sie einzufangen und wenn das nicht möglich sein sollte, sie niederzuschossen. Als Lieutenant Werther dies sagte, war ich selbst zugegen und habe es ganz genau gehört. Auch der Askari Cognaki, der später das eine Weib niederschoss, hat dies gehört. Cognaki hatte das eine Weib, das plötzlich direct [sic] vor ihm aus dem Grase aufsprang in der Weise erschossen, dass er das Gewehr ihr direct [sic] auf die Brust aufsetzte. Ich habe sofort stark gescholten, dass das Weib erschossen wurde und dass es keine Sitte sei, dass Soldaten auf Weiber schiessen. Ich habe sodann die Weiber zu ihrem Schutze in mein Zelt genommen und dem Cognacci sechs Ohrfeigen gegeben, so dass er zu Boden stürzte. Am andern Tag kam ein Verwandter der Weiber mit Kiboana an. Dieselben erhielten die Weiber anvertraut und es wurde ihnen befohlen, dieselben an ihre Angehörigen nur gegen ein Lösegeld von 10 Rindern oder Elfenbein zurückzugeben. [...] Ich hole nach, dass ich am nächsten Tage mit dem Kirongosi das Weib untersucht habe; ich fand da, dass das Weib auf der Brust beim Einschuss eine vom Pulver herrührende grössere Brandwunde hatte. Dies beweist, dass Cognacci in unmittelbarer Nähe auf das Weib geschossen hat. Auch davon habe ich sofort Herr Lieutenant Werther Meldung gemacht, worauf er abwehrend wirkte und sagte hei zuru [sic], es schadet nichts. Noch am selben Tage, als das Weib erschossen wurde, habe ich den Askaris im Lager ohne sie antreten zu lassen, eingeschärft, dass sie auf keine Weiber schiessen dürften. Als ich die Weiber zu mir ins Zelt nahm, habe ich zur Wache gesagt: die Weiber sind keine Gefangenen, sie brauchen daher von keiner Wache bewacht zu werden. Lieutenant Werther hat weder den Cognacci getadelt, noch die Soldaten zusammengerufen und gesagt, sie sollen keine Weiber niederschliessen. (Ziegler 63-65)

The Sol's account attempts to paint himself as a romance hero – his

instructions to only allow the women to be released upon payment of a ransom notwithstanding – by claiming to have insisted on several occasions that women are not to be shot, and by painting Lieutenant Werther as a romance villain who ordered the shooting of the women and who replied upon hearing that the women had been killed that it was of no consequence.

The Askari Cognaki, implicated in the shooting of the women by Sol Abdul-Menem, begins his testimony by noting, „Ich heisse eigentlich Amdallah, Lieutenant Werther gab mir den Namen Cognaki“ (Ziegler 133). This is a significant statement in that it demonstrates the racial superiority that whites in Africa like Lt. Werther assumed and the resulting liberties they took, for example, in arbitrarily re-naming people. Amdallah (Cognaki) explicitly denies that he received an order from Lieutenant Werther to shoot the women and that such an order *did* come from the Sol, but he does not know if the Sol was relaying such an order from Werther to the men:

Da hörte ich einen Schuss. Gleichzeitig kam der Ombascha Ferusi und die anderen Askaris und riefen mir zu, 2 von den gefangenen Weibern seien entflohen. Ich sah eins davon im hohen Gras und schoss darauf. Es war schon dunkel. Das Weib wurde getötet. Das andere Weib fing ich und brachte es dem Ombascha Ferusi. Einen Befehl, auf die Weiber, falls sie entfliehen würden, zu schießen, hatte ich von Lieutenant Werther nicht erhalten. Als wir Nachts ins Lager kamen, meldete der Ombascha dem Sol den Vorfall, dieser meldete es dem Lieutenant Werther: der Sol sagte darauf zu allen Askaris: Wenn Gefangene entfliehen, so schießt sie nieder. Darauf sagte der Ombascha: Das Weib wurde getötet. Der Sol überzeugte sich dann, dass das Weib wirklich tot war. Er sagte aber hierauf am Morgen zu uns: Wenn ein anderes Mal Gefangene entfliehen, so schießt sie nicht nieder, sondern verfolgt sie nur. Ihr könnt dann auch in die Luft schießen. Wenn ein anderesmal ein Askari einen Gefangenen niederschießt, erhält er 400 Hiebe. Dies waren die Worte des Sol. Ob er hierzu den Befehl von Lieutenant Werther erhalten hatte, weiss ich nicht. (Ziegler 133-134)

If one suspects, from the contradictions in the testimony above, that Sol Abdul-Menem is lying – particularly when one considers that the testimony of another Askari named Ali reveals the Sol's further

transgressions („Als der Sol entlassen wurde, sagte Lieutenant Werther zu ihm: „Du hast mein Eigenthum gestohlen. Jetzt bist du entlassen““ (Ziegler 133) and that Cognaki himself adds „Dass der Sol Ziegen und Rinder unterschlagen hat, habe ich selbst gesehen“ (Ziegler 134) – then he, as a figure in the colonial narrative, prefigures Jünger’s Arab slavers from *Das Abenteuerliche Herz* and Howard’s Arab Slavers from “The Footfalls Within” as someone exploiting the primal freedom Africa offers. In this case, he has taken advantage of the freedom that the German colonial presence has ironically provided through the imposition of its law over local forms of authority, effectively suspending them without being able to fully establish its own authority.

The testimony of the Askari Mare suggests this kind of cultural dislocation and the resultant difficulty in arriving at the chess piece clarity of a romance narrative. In claiming not to know anything of the allegation that Lieutenant Werther bribed the cook to have his wife testify against the Sol, he evokes the possibility of Werther’s romance villainy, but then Mare goes on to strengthen the case against the Sol by contradicting the Sol’s account that he bought the women. Werther’s claim on romance heroism is somewhat strengthened – but still tainted with the arbitrary exercise of authority derived from the race and barbarian discourses – when Mare insists that he heard Werther threaten to hang the Sol if he had bought the women.

Ich weiss nichts davon, dass Lieutenant Werther seinem Koch 2 Gora Zeug gegeben hat, damit er sein Weib veranlassen sollte, gegen den Sol auszusagen. Das Weib des Kochs hatte ein Doti Zeug Bakschisch erhalten, weil sie die Sklavinnen zeigte, die der Sol gekauft haben sollte. Die Weiber sagten aus, sie wären im Hause ihres bisherigen Herrn und wüssten nicht, ob sie von diesem verkauft seien. Der Besitzer der Weiber, ein Araber, erklärte, dass es nicht wahr sei, dass er die Weiber an den Sol verkauft habe. Lieutenant Werther behielt die Weiber eine Nacht auf die Wache und gab sie dann ihrem Herrn zurück. Die Leute des Mali hatten erklärt, dass der Sol die Weiber gekauft habe. Er konnte ihm aber nicht nachgewiesen werden. Dass Lieutenant Werther zum Sol gesagt hat: „Wenn du die Weiber gekauft hast, wirst du aufgehängt!“ Ist [sic] wahr. Alle Askaris wissen, dass der Sol viel Unterschlagungen begangen hat.

Ich weiss nichts davon, dass Lieutenant Werther gesagt hat,

wir sollten auf fliehende Gefangene schießen.

Der Ombascha Ferusi erhielt, weil er als Wachhabender auf einen vorübergehenden schießen liess, 100 Hiebe. (Ziegler 134-135)

Mare's insistence that all the Askaris knew of the Sol's theft of livestock, and that one Askari had been given 100 lashes for shooting at a passer-by while on watch don't fully allow a romance narrative to come into focus.

Another cook for the Irangi Expedition, Juma bin Korestrin, adds to the romance villain picture of the Sol in his testimony.

Der Sol liess häufig durch Askaris (Zeugen Askari Sefu, Katembo, Hahsani) Ziegen, später auch Rinder aus der Viehbana des Lieutenant Werther entnehmen und nach seiner eigenen, etwa 2 Stunden entfernten, bei einem Makua befindlichen Viehbana schaffen. Die Soldaten meldeten dies dem Lieutenant Werther; darauf kam der Sol zu uns, zu mir, dem Muzamzara Sohor, den Askaris Sefu, Katombe, Hahsani und drohte, uns zu erschießen. Wir erzählten dies dem Lieutenant Werther, der uns sagte, er wolle deshalb mit dem Sol sprechen. Der Sol leugnete, dies gesagt zu haben. Damit war die Sache erledigt. Der Grieche hatte 4 Esel vom Sol gekauft. 44 Ziegen, die der Sol nicht als Bakschisch erhalten hatte, fanden sich in seiner Viehbana. Darauf wurde der Sol 3 Tage auf die Wache gesetzt. Das Weib des Kochs Samaki, der mit Lieutenant Werther nach der Küste gegangen ist, erhielt nicht 2 Garn Zeug, sondern 1 Doti als Bakschisch, weil sie die Weiber zeigte, die der Sol gekauft hatte. Ombascha Ferusi und Ombascha Milo, beide jetzt an der Küste, wissen genau, dass der Sol die Weiber gekauft hatte. Die Weiber wurden ihren bisherigen Herrn, einem Araber, zurückgegeben. (Ziegler 136)

We see the paternalistic, and at the same time strangely idealistic, view the European has of the African – i.e. that his primal freedom makes of him an innocent – when Lt. Werther accepts the denial presented by the Sol on the matter of the death threats he uttered against Askaris, including the cook, when the stolen animals were discovered in the Sol's possession, and only imprisons him for three days for the thefts themselves.

We see more evidence of this racial discourse when Lt. Werther entrusts the clearly problematic Sol with a mission in a village which

results in the burning of several buildings. The Askari cook bin Korestrin testifies that Lt. Werther said to the Sol, „Suche nach Elfenbein und fange den Sultan! Das Dorf sollst du nicht zerstören und keine Leute töten,“ and bin Korestrin adds, „Ich habe die Worte des Lieutenant Werther nicht selbst gehört, sondern nur gehört, wie der Sol den Askaris diese Worte mitteilte“ (Ziegler 136-137). While this latter statement seems to offer the possibility that the burning of the village was indeed due to the Sol’s men getting out of control as the Sol testified (Ziegler 66), the Sol himself insisted that, „in der darauffolgenden Nacht bekam ich den Befehl, den Sultan Kinamu gefangen zu nehmen, oder, falls er nicht zu finden, sein Haus niederzubrennen“ (Ziegler 65). It seems the Sol may have exploited the contradictions of the European presence in order to come by more possessions, including slaves. Cognaki and the other Askaris are caught in the tension of this contradiction (which one feels in the Askari Hahsani’s testimony when he, too, accuses the Sol of stealing goats and other goods and underlines the fact that he and the other Askaris received no meat (Zielger 137)). The irony here is that the primal freedom that Africa is supposed to embody may be an outcome of the European contradiction itself, which results in the Askaris having no compunction against shooting the fleeing women. It seems that some of the Askaris are exploiting the situation financially, hiding behind the mask of barbarian innocence that the different perspectives of the European barbarian discourse offer them, to shrewdly profit from the situation. In the end, the motif of Africa as the land of primal freedom leads to the freeing of the slaves motif in the ironic sense that Lt. Werther threatens to kill the Sol for buying slaves, and yet, in a gesture determined to demonstrate European order, has the slaves returned to their original owner.

The proceedings of the Irangi Expedition reveal the extent to which the barbarian discourse was a cultural factor in the world that Jünger and Howard were born into. Both men – with the narratives of their personal lives and their textual narratives – consider the implications of the barbarian discourse, including implications brought up by the Irangi Expedition, in their use of the motif of Africa as the land of primal freedom.

#### IV.3.2. Deutsch-Südwestafrika from 1907 to 1914

Official documents of the government of Deutsch-Südwestafrika (German Southwest Africa), spanning the years 1907 to 1914, demonstrate official attempts to establish a romance narrative framework for life in the German colony. This attempt is derived from the race and barbarian discourses, and the resultant Africa as the land of primal freedom motif in the documents is linked – as in the work of Howard – to the freeing of the slaves motif. What one sees in the narrative of these documents is, in fact, cultural evolution driven by the internal logic of these various strands of discourse; the authorities in the land today known as Namibia find themselves striving for the colonial romance while they exist in a dialectical tension between the poles of the race discourse: anti-colonialism and apartheid.

The narrative, of the documents selected for this cultural archive, begins with an expression of the motif of Africa as the land of primal freedom, namely the lingering effects of the uprising of the Herrero in 1903-1904. The German response to this native attempt to reassert freedom was a bloody war. The letter of May 21, 1907, from Engel of the Kaiserlichen Gouvernement in Windhuk to the Feldintendantur, reveals a bureaucratic concern with the cost of maintaining the Herrero prisoners of war and of supplying medical services to „im Gouvernements- oder Truppendienst stehenden freien Eingeborenen“ (Engel 21.05.07). This concern for prisoners of war and providing medical services to native troops is part of a German attempt to re-establish the poles of romance hero and villain, an attempt which deliberately obscures the primal freedom which was at stake in the uprising. These attempts to “normalize” the colonial situation, „damit das weitere Verfahren für die Eingeborenen-Lazarette durch Kommando-Befehl baldigst endgültig geregelt werden kann“ (Engel 21.05.07), are nothing less than the need to banish the implications – thrown up by the revolt – that the German colonial authorities are not shining sentinels of civilization and romance heroes, but barbaric killers and romance villains.

This bureaucratic attempt to strengthen the colonial order built on a traditional interpretation of the barbarian discourse continues with the letter of October 17, 1907 from Kornmajer, representing the Kaiserlicher Gouverneur in Windhuk, to the Kaiserliche Landespolizei, reminding the police that tribal possessions of the Herrero and Hottentot have become the property of the state, and that taxes and outstanding



payments due on land bought by German colonists from the Herrero and Hottentot before the uprising is owed to the state. The romance narrative framework underneath this is that what the romance hero rightfully seized from romance villains must be accorded legitimacy and legally ratified through the payment of taxes.

The motif shaping this bureaucratic discourse is that of Africa as the land of primal freedom, and the issue of freedom manifests textually. The letter of January 18, 1908 from von Schuckmann, representing the Kaiserlicher Gouverneur in Windhuk, to the Inspection der Landespolizei, confirms the end of prisoner of war status for remaining prisoners in honour of the Kaiser's birthday. Not only is this an expression of the freeing of the slaves motif, but it is an attempt at a romance *anagnorisis* where the romance hero – the Kaiser as the embodiment of all Germany – celebrates, and shows his rightful claim to the lofty moral status of the romance hero, by releasing the bound romance villain. Even though the ironically limited nature of this “freeing” of the slaves is clear in the letter („Damit durch diese Verfügung keine Störungen in dem einen oder anderen Wirtschaftsbetriebe hervorgerufen werden, haben die bisherigen Kriegsgefangenen noch bis zum 14. Februar inclusive in ihrem bisherigen Dienstverhältnis zu verbleiben. Falls sie dann keinen neuen Dienstherrn bezeichnen, bleiben dieselben“ (von Schuckmann 18.01.08)), the logic of the narrative dynamic that links the motif of Africa as the land of primal freedom to the freeing of the slaves motif will remain at the centre of subsequent documents.

We see this development, in fact, in the letter of May 12, 1908 from Hintrager, representing the Kaiserlicher Gouverneur in Windhuk, to the Kaiserliche Bezirks- (Distrikts-) Ämter, where the issue of *Eingeborenenrecht* is raised: „Wie dem Bezirks- (Distrikts-) Amt bereits bekannt sein dürfte, legen die gesetzgebenden Körperschaften der Heimat großeß (sic) Gewicht auf die Erforschung des Eingeborenenrechts“ (Hintrager 12.05.08). This is an expression of the freeing of the slaves motif insofar as the natives of Deutsch-Südwestafrika are acknowledged as having their own system of rights and cannot be seen as mere chattel, and some attempt is being made to integrate their own legal concepts into the colonial order. The motif is, however, framed by the discourse on race. This discourse upholds the superiority of the white race and thus its paternal position vis-à-vis the Africans. The reason for the insistence on this aspect of the race

discourse is revealed in the letter of August 9, 1909 from Bruhns, the Kaiserliche Oberrichter in Windhuk, to the Kaiserliche Gouvernement, when the culturally evolutionary logic of *Eingeborenenrecht* has led to „Anträge wegen Misshandlung Eingeborener durch Weisse“ (Bruhns 9.08.09: 1). The two motifs in question have driven the narrative of the colonial project to allow the natives of Südwestafrika to take abusive whites to court. Since Bruhns rightly sees that this culturally evolutionary logic will follow the course demanded by the two motifs and thus lead, necessarily, to revolution or independence, Bruhns invokes the paternalism of the race discourse and writes: „Sie [i.e. natives over 18] kann in ihrer geistigen Entwicklung und Urteilsfähigkeit nach nicht höher einschätzen als Weisse unter 18 Jahren, und ich halte sie deshalb nicht für befugt, selbständig Anträge auf Bestrafung zu stellen“ (Bruhns 9.08.09: 2). After deciding that adult natives be legally considered children, Bruhns spells out the danger to the colonial project if the natives were legally to be considered adults: „Auf diese Weise würden die Eingeborenen sehr bald herausbekommen, dass sie es in der Hand haben, die Strafverfolgung eines Weissen zu veranlassen, und zahlreiche unberechtigte Anträge würden die Folge sein“ (Bruhns 9.08.09: 2). The ironic nature of this statement – i.e. that adult natives would “abuse” the legal system with “unjustified” charges against whites – demonstrates the existence of the primal freedom below the surface of things and the necessity of insisting on the race discourse to keep that freedom in check.

Another important discourse, that of the warrior, allows for a safety valve on this situation as the letter of April 18, 1911 from Leshe (?), representing the Kaiserlicher Gouverneur in Windhuk, to an unspecified recipient (but likely intended as a general memo to all concerned departments) reveals. In it we see that the African policeman and soldier can receive a level of the respect and dignity, that his right to his primal freedom demands, through the respect German culture has for the warrior. The hierarchical structure of armed force in the European tradition is seen as reliable enough to channel the primal freedom that the government is elsewhere at pains to check. It is additionally buttressed by the discourse on race: „Verpflichtet zum militärischen Gruss sind diese im Gouvernementsdienst stehenden Eingeborenen nur ihren Vorgesetzten gegenüber, jedoch sind sie angewiesen, jedem Weissen gegenüber die der höheren Rasse zukommende und schuldige Hochachtung in ihrer Haltung zum Ausdruck zu bringen“ (Leshe (?) 18.04.11). Native soldiers and police only need to salute their superiors,

but their attitude and manner around whites should demonstrate their respect for the “higher race”.

The motifs, of Africa as the land of primal freedom and of the freeing of the slaves, also help shape the narrative logic of the letter of June 30, 1911 from Hintrager, representing the Kaiserlicher Gouverneur in Windhuk, to the Inspektion der Landespolizei. The colonial contradiction based on the race discourse justifies the naked desire for land, power and control with the paternalistic argument that the barbarian Africans need the civilized, Apollonian Europeans to improve their lives in order to become civilized. This civilizing mission is seen as, or is purported to be, a form of justice, therefore a justice system for the natives is seen as necessary. Existence within a justice framework frees them, theoretically, from being slaves, and the attempt to ensure justice is done to them de facto acknowledges their primal freedom, in this case in the form of their own languages, as the letter makes clear: „Die Worte des Beamten sowohl wie die des Eingeborenen werden oft von dem Dolmetscher entstellt resp. gänzlich falsch wiedergegeben. Daß hierunter die geordnete Rechtspflege der Eingeborenen sehr leidet, liegt auf der Hand“ (Hintrager 30.06.11: 1). This attempt to do justice to the natives by attempting to understand their languages through a translator leads the colonial narrative (the „Mission“ as Hintrager calls it) to the next logical step: „Ferner erwarte ich, daß die Beamten auf die Erlernung der Eingeborenen-Sprache ihr Augenmerk richten. [...] Zum 1. Januar nächsten Jahres ist über Ausbildung der Eingeborenen als Dolmetscher und Erlernung der Eingeborenen-Sprache seitens der Beamten zu berichten“ (Hintrager 30.06.11: 2).

The contradictions of these discourses and motifs allow for only two logical narrative trajectories: one to anti-colonialism and the other to apartheid. Both South Africa and the American South (after the Civil War) steered their social development toward the latter; we have seen in the case of the German African colonies that impulses toward the former did indeed exist. However, for the contradictions to be managed in such a way that anti-colonialism could be the end of this cultural evolutionary narrative, the race discourse itself, and the traditional barbarian discourse it is derived from, would have to have been purged of the white superiority and paternalism positions. The letter of July 12, 1912 – in which Hintrager, representing the Kaiserliches Gouvernement in Windhuk, forwards a document prepared by C. Wandres, the Präses of the German Protestant Mission in Namaland – to the Inspektion der

Landespolizei counters any such movement within the race discourse. Wandres writes, in his document entitled „Bemerkungen über Mischehen und Mischlinge aus der Praxis für die Praxis“, against just such an attempt to reform the race discourse: „Wenn im Reichstage ein Sozialdemokrat behauptete, dass durch Mischehen eine Rassenverbesserung zustande komme, dann muss dem Manne gesagt werden: „Du kennst die infamigste Rasse noch nicht!““ (Wandres in Hintrager 12.07.12: 6) The idea propagated by the progressive socialist in the Reichstag that the mixing of German and African would result in an improved race removes white superiority, and thus white paternalism, from the race discourse.<sup>27</sup> It is also anti-colonial in the long run, for the logic of this race-mixing narrative demands that the local population eventually throw off purely European-German control. The paradoxical attempt by Wandres to insist that *Mischlinge* and *Mischehen* are actually an impoverishment of the pure native African situation – and a sin for white Germans – is an attempt to argue both sides of the barbarian discourse at once in order to desperately re-affirm the colonial narrative trajectory seen thus far in the letters, namely the inexorable progression toward a form of apartheid.

That Deutsch-Südwestafrika exists in an oscillation between the poles of the barbarian discourse is confirmed by the letter of August 14, 1913 where Seitz, representing the Kaiserlicher Gouverneur in Windhuk, transmits a resolution of the Landesrat – with his comments – to the Inspektion der Landespolizei. Both motifs and the race discourse are central to this letter’s narrative logic. It builds on the previous letter by quoting the Landesrat’s acknowledgement of the implicitly anti-colonial (or colonial-critical) tendencies in Germany around the issue of abuse of natives by whites, and the Landesrat’s declaration that the strategy to downplay such issues by the press in Deutsch-Südwestafrika, „war wohl nicht immer die richtige“ (in Seitz 14.08.13: 1). The culturally evolutionary threat to the colonial mission of Deutsch-Südwestafrika is acknowledged through the manifestation of the two motifs in question: „Der Landesrat schlägt vor, Arbeitsgebern, die sich wiederholt schlechter Behandlung Eingeborener schuldig gemacht haben, sind nach

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<sup>27</sup> Even if one argues that such a statement is motivated by racial arrogance, i.e. that the black African is improved by the mixture of white German, the fact is that one thus also accepts the flipside of the equation, i.e. that the white German can be mixed with the black African, which thoroughly undermines the position of white superiority in the race discourse.

Beurteilung des Bezirksrats keine neuen Arbeiter mehr zuzuführen“ (in Seitz 14.08.13: 1-2). This statement is shaped by the motif of Africa as the land of primal freedom, for its concern for the abused natives is rooted in the motif, while the abusers are implicated in the freeing of the slaves motif, for they are treating the natives as slaves. The letter, shaped by these motifs, shakes one of the foundations of the race discourse, that of white paternalism, when Seitz quotes the resolution of the Landesrat: „Ein Warnen vor Misshandlungen würde segensreicher wirken, wie eine Bestärkung der falschen Auffassung des väterlichen Züchtigungsrechtes“ (in Seitz 14.08.13: 1). In effect the Landesrat is questioning the decision to legally treat the natives as children who can be physically disciplined. And yet, perhaps hearing the metaphoric shaking of those foundations and the implications for the colonial mission as a whole in its statement, the Landesrat's resolution quoted by Seitz concludes with an attempt to stabilize the colonial narrative and the colonial contradictions somewhere between anti-colonialism and apartheid by excusing the paternalistic, slaver-like white colonists and, in effect, accusing local authorities of anti-colonial tendencies: „Zuweit gehende Milde der Behörde gegen Farbige war in vielen Fällen Anlass zu den Vergehen Weisser“ (in Seitz 14.08.13: 2).

This oscillation continues to be problematic four months later (December 19, 1913) when Seitz complains from Windhuk to the Inspektion der Landespolizei that court cases involving natives were remiss in translation and thus in the taking into account of the testimony of natives; in fact Seitz speaks of the „unverantwortlich flüchtigen Weise“ (Seitz 19.12.13: 1) in which the natives were questioned. He warns, „Ein derartiges Verfahren muss den Eingeborenen mit der Zeit jedes Vertrauen zu unserer Rechtspflege nehmen und für das Schutzgebiet die verderblichsten Folgen nach sich ziehen“ (Seitz 19.12.13: 1). The dire consequences of the utter loss of native trust in the colonial German legal system are the end of the colonial mission, for primal freedom must be respected in some way, and the implications of the barbarian discourse in the context of modernism insists that the natives cannot be slaves.

The next letter shows how the internal narrative logic of these letters, representing German colonialism in Deutsch-Südwestafrika, brings the anti-colonial tendencies of the culturally progressive elements of Germany in direct confrontation with the biggest criticism of colonialism: slavery. When the politician Mumm brings up the issue of

sexual slavery in Deutsch-Südwestafrika during the 237th plenary session of the Reichstag on March 20, 1914, Seitz reacts immediately. Not only does the accusation build on the freeing of the slaves motif and call into question the “justice” of European colonialism – thus driving the trajectory toward anti-colonialism – but it simultaneously attacks the racial purity position of the race discourse, which, as Wandres’ argument against *Mischlinge* shows, is just as dangerous for the colonial mission in the long run. Seitz insists to the Inspektion der Landespolizei from Windhuk, in his role as representative of the Kaiserlicher Gouverneur, on April 29, 1914, „Amtlicherseits dürfen jedenfalls eingeborene Mädchen unverheirateten Farmern n i c h t zugewiesen werden, es sei denn, daß die Eltern oder, wenn diese tot sind, ältere Verwandte des Mädchens auf der Farm beschäftigt sind und die Garantie besteht, daß das Mädchen nicht zu unsittlichen Zwecken angenommen wird“ (Seitz 29.04.14). This fear of the accusation of sexual slavery comes from the heart of the Africa as the land of primal freedom motif, where the African woman is the physical incarnation of the primal freedom that white European male desires to experience. This motif destabilizes the colonial romance narrative as it undermines the position of the European colonizers in both the barbarian and race discourses, for upon these is the colonial romance is founded.

A final letter available to this cultural archive from these Deutsch-Südwestafrika documents must stand-in symbolically for the end of the German colonial mission in modern Namibia through the South African conquest in 1915. As the preceding letters have shown, the narrative trajectory was tending to a form of apartheid. The anti-colonial criticisms from progressive members of the Reichstag would likely never have become dominant, and thus the letter of May 26, 1914, from Whinz (?) in Spitzkoppe to the Inspektion der Landespolizei in Windhuk, represents this de facto end of the German colonial mission in Deutsch-Südwestafrika. The complaints of the writer about the ramifications of the shrinking number of native auxiliaries in the Spitzkoppe policeforce symbolizes how the whole colonial mission narrative is in fact based on force, which can be represented by the Gestalt of the warrior. It is the lack of warriors, in effect, that results in the capitulation of German forces in the colony to South Africa little more than a year after this letter was written.

#### IV.3.3. The Race Discourse at Home: *Ost und West* (1911)

At about the same time as the Südwestafrika documents enter the cultural archive – marked as they are by the barbarian discourse and the discourse of race – a similar cultural dynamic is occurring back home in Germany, and this is one which has been occurring for centuries. The Jewish presence in Germany can be traced back to Roman times, and the presence of this ethnic “other” within the German ethnic-national sphere led to centuries of conflict, oppression and exploitation. The reaction within the Jewish community to their ethnic German neighbours has historically run the gamut from isolation (often in conjunction with enforced ghettoization) at one extreme to assimilation on the other. The barbarian discourse has been invoked at various times with attempts to cast the Jews as Christian-baby-sacrificing savages or well-poisoners, but it has been just as often disarmed by the high level of civilization of the Jewish population, suggesting an inversion of the protagonists of the traditional barbarian discourse narrative. In a German-language magazine aimed at a Jewish audience, *Ost und West*, a 1911 article gives us a significant insight into an intersection of the race discourse with the warrior *Gestalt* in Germany. This specific intersection will take on ominous proportions in Hitler’s *Mein Kampf*.

B. Wolff addresses the problems facing Jews who wanted to develop a military tradition, who wanted careers in the military, and who wondered, given their long absence from military action since Masada, if it was even possible for them to become warriors. In his article, „Die Juden als Wehrvolk“, Wolff begins with two questions:

Eignet sich der Jude zum Soldaten? Eignet sich der Jude zum Offizier? Die erstere Frage haben alle europäischen Staaten praktisch mit Ja beantwortet, indem sie, auch ohne die Juden bürgerliche Gleichberechtigung zu gewähren, sie ohne viele Federlesens zum Militärdienst heranzogen. Die letztere Frage wird, von Oesterreich-Ungarn abgesehen, von den ‚Edlesten und Besten‘, die die Heeresführung als ihr ausschliessliches Privilegium betrachten, im allgemeinen mit Nein beantwortet. (Wolff 869)

In other words, the race discourse across Europe expressed a prejudice against Jews being able to become officers in the various European armies. A logical consequence of this position was that Jews, although forced to do military service and thus, de facto, able to be soldiers in European armies, had no incentive to pursue careers in the armed forces

as higher rank was denied them purely on the basis of race. Adolf Hitler, in *Mein Kampf*, will cite the lack of Jewish soldiers that he encountered fighting for Germany in World War I as an epiphany leading him to ‘uncover’ the Jewish plot against the German army and Germany itself. Essentially, the lack of Jewish fighters at the front was a function of the pan-European prejudice against Jews in the military, and the sentiment of an anecdote that Wolff relates was not uncommon: „Es ist nicht lange her, da brachte die von dem getauften Juden Harden redigierte ‚Zukunft‘ einen Artikel aus der Feder eines hochadligen Offiziers a.D., in dem der Verfasser, sich grundsätzlich gegen jede antisemitische Gesinnung und jede judenfeindliche Regung verwahrend, mit einem grossen Aufwand von Worten nachwies, dass die Zulassung von Juden zum Offizierstand die Disziplin im Heere endgültig untergraben müsste, da der Germane es als eine Herabsetzung empfinden würde, einem jüdischen Befehlshaber zu gehorchen“ (Wolff 870). A result of this racial prejudice, wherein a person of Germanic heritage would take it as an insult to be given orders by a Jew, was that even when Jews were drafted for service, they were more often than not placed in office jobs – which is where Hitler encountered them and drew the wrong conclusions.

Interestingly, the race discourse that insists that a Jew should not be allowed to become an officer is justified by the „hochadelige Offizier“ with a reference to the barbarian discourse. The war-like barbarian past of the *Germane* is set in opposition with the, presumably, clerical and priestly past of the Jew to justify the racial discrimination at issue here.

#### **IV.4. World War I: The Global Romance Narrative Gets Written**

##### IV.4.1. Preparing the Ground in America: *Maid of Mars* (1916)

Robert E. Howard was 8 years old when World War I broke out. The war itself, as we shall see, was framed by both sides in terms of the barbarian discourse; the warrior Gestalt was a dominant figure in all the fighting nations.

A writer who was a great influence on Howard, Edgar Rice Burroughs, built his popular success on the warrior Gestalt, the barbarian discourse and the Africa as the land of primal freedom motif. In 1912 Burroughs created the character Tarzan. He was an outstanding expression of the modern barbarian discourse – “He can be claimed as underlier of many characters in *SWORD AND SORCERY*: he is the



ultimate barbarian, entirely lacking academic education but instead educated by his closeness to nature” (Grant 922) – and of the motif of Africa as the land of primal freedom. The influence of the Tarzan character on Howard’s subsequent barbarian heroes cannot be underestimated, as Grant argues. Burroughs also created other characters, and 1916’s *Thuvia, Maid of Mars* features Burroughs’ second most famous character, John Carter, who is a Southern Confederate soldier magically transported to the planet Mars, where he becomes the hero of a doomed civilization. Burroughs’ John Carter character expresses the romantic chivalry that Schivelbusch identifies as a major component of the pre-war South – „Denn das ist natürlich die implizite Annahme der Walter-Scotland-These: Der Süden zog sich in seine von allen Elementen der Realität gereinigte Dornröschenburg romantischer »Chivalry« zurück, in der er sich gegen die Realität verbarrikadierte oder, was dasselbe war, ihr nur noch als Scottscher Ivanhoe-Quijote begegnete“ (Schivelbusch 67) – and Carter’s textual role in defending a dying civilization is an expression of the Cimmeria motif as well.

This particular John Carter novel demonstrates the cultural obsessions common to both sides of the Atlantic in the period of the First World War. Not only does it display Burroughs’ talent for action and adventure, this story written in the midst of the First World War provides a fascinating nexus of the warrior Gestalt, the barbarian discourse, and the culture of defeat as it is transferred from the South to Germany. Helium, the capital city of the beleaguered humans of Mars, is described in terms of the warrior Gestalt – and in terms reminiscent of the fascist aesthetics soon to come:

All Martian men are warriors, save those physically unable to bear arms. The tradesman and his clerk clank with martial trappings as they pursue their vocations. The schoolboy, coming into the world, as he does, almost adult from the snowy shell that has encompassed his development for five long years, knows so little of life without a sword at his hip that he would feel the same discomfiture at going abroad unarmed that an Earth boy would experience in walking the streets knickerbockerless. (Burroughs 17)

Besides a love of technology necessary to the science fantasy aspect of the tales, the race discourse enters in the form of a slavery unproblematic in the Novum of the created Martian world: “Five minutes later the merchant was leading his slave to the public market, where a great

concourse of people filled the great open space in the centre of which stood the slave block. The crowds were enormous to-day, for Carthoris, Prince of Helium, was to be the principal bidder” (Burroughs 18).

The unproblematic tone in which slavery is broached in a story wherein an ex-Confederate soldier is the heroic defender of a people whose highest representatives participate in slavery reveals a cultural dynamic of rapprochement in the United States. This is significant in that Burroughs, born in the North, is able to cast a Civil War-era Southerner as his hero while normalizing, or rendering harmless through a textual tone of indifference, the institution that served as the flashpoint for the conflict between the States. In its 1916 context, with much of America isolationist and ambivalent about the ‘European war’ – and the reality of there being a large German-speaking population in the U.S. – this textual gesture of rapprochement is striking and can be perceived as a symbolic ‘preparing of the ground’ for the U.S.’s joining of the war against Germany in 1917. Burroughs can be read here as a sympathetic Northerner – or as a modern American who has transcended the North-South dichotomy – who represents a readiness to help the South leave its culture of defeat. Schivelbusch puts the focus squarely on the culture of defeat as an explanation for the fateful historic decision of the United States to declare war on Germany. He writes:

Erst der Erste Weltkrieg erfüllte diese Funktion [i.e. re-uniting the North and the South], dafür dann aber um so gründlicher. Er bot beiden ehemaligen Bürgerkriegsparteien die Möglichkeit, ihre noch schwelenden Ressentiments auf den gemeinsamen äußeren Feind zu übertragen, und tatsächlich zeigt ein Vergleich der amerikanischen Weltkriegspropaganda ab 1917 mit der des Bürgerkriegs bis in die Formulierungen hinein dieselbe Psychologie der Verteufelung des Gegners. Was der Norden und der Süden einander gewesen waren – die Inkarnation der Barbarei und des Bösen – wurde nun Deutschland. [...] Wie wir bereits sahen, entsprach es alter Verliererpsychologie, daß Woodrow Wilson, der die USA in diesen Kreuzzug führte, der erste Südstaatler im Präsidentenamt seit der Sezession war. (Schivelbusch 107-108)

Seeing Burroughs’ adventure stories in this light – as evidence of the North/South rapprochement – it comes as no surprise that Burroughs’ Tarzan character is used, during World War II, to incorporate a renewed

casting of Germany as the negative barbarian. Much like Conan in *The Hour of the Dragon*, Tarzan will take the role of the positive barbarian fighting for civilization as he fights Germans in the 1943 films *Tarzan Triumphs* and *Tarzan's Desert Mystery* (Grant 928).

What must be considered here is the fact that a writer influenced by Burroughs, Howard, not only takes from Burroughs the romance *mythos* as his great story pattern, but all the cultural and historical manifestations of the modern barbarian discourse, as well.

#### IV.4.2. Rosa Luxemburg and the Dawning of the *Kultur der Niederlage* in Germany

A similar focus on the revaluing of the poles of reference in the barbarian discourse (as outlined by Hall) is a central argument for including the texts of Rosa Luxemburg in the cultural archive of texts relevant to the works of Howard and Jünger. Furthermore, her political work as a socialist leads Luxemburg to interpret her life in terms of the romance *mythos*. Unconsciously, she reveals her petty bourgeois origins and her attempts at social positioning in her written utterances in the antagonistic class discourse of the day. Particularly in her position on the barbarian discourse we can see how the capitalist mode of production is inherently an assault on nature, a position which both Howard's and Jünger's texts also broach. While all of Rosa Luxemburg's life and work could be viewed as significant parts of the cultural archive for Jünger's and Howard's texts, her letters from prison during World War I are especially relevant as they parallel the founding of the German culture of defeat.

##### IV.4.2.1. Symbolic Resolution and *Mythos*

In Luxemburg's work we see how the symbolic resolutions for social contradictions that texts propose rest, in the first instance, on their mythic patterning. Most fascinating in the case of her letters from prison is not only how the *mythoi* Frye defines shape individual letters, parts of letters, or even the meta-narrative which the letters as a group are part of, but how they evoke what Frye termed the total quest romance that all the *mythoi* form. Even while Luxemburg repeatedly couches her statements in the inherent romance of the socialism ideologeme (even to the extent

of embodying the romance hero's quest and claiming possession of magic destined to assure the fulfillment of that quest), and at times even evokes the comic convention of the new spring and the establishment of a new society, her personal situation, and that of her comrades and of Germany as a whole, require her to acknowledge the necessity of accepting both tragedy and irony/satire as well. The manner in which she textually performs this acceptance reinforces the salvational and messianic nature of Frye's total quest romance.

The social contradiction that her texts are symbolic resolutions of is the fact that German social democracy – identified with the SPD, at one time the leading proponent for socialist revolution in the world – had gone from being the representative of a working class opposed to the bourgeoisie, to being a party seeking reconciliation with the bourgeoisie and, in the extreme, effectively representing the bourgeoisie.

Luxemburg patterns her 1899 work, *Social Reform or Revolution*, in the tradition of socialism as romance, going so far as to arm the romance hero that is socialism with the romance hero's traditional weapon, the sword. The sword is identified by her as the dialectic (Luxemburg 1971: 127). In true romance fashion, she describes the class struggle in terms reminiscent of the romance's *agon* stage, and that this *agon* – with its implied path to the *pathos* (the death struggle with the bourgeoisie) and the *anagnorisis* (the workers crowned as masters, or enthroned as equals in the coming socialist society) – represents the proletariat's moral rebirth, in keeping with Frye's precept that the romance hero carries the values of the reader. However, this romantic trajectory – established by the teleology inherent in the socialism ideologeme, based as it is on the linear movement of the Marxist modes of production – is undermined by the social contradiction occurring in German politics and German socialism even at this early stage. After the SPD's betrayal of the internationalist (and other) principles of socialism in 1914, Luxemburg goes on to help found the Spartacus League. In her illegal April 1916 Spartacus League pamphlet, "Either/Or", Luxemburg defines the social contradiction she is responding to in the antagonistic language of the romance: "we have gone from being the respected and feared enemy of bourgeois society to being the weak-minded and justifiably despised tools of our own mortal enemy, the imperialist bourgeoisie" (Luxemburg 1971: 337). This contradiction is based on another contradiction at the heart of the socialism ideologeme and Luxemburg's embracing of its romance: idealism. Just as Marx criticized Hegel for the latter's idealism (Rius 148),

in *Social Reform or Revolution* Luxemburg criticizes fellow SPD member Bernstein for his conciliatory approach to class struggle, branding his opportunism as “idealism” (Luxemburg 1971: 127), and yet she then reveals the idealistic nature of her apprehension of the socialist romance when she writes, 17 years later, “never has a more noble ideal been so disgracefully betrayed” (Luxemburg 1971: 337).

The mythic patterning of her texts – particularly the letters Luxemburg writes from prison after she is arrested in July of 1916 for endangering Germany’s war effort – is the socialism ideologue’s romance trajectory. Her letters from prison function as signifiers for the signified of Luxemburg’s life and work. As such, this life narrative also necessarily contains aspects, episodes and facets that are expressed through the mythic patterning of the other three *mythoi*.

However, it is the romance which provides the central pattern. Luxemburg demonstrates this most clearly in 1916’s “Either/Or” when she professes the values that she – as an embodiment of the collective romance hero that is socialism – holds, and with which her reader identifies: “The world brotherhood of workers is the highest and most sacred thing on earth to me; it is my guiding star, my ideal, my fatherland. I would rather lose my life than be untrue to this ideal” (Luxemburg 1971: 344). She further demonstrates both the obstacles that a romance hero must overcome during the *agon* stage of the romance narrative, when she notes to her correspondent, Sophie Liebknecht, in July of 1917, that she is on her way to „meinem neunten Gefängnis“ (Luxemburg 1989: 60), and the heroic attitude that the romance hero must have to overcome those obstacles when she writes in August of 1917, „ich nehme, wie Sie wissen, alle Wendungen des Schicksals mit dem nötigen heiteren Gleichmut hin“ (Luxemburg 1989: 61). On a deeper level, one corresponding to the romance’s function as a form of “wish fulfillment”, Luxemburg reveals in November of 1917 that the previously cited romance hero *Weltanschauungen*, that she as a socialist feels and represents, are „meine Träumereien“ and a „Traumwelt“ (Luxemburg 1989: 79). Further, she describes the effect of this self-identification as a romance hero in December 1917 as „merkwürdig“, and as a „freudigen Rausch“ and goes on to affirm that it is „nicht tragisch“ (Luxemburg 1989: 82).

And yet, in a culturally-related foreshadowing of Jünger’s post-war case just a few years later (he is at the front as Luxemburg writes her letters), Luxemburg’s context as a prisoner, as a committed socialist in

post-August 1914 Germany, and as a German, demands a tragic perception, and, as such, part of the meta-narrative of her symbolic resolution of the central contradiction she wrestles with is patterned according to the *mythos* of tragedy. Although presented entirely in terms of the romance hero's *agon*, Luxemburg's suggestion, that she would undertake a hunger strike (Luxemburg 1989: 23), evokes the terrible self-mutilation that leads to physical destruction and, simultaneously, suggests a desperation in the face of the contradiction between romance motivation and tragic reality that foreshadows a downfall fully in keeping with that of a tragic hero. In fact, she strengthens this identification with a phase three tragic hero when she writes to Sophie Liebknecht, „Sie wissen, ich werde trotzdem hoffentlich auf dem Posten sterben: In einer Straßenschlacht oder im Zuchthaus“ (Luxemburg 1989: 36). This suggests that the contradiction she is responding to is beyond rectifying, and that the betrayal of international socialist principles by the SPD in August of 1914 has irreversible consequences; these consequences include the SPD's complete identification with, and service to, the bourgeois power structure and the likelihood that resistance to this power structure by committed socialists like her is ultimately futile – and the symbolic value of dying in the name of this ideal is the only resolution possible.

The realization that both these mythic patternings of the symbolic resolution are pathos-laden and idealistic suggests, for a writer and thinker of Luxemburg's stature, that an awareness of the irony inherent in her meta-narrative is to be expected. That her letters show that she does indeed accept the satiric and ironic in her meta-narrative shows that, while her symbolic resolution rests on the messianic nature of the romance hero, her Judeo-Christian perception opens the way to an expansion of her basic romance symbolic resolution to that of the total quest *mythos* Frye writes of (Frye 215).<sup>28</sup> Luxemburg moves to this transcendent position once her self-identification as messianic romance hero is forced to confront her relative powerlessness. It is one of her self-proclaimed romance hero abilities, that of “the mysterious rapport with nature that so often marks the central figure of romance” (Frye 197), that leads her toward a recognition of the underlying ironic *mythos* pattern of her narrative, and even toward a recognition of herself as an *alazon* figure in comedy. This process allows her to interpret these

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<sup>28</sup> N.B. Frye equates *agon* with romance, *pathos* with tragedy, *sparagmos* with satire/irony, and *anagnorisis* with comedy (Frye 192).

mythic realities in her narrative as part of the total quest *mythos* and that the ultimate romance victory of true socialism requires all these stages.

Romance rests upon a magical expectation of resolution. In a time of year symbolic of the transition between the comic establishment of the new society and the beginning of the romance hero's quest, Luxemburg writes on June 1<sup>st</sup>, 1917 that „Gestern lag ein unbeschreiblicher Zauber auf allem“ (Luxemburg 1989: 49) and „Alles schien auf etwas zu warten“ (Luxemburg 1989: 50). Not only is this an expression of the recurring seasonal impetus for the romance hero, it also points to the wish fulfillment aspect of romance.

This wish fulfillment, whether it be for eternal youth, wealth, power or salvation of some kind is expressed by Luxemburg (and other socialists, including Marx, Engels and Lenin) in her repeated references to the Bible and other aspects of the Judeo-Christian sacred tradition (e.g. in January 1917, Luxemburg compares Corsican peasants to „die Heilige Familie“ (Luxemburg 1989: 20), while on December 14, 1918 in “What Does the Spartacus League Want?” she writes, “The words of the *Communist Manifesto* flare like a fiery *menetekel* above the crumbling bastions of capitalist society” (Luxemburg 1971: 367)). Socialism, as an ideologeme, is a romance narrative through its own teleology of the modes of production and the salvational promise to its believers, who have clearly transferred the (denied or delayed) salvational aspect of their religious traditions to socialism, as is evidenced by Luxemburg's words in “Either/Or”: “In this whole country, in all countries, the proletarian masses, enslaved and bled white, are longing for a resolute proletarian politics which alone can save them from the hell of the status quo. It is our task, our duty, to advance that hour of salvation by exerting ourselves to the very last in a relentless class struggle” (Luxemburg 1971: 346). Luxemburg makes the almost religious nature of this salvational romance wish fulfillment evident when she writes that her romance hero qualities, like her connection to nature are „wie ein Niederknien in stummen Anbetung“ (Luxemburg 1989: 59). She strengthens this religious identification further when she writes that the entire context of the SPD betrayal – the manifold brutalities of World War I as a whole – represent „die heutigen Sünden wider den Heiligen Geist“ (Luxemburg 1989: 70). As we shall see, Luxemburg's conscious linkage of socialism's struggle to Christian salvationism foreshadows her recognition, in the face of the non-romance parts woven into the meta-narrative of her life and work, of an over-arching salvational romance myth that incorporates the comic,

the tragic and the satiric/ironic (Frye 192).

She recognizes, for example, the satire of her romantic ideals and romantic self-identification when she declares her prison in Breslau to be an „Irrenhaus“ (Luxemburg 1989: 95), implying that she is mad. She heightens this ironic aspect – i.e. that the romance hero has been locked away like an insane person – by referencing the romance hero’s connection to nature in pointing out on March 24<sup>th</sup> of 1918 that the birds have returned early (Luxemburg 1989: 95). She realizes that, precisely in this point, in this connection to nature which has given her so much strength and has helped to keep her self-image as the romance hero intact, is she vulnerable: she admits that this connection is „krankhaft“ (Luxemburg 1989: 100) and writes, „Ich sage mir vergeblich, daß es lächerlich ist, daß ich ja nicht für alle hungrigen Haubenlerchen der Welt verantwortlich bin und nicht um alle geschlagenen Büffel – wie die, die hier täglich mit Säcken in den Hof kommen – weinen kann. Das hilft mir nichts, und ich bin förmlich krank, wenn ich solches höre und sehe“ (Luxemburg 1989: 101). In doing this, she treads a line between the comic, where she risks identification as the *alazon* usurper with this self-delusional connection to nature, and the satiric. The satiric is the more apt *mythos* here, as she acknowledges her ultimate helplessness, which belies her romance hero posture.

And yet, this does not invalidate her romance desire: her positive comment on English irony and satire (Luxemburg 1989: 24) reveals her understanding of its necessity, its healing power and its role in the total quest *mythos* Frye speaks of. In fact, she seizes upon this realization to reaffirm her belief in true socialism’s ultimate victory, and thus in a symbolic resolution of the SPD betrayal, when she implies an ironic narrative line by writing that those responsible for the calamity will help, „die höchsten Ideale [zu] verwirklichen“ (69). In the depth of winter she will reaffirm this satiric and ironic view and the part it plays in the total quest *mythos*:

Der Sand knirscht so hoffnungslos unter diesen Schritten [*of the prison guard*], daß die ganze Öde und Ausweglosigkeit des Daseins daraus klingt in die feuchte, dunkle Nacht. Da liege ich still, allein, gewickelt in diese vielfachen schwarzen Tücher der Finsternis, Langeweile, Unfreiheit des Winters – und dabei klopft mein Herz von einer unbegreiflichen, unbekanntem inneren Freude, wie wenn ich im strahlenden Sonnenschein über eine blühende Wiese gehen würde. Und ich lächle im



Dunkeln dem Leben, wie wenn ich irgendein zauberhaftes Geheimnis wüßte, das alles Böse und Traurige Lügen straft und in lauter Helligkeit und Glück wandelt. Und dabei suche ich selbst nach einem Grund zu dieser Freude, finde nichts und muß wieder lächeln – über mich selbst. Ich glaube, das Geheimnis ist nichts anderes als das Leben selbst; die tiefe nächtliche Finsternis ist so schön und weich wie Sammet, wenn man nur richtig schaut; und in dem Knirschen des feuchten Sandes unter den langsamen schwere Schritten der Schildwache singt auch ein kleines schönes Lied vom Leben – wenn man nur richtig zu hören weiß. (Luxemburg 1989: 83)

In this way her symbolic resolution – the ultimate victory of the positive forces of life itself, the essence and the ideal of socialism – will right the social contradiction that she lives.

#### IV.4.2.2. Antagonistic Class Discourse and the Culture of Defeat

Consciously, Luxemburg speaks as a member of the proletariat, and yet she is not truly of that class. As a petty bourgeois intellectual, she is doing the classic identification with the proletariat that the petty bourgeois do in order to forestall their own descent into that class. She is, perhaps unconsciously, jockeying – just like her vanguardist opponent Lenin – for a leadership role once the revolution succeeds.

These class utterances, both conscious and unconscious, are directly dependent on the social “big picture”. This “big picture” subsumes the specific social contradiction the writer is proposing symbolic resolutions for. In Luxemburg’s case, it is the looming culture of defeat that is being established in Germany as she writes. Luxemburg recognizes, or anticipates, this culture of defeat by commenting on some of its primary features, particularly the moral issues that Schivelbusch has identified as being at the core of a culture of defeat.

The coming of this culture of defeat, Luxemburg notes in “The Crisis in German Social Democracy”, is predicted by Bebel as early as 1905 (Luxemburg 1971: 329). While Bebel correctly outlines the coming clash of imperialist Europe, his prediction that it will cause the *Götterdämmerung* of the bourgeoisie reveals itself to be just another of the platitudes spoken against the imperialist bourgeois order. While Bebel’s statement was intended as a prophecy of the triumph of the socialist romance, it ironically foreshadowed a culture of defeat ushered in by the

failure of socialism to oppose the world war after decades of decrying its coming: “But these causes may also be found in the errors of the leader of the proletariat, Social Democracy itself, in the failure of our readiness to fight, our courage and our conviction” (Luxemburg 1971: 333). It is this failure of the romance hero, Social Democracy (i.e. Luxemburg and her ex-SPD comrades), that is piquant in Luxemburg’s comment that „Jetzt sehen wir vorerst, wie eine ganze alte Welt versinkt“ (Luxemburg 1989: 101). The world that is sinking away is that of romance-driven Imperial bourgeois Germany, but the dynamic of the culture of defeat will also halt the socialist romance trajectory. The old bourgeois world will not sink away entirely, as Jünger will discover, but it will change and survive, ironically with the SPD as the face of the new republican bourgeois order. This ironic situation, plus the blanket application of the term ‘villain’ to all aspects of German society by the Treaty of Versailles, *and* the subsequent rejection by a majority of Germans of this label, will provide the foundation for the culture of defeat that Schivelbusch describes. In fact, Luxemburg’s texts mirror Jünger’s attempt at a romance patterning of events in works like *In Stahlgewittern*, and she will be forced, like Jünger, to acknowledge a society narratively structured like a phase one comedy where the older generation, that of the usurpers, is not overcome and the failed attempt at overcoming – whether through the young man’s romance promise of a war that will transcend staid Wilhelmine society, in Jünger’s case, or the romance promise of overthrowing this Wilhelmine bourgeois order, as in Luxemburg’s case – does become the culture of defeat, with the external military defeat being the catalyst that brings all of these latent facets to the fore. While she wonders ironically if the military effort will succeed – as Jünger hopes – „Ich muß wohl warten, bis wir die ganze Welt besiegen“ (Luxemburg 1989: 94), in the end, in a comment she makes on the poetry of Stefan George – poetry that arises from the same cultural dynamic – she recognizes that it all represents „das Fehlen einer großen, edlen Weltanschauung“ (Luxemburg 1989: 77).

George, in fact, reveals what Luxemburg means when he writes – in his modern and unconventional typography – of the youth of Wilhelmine Germany „dass sie von der schwärmerei für seichte allgemeine bildung und beglückung sich ebenso gelöst hat als von verjährter barbarei [...] dass sie schliesslich auch ihr volkstum gross und nicht in beschränktern sinne eines stammes auffasst: darin finde man den umschwung des deutschen wesens bei der jahrhundertwende“ (George

430). For Luxemburg, as an internationalist socialist and petty bourgeois intellectual, George's attack on education and his praising of the rising sense of a greater German national consciousness are what demonstrate his lack of a large (i.e. internationalist) and noble (i.e. socialism as romance ideal) world vision. George, in response to the war, will incorporate the barbarian discourse by casting his poem „Einem Jungen Führer im Ersten Weltkrieg“ in the old Germanic verse form found in the Edda and the sagas,<sup>29</sup> thus making a conscious linkage to the Germanic barbarian heritage and its Ragnarokian motif. George, like Jünger, having tried to cast the youth of Wilhelmine Germany as a revolutionary force rising above its society while carrying its positive values, must re-evaluate this failed comic attempt to transcend and replace the father generation. He writes:

Jähe erhebung und zug bis an die pforte des siegs  
Sturz unter drückendes joch bergen in sich einen sinn  
Sinn in dir selber. (George 430)

Just like Jünger, and the Nazis, this will become the compensatory metaphysical reason for the lost war and, as George's title implies, this will lead to the *Führerprinzip* and, then, to the *Arbeiter Gestalt*.

As George's poetry suggests – and Schivelbusch's argument insists – cultures of defeat are predicated on a perception of certain moral issues. In fact, Luxemburg anticipates Theweleit's underscoring of the image of slime and mud as a metaphor for moral degradation but, in her case, this moral slime is not, of course, produced by women and socialists, but by the militaristic right-wing male cult at the core of Wilhelmine Germany: „Ich habe das Gefühl, daß dieser ganze moralische Schlamm, durch den wir waten, dieses große Irrenhaus, in dem wir leben, auf einmal, so von heute auf morgen wie durch einen Zauberstab ins Gegenteil umschlagen, in ungeheuer Großes und Heldenhaftes umschlagen kann und – wenn der Krieg noch ein paar Jahre dauern wird – umschlagen muß“ (Luxemburg 1989: 68-69). This ironic romance belief anticipates the process – although with reversed positions – of a moral awareness necessarily leading to a national re-birth and an ultimate romance outcome. That the coming culture of defeat will, as is typical for cultures of defeat, deny its own moral failings in order to spur the process of national rebirth is something that Luxemburg prophetically

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<sup>29</sup> And particularly in „Lied der Walküre“ which can be seen as a metaphor for the mythic narrative threads winding through the nation.

expresses when she writes that, „Was nun die Juden Pogrome betrifft, so sind alle dergleichen Gerüchte direkt *erlogen*. In Rußland ist die Zeit der Pogrome ein für allemal vorbei,“ and adds, „Eher kann ich mir – in Deutschland noch Judenpogrome vorstellen ... Jedenfalls herrscht die dazu passende Atmosphäre der Niedertracht, Feigheit, Reaktion und des Stumpfsinns“ (Luxemburg 1989: 81). Just as in 1871 France, where the moral disaster of the slaughter of the Commune is overlooked and pushed aside under the renewed control of the bourgeoisie – although it was a necessary component for the culture of defeat’s drive to a national “rebirth” – so will the Jewish scapegoating and pogroms be necessary for the national “rebirth” directed by the members of the petty bourgeoisie who raise themselves into the bourgeoisie (Hitler, Goebbels, Himmler, etc.) by professing solidarity with the workers (hence the *Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei*) in order to prevent their own fall into the proletariat in the post-war economic chaos, thus following the familiar pattern described by Marx.

This mechanism is also observable in Luxemburg, and precisely in the context of the culture of defeat. Consciously, she speaks for the proletariat, ostensibly as one of their own. She, in fact, criticizes the petty bourgeoisie and its drive for a democratic republic, and yet reveals her own petty bourgeoisie origins with statements about art, culture and society (Luxemburg 1989: 72-73). When she writes of her imminent release on October 18, 1918 (Luxemburg 1989: 103), it is in the knowledge that she is going out either to die as a socialist leader or to bring about the revolution which she, as a political celebrity, will be a leader of, despite her criticisms of Lenin’s vanguardism and the renewal of class hierarchy in the new “revolutionary” reality of post-war Germany. She decries the failure of the socialist leadership in “Order Reigns in Berlin”, implicitly excluding herself – a known leader – from this failure, claiming that, “the leadership can and must be created anew by the masses and out of the masses. The masses are the crucial factor; they are the rock on which the ultimate victory of the revolution will be built” (Luxemburg 1971: 415). She implies, as the writer of these lines that embody Frye’s total quest metaphor (with international socialism replacing the kingdom of God) that she will be one of these leaders arising from the masses, and she makes this messianic proclamation by citing a line by Freiligrath from the last edition of Marx’s *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* that not only identifies her with the “Holy Father” of socialism (Luxemburg 1971: 415) – thus underlining her leadership claims – but

also expresses the eternal romance hero who survives forever the cycle of the seasons and the *mythoi*.

Finally, Luxemburg's work provides us with a window on the cultural revolution of her time, or, to move away from Jameson's static concept of a 'window', her work helps to write that cultural revolution. It does so by incorporating the social discourses of the time, discourses that were at the same time part of, reactions to, and consequences of, that cultural revolution. Luxemburg's is a time where monopoly capitalism dominates and begins to develop toward multi-national capitalism. The colonialism of monopoly capitalism leads to capitalism's colonization of the last areas of the Earth outside its hegemonic control, and this closing off of geographical zones of freedom (the attempts to reach and experience, like Rimbaud's, are the ironic harbingers of monopoly capitalism itself), and biological zones of freedom, indicates that the capitalist colonization of the human mind has begun to be concluded, the rise of psychiatry being a symptom of this process. It is understandable that the barbarian discourse re-emerges with such vigour at such an historical moment, as both a nostalgic reflex and a cry of opposition to this complete capitalist colonization of the inner and outer worlds. The Taylorist, Keynesian, state-controlled war economies necessitated by WW I ironically help transform national monopoly capitalism into multi-national capitalism, as the bourgeoisie controlling the national monopolies find similar economic structures internationally that can be bought or taken advantage of. This economic dynamic accelerated by the war carries with it a social component also promoted by the war, the *Verhaltenslehre der Kälte*.

Luxemburg gives credence to this statement when she notes, matter of factly, that the World War has altered the situation economically and socially – “The World War has changed the conditions of our struggle and has changed *us* most of all. [...] But the tempo of development has received a mighty forward impetus through the eruption of the imperialist volcano”(Luxemburg 1971: 327-328). Her conscious awareness of this, however, does not necessarily extend to an awareness of how her utterances in the social discourses under consideration are themselves unconscious emanations of this economic and social process.

Luxemburg evokes an interpretation – a traditional interpretation – of the barbarian discourse when she cites Engels' statement about capitalism's dilemma that it must either advance to socialism or revert to

barbarism (Luxemburg 1971: 334). This traditional teleological perspective – by no means limited to socialism – suggests an eternal progression away from the evils of barbarism to an ever-more civilized state. The socialist variant of this ideology of progress is built on the teleology of Marx's theory of the modes of production, which posits an advance to socialism and true communism. Luxemburg cites Engels' statement as she adopts the role of political prophet early in WW I, declaring that capitalism's fateful moment of decision has come, and that the world has indeed reverted to a state of the traditional negative conception of barbarism. Her political prophecy consists of the assertion that the reversion to such a traditionally-conceived barbarism will prove so antithetical to human life, and ultimately untenable, that the only option in this "Either/Or" decision will prove to be the advance to socialism.

Furthermore, the link between the fundamental romance *Weltanschauung* of socialism, classic romanticism and the barbarian discourse of Luxemburg's time is made evident by her letter of May 2, 1917. In it, like a true romantic, she complains (like Werther in Goethe's book) of the prevailing rationalization of forest, garden and fields that robs the songbirds of their nests. This echoes, or foreshadows, Jünger's own complaint about Wilhelminian bourgeois progress destroying the wild places in *Das Abenteuerliche Herz*. Further, this attitude leads into Luxemburg's complaints about the treatment and plight of the Indians of North America (Luxemburg 1989: 35) – a people routinely dismissed as "savages" and "barbarians" by "civilized" Europeans throughout the colonization and conquest process. When Luxemburg notes her anger over the lack of an avenger for the Native American (Luxemburg 1989: 69), she indicates her sympathy for the traditional barbarian and for the dynamic whereby the people originally occupying the "civilized" side of the equation are re-branded as "barbarians" with all the negative and destructive qualities that the term originally possessed. Here she challenges the anti-nature bias in the traditional conception of the barbarian discourse (i.e. barbarian as bad) and thus the progress ideologeme which implies that distance from nature through technological advance is positive and "civilizing". Luxemburg demonstrates this through her respect for birds (Luxemburg 1989: 78), but particularly through her heart-rending sympathetic lament for the Romanian buffaloes mistreated by the guards at her prison – saying, in the true fashion of the romance hero connected to nature, „Oh, mein

armer Büffel, mein armer, geliebter Bruder“ (Luxemburg 1989: 87): this revaluing of the barbarian discourse and its intrinsic focus on nature is a precursor to the modern environmental paradigm. Her statement – „So bin ich aus meiner Zelle nach allen Seiten durch unsichtbare, feine Fäden an tausend kleine und große Kreaturen geknüpft und reagiere auf alles mit Unruhe, Schmerz, Selbstvorwürfen“ (Luxemburg 1989: 101) – is the coming ecological awareness, which is a product of the revalued barbarian discourse of the twentieth century, and points again to the interconnectedness of phenomena implicit in Frye’s total quest myth. Frye’s insistence on the romance as the organizing principle of all the narrative *mythoi* is paralleled by Luxemburg’s socialist romance.

It must be remembered that the cultural revolution ushered in by the war’s Keynesian economic measures accelerates this renewed barbarian discourse (and its concomitant ecological awareness) but the crushing of the socialist romance in Germany and elsewhere in the Western world, and the profound psychological forces unleashed by the war and distorted by the Treaty of Versailles, and the continued march of rationalized capitalist processes trigger the *Verhaltenslehre der Kälte*, which drive the championing of the barbarian and the revalued barbarian discourse underground. It will find expression in sublimated and often contradictory forms. An example of this contradiction – of using both poles of the barbarian discourse simultaneously and interchangeably – is when Luxemburg complains that people don’t notice trees or animals: she concludes that, „Die meisten Städter sind doch wirklich rohe Barbaren, im Grunde genommen“ (Luxemburg 1989: 99). From one letter to another she goes from positively valuing people traditionally seen as barbarians (i.e. Native Americans), to such a negative use of the term barbarian in reference to city dwellers. In doing so, she foreshadows Jünger’s attempt to reconcile such contradictions in the term barbarian by agreeing that city dwellers *are* modern barbarians, but that this indicates that the purity and vitality of the barbarian reside within them and can be tapped in order to bring about the world of the new man.

To conclude, Luxemburg interprets her life as a socialist in terms of the romance *mythos*. The cyclical nature of Frye’s statement about the proletarian element of romance that continually arises to challenge the ideals of the ruling class (Frye 186) is demonstrated in the meta-narrative of Luxemburg’s time. Just as German Social Democracy represents this proletarian element of romance in its challenging of the Wilhelmine

bourgeois order, German Social Democracy's sense of itself as the rightful ruling intellectual class of its time, and its insistence on seizing power at the end of World War I, made of it the ruling class subject to a renewed proletarian challenge in romance's cyclical nature. That an element of German Social Democracy, Luxemburg's Spartacus League, will continue the fight against German Social Democracy once it is enthroned is part of this cycle. This symbolic resolution of social contradictions reveals the usefulness of a mythic interpretation to a first horizon reading of Luxemburg's letters, but also indicates the need for a second horizon reading focussing on the antagonistic class discourse. It is on this level that Luxemburg's utterances, clearly championing the proletarian class in the antagonistic class discourse of the day, also reveal her petty bourgeois origins and her unconscious playing out of the social dynamic that Marx identified whereby the petty bourgeoisie sides with the proletariat to prevent a slide into that class. Finally, the view from the third horizon of reading, where we consider the cultural revolution as a whole, shows that her utterances within the barbarian discourse demonstrate how the capitalist mode of production's intensification from monopoly to multi-national capitalism is raising doubt about the value of progress through its assault on nature. We shall see these same discourses, and the application of romance in the same contexts, in the work of Howard and Jünger.

#### IV.4.3. The *Waffenstillstand* of 1918

The texts of the cultural archive considered to this point function as introductions to the volcanic eruption in human culture and history that was World War I. The war's effect throughout the world, but particularly in the fighting nations, and particularly in Germany, was unparalleled and so thoroughly changed everything that it is the nexus from which all subsequent history and narrative radiates. As Jameson noted, however, history is only accessible to us as text, and it is the writing of World War I and its socio-cultural shockwaves that unifies the work of Howard and Jünger and the works of the cultural archive relevant to their work. Luxemburg's opposition to the war, for example, led to her incarceration, and it was her textual and militant anti-war position that defines her life and work. The "mainstream" of German society (this, admittedly, is a conception that obscures class differences and struggle) during World War I wanted to frame their experiences according to the romance



*mythos*, as do all cultures, countries, peoples and individuals if one recalls Jameson's citation of Frye's contention that romance is the *Urform* of all narrative structure. With the belief that they were experiencing just such a romance, much of Europe entered World War I. Almost everyone believed that he – and his nation – would experience the *anagnorisis*, and many were so intoxicated by this romance promise that they believed that they would defeat their opponents by Christmas. One of the reasons that Luxemburg and other socialists were able to resist this war romance euphoria was that they felt that they lived a different romance narrative – that of socialism's imminent triumph.

As the socialists rightly saw, the war was the direct result of European imperialism and colonialism, whereby the European powers divided the world amongst themselves, strengthened and encouraged to do this by their belief in their respective romantic missions (e.g. to bring French civilization, British order, etc.). Bismarck had seen the danger in colonialism and, while he attempted to broker peace between the competing European powers (Taylor 89), he also tried to keep Germany out of the colonial race; but the calls of German nationalists who were convinced of Germany's own colonial romance destiny became too loud, and so Germany also acquired colonies, officially known as protectorates: Tsingtao in China, the Mariana and Caroline Islands, Papua New Guinea (known as Kaiser Wilhelmland), Togoland, German East Africa, German Southwest Africa and Cameroon. After Bismarck's dismissal by Kaiser Wilhelm II in 1890, the calls for Germany's colonial romance became more strident and were crystallized in the Kaiser's famous demand for Germany's 'place in the sun'.<sup>30</sup>

The competition for colonies heightened the hegemonic battle between the European cultures and the war for the 'future of the world' was, in effect, pre-programmed. Therefore, of necessity, not everyone/every nation would ultimately be able to keep a romance *Weltanschauung*, for there had to be a loser in this war. And the reason for Germany's defeat may well explain the hate that many home-coming nationalistic front soldiers developed for Marxism: economic factors decided the war, exactly as Marx indicated when he argued that the mode

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<sup>30</sup> A formulation that metaphorically expresses Germany's claim to a national romance meta-narrative, as it suggests Frye's archetypal metaphor for the romance *mythos*, i.e. summer.

of production is decisive in history.<sup>31</sup>

That the German leadership allowed itself to be so taken by its own romance attitude to the point where it ignored the enemy's superiority in manpower, matériel, and economic capacity was a sign of the incompetence of the Wilhelmine government. But this crushing reality was brought home to the general population and it allowed them to realize early on that this war would not be a romance, but rather a tragedy – a fact that postcards of the time reveal, especially one bearing a poem that explicitly highlights the archetypal autumnal imagery of tragedy:

Vater ich rufe dich.  
Gott ich erkenne dich!  
So, im herbstlichen  
Rauschen der Blätter,  
Als im Schlachten  
Donnerwetter,  
Urquell der Gnade  
erkenn ich dich!

Vater, du segne mich! (in Million and Burger 73).

The evocation of the archetypal autumnal imagery in this resignation to the unfolding tragedy and the willingness to bear it, is informed by Christianity. This Christian, martyr-like *Weltanschauung* and implied connection to the passion of Christ is something that put its stamp on the Weimar Republic and the Nazi dictatorship. We see in this postcard sent from the front how the *Kultur der Niederlage* is already being prepared, and this Christian aspect will move into the foreground of the defeat where „das Martyrium Christi an die Stelle des aktiven Kriegerhelden tritt“ (Schivelbusch 363). Schivelbusch explains how this process is a central factor of a culture of defeat: „Von der Überzeugung, der mit unmilitärischen Mitteln errungene Sieg sei nicht wahr, sondern falsch (unlauter, betrügerisch, erschlichen, gestohlen) und daher nicht anzuerkennen, ist es nur ein Schritt zum Verständnis der Niederlage als dem reinen, erhabenen Gegenbild. Christliche Vorstellungen des Opfers und des Martyriums verbinden sich hier mit solchen der klassischen Ästhetik“ (Schivelbusch 29).

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<sup>31</sup> This inability or unwillingness to accept defeat, and to avow the superiority of one's own armed forces over the enemy by branding the victory 'unfair', Schivelbusch explains as a standard reaction to such a loss, and he demonstrates this in reference to the Confederate States of America in 1865, France in 1871, and Germany in 1918.

Although Frye states that comedy is a narrative structure more directly concerned with society as a whole, one can cast Germany (as elements within Germany will indeed cast it following the dynamic laid out by Schivelbusch) as a collective tragic hero before, during and after WW I. Seen in this light, Germany-as-tragic-hero does fulfill the tragic requirement cited by Frye that the hero be 'very great' in that Germany fought against a multitude of nations in World War I and held its own for far longer than the numbers arrayed against it should have allowed. However, Germany did in the end seem small against the will of the gods, destiny or necessity that would not permit a German victory. It is not insignificant that, as the reality of the vanishing romance and gathering tragedy became clearer with every passing year of the war, one individual, the so-called 'Hero of Tannenberg', General – later Field Marshal – Paul von Hindenburg, became the visible manifestation of Germany-as-tragic-hero. Parallel to, and a crucial component of, this process involving Hindenburg – and parallel to Luxemburg's last writings – is the end of the war as textually presented by the November 11, 1918 „Erklärung der deutschen Bevollmächtigten bei der Unterzeichnung des Waffenstillstands“ of the Deutsche Waffenstillstands-Bevollmächtigte.

In narrative terms, the „Erklärung“ (explanation) opens with a characterization of the text's protagonist, which is the German government. Erzberger, Graf Oberndorff, von Winterfeldt and Vanselow – the Waffenstillstandskommission members – write, „Die deutsche Regierung wird selbstverständlich bestrebt sein, mit allen Kräften für die Durchführung der auferlegten Verpflichtungen Sorge zu tragen“ (Deutsche Waffenstillstands-Bevollmächtigte 34). The intention here is to underline the honest and honourable character of the German government and, by implication, the German people. As subsequent events will show, this will prove to be ineffective. This is followed by a statement that may also be intended for Entente consumption – an attempt to acknowledge the opponent as honourable as well – or it is intended as a defense against criticism of the Waffenstillstandskommission's work at home: „Die unterzeichneten Bevollmächtigten erkennen an, dass in einigen Punkten auf ihre Anregung hin Entgegenkommen gezeigt worden ist“ (Deutsche Waffenstillstands-Bevollmächtigte 34).

With this attempt at establishing the protagonist – and, to some extent, the antagonist – the document then proceeds to make the conflict clear, and thereby establishes the tragedy *mythos*. After noting that the

deadlines for the German Army to abandon territory in France and Belgium will be impossible to meet as Germany is simultaneously required to surrender thousands of trucks and other vehicles, the Bevollmächtigten write, „Die unterzeichneten Bevollmächtigten erachten es ferner für ihr Pflicht, unter Berufung auf ihre wiederholten mundlichen und schriftlichen Erklärungen noch einmal mit allen Nachdruck darauf hinzuweisen, dass die Durchführung dieses Abkommens das deutsche Volk in Anarchie und Hungersnot stürzen muss“ (34). Here the conflict is described in a manner reminiscent of tragedy, where the coming fall of the protagonist can clearly be seen (“Tragedy seems to move up to an *Augenblick* or crucial moment from which point the road to what might have been and the road to what will be can be simultaneously seen” (Frye 213)), and this description is most representative of a phase one tragedy, which Frye characterizes as a stag being dragged down by wolves, where the courage and innocence of the protagonist are emphasized (Frye 219). This impression is reinforced by the document’s penultimate sentence: „Das deutsche Volk, das 50 Monate lang Stand gehalten hat gegen eine Welt von Feinden, wird ungeachtet jeder Gewalt seine Freiheit und Einheit wahren“ (Deutsche Waffenstillstands-Bevollmächtigte 35). This line not only suggests Frye’s phase one tragedy, it simultaneously also points the way beyond tragedy, back to the overarching salvational romance that Frye argues unites all the *mythoi*. The penultimate sentence and the ultimate sentence – „Ein Volk von 70 Millionen leidet, aber es stirbt nicht“ (Deutsche Waffenstillstands-Bevollmächtigte 35) – define the tragic mythic pattern for the Weimar Republic. These lines also indicate how the tragedy will end, for they look forward to a future salvational romance narrative framework for Germany, as the protagonist of this collective narrative. It only remains for someone to articulate this salvational romance in terms directly intended to end this tragic perception of Germany. Of course, it will be Hitler and the Nazis who will do this.

With the mythic framework for the Armistice agreement established by this „Erklärung“, the Waffenstillstandskommission presents the articles of the Armistice. Of particular interest, in terms of this document as part of the cultural archive of this dissertation, is the article, „Kolonien“. That only one of Germany’s colonies is mentioned in this article is testament to the profound German desire for romance, and the desire, in some way, to present Germany in the context of that *mythos*. It is worth quoting in full:

Deutsch-Ostafrika: Entente vorschlug glatte Kapitulation. Kränkung deutschen Mutes, deutscher Opferfreudigkeit, wie Weltgeschichte nie gesehen. (Huldigung Lettow-Vorbeck.) Darum Delegation besonders dankbar, dass gelungen ist, diese entwürdigenden Bedingungen abzuwenden. Zugesichert wurde ehrenvoller Abzug der Streitkräfte. Deutsche Schiffe würden nach Sansibar geschickt werden. Inzwischen sollen dortige Truppen mit Lebensmitteln versorgt werden. Sobald wie möglich sollen tapferen Kämpfer zur Heimat zurückgeführt werden. Wohl nie dürften Truppen trotz aller Notlage des Vaterlandes einen würdigeren Empfang gefunden haben. (Deutsche Waffenstillstands-Bevollmächtigte 49)

It is the narrative trajectory of the German colony of Deutsch-Ostafrika during World War I that explains its prominent position in this document; or, to put it another way, it is the importance of the mythic shape of the colonial narrative of Deutsch-Ostafrika for Germany as a whole that explains the attention given to it by the Waffenstillstandsbevollmächtigten in their „Erklärung der deutschen Bevollmächtigten bei der Unterzeichnung des Waffenstillstands“ of November 11, 1918.

#### IV.4.3.1. The Romance of von Lettow-Vorbeck and Deutsch-Ostafrika, 1914-1918

This romance narrative has a romance hero in Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck, Kommandeur of the Schutztruppe of Deutsch-Ostafrika. Von Lettow-Vorbeck's romance quest is to save the colony and not surrender. This narrative has a definite romantic thrust; although it, like Jünger's World War I narrative *In Stahlgewittern*, must yield to the historical reality of November 11, 1918. Its persistent romance character allows it to be finally framed as the 'victory in tragedy' phase of tragedy: this narrative only receives its final victory-in-tragedy form after its own narrative momentum has been suspended by the signing of the Armistice, so it retains, in a significant way, its mythic romance form.

Events from the Deutsch-Ostafrika narrative function as the *agon* of the romance hero. These obstacles that are overcome include the defeat of the English cruiser *Pegasus* by the *SMS Königsberg* (Sept. 20, 1914), the victory at the Battle of Tanga (Nov. 2, 1914) –

Das britische Landungskorps unter Generalmajor Aitken

besteht aus einen englischen (Northlancashire) und acht indischen Regimentern sowie einige Spezialtruppen.

Am 4. November, dem Hauptkampftag, besteht die deutsche Heeresmacht aus 1000 Mann mit 21 Machinengewhren. Von Lettow kam in der Nacht vom 3. zum 4. November in Tanga an. Am 4. November fällt von Prince („Bwana Sakkarani“). Die Schlacht endet mit einem Sieg der Deutschen. Am 6./7. November dampft die britische Flotte mit allen Truppen wieder ab. („Deutsch Ost-Afrika“)

– the breaking of the British blockade by the *SMS Rubens* (April 1915) and the *SMS Marie* (Mar. 15, 1916), the victory at the Battle of Mahiwa in the Lukuledi valley (Aug. 15-17, 1917) –

Viertägige Schlacht (neben Tanga das größte Gefecht des ganzen Feldzuges) bei Mahiwa im Lukuledital. Die Abteilung Wahle wird von den Briten angegriffen, von Lettow eilt zu Hilfe. Es gelingt ihm die zahlenmäßig weit überlegen Briten zurückzuschlagen. („Deutsch Ost-Afrika“)

– and the successful evasion of Entente troops with the trek through Mozambique (Nov. 25, 1917 to Sept. 28, 1918). In von Lettow-Vorbeck's historical narrative, the romance quest is to not surrender, keep fighting, and tie down as many Entente troops as possible, which he accomplishes until the 14<sup>th</sup> of November, 1918: „Lettow-Vorbeck muss auf Befehl von Berlin bei Kasama die Waffen nach 4 ½jährigen Kampf strecken“ („Deutsch Ost-Afrika“). This romance narrative – during the course of which von Lettow-Vorbeck becomes the embodiment of Deutsch-Ostafrika much as von Hindenburg and Hitler after him would become the manifestations of the German national narrative – only reluctantly submits to the dawning culture of defeat, and only then by manifesting a central feature of a culture of defeat, namely by insisting that the opponent's victory was only gained through ignoble means („der mit unmilitärischen Mitteln errungene Sieg“ (Schivelbusch 29)). In the Deutsch-Ostafrika/von Lettow-Vorbeck narrative, these ignoble means were the cancellation of the agreement of the neutrality of the colonies in the event of an European war by the English, and the subsequent overwhelming numerical and material superiority of the Entente troops.

The influence of von Lettow-Vorbeck's narrative becomes part of the social and political fabric of Weimar Germany, just as his narrative reinforces, for Germany, the Africa as the land of primal freedom motif. Not only would his command of the Deutsch-Ostafrika Schutztruppe

guarantee von Lettow-Vorbeck a political career in the Weimar Republic, but it made of him and his men heroes – true romance heroes who were successful in their romance quest and experienced their *anagnorisis* in Berlin at the Brandenburger Tor: „2. März 1919: Einzug der deutschen Schutztruppe mit Gouverneur Schnee, Generalmajor von Lettow-Vorbeck und Kapitän zur See Looff durch das Brandenburger Tor in Berlin“ („Deutsch Ost-Afrika“). In this signal event the motif of Africa as the land of primal freedom is highlighted. Like Jünger and other *Pour le mérite* winners like Göring, von Lettow-Vorbeck and the Ostafrika Schutztruppe were spared the stigma of losers and this stemmed directly from their military prowess and from the mystique that they had achieved this result and had been „unbesiegt im Feld“ in Africa.

Theweleit sees this public attempt to glorify von Lettow-Vorbeck and his troops as symptomatic of the process that leads to the establishment of Nazi Germany. Theweleit presents a telling picture of „Lettow-Vorbeck, dabei, sich fotografieren zu lassen, wie er seinen Sohn Arndt bei Schularbeitenmachen am Ohr zieht“ (Theweleit 1987a: 443). This picture of von Lettow-Vorbeck is emblematic of the generational renewal of the German soldier and the cultivation of the *Ich-panzer* which will become a part of the male German psyche of the *kalte persona* during the Weimar time of the *Verhaltenslehre der Kälte*. Theweleit describes the development of this persona as follows: „Gegen den feigen Mann, den, der sein Inneres nach außen läßt (und der auch im soldatischen Mann steckt) hilft nur «standhalten» (Arschbacken zusammen kneifen), Nationales Denken. Im Zentrum dieser Abwehr steht das Verbot jeder Vermischung (des Mannes mit der Frau, des eigenen Inneren mit dem Äußeren)“ (Theweleit 1987a: 419). And then he describes this social attitude's origin:

Das unglaubliche Ansehen, das dem Soldatenberuf, der Armee und in einer perversen Weise dem Offizier entgegengebracht wurde, entstand nicht spontan: der Sieg von 1870/71 wurde systematisch den Körpern deutscher Knaben eingebleut: Deutschland gibt es, weil es diesen Sieg, diese Armee, diese Soldaten gab – wer nicht sein wird wie sie, wird kein deutscher Mann genannt werden können. Die folgenden Generationen wurden zu Denkmälern eben dieses Sieges abgerichtet, dann aber, als das Deutsche Reich immer deutlicher seinen Charakter einer Militärdiktatur hervorkehrt, die sich anschickt, mit den anderen imperialistischen

Weltmächten in den Krieg um die Weltmärkte und Kolonialgebiete einzutreten, wird die Erzeugung dieser Art von Jungmann auch zur praktischen Notwendigkeit. (Theweleit 1987a: 443-444)

How this was psychologically accomplished, and its psychological effects, Theweleit explains:

[...] durch die Eindämmung und Negativisierung ihrer Körperflüsse, durch den Zugriff strenger, harter Hände, die die Lustempfindungen aus der Haut vertrieben, durch schmerzhaft eingriffe körperlicher Strafen aber möglicherweise auch durch gelegentliche oder andauernde «verschlingende» Emotionalität mütterlicherseits, die das Kind mit unverarbeitbaren intensiven Reizen «überschwemmt», vor denen es ebenso nach «innen» flüchten kann wie vor dem Schmerz.

Diese «erste» Sozialisation ließ das Kind ohne ein sicheres Gefühl äußerer Grenzen, ohne die psychische Instanz des «Ich» im Freudschen Sinne.

[...] die «zweite» Sozialisation, der Drill im weitesten Sinne, [schafft] das Gefühl von Grenzen [...] (Theweleit 1987b: 212)

With someone like Lettow-Vorbeck held up as a romance hero model to German youth – someone representing the German militaristic socialization that Theweleit describes – one can foresee how the Nazis, particularly through the S.A., will provide that renewed militaristic drill in the vacuum of collapsed Wilhelminianism, while their mission is popularized through their salvational romance identification. To identify themselves – and, by extension, the Germany that they mold with the psychological borders that they enforce – as a romance protagonist, they will require a clearly defined romance antagonist. This was supplied by the Peace Conference following the Armistice.

The von Lettow-Vorbeck/Deutsch-Ostafrika narrative, ultimately a victory-in-tragedy narrative, was a signal expression of the culture of defeat of Weimar Germany. The stripping of Germany's colonies with the argument that Germany was not fit for the European civilizing mission – that Germany was barbarian – and the highlighting of the Africa as the land of primal freedom motif led to an identification with the colonized peoples in a Germany that itself felt colonized by the terms of the Treaty of Versailles. Schivelbusch explains this paradoxical process:



Hatte Deutschland im Weltkrieg nicht auch *ihre* Sache verfochten, indem es die westlichen Kolonialherren durch den Kampf in Europa so schwächte, daß Befreiungsbewegungen wie die Gandhis überhaupt erst möglich wurden? Hatte es den Weltkrieg nicht eigentlich stellvertretend, messianisch fast, für die Unterdrückten dieser Erde geführt? Und stand es, von der eigenen kolonialen Last befreit, nun nicht auch existentiell auf einer Stufe mit ihnen? Schließlich: War es nicht wie die um ihre Unabhängigkeit kämpfenden Kolonialvölker ein »junges« Volk, dem die alten Herrschaften des Westens seinen Platz an der Sonne vorzuenthalten suchten? (Schivelbusch 282)

Significantly, once in power, Hitler and the Nazis will deny those supporters who had hoped for a return of Germany's colonies by ignoring this demand. Nazi Germany's attempt to conquer and colonize eastern Europe will put a de facto end to this Weimar-era identification with colonized peoples.

Two events after World War II serve as a romance coda to both Germany's colonialism and von Lettow-Vorbeck's narrative, as they function as *anagnorisis* moments: in 1953, when von Lettow-Vorbeck returned to Dar Es Salaam, he was recognized on the pier by old Askaris who had served with him and was carried into town on their shoulders; and, in 1964, some of these same Askaris made the journey to Germany to be present at von Lettow-Vorbeck's funeral.

#### IV.4.3.2. Germany as Tragic Hero

Finally, another article of interest in the Armistice agreement, is the one entitled „Finanzielles“. It is here again that the innocence of Germany as *tragic* protagonist is stressed, while more fodder is supplied to fuel a general tragic perception in Weimar Germany. This same fodder will help establish the romance *mythos* framework that the Nazis will insist on, for it helps to create the romance antagonist necessary for the romance myth the Nazis will write. The Waffenstillstandskommission members note:

Protest der Delegation, dass endgültige Abmachungen schon jetzt zu treffen seien. Sei einverstanden mit Teilabmachungen. Es sei für Friedensverhandlungen keine Präjudiz geschaffen, sondern Deutschland vollkommen frei,

seine eigenen Kriegsschäden anzumelden. Schädigung deutscher Volkskraft durch die ungesetzliche Blockade. (Deutsche Waffenstillstands-Bevollmächtigte 49)

As the discussion of the Peace Conference below will point out, this is a case of Germany – the innocent tragic protagonist according to a phase 1 tragic narrative framework – being misled/tricked/deceived in order to secure the Armistice, as there was never any intent to consider German claims for war damages, and that, in fact, prejudice against such claims was pre-existent. That Germany could have imagined that the Entente would consider their claims can be taken as a sign of naïveté – which reinforces the character of the innocent phase 1 tragic protagonist. While such machinations will help to foster the sense of tragic betrayal much of the public of Weimar Germany will feel, they will also give ammunition to the Nazis to end the tragic mythic framing of Germany's narrative and replace it with their messianic romance narrative framework.

#### IV.4.4. *The Inside Story of the Peace Conference* (1920)

Dr. E.J. Dillon's book, *The Inside Story of the Peace Conference* is an important text in the cultural archive as it was published in February, 1920 in the United States for the popular market in the English-speaking countries. Dillon attempts to narratively frame the conference which produced the Treaty of Versailles, and which engraved the narrative of World War I as a romance narrative in which the heroic Entente defeated the romance villain, Germany. Dillon's narrative framing, however, often veers away from that of romance to one replete with irony.

Dillon gives a sense of the ironic, if not satiric, in his general view of the proceedings. He describes, for example, the atmosphere and circumstances of the Peace Conference as a whole:

Never was political veracity in Europe at a lower ebb than during the Peace Conference. The blinding dust of half-truths cunningly mixed with falsehood and deliberately scattered with a lavish hand, obscured the vision of the people, who were expected to adopt or acquiesce in the judgements of their rulers on the various questions that arose. Four and a half years of continuous and deliberate lying for victory had disembodied the spirit of veracity and good faith throughout the world of politics. Facts were treated as plastic and capable

of being shaped after this fashion or that, according to the aim of the speaker or writer. Promises were made, not because the things promised were seen to be necessary or desirable, but merely in order to dispose the public favourably toward a policy or an expedient, or to create and maintain a certain frame of mind toward the enemies or the Allies. At elections and in parliamentary discourses, undertakings were given, some of which were known to be impossible of fulfillment. Thus the ministers in some of the Allied countries bound themselves to compel the Germans not only to pay full compensation for damage wantonly done, but also to defray the entire cost of the war.

The notion that the enemy would thus make good all losses was manifestly preposterous. In a century the debt could not be wiped out, even though the Teutonic people could be got to work steadily and selflessly for the purpose. (Dillon 117-118)

And yet, despite Dillon's apprehension of the irony of the situation, he is still compelled to project the Entente romance narrative of the war, wherein the Entente powers are the romance protagonist and Germany the romance antagonist: "The crimes perpetrated by the Teutons were unquestionably heinous beyond words, and no punishment permitted by the human conscience is too drastic to atone for them" (Dillon 430). But, in an example of how the tension between a differentiated and ironic apprehension of the World War, the post-war situation, and an easy romance good guy/bad guy perspective, will persist – particularly in the U.S. – Dillon goes on to write:

How long this punishment should endure, whether it should be inflicted on the entire people as well as on their leaders, and what form should be given to it, were among the questions confronting the Secret Council, and they implicitly answer them in the way we have seen.

People who consider the answer adequate and justified give as their reason that it presupposes and attains a single object – the efficacious protection of France as the sentinel of civilization against an incorrigible arch-enemy. And in this they may be right. But if you enlarge the problem till it covers the moral fellowship of nations, and if you postulate that as a safeguard of future peace and neighborliness in the world,

then the outcome of the Treaty takes on a different coloring. Between France and Germany it creates a sea of bitterness which no rapturous exultation over the new ethical ordering can sweeten. The latter nation is assumed to be smitten with a fell moral disease, to which, however, the physicians of the Conference have applied no moral remedy, but only measures of coercion, mostly powerful irritants. The reformed state of Europe is consequently a state of latent war between two groups of nations, of which one is temporarily prostrate and both are naïvely exhorted to join hands and play a helpful part in an idyllic society of nations. (Dillon 430)

This quotation, additionally, reveals the central place of the barbarian discourse in the world that Jünger and Howard will come to live and work in. Germany being explicitly linked to barbarism is something that Jünger will object to publically, but a notion he will bring into play in *Auf den Marmorklippen* wherein the Oberförster's forces will incorporate this traditional negative view of the barbarian. Howard, as we will see, will dispute the identification of Germany with barbarism – for he will champion the barbarian's positive traits – and his sub-created Hyborian metaphor for Germany, Nemed, will display the trappings of the Roman Empire, that ancient representation of civilization that Howard hated.<sup>32</sup>

While the barbarian discourse helps frame the romance framework for the Entente nations, its implications – particularly the resulting attitude that no punishment was too drastic – reinforce firstly the tragic framework for Germany, and then the Nazi romance framework. Dillon explains how France's war-time exertions were based on “a dogma that the Teuton state was to provide all the cost of the war” (Dillon 435), something that did not permit for assurances that Germany could make its own claims for war damage. The Americans, who had come into the war late and had not been as permeated with the romance *mythos* propaganda that painted Germany as the incorrigible antagonist, did not support the demand that Germany pay the entire cost of the war. Dillon relates how, “In October, 1918, the French government, in doubt about the full significance of that one of Mr. Wilson's Fourteen Points which dealt with reparations, asked officially for explanations, and

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<sup>32</sup> “Sometimes I think Bran [*i.e.* Howard's Pictish barbarian hero Bran Mak Morn] is merely a symbol of my own antagonism against the [Roman] empire” (Howard in Breakiron 6).

received from Mr. Lansing the answer by telegraph that it involved the making good by the enemy of all losses inflicted directly and lawlessly upon civilians, but none other” (Dillon 435). The French Finance Minister – significantly, for what was to come later, a Jew – “Not only, however, did he not reveal what he knew, but he behaved as though his information was of a directly contrary tenor, and he also stated that Germany must also refund the war indemnities of 1870, capitalized down to November, 1918, and he set down the sum at fifty milliards of francs. [...] He drew up a bill against the Teutons for one thousand and eighty-six milliards of francs” (Dillon 435-436). Although the Americans attempted to stand by their position, the end result, from the German perspective, was the same: in terms of tragedy, the innocent protagonist was pulled down by wolves, and in terms of the romance that would replace the tragedy the romance villain had performed his evil deed, which would become the quest of the romance hero to undo and to punish:

But even with that limitation the sums claimed were huge. It was alleged by the Germans that some of the demands were for amounts that exceeded the total national wealth of the country filing the claim. And as no formula could be devised that would satisfy all the claimants, it was resolved in principle that, although Germany should be obliged to make good only certain classes of losses, the Conference would set no limits to the sums for which she would thus be liable. (Dillon 437)

The dual German mythic perspectives, of tragedy and of the romance that it was the nation’s intent to eventually reclaim, saw in such machinations the further assaults of the wolves taking down the proud, innocent stag and the pre-meditated evil deeds of a romance villain. These perspectives were reinforced by the planned French occupation of Saarland, particularly the clause which would allow France to annex Saarland if Germany could not pay a ransom for the coal mines there: “Fortunately for the Allies, the reproach of exchanging human beings for coal was seen by their leaders to be so damaging that they modified the odious clause that warranted it” (Dillon 460). Dillon quotes *Le Journal de Genève* which concluded,

In 1914 Germany put her faith in force because she herself wielded it. But crushed down under a peace which appears to violate the promises made to her, a peace which in her heart of hearts she will never accept, she will turn toward force

anew. It will stand out as the great misfortune of this Treaty that it has tainted the victory with a moral blight [...]. (in Dillon 460).

This far-sighted and prophetic quotation perceives the tragic mythic framework that the Treaty is creating for Germany, and for the world in that war to come.

This quotation also sets the parameters for the romance narrative that the Nazis will construct: Germany as romance protagonist struggling to overcome the ‘crushing’ obstacles in her quest for freedom; but this quotation is not the only prophetic aspect of Dillon’s book. Dillon also evokes a perception of the Treaty and its writers that will bolster the Nazi romance narrative, with horrific consequences. Dillon notes, “It may seem amazing to some readers, but it is none the less a fact that a considerable number of delegates believed that the real influences behind the Anglo-Saxon peoples were Semitic” (Dillon 496). He goes on to write, “However right or wrong these delegates may have been, it would be a dangerous mistake to ignore their views, seeing that they have since become one of the permanent elements of the situation. The formula into which this policy [*President Wilson’s proposal on the subject of religious equality*] was thrown by the members of the Conference, whose countries it affected, and who regarded it as fatal to the peace of eastern Europe, was this: ‘Henceforth the world will be governed by the Anglo-Saxon peoples, who, in turn, are swayed by their Jewish elements’” (Dillon 497). When one adds this perception of the Conference and the Treaty it produces with the following quotation that Dillon provides –

“The resettlement of central Europe,” writes an American journal, “is not being made for the tranquillity of the liberated principles, but for the purposes of the Great Powers, among whom France is the active, and America and Britain the passive, partners. In Germany its purpose is the permanent elimination of the German nation as a factor in European politics. ... We cannot save Europe by playing the sinister game now being played. There is no peace, no order, no security in it. ... What it can do is to aggravate the mischief and intensify the schisms.” (Dillon 510-511)

– the romance antagonist for the Nazi romance framework has been defined: not only the treacherous Great Powers, but, even more so, the Jews apparently directing them to ‘play the sinister game’ against Germany. Not only do all these perceptions help to explain the

emergence of the Nazi romance, but they also explain the ensuing American isolationism, and the French and British appeasement policy, as none of the Great Powers is able to, initially, confront the Nazi romance with their own romance. Their awareness of the moral taint put upon them by the Treaty and its 'sinister' machinations, makes them unable to play the part of the romance protagonist whose values represent those of the "audience" – in this case, world opinion. In essence, if one does adopt – as is clearly foreshadowed in the comments Dillon makes and reports – that World War I and World War II represent a second Thirty Years War, then the Allies undergo a *sparagmos* phase from 1919 to 1938, where the victory seems hollow. The Allies are only able to reclaim the role of romance protagonist when Hitler openly demonstrates that he/Germany is not a true romance protagonist with moral values, by invading Czechoslovakia against the guarantees he gave at the Munich Conference. (Despite propaganda attempts to maintain the romance position within Nazi Germany, this apprehension of having acted contrary to the ideals of the romance hero was, as Gisevius argues, also clear within Germany, for those willing to see.) From this point on, the *mythos* frameworks are re-established: Germany again takes on a tragic narrative and becomes a tragic hero, Hitler's action like Macbeth's killing of Duncan, while the Allies are able to throw off the irony and self-satire that they had decended into and reclaim the mantle of romance protagonist against Germany's romance antagonist. Dillon's final lines, in effect, foreshadow much of this narrative trajectory:

Every government is making its policy subservient to the needs of the future war which is universally looked upon as an unavoidable outcome of the Versailles peace. Imperialism and militarism are striking roots in soil where they were hitherto unknown. In a word, Prussianism, instead of being destroyed, has been openly adopted by its ostensible enemies, and the huge sacrifices offered up by the heroic armies of the foremost nations are being misused to give one half of the world just cause to rise up against the other half. (Dillon 512-513).

This is not, however, to say that there was no resistance to this kind of mythic patterning of the national and international narratives. Schivelbusch notes that at first a broad public consensus on the narrative meaning of World War I in Germany was to reject the conclusion that the war and its aftermath represented an heroic tragedy:

„Übereinstimmend wurde das völlige Fehlen tragisch-heroischer Größe festgestellt. Deutschland war weder Hektor noch Achilles“ (Schivelbusch 231); in fact, some intellectuals attempted to frame the war in ironic or satiric terms: „Keine Tragik im Untergang, sondern das banale Ergebnis einer Fehlrechnung sah Richard von Schaukal“ (Schivelbusch 232). And yet the culture of defeat process described by Schivelbusch, whereby defeated cultures look to adopt the tragic *mythos* for their national narrative – particularly the victory-in-tragedy phase – did occur.

In fact, Schivelbusch relates how the German military and the bureaucracy, as early as November of 1918, came up with the idea that „man könne den Zusammenbruch als heroischen Untergang inszenieren“ (Schivelbusch 240) and he also notes how Ludwig Reiners, in his history of the war published in the 1920s, referred to the war as „Tragödie“ (Schivelbusch 240). The attempt to find meaning in the war, to frame it as an understandable narrative, pervaded every aspect of Weimar German society, and Karl Prümm noted that, long before the Nazis used public resentment over Versailles as a stepping stone to power, the war had been raised to a social ideal (Prümm 1976: 140). The model that was used to form and shape the tragic narrative of the war was that of the *Nibelungenlied* and this was a process of several steps:

»Kein Feind hat euch überwunden. Erst als die Übermacht der Gegner an Menschen und Material immer drückender wurde, haben wir den Kampf aufgegeben.« Mit diesen Worten begrüßte Friedrich Ebert am 10. Dezember 1918 in Berlin von der Front zurückkehrende Truppen. (Schivelbusch 242).

Here no one less than the new head of the SPD government of Germany dismisses „der mit unmilitärischen Mitteln errungene Sieg“ – as per the dynamic Schivelbusch outlines – and thereby lays the foundation for the *Dolchstoßlegende*.

Als aktuelles politisches Schlagwort wurde der Dolchstoß ein Jahr nach dem Zusammenbruch von Hindenburg eingeführt. Im Herbst 1919, bei seiner Vernehmung vor dem Untersuchungsausschuß über die Ursachen des deutschen Zusammenbruchs, erwähnte er den angeblichen Ausspruch eines englischen Generals: »Die deutsche Armee ist von hinten erdolcht worden.« In seinen im darauffolgenden Jahr veröffentlichten Erinnerungen benutzte er hingegen ein anderes Bild. »Wie Siegfried unter dem hinterlistigen



Speerwurf des grimmen Hagen, so stürzte unsere ermattete Front; vergebens hatte sie versucht, aus dem versiegenden Quell der heimatlichen Kraft neues Leben zu trinken.« Der Wechsel der Metapher ist bedenkenswert. Nicht daß Hindenburg, dem niemand je besondere sprachliche Sensibilität nachsagte, eine bewußte Entscheidung getroffen hätte. Wohl aber war für ihn und seine Generation, die mit dem Nibelungenmythos – und vor allem seiner Wagnerianischen Version – aufgezogen worden war, die Niederstreckung Siegfrieds durch Hagen ein vertrauteres Bild für Verrat und Meuchelmord als der gezückte Dolch. [...] Der Hagensche Speerwurf ist also in Wirklichkeit Dolchstoß, und die Dolchstoßlegende eigentlich die Hagen-Siegfried-Legende. (Schivelbusch 248-249)

While there were attempts, including by the radical nationalist right, to reject this – „Für Edgar Jung, einen ihrer Wortführer, war es zum Zusammenbruch nicht durch Verrat, sondern durch die »Fahnenflucht der Massen« gekommen, und diese war berechtigt, weil das Wilhelminische System es gar nicht verdiente, bis zum letzten Blutstropfen verteidigt zu werden“ (Schivelbusch 251) – and to express criticism of Siegfried’s character (Schivelbusch 252), ultimately the attempt to frame World War I with the narrative pattern of tragedy succeeded, and it was explicitly a reaction to the Entente romance structure that underlay the Treaty of Versailles<sup>33</sup>:

Natürlich hatte die deutsche Märtyrer- und Unschuldpropaganda, ebenso wie die moralische Verdammung Deutschlands durch die Alliierten, ihren realpolitischen Kern darin, daß das gesamte Versailler Vertragswerk auf der Kriegschuld Klausel basierte. Wenn mit dem Artikel 231 alles stand oder fiel, drängte sich seine Widerlegung – oder propagandistische Vernichtung – als strategisches Ziel der deutschen Nachkriegspolitik geradezu auf. Doch klang in der Art, in der die eigene Unschuld am Krieg und die Ungerechtigkeit von Versailles herausgestrichen

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<sup>33</sup> The Treaty of Versailles was itself the continuation of, and the culmination of, WW I Allied propaganda, which Hitler and Goebbels claimed to have learned from, particularly the romance ferocity of the Allied propaganda – i.e. the relentless casting of Germany as a monstrous, satanic romance antagonist – against the satirical approach favoured by Wilhelmine German WW I propaganda (Dauerausstellung).

wurde, ein ähnlich auftrumpfender Ton mit wie in den außenpolitischen Bekundungen der Vorkriegszeit, mit dem Unterschied, daß damals von der Welt der Platz an der Sonne gefordert wurde, nun ihre reuige Einsicht in das Deutschland angetane Unrecht. (Schivelbusch 268)

Both the German martyr and innocence propaganda, and the moral condemnation of Germany by the Allies, had a *Realpolitik* core in that the entire framework of the Versailles Treaty was based on the war guilt clause. If everything stood or fell with article 231, the opposition to, or propagandistic destruction of, that article was the strategic goal of German post-war politics. The underlining of Germany's innocence in terms of starting the war, and the injustice of Versailles, created a tone similar to that of the pre-war propaganda wherein Germany demanded its place in the sun, but now it became a demand that the Allied nations show regret for the injustice done to Germany. Thus, in both the pre-war and post-war political discourse, it is a romance narrative that is striven for. The difference, in the post-war context, is the tragic dynamic of the culture of defeat.

With these insights to consider, and the ground thus prepared, we can look at Jünger's first major text, *In Stablgewittern* which appeared in the same year as Dillon's *The Inside Story of the Peace Conference*, i.e. 1920, as a text not only related to, but in a real sense a product of, this cultural archive.



## V. Marked by the Experience of the War and the War's Official Narrative Myth: Jünger's *In Stahlgewittern* (1920)

The first central text to be considered in this dissertation is Ernst Jünger's *In Stahlgewittern*. Originally published in 1920, it was generally perceived as a World War I autobiography. In this first major work of his writing career, Jünger did not avail himself of a *Phantastik* or *Neophantastik Schreibweise*. Its *Schreibweise* is, or purports to be, a form of realism, and this was precisely one of the factors in its success: readers, including Adolf Hitler, claimed that Jünger described the war as it was. This seemingly factual statement is, however, problematic: many of the readers were themselves *Frontsoldaten*, and almost none of them had achieved Jünger's battlefield success – when measured in medals<sup>34</sup>. In other words, Jünger's ostensible portrayal of his own career as a soldier flattered those whose careers were not as illustrious. The book's very insistence on its realism helps to begin the process whereby the experience of the war steadily becomes idealized in Germany as the years go by. Both the second layer of form (i.e. *Schreibweise*) – realism – and the third layer of form (i.e. genre) – World War I autobiography – are significant for an analysis of the book. Both of these latter layers, however, reveal their full political unconscious meaning only once the first layer of form (i.e. *mythos*) is established. Hans-Harald Müller suggests the interrelated problematic of these layers of form when he discusses the difficulty of ascribing a genre to the book:

Das Buch enthält nicht nur den Versuch einer genauen Beschreibung ausgewählter Kriegserlebnisse, sondern zugleich die Bemühung, diese Erlebnisse in jenen heroischen Lebensplan zu integrieren, der Jünger 1914 bewogen hatte, sich freiwillig zum Kriegsdienst zu melden. Diese beiden Intentionen führten dazu, daß das Buch weder der Gattung der apologetischen „Offiziersmemoiren“ zuzurechnen ist noch der Gattung der Kriegstagebücher im engeren Sinn, die dem Prinzip der täglichen Aufzeichnung verpflichtet waren. Dem objektiven militärhistorischen Kriegsverlauf setzte

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<sup>34</sup> The Iron Cross (Jünger 2001: 316), the Goldenes Verwundeten Abzeichen (Jünger 2001: 323), and the *Pour le mérite* (Jünger 2001: 324).

Jünger die individuelle Historie seiner glanzvollen Frontkarriere entgegen: das Buch endet nicht zufällig mit der Verleihung des höchsten Kriegsordens an den Verfasser. (Müller 19-20)

Müller notes that the identification of the specific (sub-)genre of World War I autobiography is made difficult by Jünger's mythic narrative intention toward romance, which indicates that the meaning of the third layer of form is contingent on establishing the first layer of form. Müller is also correct in highlighting the end of the text with a scene that should have been – according to Jünger's „heroischen Lebensplan“ – a romance *anagnorisis* scene. As we shall see, the mythic intention of this scene is deflected by the realism *Schreibweise* which must take the actual historical irony into account.

The establishment of the narrative *mythos* of *In Stablgewittern* must, of necessity, assess the book's relationship to the barbarian discourse of the time, the culture of defeat that has a decisive effect on the book's ultimate mythic patterning, and the *kalte persona* and *Verhaltenslehre der Kälte* that the book helps to anchor in the post-war society of Weimar Germany. Aspects of the text will reveal its patterning according to the *mythos* of comedy; the militaristic Wilhelmine upbringing will replace the comic desire for sex with Eros-as-destroyer; and the new society and Saturnalia that centre on the comic protagonist arise in the text as a Wotanic Saturnalia. This Saturnalia of endless fighting accounts for the episodic nature of the text that Müller notes. This episodic process in the book does not culminate in the successful resolution of a romance quest, but in a truer expression of the comic Saturnalia – in this case a Saturnalia of war: „Innerhalb der einem chronologischen Gerüst folgenden Reihung von Episoden ist in den *Stablgewittern* nur ein wichtiges Element der Steigerung erkennbar: das Buch ist auf die Überwindung der Monotonie des Grabenalltags und des dumpfen Ausharrens in den Materialschlachten des Stellungskriegs angelegt, es kulminiert in der Herausbildung von Stoßtrupps und beschreibt als Höhepunkt der offenen Feldschlachten des Jahres 1918 die Tätigkeit ‚anarchisch-naturhafter‘ Kampfgruppen im Kampf Mann gegen Mann“ (Müller 20). This attempt by Jünger at constructing a romance *agon* fails because the final scene does not represent the *anagnorisis* of a successful quest, but rather identifies him as a representative of the Golden Age that his generation was attempting to re-establish, and thus as a political prophet for the (deferred) new society that the comedy *mythos* promises.

## V.1. Impulses to Romance

Jünger, like many of his generation, had been raised in the dream of a warrior romance. The German Empire under Wilhelm II strove for its place in the sun with a romance sense of mission, propelled by its Prussian military tradition with its martial and intellectual romance hero, Frederick the Great. Although Jünger, like Nietzsche, had sensed the vital romance being weighed down by the bourgeois pretensions of Wilhelmine Germany, and had attempted to escape it, the coming of the war seemed to re-new the promise of martial romance heroism. Significantly, the book that Jünger, the autobiographical narrator, reads in shell craters in breaks in the fighting in the early part of *In Stahlgewittern* is one of the most famous romances of all, Ludovico Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*. Jünger biographer Lutz Hagedstedt writes, „Seinen Heroismus führt Jünger im konkreten Fall auf Ariost zurück, dessen „Rasender Roland“ zu den wichtigsten Lektüren seiner Leserbiographie zählt, schon im großen Krieg: „Es waren seine Worte, seine Reime, die ich in den Kampfpausen las und die mich motivierten.“ Große Ereignisse, so Jünger, seien immer literarisch und böten jedem, der sich bedienen wolle, Stoff“ (Hagedstedt 2002: 2). In terms of the text itself, this is substantiated when the Jünger narrator states: „Mehrere Male murmelte ich ein Wort Ariosts: »Ein großes Herz fühlt vor dem Tod kein Grauen, wann er auch kommt, wenn er nur rühmlich ist.« Das rief eine angenehme Art von Trunkenheit hervor, wie man sie ungefähr in der Hexenschaukel erlebt“ (Jünger 2001: 193). Jünger himself here indicates how intoxicated he was with the ethos of romance, which demonstrates that the inspiration, for the notes that Jünger the soldier was writing, was romance and that they were intended for the later narrator of *In Stahlgewittern* to pattern as a romance.

Significant in the writing of romance is the creation of the romance hero as protagonist. Helmut Lethen writes of the book's „Figur“ of the „Stoßtruppführers“ as an acknowledgement that Jünger had fashioned this character, his Stoßtruppführer-Jünger-as-narrator, and implies that this is, in fact, a feature of the genre of autobiography. *In Stahlgewittern* is presented as an ostensibly realistic and factual World War I autobiography by Jünger, yet critics have pointed out that one must not lose sight of the fact that it is a crafted narrative. This is significant in that, although one might be tempted to conclude that Jünger re-creates

himself as narrator, one must realize that the author-function Foucault speaks of is at work here: the Jünger narrator is as much an expression of the social discourses that find their nexus in this text as an expression of the individual Jünger. The drive to create a romance hero was a social phenomenon, and it was this pan-European phenomenon that found expression at the height of Europe's dominance of the world.

All of Europe, with almost the entire globe either colonized by European nations or the political inheritors of European colonies (like North and South America and Oceania), believed in its romance mission to bring civilization to a benighted world. The eruption of the intra-European conflict in 1914 was marked by attempts to claim the true mantle of civilization and to cast the other side as barbarians. The slaughter and brutality of the war even in its early stages intensified the barbarian discourse, as Lethen's discussion of Freud's 1915 text *Zeitgemäßes über Krieg und Tod* reveals. Freud argued, in the midst of the war, how – overnight – the social norms of the cultured states no longer applied. Lethen explains, „Diese Beobachtung hatte die Erkenntnis erleichtert, daß das Gewissen sein Entstehen äußerem Zwang und sozialer Angst verdankt, daß die Sittlichkeit, die es bewachen sollte, bei veränderter sozialer Konstellation »wie ein Gewand« abgeworfen werden kann und daß die Neigung zur Grausamkeit zu den elementaren Regungen des Trieblebens gehört: »Der Krieg läßt den Urmenschen in uns wieder zum Vorschein kommen«“ (Lethen 29). Freud's observations reveal themselves to be cast according to the traditional perspective on the barbarian discourse, namely by assigning negative characteristics to the *Urmensch*/barbarian.

While Freud had rightly – from the perspective on the barbarian discourse that equates the barbarian with gruesome violence and immoral acts – diagnosed that ALL the fighting nations of World War I had required their soldiers to become this kind of negative barbarian, the propaganda efforts of both sides focussed on denying such a claim and throwing it back re-doubled at the opponent. The Allies made insistent and consistent use of romance-patterned propaganda, which made of Germany the monstrous and barbaric romance villain and of themselves the shining white knight of romance heroism; German propaganda also availed itself of this kind of romance imagery, but less so: in fact, Hitler and the Nazis will later condemn the German Imperial authorities for not making consistent enough use of the romance paradigm, and one can see, as noted above, in the permanent exhibition on World War I in the

Deutsches Historisches Museum in Berlin, German World War I propaganda making use of satiric, ironic and, towards the end, tragic mythic patterning and imagery. This battle to claim for one's side the romance as the narrative of the World War was won by the Allies in the Treaty of Versailles.

The idea that the Treaty of Versailles' romance-inspired *Schuldthese* would institute a *Schuldkultur* in Germany – i.e. that each German would acknowledge his or her guilt as being the romance villain in the narrative of the war – that was characterized by „Aufmerksamkeit für die innere Stimme, die interne Kontrollinstanz“ (Lethen 32), was rejected by a majority of Germans, not least because of the 'sinister game' and 'moral taint' of the Great Powers at the Treaty Conference. Instead, in a formulation itself partly derived from the barbarian discourse – particularly in terms of anthropology and sociology – Germany's *Schamkultur*, characterized by „Aufmerksamkeit für die äußere Stimme, die externe Kontrollinstanz“ (Lethen 32), and already inculcated by Wilhelmine society (as Theweleit argues), becomes reinforced.

The *Schamkultur* is thus a reaction against the romance imperative of the Treaty of Versailles that Germans acknowledge themselves as villains. Since the romance *mythos* is thus unavailable for Germans as the mythic national narrative of the war, other mythic attempts to frame the experience are suggested, as we noted above. Though there were, as Schivelbusch noted, attempts to frame Germany's wartime experience and post-war reality in ironic or satiric terms, for many, irony was untenable, and, as Schivelbusch argues, the tendency was to gravitate toward tragedy. Jünger – although he will show his fascination for irony and satire as his I-narrator moves from his war-time reading of Ariosto's romance to *Tristram Shandy*, and through his citations of *Don Quixote* and *Simplicissimus* – cannot allow his own experience of the war to be seen as ironic or satiric. As a German front-soldier returning to a *Schamkultur* characterized by „Soziale Angst“ (Lethen 33), the question of fitting back into society and of having one's efforts and sacrifices in the war validated is paramount. Any opening for irony or satire – any mockery – could lead to becoming a social outcast, „denn die »Furcht und das Grauen vor der Lächerlichkeit« sind im tiefen Grunde »die Furcht vor Verlassenwerden«“ (Lethen 87). The *Schamkultur* threat of irony and satire, and the practical impossibility of romance and the romance-inspired unwillingness to admit to tragedy, leaves only the *mythos* of comedy available to Jünger as the mythic pattern for *In*



## V.2. The Text as Comedy

This search by Jünger for a mythic narrative structure for his World War I autobiography is not necessarily as conscious as the above logic suggests. True to his romance inclinations, he *tries* to order *In Stahlgewittern* as a romance. He provides his narrator, the romance hero, with the requisite *agon* through all the battlefield conflicts. Jünger attempts to generate a *pathos* – an ultimate death struggle – with the highpoint of the fighting of March of 1918 in the chapter „Die Große Schlacht“. Jünger also attempts to create an *anagnorisis* with the awarding of the *Pour le mérite* to the Jünger-narrator character. These attempts, however, don't fulfill the romance criteria. The *pathos* stage, for example, is not as decisive as the romance structure requires, and the ironic reality of the war forces Jünger to add two more chapters of fighting. The *agon* section of the text – all the fighting from the time of Jünger's entry into the army to March 1918 – does not succeed in generating the rising momentum to the *pathos* scene that a romance requires. One could possibly argue that the two chapters of fighting after March 1918 represent the *sparagmos* stage, but even this attempt at claiming a romance structure is belied by the historical facts that the selected realism *Schreibweise* cannot help but implicitly point to. In fact, the attempted *anagnorisis* scene, in the light of the historical reality of November of 1918 that the realism *Schreibweise* points to, suggests the comedy *mythos*, as that scene can be read as comedy's *cognitio* where a new society is formed around, and founded by, the comic protagonist. *In Stahlgewittern's* cultural, political, and historical significance rests on the fact that the readers that it appealed to – including Adolf Hitler – saw themselves in the *Stoßtruppführer* Jünger character and built a social and political movement around such an idealized *Frontsoldat* Gestalt.

In fact, the interminable and apparently patternless fighting that *In Stahlgewittern* presents can be read as the comic Saturnalia and golden age that Frye discusses. The romance adventure of war is what Jünger's generation was raised to want, and the outbreak of the war – however much it seemed at first as a series of obstacles to the romance quest for victory – was, in fact, the martial Saturnalia that Jünger and many of his generation yearned for. There were many of Jünger's generation who were not enough like himself in this regard: they volunteered for the war

but lost heart during it and turned their backs on this martial Saturnalia and golden age by yearning to go home or by yearning for peace at any price. Jünger noted pointedly – apparently because the appeal of the comic society that formed around the *Frontsoldat* Gestalt continued to grow after the war – that these men claimed to have re-discovered later that just being in the war was indeed what they had really yearned for.

Admittedly, the very idea that Jünger's book about his World War I experiences might be some sort of comedy seems absurd on the surface. And yet, there are other elements in the text that do open the door to an analysis from this perspective. One of these elements is suggested by a statement by Heiner Müller that Lethen cites: „Jüngers Problem ist ein Jahrhundertproblem: Bevor Frauen für ihn eine Erfahrung sein konnten, war es der Krieg“ (Lethen 198). Another element is suggested by Jünger's biography, namely that Jünger, before World War I, volunteered for the French Foreign Legion as a 16 year-old, and that his father intervened and had him returned home. Additionally, the First World War is regarded by commentators like Scheler as a youth movement and revolt against the generation of their fathers (Lethen 143). Here we have two further elements of the comedy *mythos*: the centrality of the hero's desire and the hero's generational struggle to supplant the society of the fathers.

Jünger significantly presents both his formulation of his “hero's desire” and his hero's revolt against the generation of the fathers on the first page of the book: „Wir hatten Hörsäle, Schulbänke und Werkische verlassen und waren in den kurzen Ausbildungswochen zu einem großen, begeisterten Körper zusammengeschmolzen. Aufgewachsen in einem Zeitalter der Sicherheit, fühlten wir alle die Sehnsucht nach dem Ungewöhnlichen, nach der großen Gefahr“ (Jünger 2001: 7). One can see in the lecture halls, school benches and work tables the world, and the will, of the fathers against which German youth rebelled. Here the desire or longing for danger replaces the erotic desire that is usually the young comic hero's primary motivation; as Müller's statement suggests, for a significant portion of the German male generation, the war interfered with their normal psychological development and a replacement of the object of their desire occurred.<sup>35</sup> Theweleit underlines this point in his book, *Männerphantasien*, by presenting a contemporary postcard, „Amor auf dem Exerzierplatz“ (Theweleit 1987a: 441). This

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<sup>35</sup> Theweleit argues that this is a multi-generational German male problem.

socially-inculcated supplanting of sexual desire by a desire for violence is the result, Theweleit argues, of a deep implantation of sexual *Schuldgefühle* (i.e. feeling guilty about being sexual) in the German child of Wilhelmine Imperial Germany: „Das Kind beginnt, eine Schuld zu fühlen, wo es sonst Lust gefühlt hat; es beginnt nicht etwa, eine Schuld zu denken oder zu wissen“ (Theweleit 1987a: 429). Feelings of pleasure or lust are programmed to create a feeling of guilt in the child; since this guilt has initially come from the outside, it reinforces the *Schamkultur* because the child becomes concerned about what others think about their sexual *Schuldgefühle*.

It was not only the desire for danger and violence that drew Jünger to the Foreign Legion, but Africa itself – and its promise of a primal freedom that could possibly restore the emotional and sensual balance that was disrupted by the strict and martial Wilhelmine upbringing. Again, this last hope for a restored internal balance was not necessarily conscious, but images of Africa and Africans often highlighted sensual aspects. We saw this, for example, in the issues that provoked the most alarmed response in the authorities of Deutsch-Südwestafrika: that of native girls being ‘assigned’ to white farmers and the concern with race-mixing. We saw this in the central question in the court proceedings on the Irangi Expedition in Deutsch-Ostafrika, the shooting of slave women, and we shall see similar sensual concerns in Howard’s tales of Africa. Jünger’s attempt to flee Wilhelmine Germany, and its body-oppression upbringing ostensibly rooted in a concern with ‘cleanliness’, ended ironically, as it was his father, an adult representative of the *Sauberkeitserziehung* (i.e. cleanliness upbringing), who re-established his paternal authority over the young Jünger and had the French Foreign Legion return Jünger home, effectively denying Jünger’s sexual maturity and personal freedom. When Jünger next received an opportunity to escape the authority of the father generation – the beginning of World War I – Jünger seized it, pursuing a desire for war that his society approved of, in the process further sublimating his sexual drives to the point that Heiner Müller could comment as he did.

The desire to leave the lecture halls and overturn the school benches and work tables was subversive in itself, although – as Erich Maria Remarque’s *Im Westen nichts Neues* attests with the figure of the teacher who encourages his charges to enlist – many of those in the generation of the fathers saw the war as a necessity in order to *defend* their system, including the lecture halls, school benches and work tables; of

course, Jünger's passage does not envisage the war as a defence of what they have left behind, but rather sees the war as an end to accomplishing the leaving-behind of the sterile and secure world.

There is, however, the brief presence an actual female object of desire in the book and Jünger explicitly labels the sequence involving her as comic:

Es wäre nicht nett von mir, wenn ich in diesem Buche, das soviel Blutiges bringt, ein Abenteuer verschwiegen wollte, in dem ich eine etwas komische Rolle spielte. Damals im Winter, als unser Bataillon beim König von Quéant zu Gaste gewesen war, hatte ich zum ersten Mal als junger Offizier die Wache zu revidieren gehabt. Am Ortsausgange hatte ich mich verirrt und war, um nach dem Wege zu einer kleinen Bahnhofswache zu fragen, in ein winziges alleinstehendes Häuschen getreten. Ich fand als einzigen Bewohner ein siebzehnjähriges Mädchen namens Jeanne vor, dessen Vater kurz vorher gestorben war und das nun allein dort wirtschaftete. Als es mir Auskunft gab, lachte es und meinte, als ich nach dem Grunde fragte: »Vous êtes bien jeune, je voudrais avoir votre devenir.« -- Wegen des kriegerischen Geistes, der aus diesen Worten sprach, hatte ich ihm damals den Namen Jeanne d'Arc gegeben und hatte in der folgenden Zeit des Grabenkampfes manchmal an das einsame Häuschen zurückgedacht.

An einem Abend in Croisilles spürte ich plötzlich den Wunsch, einmal hinüberzureiten. Ich ließ satteln und hatte bald das Städtchen im Rücken. Es war ein Maiabend, wie geschaffen für einen solchen Ritt. Der Klee lag in schweren dunkelroten Polstern auf den von Weißdornhecken gesäumten Wiesen, und vor den Dorfeingängen brannten die Riesenkandelaber blühender Kastanienbäume in der Dämmerung. Ich ritt durch Bullecourt und Ecoust, ohne zu ahnen, daß ich zwei Jahre später inmitten einer gänzlich veränderten Landschaft gegen die schauerlichen Trümmer dieser Dörfer, die jetzt so friedlich zwischen Weihern und Hügeln im Abend lagen, zum Sturm vorgehen sollte. An der kleinen Station, die ich damals revidiert hatte, luden Zivilisten noch Gasflaschen aus. Ich begrüßte sie und sah ihnen zu. Dann tauchte bald das Häuschen mit seinem braunroten und

von runden Moosflecken gesprenkelten Dache vor mir auf. Ich klopfte an die Läden, die schon geschlossen waren.

»Qui est là?«

»Bon soir, Jeanne d'Arck«

»Ah, bon soir, mon petit officier Gibraltar!«

Ich wurde so freundlich aufgenommen, wie ich gehofft hatte. Nachdem ich mein Pferd angebunden hatte, trat ich ein und mußte am Abendessen teilnehmen: Eier, Weißbrot und Butter, die appetitlich auf einem Kohlblatt lag. Unter solchen Umständen läßt man sich nicht lange einladen, sondern greift zu.

Soweit wäre alles sehr schön gewesen, wenn nicht nachher, als ich wieder ins Freie trat, eine Taschenlampe vor mir aufgeblitzt wäre und ein Feldgendarm mich nach meinen Personalien gefragt hätte. Mein Gespräch mit den Zivilisten, die Aufmerksamkeit, mit der ich die Gasflaschen betrachtet hatte, meine unbekannte Erscheinung in dieser schwach belegten Gegend, das alles hatte den Verdacht der Spionage erweckt. Natürlich hatte ich mein Soldbuch vergessen und mußte mich vor den König von Quéant führen lassen, der wie gewöhnlich noch am runden Tische saß.

Dort hatte man für solche Abenteuer Sinn. Ich wurde legitimiert und freundlich in die Gesellschaft aufgenommen. (Jünger 2001: 76-77)

Interestingly, Jünger follows Frye's seasonal metaphor, in that the comic scene – of the young man desiring the young woman – occurs in the spring. Although Jünger is silent about what occurred between the meal and the discovery by flashlight later that night, we may suspect its sexual outcome – particularly as the company around the local highest-ranking German officer (dubbed the *König von Quéant*<sup>36</sup>) accepted young Jünger into their company upon hearing of his adventure: in other words, the comic hero in this case achieves his desire, and a new society forms around the comic hero. This new society is the gathering around the medievalistic figure of the König von Quéant, who welcomes the comic hero Jünger into a company suggesting a group of knights. The romance

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<sup>36</sup> It is also interesting to note that the König von Quéant gains his authority over his knightly company in large degree because of his storytelling about his colonial days, i.e. this distant promise/experience of freedom gives him an aspect of grandeur befitting his title.

*mythos* has its most popular expression in the medieval romances of questing knights, and Jünger makes a gesture in this direction when he flash-forwards, in the passage, to his leading of his troops to retake the ruins of Jeanne d'Arc's town, suggesting the classic romance trope of rescuing the damsel in distress. Interestingly, in the scene most clearly identified as the comedy *mythos*, Jünger is also able to bring forth, in a limited fashion, his determination to pattern events according to the romance *mythos*. Nevertheless, the above episode with Jeanne was, as Jünger announces at the outset of the anecdote, unique in the text, and for the rest of the book the comic hero's desire is for danger and war.

Initially, the secure world of the fathers stood in his way. He rebels, goes to war, seeks out danger but, with incredible luck, is delivered from the greatest danger – death – again and again. The comic “plot twist”, although it is no great changing of the trajectory of the narrative, comes at the end when Jünger is – apparently – mortally wounded. This touch of death stemming from danger and war replaces the sexual culmination: in other words, “the hero has his will”. Not only is the central comic feature of desire present, the subversive nature of the movement from one society to another is also present in the text.

Frye insists that the comic movement from one society to another is a key feature in understanding comedy's social and political role. The “obstructing characters” – in this case the entire father-generation – are in power at the beginning of the text, and will be seen by Jünger's readers (many of them young men who had experienced the war and/or the Freikorps) as usurpers of the position that the young men themselves should have held at the beginning of the war in order to win it, or – at the very least, after the crumbling away of the Wilhelmine world – should now hold after the war. Jünger himself best expressed this attitude a decade later in *Der Arbeiter* when he wrote, „die Führung [war] viel zu gesättigt, viel zu überzeugt von den Werten einer Welt, die einmütig in Deutschland ihren gefährlichsten Widersacher erkannte; und so entsprach es der Gerechtigkeit, daß diese Führung besiegt und ausgestrichen wurde“ (Jünger 1982: 39). The comic plot device – Jünger's final, and apparently mortal wounding – leads to Jünger receiving the *Pour le mérite*, which is a legitimation of Jünger as the comic hero. This shows that there has indeed been a social shift, from a society whose elite are usurpers and under whose illegitimacy the comic hero must struggle to achieve his desire, to a society in which the comic hero now occupies, as far as the comic hero's generation is concerned, the

highest position: the achiever of the highest desire, the one recognized as the greatest warrior who dared the greatest danger. This moment in the text is one that can be perceived as “the comic discovery, *anagnorisis* or *cognitio*,” particularly as the *cognitio* of the awarding of the *Pour le mérite* is intimately linked with, and occurs immediately after, a passage that can only be described as slap-stick comedy when the convalescing Jünger, and his comrade Wenzel, attempt „einen gewaltigen Sessel zu eskaladieren“ (Jünger 2001: 324), whereby Wenzel re-breaks his arm and Jünger ends up in bed with a 40 degree fever.

In the comedy *mythos*, the new social order arising out of the *cognitio* should be legitimated by a celebration, often a marriage. And yet this important aspect of the comedy *mythos* is problematic in the case of *In Stablgewittern* for the book is intimately interwoven with history – not only because of its realism *Schreibweise* and autobiographical genre, but because it forms part of the post-war discourse dominated by the first phase of a *Kultur der Niederlage* that Germany of 1918 had in common with the 1865 South: „Den jahrelangen Abnutzungskriegen, die im amerikanischen Süden und in Deutschland die Heimat ebenso erschöpften wie die Front, folgte deshalb keine »levée en masse«, sondern einfach der Zusammenbruch“ (Schivelbusch 21); Frye writes that the founding celebration of the new society is assumed to take place immediately after the *cognitio* (Frye 163): because Jünger abruptly terminates the book right after the telegram announcing that he has been awarded the *Pour le mérite*, a reader cognizant of the comedy *mythos* can assume that a celebration *should* follow. Yet, in these last two paragraphs of the book –

An einem dieser Tage, es war der 22. September 1918, erheilt ich vom General von Busse folgendes Telegramm:

»Seine Majestät der Kaiser hat Ihnen den Orden Pour le mérite verliehen. Ich beglückwünsche Sie im Namen der ganzen Division.« (Jünger 2001: 324)

– the date cited carries, for a contemporary German reader of Jünger’s work, a bell-tolling resonance and a fateful narrative trajectory in itself, for the reader knows all too well how the war ended. Less than two months later came the collapse and the armistice. There was then, in this truncated comic narrative so interwoven with history, no celebration: no celebration for the German *Frontsoldaten*, no celebration for Jünger as comic hero, not even an heroic ‘levée en masse’; his medal did not allow him to found a new society. At least not in the course of the *In*

*Stahlgewittern* narrative: his abrupt conclusion – although not contradicting the historical facts that his second and third layers of form must respect – leaves open, and possible, the fact that the comedy *mythos* demands a concluding celebration, and that the national renewal that a culture of defeat strives for demands a “levée en masse”. This function of the text helps to explain its attraction to its audience, and helps to explain how Jünger used his position as war hero to amass social and political capital in Weimar Germany to the point where he could get away with forbidding the *Völkische Beobachter* to re-print his texts, with refusing a position in the Nazi Deutsche Akademie der Dichtung (Wulf 35), with writing *Auf den Marmorlippen*, and finally, to escape the backlash after von Stauffenberg’s assassination attempt in July of 1944 with his life.

Frye writes: “Thus the movement from *pistis*<sup>37</sup> to *gnosis*<sup>38</sup>, from a society controlled by habit, ritual bondage, arbitrary law and the older characters to a society controlled by youth and pragmatic freedom is fundamentally, as the Greek words suggest, a movement from illusion to reality” (Frye 169). But this cannot occur in the text of *In Stahlgewittern* because the end of the war brought the Treaty of Versailles that re-established, instead, a *Schamkultur* society, one again dictated by old men who reaffirm “habit, ritual bondage, arbitrary law” instead of the desired new society: the rule of the youth. Jünger would later describe the renewal of the Wilhelmine usurping society in Weimar Germany in *Der Arbeiter* as follows – „die Kapitulation vor Europa, die Kapitulation vor der Welt einerseits durch eine bürgerliche Oberschicht alten Stiles, andererseits durch die ebenso bürgerlichen Sprecher einer sogenannten Revolution, also im Grunde durch die Verteter ein und desselben Menschenschlages, [vollzog] sich“ (Jünger 1982: 39). Significant, as we have seen, is how the movement from the bondage of the old to the freedom of the young is a central concept in *In Stahlgewittern*: “The total *mythos* of comedy, only a small part of which is ordinarily presented, has regularly what in music is called a ternary form: the hero’s society rebels against the society of the *senex* and triumphs, but the hero’s society is a Saturnalia, a reversal of social standards which recalls a golden age in the past before the main action of the play begins. Thus we have a stable and harmonious order disrupted by folly, obsession, forgetfulness, ‘pride and prejudice,’ or events not understood by the characters themselves, and then restored” (Frye 171). The interesting thing in terms of *In*

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<sup>37</sup> Meinung.

<sup>38</sup> Beweis.



*Stahlgewittern*'s comic structure is that, in this light, one can see how Jünger's society of young soldiers can be seen to have rebelled against the society of the fathers and that this rebellious society moves, throughout the text of *In Stahlgewittern*, triumphantly from (desired) danger to danger. The comic triumph, in other words, occurs early in the text and throughout the text, for this unending, euphoric and addictive danger represents a Saturnalia for a generation for whom women were replaced by war. Jünger explicitly describes the expectation of the Dionysian ecstasy of the war-Saturnalia as the young volunteers leave for war in 1914:

Da hatte uns der Krieg gepackt wie ein Rausch. In einem Regen von Blumen waren wir hinausgezogen, in einer trunkenen Stimmung von Rosen und Blut. Der Krieg mußte es uns ja bringen, das Große, Starke, Feierliche. Er schien uns männliche Tat, ein fröhliches Schützengefecht auf blumigen, blutbetauten Wiesen. »Kein schöner Tod ist auf der Welt...« Ach, nur nicht zu Haus bleiben, nur mitmachen dürfen!« (Jünger 2001: 7)

This expectation of ecstasy is fulfilled again and again in the text, particularly in the LSD-like experiences Jünger has during the great battle around Ecoust-Saint-Mein and Noreuil (Jünger 2001: 263), and at the end where Jünger is apparently mortally wounded: „Die große Blutverlust gab mir die Freiheit und Leichtigkeit eines Rausches“ (Jünger 2001: 321).

The comic Saturnalia in *In Stahlgewittern* connects to both the barbarian discourse of the day and later historical developments in Germany. The Saturnalia of Dionysian war has a connection to Germany's Germanic tribal – i.e. barbarian – past. Similar utterances in the barbarian discourse of Germany had been occurring before the war, as far back at least as Jakob Grimm's *Deutsche Mythologie* or Genzmer's translation of the *Edda*. This positive look back at Germany's pagan barbarian past – so long suppressed and demonized by Christianity and the Roman Catholic Church – intensified after the First World War. Evidence of this were magazines like *Germanien* – which was dedicated to a positive valuing of Germany's barbarian past – and, in fact, in a telling example, the double *sig* rune of the SS. To understand World War I as a Dionysian Saturnalia, and then to connect this concept to Germany's Germanic tribal past, one needs to understand that the Greek myths of Dionysus, which formed part of the basic layer of cultural discourse throughout Europe and the Americas, have a Germanic counterpart in

the myths associated with the chief Germanic god, Wotan. Most significantly is to understand that Wotan was not simply a war god, but also the god of poetic ecstasy: “The picture of the god as the bringer of ecstasy is in keeping with the most acceptable interpretation of the Germanic name Wodan, that which relates it to *wut*, meaning high mental excitement, fury, intoxication, or possession. The Old Norse adjective *óðr*, from which *Óðinn*, the later form of his name in Scandinavia, must be derived, bears a similar meaning: ‘raging, furious, intoxicated’, and can be used to signify poetic genius and inspiration” (Davidson 147). Wotan’s most Dionysian manifestation, and the one most present in popular folklore in Germany in Jünger’s time, was as the leader of the wild hunt (Plaßmann 1937b: 192). That the Saturnalia of the young soldiers in *In Stablgewittern* represents a return to a „Goldene Zeitalter“ can be understood by considering the popular contemporary view of war-like Germanic tribes, particularly of the *Cheruskerfürst Hermann* (a.k.a. Arminius or Armin), a figure popularized by Klopstock’s plays and by the statue built in his honour: in other words, a revaluing of Germany’s barbarian past was occurring, and this was a major current in the barbarian discourse of Jünger’s day.

This fact would seem to substantiate Allied charges that Germany and Germans were barbarian, but the reality is more nuanced than this. It must be noted, however, that the fighting in World War I did seem, symbolically – through geographical parallels – to re-play the basic conflict between Roman civilization on the left side of the Rhine, and the barbarian Germanic tribes on the right side of the Rhine trying to reassert their tribal lands and decisively defeat the hated conqueror who claimed the mantle of civilization. While it is not necessary to establish the exact time-frame for the Golden Age that the ecstatic war Saturnalia harkens back to, this four hundred year period of conflict between the barbarian Germanic tribes and Rome is likely that period.

The cultural reasoning behind the choosing, by many, of the barbarian Germanic tribes as positive barbarian role models in the barbarian discourse of the Germany of the late 19th and early 20th century is explicable by the same dynamic whereby Tacitus wrote his *Germania* in first century Rome. Tacitus wrote glowingly of the positive values of the barbarian Germanic tribes that his contemporary Roman audience was at war with – this was the Golden Age that the World War I youth Saturnalia looked back to. Tacitus was not inspired to do so out of a desire to commit treason, and yet, “Tacitus unmistakably contrasts

the virtues of the Germans, which recall the uncorrupted morals of old Rome, with the degeneracy of the Empire” (Mattingly 25). In other words, as Mattingly argues, Tacitus uses the barbarian discourse, and the unflattering comparison it suggests with the Rome of his day, in order to provoke public debate and engender social and cultural change to purer, more ‘barbarian’ virtues. Mattingly notes that Tacitus’ work was used in the same sense within Wilhelmine, Weimar and Nazi Germany: “Modern Germany has claimed to draw her strength from her ancient barbarian tradition, and has made a virtue of her late submission to Latin civilization. She has glorified the natural man with all his virtues and his vices” (Mattingly 28-29). Jünger was a product of this educational outlook, but it was a double-edged sword in the sense that the father generation that insisted on this positive barbarian discourse was judged according to its standard, and found wanting; the positive values of the Germanic barbarian were contrasted with the “folly, obsession, forgetfulness, pride and prejudice” of bourgeois Wilhelminian society. This judgement, and its origin in the barbarian discourse, is also the source of Nietzsche’s withering criticism of the Wilhelmine German Empire:

Demokratismus war jederzeit die Niedergangs-Form der organisierenden Kraft: ich habe schon in »Menschliches, Allzumenschliches« die moderne Demokratie samt ihren Halbheiten, wie »Deutsches Reich«, als *Verfallsform des Staats* gekennzeichnet. Damit es Institutionen gibt, muß es eine Art Wille, Instinkt, Imperativ geben, antiliberal bis zur Bosheit: den Willen zur Tradition, zur Autorität, zur Verantwortlichkeit auf Jahrhunderte hinaus, zur *Solidarität* von Geschlechter-Ketten vorwärts und rückwärts *in infinitum*. Ist dieser Wille da, so gründet sich etwas wie das *imperium Romanum*: oder wie Rußland, die *einzig*e Macht, die heute Dauer im Leibe hat, die warten kann, die etwas noch versprechen kann – Rußland, der Gegensatz-Begriff zu der erbärmlichen europäischen Kleinstaaterei und Nervosität, die mit der Gründung des deutschen Reiches in einen kritischen Zustand eingetreten ist...“ (Nietzsche 1999: 128).

This imperative to connect to the *Geschlechter-Ketten vorwärts und rückwärts* is nothing less than Nietzsche’s formulation that the Golden Age of Germany’s past must be the model for its future. This is why Jünger’s generation attempted to re-establish the Golden Age, and why the failure

of the war and of the young Frontsoldiers in completing their comic trajectory – “Comedy usually moves toward a happy ending, and the normal response of the audience to a happy ending is ‘this should be,’ which sounds like a moral judgement. So it is, except that it is not moral in the restricted sense, but social” (Frye 167) – explains the hatred of many returning Frontsoldiers, especially those who gravitated toward the Nazis in the ensuing decade, toward the Weimar Republic. Weimar represented the re-establishment of the usurping bourgeois father society and the denial of positive barbarian values. This combination of attitudes and motivations was decisive in leading to the emergence of the Nazis, for they, in their way, attempted to make good the promise of the Saturnalia and the Golden Age: re-armament and war were major points of their programme, as were anti-bourgeois sentiments – and references to the Germanic barbarian past became commonplace in Nazi Germany; they were, in fact, a central feature of Nazi Germany’s most powerful institution, the SS.

Jünger’s war experiences were, in the comic paradigm, the restoration of the Golden Age of the warrior Germanic tribes, and yet – despite the youthful rebellion against the lecture halls, school benches and work tables – his war experiences occurred under the aegis of the Wilhelmine father-generation. This paradoxical connection comes to light as we consider the structure of the comedy *mythos* in terms of *In Stahlgewittern*.

Considering Frye’s definition that the antagonists in comedy are blocking humours and that the obstructing characters are in charge of the play’s society, the blocking figures in *In Stahlgewittern* are the generation of the fathers. Significantly, for the enthusiastic motivation of German youth to go to war, comedy’s figure of the ‘benevolent grandfather’ is represented by Kaiser Wilhelm II. The Kaiser’s decision to give the young men their comic desire – i.e. to go to war<sup>39</sup> – gives him this role in *In Stahlgewittern*, a suggestion reinforced by the fact that it is – technically – from the Kaiser that the *Pour le mérite* comes to the comic protagonist in

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<sup>39</sup> Stefan Zweig describes the Austrian version of this desire during the declaration of war in poignant and significant terms: „Jeder Einzelne erlebte eine Steigerung seines Ichs, er war nicht mehr der isolierte Mensch von früher, er war eingetan in eine Masse, er war Volk, und seine Person, seine sonst unbeachtete Person hatte einen Sinn bekommen ... So gewaltig, so plötzlich brach diese Sturzwellen über die Menschheit herein, dass sie, die Oberfläche überschäumend, die dunklen, die unbewussten Urtriebe und Instinkte des Menschtiers nach oben riss“ (Zweig in Traub 26).

the end. The implicit mythic comic sub-text of *In Stahlgewittern* is that the weak, security-based Wilhelmine society occurred against the will of the Kaiser who, as heir to German war-leaders going back through the immediate Prussian past, including Frederick the Great, all the way to Hermann der Cherusker, ended that usurpatory state by declaring a war that was welcomed by youth because it represented a re-establishment of the Golden Age. This re-establishment of the Golden Age was opposed by the usurping and blocking father generation that wanted the youth to remain in the lecture halls and at the work tables. In leading the way to war, the Kaiser, the benevolent grandfather in this scenario, apparently signaled the end to the society of “folly, obsession, forgetfulness, pride and prejudice”. Jünger and his comrades fought at the front in order to live this Golden Age, and to experience the Saturnalia. The lack of a clear collective romance goal for the protagonist, or rather its increasing impossibility – something the reader, existing in the post-war reality of the lost war, reads into the text before the Jünger-narrator’s moment of realization toward the end of the book: „Jeder wußte, daß wir nicht mehr siegen konnten. Aber wir würden standhalten“ (Jünger 2001: 311) – gives us insight into how the *Frontsoldat* experience itself, the Saturnalia itself, became an ideal in-itself in the period following the war, and those having that experience in effect had social and political capital that allowed them to claim positions within the Nazi hierarchy.

In this context of the Golden Age and Saturnalia of war being an end in itself – i.e. the comic new society in an era where young men’s desires are re-routed toward war – one remarkable aspect of *In Stahlgewittern* is that the reader comes to realize that the main enemy at the front are not the Western Allies but rather the incompetent or cowardly German soldiers who do not to revel in, or support, the re-established Golden Age. There are many examples of this conflict throughout the text, including moments like „Ein anderer versuchte sich wahnsinnig zu stellen, um der Schlacht zu entgehen. Nach langem Hin und Her wurde er durch den kräftigen Rippenstoß eines Unteroffiziers wieder vernünftig, und wir konnten einsteigen“ (Jünger 2001: 231). These German soldiers who would deny the Golden Age and betray the Saturnalia are contrasted with those who exemplify it: „Ich lernte hier einen neuen Schlag von Kämpfern kennen – den Kriegsfreiwilligen von 1918, allem Anschein nach von der Disziplin noch wenig beleckt, doch tapfer aus Instinkt“ (Jünger 2001: 300). The collapse of the German army at the end of the war, the *Zusammenbruch*, will, in part, be ascribed to the incompetent or

cowardly German soldiers, by arguing that they succumbed to anarchic, Marxist and “un-German” propaganda (von Hindenburg 61). The easy brutality used by the soldiers fighting for the Golden Age against those who tried to escape it explains the brutality with which the Revolution in Germany was suppressed; these despised ‘cowards’ – elsewhere in the text the Jünger-narrator shoots a deserter in the middle of a battle – were opportunistically linked by people like von Hindenburg, who tried to deflect criticism of the military and of the war itself, to the ‘real’ threat to the upper classes: communism. What is amusing, in terms of the comedy *mythos* – and the particular ironic phase of comedy that this analysis is narrowing in on – is that the soldier who pretended to be insane in the quotation above, was ‘brought to his senses’ and made to participate in a very insane war. This ironic reality could not be admitted; not by Jünger, who prided himself on being true to the Golden Age by doing his duty, and not by the upper class authorities who had led Germany into the war. The war itself, the fighting itself, could not be exposed to ridicule, and so scapegoats were manufactured by combining these soldiers, whose psychological desires were not wholly given over to war, with activists like Rosa Luxemburg and her Spartacists, who opposed the war precisely because of its insanity. This, in the general manner of a culture of defeat, and specifically parallel to the slaughter of the Paris Commune as the initial act of the French culture of defeat in 1871, resulted in the „blindwütiger Spartakistenverfolgung“ (Theweleit 1987b: 207) in the weeks directly following the Armistice.

Interestingly, the code of the German warrior past, of the Golden Age, was also invoked by the Spartacists themselves. As Jameson would argue, the reason for this apparently contradictory state – where both those in favour of the war and those opposed to it construct their arguments using the same coding – is the dominant code of an era. Here, the barbarian discourse of the age informs war-time Germany, and the dominant code is that of Germany’s warrior self-image. The most famous Spartacist poster depicts an heroic German worker armed with a sword defeating a hydra whose various heads represent capitalism and militarism. This poster graphically displays how Luxemburg and the Spartacists framed the narrative of their socialist movement as a romance.

The socialist romance was fragmented by the war. It was fragmented at the outset, with the bulk of the SPD voting for the war and thus throwing their lot in with the capitalist upper class. This ironic

move was an attempt to equate the socialist romance quest with the German national romance quest. Luxemburg and the Spartacists remained true to the principles of international socialism and continued to pursue that global socialist romance. With Luxemburg and Liebknecht killed on the orders of the SPD government which had essentially inherited the government of Germany, the SPD made themselves the representatives of the father-generation that Jünger's generation had revolted against, thus adding to the composite picture of the Weimar-era antagonist for Jünger's generation.

This culture of defeat hatred of the enemy-within, in this case of the German who does not strive for the Golden Age that Jünger and his comrades lived at the front, also explains the lack of consideration that Hitler – as a former front soldier himself and fan of Jünger's work – showed for civilian society during World War II. Davis' "Battles over Butter" shows civilian unrest at home during World War I due to the shortages occasioned by the unpreparedness of the Wilhelmine government for the consequences of the war they embarked on. Through this resistance to war, German civilians could also be added to 'cowardly' soldiers, socialists, and the bourgeois father-generation to complete the composite picture of the antagonist defying the Saturnalia of Jünger's generation. Hitler, as both Fest and Taylor argue, viewed the German people on the whole as an obstacle, as an opponent, and he tried to overcome their lack of enthusiasm for the warrior Golden Age of his generation by forcibly militarizing society. As everything collapsed at the end, Hitler blamed the people and condemned them to death through his refusal to negotiate or surrender and by his 1945 scorched earth directive. As Joachim Fest suggests in *Der Untergang*, this punishment of German civilian society may well have been part of Hitler's intention from the beginning (Fest 147-150).

What must be recalled here, in terms of the comedy narrative *mythos*, is that the lines between historical reality and the requirements of comic narrative are blurred. While, in reality, many of the father-generation supported the war, in Jünger's text and in the perception of fellow *Frontsoldaten* that shared the vision of the warrior Golden Age – often because of the influence of the barbarian discourse in their upbringing – the father-generation represents the blocking humours and the usurpers that Jünger's generation must struggle against. The comic sub-text in Jünger's text is that the war was declared by the 'benevolent grandfather', the Kaiser himself (even if through those representing him),

against the wishes of the father-generation and *in order* to grant the desire of the young generation of the comedy protagonist. The awarding to the Jünger-narrator of the *Pour le mérite* medal in the name of the Kaiser represents, in lieu of a romance victory, a validation that Jünger was indeed worthy of the Golden Age and the Saturnalia of war and danger.

That the Kaiser does indeed fit into Frye's conception of the comedy – is made clear by the following quote: “Another *iron* [*i.e. self-deprecator*] type has not been much noticed. This is a character, generally an older man, who begins the action of the play by withdrawing from it, and ends the play by returning” (Frye 174). While the historical Wilhelm II does not count as a self-deprecator, Frye's description does match the picture of the Kaiser that Jünger provides us with in *In Stablgewittern*. Whereas Remarque's anti-war *Im Westen nichts Neues* provides us with a scene where the soldiers mock the Kaiser and his role, there is no such scene in Jünger's text. The Kaiser himself, of course, never appears in the book, but it is he who has set the action of *In Stablgewittern* in motion by declaring war, and the text's silence about him – a figure whose post-war flight from Germany would leave open to mockery – is itself a sign of respect. After this implied initial appearance – historically, in the famous scene on the balcony in Berlin – the Kaiser then withdraws behind the actual action at the front, where he implicitly is as the text begins and where he was in reality:

Unmittelbar bei Kriegsbeginn übertrug Wilhelm II. seine Befugnisse als Oberster Kriegsherr an den Chef des Großen Generalstabs, Helmuth von Moltke. Dieser wurde durch ihn ermächtigt, im Namen des Kaisers selbständig Befehle zu erteilen. Nach außen sollte aber unter allen Umständen die Fiktion aufrechterhalten werden, alle Entscheidungen und Befehle würden entweder durch Wilhelm II. selbst oder mit seinem Wissen und seiner Billigung erfolgen.

Die Wirklichkeit war davon jedoch weit entfernt. [...] Bereits im Herbst 1914 klagte Wilhelm II. „Der Generalstab sagt mir nichts und fragt mich auch nicht. Wenn man sich in Deutschland einbildet, dass ich das Heer führe, so irrt man sich sehr.“ Und fuhr frustriert fort: „Ich trinke Tee und säge Holz und gehe spazieren, und dann erfahre ich von Zeit zu Zeit, das und das ist gemacht, ganz wie es den Herren beliebt.“ (Mohr 94)

This quotation does lend credence to the conception of the Kaiser not



being in accord with the rest of the elite of Wilhelmine society, and that he can be metaphorically seen as the grandfather of the nation and not as part of the father generation that the youth is rebelling against. In fact, the above quotation also allows us to see the Kaiser – after his pre-war belligerence and arrogance – as adopting an *eirōn* role as he drinks tea, saws wood and goes for walks while his metaphorical grandson, Jünger, masters the events that Kaiser Wilhelm II has set in motion. After his long withdrawal throughout the course of the text, the Kaiser metaphorically reappears and ends the story in the form of the telegram from General von Busse (who, as the above quotation makes explicit, acts *im Namen des Kaisers*) which states: „Seine Majestät der Kaiser hat Ihnen den Orden Pour le mérite verliehen“ (Jünger 2001: 324). However, since the Kaiser bowed before the “un-German” revolution, abdicated his throne and fled the country, the end of the book seems – instead of an affirmation of the comic hero and his establishment of a new society – ironic.

The irony of the German experience of World War I undermines the text’s attempt at casting both the Jünger-narrator protagonist and the young generation of Germany that he represents as the comic hero’s successful defiance of the established social order and the conquest of his desire. This irony – that all the sacrifice, all the fighting in the name of the Golden Age, and even the awarding of the *Pour le mérite* – are, in the end, futile, skews the narrative pattern of the text in the direction of irony/satire. This skewing is in keeping with a specific phase of comedy outlined by Frye, and it does explain the Jünger-narrator’s fascination with *Tristram Shandy* in the second half of the book, the reading of which Stoßtruppführer Jünger takes up after his romance reading of Ariosto’s *Orlando Furioso* in the early stages of the text and the war.

Often during the reading of *In Stahlgewittern*, the reader feels both “sympathy” and “ridicule” for the soldiers. These emotions, as Frye argues, are emotions that comedy raises and casts out. It may well have been Jünger’s intention to cast out these emotions in leading the reader to the conclusion that what the text presents is in keeping with the social effect that the comedy *mythos* aims at, namely that what the comic narrative presents – is as it ‘should be’. The textual reestablishment of the Golden Age in *In Stahlgewittern* transcends the emotions of sympathy and ridicule. Jünger’s text does not attempt to play on the audience’s sympathy for the hard-pressed German soldiers, for that would call the Saturnalia and the Golden Age into question. And Jünger certainly does

not want the reader to come away with a feeling of ridicule toward the German *Frontsoldat*.

And yet, just as the outcome of the war and the post-Versailles reality of the book's publication does not allow for a German text about the war, that chooses realism as its *Schreibweise* and autobiography as its genre, to be patterned according to romance, neither does it allow for Frye's third phase of comedy, which is the 'pure' form of comedy where the hero unambiguously achieves his comic desire. One can see the book – particularly in light of the ending – as another phase of comedy. One can see the ironic awarding of the *Pour le mérite*, and the indicated collapse of the German Army through the date on the telegram, as signs that the "humorous society triumphs". In the real world which is the always-referred-to signified, the culture of defeat dynamic immediately sets in to establish the internal enemies responsible for this inability to dislodge the usurping father-generation. These internal enemies – a composite picture, as we have seen – were seen to be headed by an ostensible (and illogical) alliance between Jewish capitalists and Marxist agitators (Theweleit 1987b: 370). These enemies helped the bourgeois humorous society of the father generation stab the German Army in the back, end the war and the Golden Age, and make all the efforts of the comic hero (i.e. Jünger) to have been in vain. Frye gives an example of a comedy of this phase when he writes, "A good example of a comedy of this type is *The Alchemist*, in which the returning *iron* Lovewit joins the rascals, and the plain dealer Surly is made a fool of" (Frye 177-178); one can replace the Kaiser in *In Stahlgewittern* for Lovewit. The Kaiser's abdication and flight shortly after the telegram is sent in his name leaves the rebellious youth attempting to restore the Golden Age in the lurch; in this way the Kaiser *iron* figure has bowed to the rascals, and through his cowardly action has reinforced the rule of the bourgeois society of the father generation with their folly and obsession with security. One can, in the above quotation, see the Jünger-narrator in Surly in that the reader realizes that Jünger has, in some sense, been made a fool of: the symbol of his success, the *Pour le mérite*, gains its validation character because it is awarded by the Kaiser and yet this validation is itself undermined by the Kaiser's confirmation of the undefeated humorous society. This is why the text of the telegram seems to hang in empty space at the end of the last page of *In Stahlgewittern*: with this choice of abrupt ending for his text, Jünger the writer is clearly unwilling to continue the story after the 22nd of September, 1918. If he did continue the story, he would have to

textually admit to the ironic undermining of his award and also that it did not represent – as it would in a ‘pure’ phase 3 comedy – the successful establishment of a new society. This is why, as Fischer and Wunsch note, Jünger spends much of the Weimar era (and, indeed much of his career) trying to establish meanings and reasons for the war. These reasons – as Jünger argues in *Der Kampf als inneres Erlebnis* – centre on the promise of the establishment of a renewed Germany, and a renewed world, through the new man that the war created (Jünger 2010: 63).

Therefore, the first phase of comedy, ironic comedy, seems to accurately describe the mythic patterning of *In Stablgewittern*. This impression is strengthened when one considers Frye’s comment, “We notice in ironic comedy that the demonic world is never far away” (Frye 178), and when one notes that Jünger, in fact, often describes events in the text as „dämonisch“ (Jünger 2001: 35, 105, 129). Furthermore, in this book Jünger is at “the point of ritual death” that the comedy *mythos* requires and is suddenly decorated as a hero – but the “humorous society”, ironically, continues to exist.

Aspects of the second phase of comedy that Frye identifies are also present in *In Stablgewittern* and combine with a further facet of the first phase, the idea that the father-generation has established a cruel law, and the comic hero’s avoiding of this law is a ‘narrow squeeze’ (Frye 178). Again, citing the historical narrative imperatives that the second and third layers of form of the text require the reader to be conscious of, this cruel law implied throughout the text is that the young *Frontsoldaten* must fight *and* must accept inevitable defeat, and thus acquiesce in being part of the culture of defeat that the acceptance of the Treaty of Versailles by the father-generation represents. In this light, the Jünger-narrator (closely identified with the historical Jünger) can be seen as the comic hero in the second phase of comedy, i.e. as an escapee from the humorous society, because he has managed to accomplish the “narrow squeeze” and has escaped the effects of the cruel law for himself personally. As Ansel and Fröschle argue, Jünger managed to garner social and political capital because of his textualized war exploits which insist on – by ending the text with it – the significance of his awarding of the *Pour le mérite* in September of 1918. This focus on the medal, and the text’s concomitant refusal to allow the *Zusammenbruch*, the Armistice and Versailles to be textually represented, allows Jünger to establish for himself a position above the reality of the defeated ex-*Frontsoldaten* in Weimar. This rare and elevated social position – which he shared with very few, but

significantly with von Lettow-Vorbeck and Göring – gave an authority to Jünger in the time of the Weimar Republic and during Nazi Germany, and was likely responsible for saving his life in 1944.

What is further applicable to *In Stahlgewittern* in the quixotic second phase of comedy is that the society around Jünger – the war-like youth rebellion Saturnalia – does not prove strong enough to establish itself: the young warriors cannot win the war and they cannot stop the father-generation of the humorous society from accepting the Treaty of Versailles and, thereby, assuring the continued social dominance of the father-generation humorous society (i.e. the habit, ritual slavery and arbitrary laws that Frye cites). The second phase aspect of the ‘mental runaway’ is connected to this failure of the comic society in that a reader who is not sympathetic to the warrior ethos descended from the barbarian discourse evident in *In Stahlgewittern*, and who can only find the slaughter of millions as gruesome and inexcusable (as Remarque, for example, did), the Jünger-narrator’s character in the book can come off to such a reader as a “comic humor” and even as a “mental runaway”. Throughout the text, the narrator wants to keep fighting, no matter how gruesome or meaningless the situations seem. In this light one can see the abrupt conclusion of the book as suspicious – why did Jünger not carry the narrative forward to the collapse, the Armistice, and Versailles? He certainly became aware of these things in the hospital. One can therefore take the abrupt conclusion to the text as a second phase case of “a hero’s illusions thwarted by a superior reality” (Frye 180). The Jünger-narrator’s efforts throughout the text are quixotic as he adopts a Don Quixote-like insistence on pursuing a romance vision despite wounds, retreats, and endless, indecisive fighting. Later in his career, as Fischer notes, Jünger makes Don Quixote a recurring personal symbol and – interestingly from the perspective of Jünger’s mythic development – he champions this figure taken from Cervantes’ great satire.

By establishing the narrative *mythos* of *In Stahlgewittern* as that of a comedy combining features of the first and second phases of comedy, we have gone a long way to unlocking the political unconscious of the text. The second and third layers of form, while much easier to establish in this case, are also significant in terms of enabling a political unconscious reading of the text on each of the three horizons that Jameson identifies.

### **V.3. First Horizon of a Political Unconscious Analysis**

The social contradiction that the text wrestles with is that of the effort, put in by the young *Frontsoldaten* to establish a new society, against the result: a loss for the generation and for the nation. Major currents within the culture of defeat that the book was published into could not accept this contradiction, and the text directly addressed a social phenomenon described by Lethen thusly: „Nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg ging es um die »Schande« des Zusammenbruchs, die nach den Regeln eines Männerbundes rückgängig gemacht werden mußte“ (Lethen 219). The symbolic resolution, to the social contradiction between the sacrifice in the name of Kaiser and country and the loss of the war and the war-guilt dictated by the Treaty of Versailles, that Jünger offers up here in this ironic comedy is the awarding of the *Pour le mérite* to himself. At this early stage of the Weimar culture of defeat, he can consciously find no symbolic resolution but a personal one which, unconsciously, implies a metatextual one: his receiving of this award, and his writing of this book which culminates with the receiving of this highest award, must mean something, must destine him to do something to right this social contradiction. It will, in fact, as Fröschle argues, allow him to take on the public role of political prophet. Mottel also points out that Jünger's repeated textual representations of his recovery of his diary while severely wounded textually demonstrates his confidence in the prophetic importance of his own words (Mottel 307). To interpret this in terms of a first horizon reading, the text itself offers a symbolic resolution to the social contradiction it addresses. The text and its audience – *Frontsoldaten* and other nationalist renewal sympathizers, young and old – represents the promise to resolve the social contradiction. As Mottel further notes, the Jünger-narrator's rescuing of his brother and his being awarded the *Pour le Mérite* gave him legitimacy in Wilhelmine and Prussian tradition (Mottel 308), further buttressing his authority and his role as political prophet. He will use this role to prepare the country for the new society that he and his comrades fought for at the front, and which he will remain faithful to – until the Nazis enact their version of this new society, whose horrors Jünger will turn away from.

The symbolic resolution that the text offers its readers through its inner-textual incompleteness and, thus, its metatextual promise of a prophetic role, is closely associated with Jünger's position at this point in his career as a popular culture writer. His third layer of form decision to use the autobiography genre makes of him a popular culture writer in the early stages of the Weimar culture of defeat. A fact that ties Jünger

firmly to the popular culture discourse of Weimar Germany is Jünger's literary *Schwerpunkt*, his experience – and Germany's experience as a whole – of World War I. Schivelbusch argues that WW I pervaded every aspect of Weimar German society, which Prümm confirms (Prümm 1976: 140). With this being the case, it followed that WW I would become the stuff of popular literature for young male readers, and the World War autobiography, of which *In Stahlgewittern* was an early exemplar, was part of this popular reading. Prümm explains this cultural process, and Jünger's role and reaction to it, as follows:

Ein Jahrzehnt nach der Niederlage war zumindest im Bürgertum und in den Mittelschichten unter den Vorzeichen krisenhafter Verunsicherung der Drang zur Idealisierung übermächtig geworden, die kollektive Erinnerung tendierte zur Verklärung, zur einseitigen Akzentuierung der Positivität des Krieges, seiner exemplarischen Verhaltensformen, seiner vorgeblichen Tugenden. 1930 registrierte Ernst Jünger mit Befriedigung, »daß die deutsche Jugend sich der symbolischen Erscheinung des Frontsoldaten als ihrem Vorbilde zuzuwenden beginnt« (Prümm 1976: 140)

Jünger helped, as Prümm's citing of him suggests, to push the World War I experience into the forefront of the German popular culture discourse, and *In Stahlgewittern* was one of the texts that started this cultural dynamic.

This cultural dynamic, and the social ideal that the World War represented, became clearer the more the German people went through the process of being a culture of defeat. The symbolic resolution, that the text promises, comes to be that the war, as Jünger noted in a quotation cited above, was a great school in creating a new man and a new Germany. Citing Karl-Heinz Bohrer's *Ästhetik des Schreckens*, Segeberg demonstrates how Jünger's narrative architecture comes into play as he utopically redefines the catastrophic mass slaughter of WW I as the heroic-tragic creation of a New Man, and goes on to repeat this prophetic process in *Das Abenteuerliche Herz* and *Der Arbeiter* (Segeberg 2004: 407). One must bear in mind the lacuna that exists in the text itself in regards to this redefined meaning for the war – the text itself, and its concluding insistence on Jünger's medal as a symbol for his soon-to-be-expressed authority – is the symbolic resolution. The text itself does not redefine the mass slaughter as the creation of a new man, but sets the stage for Jünger to do that later in his career, starting with *Der Kampf als inneres Erlebnis*. Wunsch warns us that apparent indications of this

redefined meaning of the war in the text are faltering attempts, and she argues that passages hinting at such a meaning in *In Stahlgewittern* not only prove to be empty concepts, but were often first inserted into re-edited versions of the text by Jünger as late as 1978 (Wünsch 460).

#### V.4. Second Horizon of a Political Unconscious Analysis

In terms of a second horizon reading of this text, we see a representative of the petty bourgeoisie – the Jünger-narrator whose social origins are identical with that of Jünger the writer – identifying with the proletariat. The text presents a microcosm of the macrocosmic process that begins during the Weimar culture of defeat and culminates during the Nazi era. The comic Golden Age, the Dionysian Saturnalia, is not organized on class lines, but rather is based on martial values that all men may exhibit. The soldiers recruited from the mass of the people, from the proletarian class, prove again and again throughout the text that they are worthy of the Golden Age and represent the true vital barbarian soul of Germany. The textual and historical validation of this fact comes toward the end of the war and the end of the text, where the German army develops – under pressure from competent soldiers who represent the Saturnalia and are critical of the existing command structure, and also under pressure from the historical trajectory of the war – highly mobile, highly independent storm troops whose composition and leadership are determined by merit and not noble birth. This apparent detail of military history is the genesis of the Nazi Führer-principle and simultaneously indicates the core of the early Nazi movement. The second horizon reading of the text, which sees it as an utterance in the antagonistic class discourse of the day, is rooted in this dynamic, for Jünger is one of the leaders of these storm troops and his authority to speak for these *Frontsoldaten* takes on this class character, particularly when one considers Theweleit's analysis of these soldiers after having returned home. Theweleit presents an argument that depicts the Weimar era as a time of irony and satire (which explains the popularity, for example, of Brecht's *Die Dreigroschen Oper*); Theweleit, in effect, argues that the bourgeois Wilhelmine father-generation does not maintain its blocking humour hold on Weimar society in the same manner, but that international capitalism, which celebrates its victory through Versailles, has taken over the real power of the German father-generation. This take-over, this *Entmachtung*, might have presented the *Frontsoldat* generation with

freedom, but they are, largely, unprepared for the excesses of capitalism given the military austerity they were used to. Theweleit writes, „Das Versprechen der Freiheit, das in der Entmachtung des realen Vaters durch den Kapitalismus liegt, kam für sie zu früh und wurde unerträglich, weil in ihnen gleichzeitig das Fließen des Wunsches in einen verschlingenden Strom transformiert wurde, in dem sie den Vater als Felseneiland nötig gebraucht hätten“ (Theweleit 1987b: 364). This explains the ideological contradictions within the nationalist movement that will culminate with the National Socialists, who will oppose both communism and capitalism with the same vehemence. Theweleit argues that the early fascist, returning *Frontsoldaten* attempted to claim the archetypal power of the “Abstract father” as the real ones had failed twice – first as the blocking humours who refused to give way to the younger generation, and secondly, as actually powerless in the face of the new hyper-capitalist reality. The shaming of the father-generation by capitalism leads to a proletarian-like opposition to capitalism and the capitalist upper class – now seen as the international capitalists behind Versailles. And yet, in order to buttress their own authority, in Theweleit’s argument, these men then add the abstract father’s younger sons – i.e. the men too young to have gone to war – to the picture of the composite enemy within the German culture of defeat: „In der Formel von der «Diktatur des Proletariats» wird der Aufstand der *jüngeren* Söhne, die sich mit allerlei Gesindel verbündet haben, sogleich auch zum Aufstand der angemäßen Väter“ (Theweleit 1987b: 366). In this way Jünger’s *Frontsoldat* generation represents a class struggle, and yet one that does not turn to socialism or communism. Theweleit goes on to say of Jünger’s fellow *Frontsoldaten*, „Sie halten am «Auftrag» des abstrakten Vaters fest; das garantiert ihnen eine Art Erbe, einen quasi legalen Zugang zur Macht“ (Theweleit 1987b: 368). This *Auftrag* is what *In Stablgewittern* helps to establish as it represents an utterance in the antagonistic class discourse. This *Auftrag* descends directly from the Saturnalia and the Golden Age through the *Geschlechterketten* that Nietzsche talks about and that reach back into Germany’s barbarian past, which, in effect, is the Abstract Father that Theweleit refers to. Jünger then typifies the social mechanism that Marx and Engels identify, whereby the petty bourgeoisie sides with the proletariat, in that the war experience – which Jünger’s text reflects and helps to construct – indicates that the *Frontsoldaten* are the quasi-legal inheritors of state power, and so Jünger, like Luxemburg and Lenin, establishes himself –



by highlighting his awarding of the *Pour le mérite* – as one of their leaders, one of their spokespersons, and their prophet.

### V.5. Third Horizon of a Political Unconscious Analysis

In reading the text as a ‘window’ on the on-going cultural revolution of world history, the text is revealing in that it is an eye-witness account of the economic and social transformation wrought upon, and by, the nations that fought in World War I. We not only see this Keynesian state-economy transformation occurring, but we see its effects in the *Materialschlacht* and how capitalism so thoroughly permeates the events of the war. Müller discusses this when he argues how Jünger attempts to hold on to a mythic romance vision within *In Stahlgewittern* in the face of this industrialization of war:

Die Zähigkeit, mit der Jünger an der personalen Heroismuskonzeption der *Ilias* festhielt, ist daraus zu erkennen, daß er – mitunter um den Preis gewaltsamer Umdeutungen und verstiegener Metaphorik – prinzipiell alle Kampfsituationen als Zweikampfsituationen zu interpretieren bemüht war. Eine solche Deutung stand aber im starken Kontrast zu seinen eigenen Kampfbeschreibungen, in denen er die Unsichtbarkeit des Feindes als eine elementare Erfahrung der Infanterie im Krieg schilderte, die erst dann vorrücken dürfte, wenn die Artillerie den Gegner zuvor kampfunfähig gemacht hatte. Immer wieder beschrieb Jünger die „chaotische Leere“ des Schlachtfeldes, die eine Folge der Technisierung der artilleristischen Kriegsführung war, und schon im Vorwort seines Buch wies er auf die „überragende Bedeutung der Materie“ hin: „Selbst der Mensch wurde als Material gewertet“. (Müller 22)

The effect of this material and economic reality is evident in the mythic narrative pattern of the book – despite Jünger’s attempts to envision it as a romance – for this material and economic reality is decisive in turning Germany into a culture of defeat; the impossibility of romance victory leaves only the comic *mythos* as the narrative pattern; Jünger is not ready to admit to tragedy (as the final scene insists) and dare not entertain irony or satire. Of course the irony of necessity seeps into the comic narrative trajectory, but an open acknowledgement would not only put the Saturnalia in question, but would lead to laughability, the greatest threat

to the post-War *kalte persona* that Jünger here advocates.

The textual irruptions of this material and economic reality occur throughout the text, but it is most evident, and most poignant, in the scene where the starving German soldiers are amazed at the rations they find in taken British trenches in March of 1918:

Ein Nebenraum enthielt die Küche, deren Vorräte wir ehrfurchtsvoll bestaunten. Da war eine ganze Kiste voll roher Eier, von denen wir gleich eine erhebliche Zahl aussogen, da wir sie kaum noch dem Namen nach kannten. Auf den Wandborden stapelten Büchsen voll Fleisch, Dosen köstlicher eingedickter Marmelade, ferner Flaschen voll Kaffee-Essenz, Tomaten und Zwiebeln; kurz alles, was der Feinschmecker sich wünschen kann.

Das Bild trat mir später noch oft ins Gedächtnis, wenn wir wochenlang bei schmaler Brotration, wäßrigen Suppen und dünner Marmelade in den Gräben lagen.

Nach diesem Einblick in die beneidenswerten wirtschaftlichen Verhältnisse des Gegners verließen wir den Unterstand [...] (Jünger 2001: 274)

The outcome of the war is thus not a function of the skill of warriors or the power of their will – and this is a major point of public agreement in a culture of defeat which does not see its defeat as legitimate – but of sheer materialist economy. The Jünger-narrator, back in Berlin on leave after being wounded in the battle, admits this much to himself: „Die Große Schlacht bedeutete eine Wendemarke auch in meinem Inneren, und nicht nur deshalb, weil ich von nun an den Verlust des Krieges für möglich hielt“ (Jünger 2001: 288). *Möglich* – but not textually shown; nevertheless, Jünger will take this lesson from the war and will meditate upon it as part of his self-imposed calling as political prophet, and it will inspire his major work, *Der Arbeiter*.

As Eugen Weber argues, the concentration of economic forces practised by the war economies of both sides represented an intensification of the capitalist mode of production. The time period covered by Jünger's text essentially documents this economic revolution. The broader cultural revolution subsumes this economic one; a major facet of this revolution is the establishment of the *Verhaltenslehre der Kälte* of the post-war world on both sides of the Atlantic. The barbarian discourse is implicated in the grand cultural dynamic before and during the war, and receives renewed impetus from the war to remain a major

cultural discourse after the war, being instrumental in establishing the *Verhaltenslehre der Kälte*. Lethen's argument allows one to see how the unparalleled inhuman brutality of the war of necessity allocates the role of negative barbarian, in the traditional interpretation of the barbarian discourse, to the self-proclaimed 'civilized' nations of Europe and North America. This significant polar shift undermines the justification for colonization of Africa and Asia by Europe and the United States. The Allies clearly realized this, and attempted to forestall this conclusion by one of the stipulations of the Treaty of Versailles that was most bitterly resented in Germany, namely the stripping of Germany's colonies as a result of declaring Germany solely responsible for the barbarism of the war. The damage to the reputation, and the psychological make-up, of the 'civilized' nations, however, had already been done. The necessity of releasing the soldiers at the front from their 'civilized' manners and self-control so that previously sublimated primal violent drives could be unleashed, as Freud observed, could not be undone in the years after the war, as Lethen argues:

Max Scheler beobachtet dagegen Mitte der zwanziger Jahre den epochalen Prozess der »Entsublimierung«. Sportkult und Triebpsychologie, die Aufwertung des Kindes und die »Lust an primitiver mythischer Mentalität« sind seine Indizien. Scheler registriert eine Bewegung des »Rücklaufs der Sitten« der einst von Europa kultivierten Völker, eine »Gegenkolonisierung«, in der »Barbareien« aufgewertet werden. Auf die Arbeits- und Erwerbsaskese der Vätergeneration sei mit der Jugendbewegung als Gegenschlag die »Revolte gegen die einstige Sublimierung« erfolgt; auch der Weltkrieg sei ein solcher Aufstand gewesen. Scheler ist skeptisch; er rechnet damit, daß die Entsublimierung zwangsläufig ein Moment der Dekadenz-Bewegung bleibt, solange sie die Vernunft ausgrenzt. Wo immer sie auftritt und in welche Ideen und Wertungsformen sie eingehüllt ist, sie bleibt – wie die reflektionsgebundene Sucht zum Primitiven, Kindhaften, zur »zweiten« Naivität – an sich ein Zeichen des Alters und der »vitalen Ermüdung«. Das Rückgängigmachen der Sublimierung ist für Scheler ein Vorgang, der sich über den Zeitraum vom Jugendstil bis zu den faschistischen Bewegungen erstreckt. (Lethen 143-144)

Scheler's position, as described by Lethen, is that the barbarian discourse

that is driving the cultural anti-sublimation process is, in actuality, not a sign of primal vitality, but a sign of decadence and world-weariness in the post-war world. This position will be considered when this dissertation assesses Robert E. Howard's explicitly barbarian heroes who incorporate as positive traits those values that Scheler describes as decadent. Scheler's position must also be weighed against Nietzsche's, for he insisted that the new barbarian would be necessary to reach new shores of culture (Lethen 35). In fact, the valuing of the positive barbarian was one factor in allowing an abruptly re-engineered German society – from a patriarchal, bourgeois Wilhelmine monarchy to a desublimated, semi-socialist capitalist republic marked by increased social roles for women – to reject the *Schuldkultur* demanded by Versailles.

## V.6. Conclusion

*In Stablgewittern's* conclusion reveals Jünger's romance drive in that he concludes it with a medal presentation, a classic *anagnorisis* device. However, the historical context makes clear that it is a medal given even though the romance quest – victory – has not been achieved. This major requirement of the *mythos* of summer – victory, success – denies the book that romance pattern. The comic paradigm fits that medal presentation better in that the medal represents the establishment, or the acknowledgement, of a new society centred on the hero. The novel is replete with the names of those in this society, and the historical reality of post-war Freikorps and right wing nationalist groups *does* support the comic pattern. Again, the defeat in the war, and the irony that the new society has not been established, but, at best, deferred, suggests an ironic phase of comedy.

Critics like Fischer and Müller argue, in effect, that Jünger's primary objective, in life and in his work, was to exist in a romance *mythos* framework. Müller says as much when he comments on Jünger's early work thusly: „Allen diesen Phasen gemein ist der kompakte Anspruch des Autors auf die Verwirklichung eines autonomen, anarchischen oder heroischen Lebensplans“ (Müller 15). The first obstacle that the young Jünger encountered on his quest to pursue a romance vision, and one that helps to explain his apparent penchant to obey the Marxist observation that the petty bourgeois supports the proletariat in times of crisis, was his petty bourgeois apothecary father. „Dieser Vater war als

Gestalt von absoluter Dominanz, als positivistischer Wissenschaftler auch im alltäglichen Umgang von „reiner schneidender Verständigkeit“, die mit Ironie gepaart war, als Mensch und Vater unberührbar, ungreifbar, emotional unzugänglich – die familiäre Machtrolle war hinter der Verstandesrolle gänzlich verborgen“ (Müller 15). This father, a representative of the father generation – and one significantly identified with irony by Müller –, was Jünger’s personal blocking humour.

Although Jünger strove to pattern his biographical narrative as much, or even more than his textual narratives, according to the romance *mythos*, the narrative of his youthful rebellion against his father fits the comic paradigm. Running away from home before the First World War to join the French Foreign Legion represents his first attempt to achieve his desire – a desire that his Wilhelmine generation had been strictly raised to equate with war and danger. The intertwining of this desire with the sublimated desire for sexuality is expressed in the fact that he chose the Foreign Legion in order to run away to Africa – the land of primal freedom. Jünger will recount this foray in *Afrikanische Spiele* in 1936, a time when Gisevius would argue all should have been involved in an intensive examination of, and resistance to, the Nazi regime. But for Jünger, the striver for romance, the spokesperson for the right-wing nationalist renewal, the political prophet and unwitting *Wegbereiter* for the Nazis, this reflection on the seminal moment of his life, on his first comic attempt to claim romance, is a necessary first step before he is able to write *Auf den Marmorklippen*. The willingness to re-visit his youthful rebellion and to come close to admitting to the irony that made of it a phase 1 and phase 2 comedy narrative – just like *In Stahlgewittern* – is necessary for the dramatic statement about the historical trajectory of Germany that Jünger will make three years later (1939) in *Auf den Marmorklippen*. Müller notes of Jünger’s key textual revisitation of his pre-World War I comic rebellion:

Den Ausgang des Experiments mit der Fremdenlegion schilderte Jünger in den *Afrikanischen Spielen* mit angestrengter Ironie. Nur sehr mittelbar brachte er in diesem Buch jedoch zum Ausdruck, daß das Ergebnis des afrikanischen Abenteuers ein Desaster war, das hart an die Grenzen einer Negation der Identität des jugendlichen Ausbrechers gereicht haben muß: einer der auszog, die Träume von Macht und einer anderen Wirklichkeit zu realisieren, kehrte zurück als ein um die Wirklichkeit seiner Träume Betrogener, der seine

Rettung aus der Legion jenem zu verdanken hatte, dem Aufstand und Ausbruch gegolten hatte: dem Vater. (Müller 17)

Significant here are Müller's phrases „angestrenzter Ironie“ and „das hart an die Grenzen einer Negation der Identität des jugendlichen Ausbrechers gereicht haben muß“. Here we see the origin of Jünger's antipathy to Irony, to his life-long struggle against this mythic narrative framework for his life and texts. We also see, however, even in his halting straining toward irony, the large personal step that it was. And it came at a time when Gisevius had hoped that all decent Germans would stand up against the Nazi regime. In effect, Jünger's *Annäherung* to irony was a way of standing up to his own romance vision, to go back to his earliest life experience that set him on the road to becoming Germany's political prophet, and to try to give it the ironic mythic narrative framework that it required. Volker Mergenthaler explains the significance of this in his essay „Von Bord der ‚Fremdenlegion‘ gehen. Mythologisch-metaphorische Ichbildung in Ernst Jüngers *Afrikanische Spiele*“ when he writes of the protagonist's „Übertritt‘ von der bürgerlich-geordneten Welt des Elternhauses und der Schule, von der Vaterordnung, in die andere, ‚den äußersten Grad der Freiheit‘ verheißende ‚tropische Welt“ (Mergenthaler 277). Mergenthaler discusses how this attempt to frame the escape to Africa as romance fails and descends into the ironic: „es liefert vielmehr eine Reihe von (übrigens vielzitierten) ‚Entzauberungen“ (Mergenthaler 277). Mergenthaler notes how this led Nevin to conclude that the work portrayed a “farcically misfired self-initiation” (Mergenthaler 285): in effect, a phase 1 comedy.

This event in Jünger's life immediately precedes his First World War experience, and its ironic comedy narrative frame – which Jünger does not consciously acknowledge until 1936 and, even then, not fully – is the template for *In Stahlgewittern*. He is unable to portray his war experiences as romance and Müller will characterize his later perception of his entry into the war thusly: „Welch tiefsitzende Frustrationen und Aggressionen den vom Vater zum Vertragspartner degradierten Rebellen erfüllt haben mögen, geht aus dem Bekenntnis der Erstfassung des *Abenteuerlichen Herzens* hervor, es sei vor allem die ‚innere Aussicht auf Zerstörung gewesen‘, die ihn ‚jubilnd‘ in den Krieg getrieben habe, während ihm die ‚tiefere Liebe zur Nation‘ vor ‚dem Kriege mangelte“ (Müller 18). This *Aussicht auf Zerstörung* cannot be successfully portrayed

as a value of the romance protagonist, but it can represent the comic protagonist's desire in the comedy *mythos*, i.e. the Wilhelmine youth generation's desire for war and danger (War-as-Eros and the Dionysian-Wotanic Saturnalia).

Finally, the moments of oracular meaning in the text, that Wünsch suggests are problematic, give *In Stablgewittern* a continuity with Jünger's later work. Early in the text, a young Jünger-narrator feels for the first time, as he looks upon „der von blühenden Kirschbäumen bekränzten Neckarberge“: „Wie schön war doch das Land, wohl wert, dafür zu bluten und zu sterben“; and then „ich ahnte zum ersten Male, daß dieser Krieg mehr als ein großes Abenbteuer bedeutete“ (Jünger 2001: 38). Later, during Jünger's attempt at the romance *pathos* scene – i.e. the ultimate death struggle – in the chapter „Die Große Schlacht“, the Jünger-narrator thinks, „Der Endkampf, der letzte Anlauf schien gekommen. Hier wurde das Schicksal von Völkern zum Austrag gebracht, es ging um die Zukunft der Welt“ (Jünger 2001: 259-260). When the *pathos* scene does reveal itself as a romance failure, and the wounded Jünger-narrator admits to himself in a Berlin Café that Germany might lose the war, he adds: „es war eine Einweihung, die nicht nur die glühenden Kammern des Schreckens öffnete, sondern auch durch sie hindurchführte“ (Jünger 2001: 288). The tone of these prophetic statements suggests, as Wünsch noted, that they represent later editings. In fact, Segeberg argues that around the time of his essay *Über den Schmerz*, 1934, Jünger sank himself into „einen Kult der Bearbeitungen“ (Segeberg 1995: 107):

So entfernt Jünger bereits in den 1934 und 1935 erstellten „ Fassungen“ seines Erstlings *In Stablgewittern* die in den „soldatischen“ Fassungen von 1920/22 und der „nationalrevolutionären“ Fassung von 1924 zum Teil sehr deutlich gesetzten zweckgerichteten Aktualisierungen seines bis heute berühmtesten Kriegs-Werks. Zugleich aber fügt er Episoden und Erzähleinheiten hinzu, in denen (so ein neuerer Interpret der Fassungen) die zuvor dynamische bewegte Erzählzeit „wie in der Linse einer Photographie zum Stillstand“ gebracht wird, oder aber Jünger entfaltet – im Rückgriff auf Berichte anderer – die alle aktuellen Bezüge übersteigende typologische Perspektive einer Kriegsgeschichte, in der jenseits aller national-ideologischen Entgegensetzungen die epochale Bedeutung eines vom

„Stellungskrieg“ über die „Materialschlacht“ zur „planmäßigen mechanischen Schlacht“ neu dynamisierten Weltkriegs hervortritt. (Segeberg 1995: 107)

When the deferred comic new society that Jünger had prophesied began to take shape as Nazi Germany, Jünger re-wrote the meaning of his World War I experiences to suggest not this heroic national-revolutionary project gone wrong, but something deeper. This ‘something deeper’ is what he reaches toward in the first years of the Nazi dictatorship, the *Kult der Bearbeitungen* of 1934 and 1935 being one sign of this, the rapprochement with irony in 1936’s *Afrikanische Spiele* being another, and 1939’s allegorical *Auf den Marmorlippen* being yet another.





## **VI. Responses to the War's Narrative Myth until the Great Depression (1921-29): The Cultural Archive and the Texts of Howard and Jünger**

### **VI.1. Responses in Early Weimar Germany**

#### VI.1.1. *Siddhartha* (1922)

It must be recalled that Jünger's response to, and relationship with, the war and its ramifications for society was by no means the only German response, and the cultural archive is replete with examples of the differentiation of responses. Hermann Hesse began composing his textual response to the war during the war itself – as Jünger did with *In Stahlgewittern* – and Hesse explored meaning outside the competing ironic and tragic mythic narrative patterns that characterized the early Weimar culture of defeat's perspective on the war and its aftermath. Hesse, in stepping far outside Germany's cultural boundaries and intense preoccupation with its recent history, with a tale set in ancient India, was able to claim the romance *mythos* as the narrative pattern for his entirely un-war-like romance quest in 1922's *Siddhartha*.

The protagonist of this tale set in ancient India, Siddhartha, leaves his pre-programmed life in the highest caste – that of the priestly Brahmins – to assuage his thirst for knowledge and meaning, a thirst which the Hindu *Weltanschauung* passed down to him no longer satisfies: “He had begun to suspect that his worthy father and his other teachers, the wise Brahmins, had already passed on to him the bulk and best of their wisdom, that they had already poured the sum total of their knowledge into his waiting vessel; and the vessel was not full, his intellect was not satisfied, his soul was not at peace, his heart was not still” (Hesse 1996: 5). This, in effect, becomes Siddhartha's romance quest. While Siddhartha's friend and companion, Govinda, becomes a follower of the Buddha, Siddhartha continues on his own existentialist quest for enlightenment. He tastes the highs and lows of all sorts of experience, from the severe ascetism of the mystic Samanas to the wine-soaked gambling soirées of a rich merchant's life. And although irony does figure in, or soak in, to this romance, in the end, it is the individualist

Siddhartha who succeeds in his romance quest for enlightenment while the faithful follower Govinda does not achieve it.

The symbolic resolution that Hesse suggests with this text to the same social contradiction that Jünger wrestles with is not a renewed identification with the national collective and its militaristic tradition that the early *Fassungen* of *In Stahlgewittern* propose, but is rather to seek a personal salvation, the attaining of which can have positive effects on others, as symbolized by Govinda's kissing of Siddhartha's forehead. This scene represents the romance *anagnorisis*, i.e. the recognition of the hero, whereby the peace and wisdom Siddhartha has achieved is acknowledged through its blissful transference to Govinda.

Hesse's romance is only possible through a rejection of the gathering tragic mind-set in Germany and the *kalte persona* that begins to become socially dominant. Instead of wanting to be mobile, to have an *ich-panzer*, to be emotionally cool, and to be like unto a Gestalt with heavily-defined borders, Hesse's Siddhartha proposes the opposite to all of these. Siddhartha's decision to become the ferryman and to remain in one place rejects the *kalte persona's* restless mobility; the permanent smile that Siddhartha and Vasudeva have, that makes some think they are idiots, represents a confident, unguarded openness at odds with the need during the *Verhaltenslehren der Kälte* to be emotionally armoured and cool; and Siddhartha's vision of Om, which he sees in the river and which is transferred to Govinda during the aforementioned kiss, shows that all things are fluid, cyclical manifestations of a cosmic Oneness which is the erasure of borders, and which is the flowing that Theweleit argues that the *soldatischen Mann* fears as the ultimate threat to his identity.

Not only does this conception offer an alternative to the German public after the war, but it is a warning against being followers and to falling for the power of words – which, as Hitler will argue in *Mein Kampf*, is the best way of convincing the masses. Siddhartha explains the limitations of words to Govinda:

For example, a truth can only be expressed and enveloped in words if it is one-sided. Everything that is thought and expressed in words is one-sided, only half the truth; it all lacks totality, completeness, unity. When the illustrious Buddha taught about the world, he had to divide it into Samsara and Nirvana, into illusion and truth, into suffering and salvation. One cannot do otherwise, there is no other method for those who teach. But the world itself, being in and around us, is

never one-sided. Never is a man wholly Samsara or wholly Nirvana; never is a man wholly a saint or a sinner. This only seems so because we suffer the illusion that time is something real. Time is not real, Govinda. I have realized this repeatedly. And if time is not real, then the dividing line that seems to lie between this world and eternity, between suffering and bliss, between good and evil, is also an illusion. (Hesse 1996: 143)

The dialectic (thesis, antithesis, synthesis) and transcendent approach that Siddhartha here attempts to teach to Govinda are parts of the Weimar German discourse. The warning against words, and the insistence that time – weighing so heavily on Germany – is an illusion are revolutionary concepts. And yet, like Jünger and other thinkers on the right, these ideas hearken back to Nietzsche<sup>40</sup>, whose role in the cultural archive is influential on the right and the left. The Nietzschean concept that good and evil are illusory ideas – used by Siddhartha in the quotation above – will, in the hands of another Nietzsche admirer, Hitler, prove to be to be Germany's downfall.

When Govinda challenges Siddhartha's statement that "every wind, every cloud, every bird, every beetle is equally divine" with "But what you call thing, is it something real, something intrinsic? Is it not only the illusion of Maya, only image and appearance? Your stone, your tree, are they real?" (Hesse 1996: 146), Siddhartha's response –

"This also does not trouble me much," said Siddhartha. "If they are illusion, then I also am illusion, and so they are always of the same nature as myself. It is that which makes them so lovable and venerable. That is why I can love them. And here is a doctrine at which you will laugh. It seems to me, Govinda, that love is the most important thing in the world. It may be important to great thinkers to examine the world, to explain and despise it. But I think it is only important to love the world, not to despise it, not for us to hate each other, but to be able to regard the world and ourselves and all beings with love, admiration and respect." (Hesse 1996: 147)

– shows that Hesse was able to walk the tightrope that is the acceptance of the idea that the line between good and evil is an illusion, and still come out on the other side to declare love the

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<sup>40</sup> Hesse will textually confirm Nietzsche's influence on his work in 1929's *Steppenwolf*.

central principle with which to approach life. This was a feat that his teacher, Nietzsche, the great tightrope dancer himself, also attempted to accomplish – as he notes in *Thus Spake Zarathustra* – but it was a feat that the Nazis would have no interest in accomplishing.

*Siddhartha* is, in effect, a romance, but one which puts experience and the gaining of self-knowledge in place of physical conflict. The *agon* for Siddhartha are his obstacles toward enlightenment, and these are the false paths that he takes in life. His *pathos* is the extended climax concerning his son and his discovered need to let the child come to his own wisdom by having his own experience. This stands in sharp contrast to the militaristic tradition of the *Sauberkeitserziehung* and to the Nazi project of strict ideological training of Germany's children. Siddhartha's *anagnorisis* – where he is acknowledged as hero and rewarded – is when he shares his enlightenment with Govinda. As Hesse shows here, it is only by stepping outside national boundaries that a German is able to write a romance. While *Siddhartha* can be perceived as a romance, for Siddhartha smiles the same smile of enlightenment at the end as the Buddha had done earlier in the book – “He smiled peacefully and gently, perhaps very graciously, perhaps very mockingly, exactly as the Illustrious One had smiled” (Hesse 1996: 151) – that trace of mockery, or of bemusement, hints at the irony that runs through the book. Hesse shows that irony can be acknowledged and can even be incorporated to a certain extent in a romance – and that a post-World War German can still fashion a satisfying (and best-selling) romance.

This sense of balance, spiritual, moral and psychological, that Hesse's 1922 text offers its German audience shows Hesse's engagement in the discourse of Weimar Modernism. Kindt and Müller describe the quest for equilibrium as a central feature of modernism's answer to the difficulties of social interaction: „Ansatzpunkt für ihre Überlegungen zum gesellschaftlichen Zusammenleben war eine Sicht des Menschen, die nicht zuletzt durch die Grundhaltung der hybriden Moderne eine Bestätigung zu erfahren schien – die Auffassung, daß der Mensch aufgrund seiner prekären Stellung zwischen Gott und Tier zum Exzeß neige. Ausgehend von dieser Annahme entwickelte die kritische Avantgarde eine Konzeption der Ethik als existentielle Äquilibristik; sie trat für mittlere Tugenden, die Idee des Maßes und die Vorstellung der Mitte ein, die es dem Menschen möglich machen sollten, seine Neigungen zum Extrem unter Kontrolle zu halten und eine Position der

Balance zwischen Gott und Tier einzunehmen“ (Kindt and Müller 200). This balance is what Hesse’s *Siddhartha* argues for, but it is an argument which will be lost in the competition of the extreme right and the extreme left in Germany.

#### VI.1.2. *Die dreizehn Bücher der deutschen Seele* (1922)

Another example from the cultural archive of 1922 is the work *Die dreizehn Bücher der deutschen Seele* by Wilhelm Schäfer (which reached a distribution of 52 000 copies in 1934 (Schäfer 4)). This episodic and poetic look at German history is an explicit acknowledgement of the significance of the barbarian discourse in that it begins with the Germanic barbarian past. In reaching back to the pagan and barbarian past, Schäfer rejects a traditional option for beginning histories of Germany with Charlemagne. This text, which has clear Protestant and nationalist motivations, does demonstrate with what insistency this claiming of the barbarian occurred. Although Schäfer attempts to focus on positive aspects in his encyclopedic and poetic overview of German history – and thus present the narrative as much as possible in terms of romance – his pagan/barbarian sympathies are evident in the chapter „Widukind“. Here he writes, „Wie vormals Armin, Segimers Sohn und Fürst der Cherusker, war Widukind Herzog von Sachsen; dreizehn Jarhe lang bot er der fränkischen Zwingherrschaft Trotz, freudig und flüchtig im Wechsel des Waffenglücks, ein Meister der List und ein Nacken unbeugsam, das Unglück zu tragen“ (Schäfer 64). And he concludes this chapter, „Bis endlich drei Bistümer blühten im Weserland, zu Bremen, zu Münster und Paderborn; drei Hochkreuze des allerchristlichsten Königs, drei Leichensteine auf dem Kirchhof des sächsischen Volkes, drei Krummstäbe über dem Nacken germanischer Freiheit“ (Schäfer 65). Such post-war instrumentalizations of the barbarian discourse will play into the hands of the Nazi authorities as they challenge the churches for the soul of Germany. Himmler’s SS, particularly, will make insistent use of this barbarian discourse to buttress its own authority as an institution representing a continuity with the noble barbarian past, essentially, to recall Theweleit, claiming the *Auftrag* of the Abstract Father of Germany, the Germanic barbarian.

### VI.1.3. *Der Kampf als Inneres Erlebnis* (1922)

Although many critics acknowledge this text as a key work in Jünger's oeuvre, the brief analysis of it presented below aims merely to position it in the chronology and development of Jünger's thought, and in the discourses of its time. Although certainly worthy of extensive consideration, the intention here is to treat it like a text of the cultural archive and thus point toward Jünger's later works like *Das Abenteuerliche Herz*, *Der Arbeiter* and *Auf den Marmorklippen*. The text is significant in that Müller argues that Jünger's *Der Kampf als inneres Erlebnis* „stellt eine komplette Reinterpretation seines Kriegserlebnisses dar“ (Müller 24), as the discussion of Jünger's editings of *In Stablgewittern* already indicated. As the brief treatment below will point out, the first layer of form reveals Jünger's attempt to re-claim a mythic romance narrative; in order to do this, he must look beyond the loss insisted on by Versailles and build on his role as political prophet. One can argue that the *Schreibweise* that he employs, considering the poetic and mystic tone and constructions he uses, is a religious one, a prophetic one; finally, the third layer of form, the genre that Jünger has chosen to present this text within, is that of the *Großessay*.

Müller begins his analysis of *Der Kampf als Inneres Erlebnis* by noting that Jünger chose the „Großessay“ as the genre of the text and that Jünger's stated intention was to observe the war as something „das bestand und noch in uns besteht“ (in Müller 24). This insistence by Jünger that the war is not something that has been lost and is gone is a point that Walter Benjamin will focus on in a 1930 review of a text edited by Jünger (Benjamin 73) – a review where Benjamin also criticizes the “really rather depraved mysticism” (Benjamin 72) that Jünger evokes – and the implication in terms of *Der Kampf als Inneres Erlebnis* is that the aura of factual validation that the (large) essay genre conveys will help to support the romance implication of the war that is not gone but lives on inside the *Frontsoldaten* and all Germany. These choices in terms of layers of form highlight the realization that Jünger comes to through *In Stablgewittern*; he realizes that a realistic, autobiographical focus on the events of the war does not allow for a mythic romance framework – despite, as Fischer argues, of Jünger's inspiration behind *In Stablgewittern*: „Jünger begibt sich zunächst auf den Standpunkt des fahrenden Ritters, nimmt Krieg und Abenteuer, ‚beim Wort‘ und sucht in diesen Formen die Essenz“ (Fischer 89).

He does not, therefore, abandon the desire for this archetypal romance *Weltanschauung* when he writes *Der Kampf als Inneres Erlebnis* two years later, but his focus on the inner struggles of the German World War soldier, particularly his own inner struggles, enables him to strengthen his claim to the artist-as-prophet role that the mystic and poetic *Schreibweise* that he uses points to. Müller argues „daß er selbst die kriegerischen Elementärkräfte in künstlerische zu verinnerlichen und so eine Verwandlung des kriegerisch-heroischen in einen künstlerischen Lebensplan zu vollziehen suchte“ (Müller 24). Many Jünger critics are in agreement with this perspective on Jünger's attempt to preserve the romance by shifting it from an external adventure narrative to an internal and artistic quest. With this, as Hesse shows in the same year in *Siddhartha*, the *anagnorisis* of a romance protagonist is possible.

In fact, the war itself can now be rescued from loss and irony. Martus writes of how „Jünger den verlorenen Ersten Weltkrieg in einen Sieg umdeutet“ (Martus 253) and then, referring to Jünger's statement that the war was „Sinnvoll“ and that it was perhaps better to lose it, Martus' argument reveals the German culture of defeat dynamic toward the mythic concept of victory in tragedy (Martus 257). This does not mean that Jünger, at this time, is abandoning the dream of an actual romance victory for Germany: Köhler cites a 1923 article that Jünger published in the *Völkische Beobachter*, „Revolution und Idee“, where he argues for a true revolution whose banner should be the swastika, implying that this would lead Germany ultimately to a true romance victory. And yet the pressure of time, Jünger's need to establish himself as political prophet, and the gathering cultural hegemony of the dynamic of a culture of defeat lead him more and more to a metaphysical romance interpretation.

The significance of Jünger's shift to a metaphysical romance is underlined by Grabes' position that high literature crosses experience borders and reality-constructs, exposing collective wishes and fears, thereby showing the reader that their world is only one possibility among many. For Jünger's readers in Weimar Germany, the implication that a shift in perspective, a willingness to aim for metaphysical or artistic goals, will open up new possibilities is echoed by Hesse's *Siddhartha*. Grabes' terms allow us to note how *Der Kampf als inneres Erlebnis* contrasts its internal value hierarchy of prophetic war mysticism with the value hierarchy of much of Weimar German society, which, like Remarque, Benjamin and Brecht, criticized the inhumanity, the brutality, the folly,



and waste of the war. Jünger's intent here is to rescue the war from such a condemnation, to insist on its value and meaning, and thus to enshrine it in the hierarchy of values of Germany at the highest level.

Zuweilen erstrahlt an den Horizonten des Geistes ein neues Gestirn, das die Augen aller Rastlosen trifft, Verkündung und Sturmsignal einer Weltwende wie einst den Königen aus dem Morgenlande. Dann ertrinken die Sterne ringsum in feuriger Glut, Götzenbilder splintern zu irdenen Scherben, und wiedereinander schmilzt alle geprägte Form in tausend Hochöfen, um zu neuen Werten gegossen zu werden.

Die Wellen solcher Zeit umbranden uns von allen Seiten. Hirn, Gesellschaft, Staat, Gott, Kunst, Eros, Moral: Zerfall, Gärung – Auferstehung? Noch flirren rastlos die Bilder vorüber, noch wirbeln die Atome in den Siedkesseln der Großstadt. Und noch wird auch dieser Sturm zerflattern, auch dieser Glutstrom zu Ordnung erkalten. Noch zerschellte jede Raserei an grauem Gemäuer oder es fand sich einer, der sie mit stählerner Faust vor seinen Wagen spannte. (Jünger 2007)

In these paragraphs we see Jünger's mystic and prophetic *Schreibweise* and how he uses it to declare that new values are being established as the old values are blown by the storm of the times. He prophesies that someone with a steel fist will be able to harness this storm and the changes it brings.

Warum ist gerade unsere Zeit an Kräften, vernichtenden und zeugenden, so überreich? Warum trägt gerade sie so ungeheure Verheißung im Schoß? Denn mag auch vieles unter Fiebern sterben, so braut zu gleicher Zeit die gleiche Flamme Zukünftiges und Wunderbares in tausend Retorten. Das zeigt ein Gang auf der Straße, ein Blick in die Zeitung, allen Propheten zum Trotz. (Jünger 2007)

He does not only prophesy change, he promises it. The power of these days that he evokes, the feverish flame that destroys some, yet creates the wonderous future at the same time, is implicitly the result of the war, and an evocation of the Ragnarok motif. The further implication is that it is impossible to see the war, that is capable of generating such a seething cauldron of change, as being somehow lost; and then he explicitly insists on this:

Der Krieg ist es, der die Menschen und ihre Zeit zu dem

machte, was sie sind. Ein Geschlecht wie das unsere ist noch nie in die Arena der Erde geschritten, um unter sich die Macht über sein Zeitalter auszuringen. Denn noch nie trat eine Generation aus einem Tore so dunkel und gewaltig wie aus dem dieses Krieges in das lichte Leben zurück. Und das können wir nicht leugnen, so gern mancher wohl möchte: Der Krieg, aller Dinge Vater, ist auch der unsere; er hat uns gehämmert, gemeißelt und gehärtet zu dem, was wir sind. Und immer, solange des Lebens schwingendes Rad noch in uns kreist, wird dieser Krieg die Achse sein, um die es schwirrt. Er hat uns erzogen zum Kampf, und Kämpfer werden wir bleiben, solange wir sind. Wohl ist er gestorben, sind seine Schlachtfelder verlassen und verrufen wie Folterkammer und Galgenberg, doch sein Geist ist in seine Fronknechte gezogen und läßt sie nie aus seinem Dienst. Und ist er in uns, so ist er überall, denn wir formen die Welt, nicht anders, Anschauende im schöpferischsten Sinne. Hört Ihr nicht, wie er aus tausend Städten brüllt, wie rings Gewitter uns umtürmen wie damals, als der Ring der Schlachten uns umschloß? Seht Ihr nicht, wie seine Flamme aus den Augen eines jedes einzelnen glüht? Manchmal wohl schläft er, doch wenn die Erde bebt, entspritzt er kochend allen Vulkanen. (Jünger 2007)

It was the war, Jünger-the-prophet explains, that made the people (of Germany) and the time. Never, he states, was there a race like this, for never did a generation like his stride through such a dark door like that of the war to enter the arena in order to struggle for the domination of the era. His generation cannot deny that War is their father, and that War has hammered and chiselled them to be what they are. Jünger's evocation here of the archetype of the Abstract Father – given the cultural connections to the barbarian past already discussed – hints at what Carl Jung will state explicitly a decade later, namely that the Gestalt of Wotan is what is actually being evoked here. Jünger goes on to say that this War-father will forever be the axis around which the lives of his generation will turn, and that they have been raised to be warriors and will remain warriors. He admits that the war itself has died, in a sense, but that the war, and thus the War-father, now exists in them (and the phrasing Jünger uses here is reminiscent of spiritual possession) and the war-father will never release them from his service. And since the war-

father is in them, and they look upon the world that they form, then he is everywhere. The religious and prophetic tone of these passages cannot be denied, and the real or imagined influence of this war-father Gestalt, evocative of the Germanic barbarian chief war-god Wotan, as the second World War begins to take shape, has, in effect, been prophesied in these lines. And Jünger insists that the war-father is everywhere: one hears his screaming voice in the cities, and one sees him in the fire in everyone's eyes.

Indes: Nicht nur unser Vater ist der Krieg, auch unser Sohn.  
Wir haben ihn gezeugt und er uns. Gehämmerte und  
Gemeißelte sind wir, aber auch solche, die den Hammer  
schwingen, den Meißel führen, Schmiede und sprühender  
Stahl zugleich, Märtyrer eigener Tat, von Trieben Getriebene.  
(Jünger 2007)

With the physical union suggested by the possession phraseology that Jünger uses, his generation has fully claimed the *Auftrag* of the archetypal abstract father, has recognized him as the war-father, and has recognized that they *are* the war-father. As such, they have given birth to the war, and thus to themselves. Not only have they been hammered and chiselled, they are the ones holding the hammer and the chisel. Jünger concludes this section in a fully prophetic and mystic tone by declaring that his generation are martyrs to their own acts, driven by their own drives.

That Jünger thus gave voice to a generation of soldiers that was struggling with the Weimar culture of defeat is evidenced by his reputation among right wing nationalist circles, a reputation culminating in two offers by the National Socialist party of a seat in the Reichstag. With such ringing mystic and prophetic formulations to inspire them, they could challenge the ironic and bourgeois perspectives on themselves and Germany; in short, they could challenge that hierarchy of values and replace it with one such as Jünger suggests here. Grabes argues that the tension between the value hierarchy of a society and a text is not only a measure of literature itself, but points to a text's *Veränderungspotential*. The ability of words like those quoted above to change a society are not necessarily a function of the number of readers, but a function of who those readers are. As it turned out, major figures on the German right would be influenced by the warrior values this text expounds. The explicit point of this work was to show the contemporary German reader that another reality besides that of the bourgeois Weimar Republic was

possible – and desirable, and inevitable.

The prophetic *Schreibweise* and the essay genre allow Jünger to revive a romance narrative trajectory through a metaphysical shift. This time there are no comic moments: no naïve youngsters marching off to war, no shooting at rabbits on the battlefield, no laughing at Jünger taking off his coat in the middle of combat, no climbing of large armchairs; the inevitable social change is presented as the *anagnorisis*, while the initial *agon* phase is clearly the conflict with „einer versinkenden Zeit“: „Das glühende Abendrot einer versinkenden Zeit ist zugleich ein Morgenrot, in dem man zu neuen, härteren Kämpfen rüstet. Weit hinten erwarten die riesigen Städte, die Heere von Maschinen, die Reiche, deren innere Bindungen im Sturme zerrissen werden, den neuen Menschen, den kühneren, den kampfgeübten, den rücksichtslosen gegen sich selbst und andere. Dieser Krieg ist nicht das Ende, sondern der Auftakt der Gewalt“ (Jünger 2007). The protagonist is Jünger’s generation of fighters (not to be confused with the common soldiers, the majority of whom, likely, identified more with Remarque’s perspective on the war) who were created by the last war and who march to the *agon* with certainty that the coming *pathos* will be victorious. In a passage that is worth quoting again in full, Jünger defined this romance protagonist, and presented this collective protagonist, as possessing values that his nationalist right wing readers could identify with:

Und die Stunde kam für jeden, wo es aufbraute, dunkel, unbestimmt, aus der Tiefe, gerade, wenn man am wenigsten daran gedacht. Wenn die Felder leer waren wie an hohen Festtagen, und doch ganz anders. Wenn das Blut durch Hirn und Adern wirbelte wie vor einer ersehnten Liebesnacht und noch viel heißer und toller. Wenn man dem tosenden Lärm da vorn immer näher und näher rückte, die Schläge immer dröhnender, immer hastiger sich jagten, wenn vor der Überfülle hetzender Gedanken rings die Ebenen erglöhnten, wenn man so Gefühl war, das Landschaft und Geschehen später nur dunkel und traumhaft der Erinnerung enttauchten. Die Feuertaufe! Da war die Luft von so überströmender Männlichkeit geladen, daß jeder Atemzug berauschte daß man hätte weinen mögen, ohne zu wissen warum. O, Männerherzen, die das empfinden können! (Jünger 2007)

Jünger’s narrative voice in the essay gains its authority, its prophetic *Schreibweise*, from the fact that it is the voice of an author who was

awarded the *Pour le mérite* for the martial events he experienced and now describes, and who makes this metaphysicalized martial romance attractive to readers who will use it, and its hierarchy of values, to overthrow the bourgeois values of Weimar Germany and propel Germany to what they hope is this mystical martial *anagnorisis*.

To conclude, what Jünger does with this text is to build on the deferred comic new society offered by *In Stahlgewittern* by metaphysically re-imagining it and setting it back into the romance *mythos*. He builds on the only meaning he can suggest for the war at the end of *In Stahlgewittern* – his personal achievement of being awarded the *Pour le mérite* – by using it as the basis of his romance prophesy that the war's meaning was the following (to use the accenting supplied by an English translation):

This war is not the end but the prelude to violence. It is the forge in which the new world will be hammered into new borders and new communities. New forms want to be filled with blood, and power will be wielded with a hard fist. The war is a great school, and the new man will bear our stamp.  
(Jünger 2010: 63)

In other words, the war's meaning was the creation of this new man. Here Jünger archetypally merges the comic new society offered by the war and, in the cyclical advance of Frye's seasonal metaphor, its suggested romance *anagnorisis*: the creation of a new, more powerful, more vital, and more legitimate man able to conquer the age.

#### VI.1.4. *Mein Kampf* (1925/1927)

The importance of establishing the first layer of form in the analysis of a text lies in the need to understand that human life exists in terms of narrative. Every text is patterned according to an archetypal narrative *mythos* and joins in with a chorus of texts from the cultural archive that express a similar archetypal and mythic narrative. No text displays this more clearly in terms of the era covered by this dissertation than Hitler's *Mein Kampf* – not because of any literary pre-eminence the text possesses, but because it harnessed many of the fragmentary mythic narratives extant in Weimar Germany and proposed a new hierarchy of values. This text's *Veränderungspotential* cannot be understated, as one contemporary commentator noted: „Und wie viele junge und alte Deutsche haben nicht »Mein Kampf« gelesen und darin die Wiener Erlebnisse des Führers, die ihm die Augen für die Judenfrage geöffnet

haben, über die er sich dann so ausführlich ausläßt?“ (Schickert 27) Hitler's book – a bestseller even when he was not in power and further disseminated into the German public through political pressure when he was in power – came to express *the* major archetypal mythic narrative of the culture of defeat that was Weimar Germany. In terms of the second and third layers of form, Hitler uses a *Schreibweise* that can be described as a didactic rant, and its genre is that of a political memoir crossed with a political programme; these layers serve to package the main power of the text, its archetypal mythic narrative.

This most notorious of books underlines the importance of books as symbolic carriers or shrines for the major mythic narrative of an era, culture or nation, particularly in its time of the transition from monopoly capitalism to the Taylorist/Keynesian state capitalist mode of production of the 1920s, 30s, and 40s. Seen in this context, *Mein Kampf* manifested and shaped the world that Jünger and Howard inhabited and was partially responsible for bringing their respective societies into direct military confrontation.

Hitler's book is a direct consequence of, and deliberate reaction against, the romance implications of the Treaty of Versailles – i.e. that Germany was the “villain” of World War I. In order to find the real “villain”, and thus identify the internal enemies of Germany – a central concern for a culture of defeat – Hitler, who subscribed to the *Dolchstoßlegende* and promoted it („Sie [*die Juden*] werden jede deutsche Erhebung genau so niederschlagen, wie sie einst dem deutschen Heer das Rückgrat zerbrachen“ (Hitler 367)) expanded it in a significant way, as Schivelbusch explains: „Auch für den Le-Bon-Leser Adolf Hitler, der in den Juden eine für den deutschen Volkskörper gefährliche Mikrobenart erblickte, die im November 1918 zugeschlagen hatte, kam die Seuchen- und Bakterien-Metapher der Realität näher als das Dolchstoß-Bild“ (Schivelbusch 255). Hitler not only casts the Jews as the villains in a tragedy narrative of World War I –

Die Niederlagen auf dem Schlachtfelde im August 1918 wären spielend leicht zu ertragen gewesen. Sie standen in keinem Verhältnis zu den Siegen unseres Volkes. Nicht sie haben uns gestürzt, sondern gestürzt wurden wir von jener Macht, die diese Niederlagen vorbereitete, indem sie seit vielen Jahrzehnten planmäßig unserem Volke die politischen und moralischen Instinkte und Kräfte raubte, die allen Völker zum Dasein befähigen und damit auch berechtigen. (Hitler

359)

– but also as the villains in the new romance narrative he is writing in which he posits his National Socialist movement as the heroic protagonist in a battle for the future of Germany. This is a central text of the cultural archive that permeates the worlds of Jünger and Howard, one whose racism will precipitate a greater slaughter than World War I.

The roots of Hitler's anti-semitism can be traced through *Mein Kampf* wherein Hitler discusses what 'set him off' against the Jews. Not surprisingly, Hitler's experiences and conclusions were laced with misunderstandings and were the result of historical and sociological ignorance on his part. This aspect is important to consider in terms of both the archetypal narrative that the Nazis will attempt to write of themselves and their movement, and the one they actually did author.

After being wounded in World War I on the 7<sup>th</sup> of October, 1916 (Hitler 209), Hitler was transported back to Germany where he met, for the first time, unpatriotic and anti-martial fellow soldiers<sup>41</sup> (Hitler 210). Encountering such a weakening of fighting spirit stunned him and made him, as he relates, begin to suspect a "disease" or "conspiracy" within Germany. Hitler's *Weltanschauung* did not allow him – as Remarque did – to conclude that Germans were becoming sick of the insanity of the war; there had to be something, or someone, else behind this phenomenon. When he had recovered enough to be sent to an Ersatzbataillon, this is what he found:

Die Kanzleien waren mit Juden besetzt. Fast jeder Schreiber ein Jude und jeder Jude ein Schreiber. Ich staunte über die Fülle von Kämpfern des ausgewählten Volkes und konnte nicht anders, als sie mit der spärlichen Vertretern an der Front zu vergleichen. (Hitler 211)

This was – at least textually – an epiphany for Hitler<sup>42</sup>, evidence for his belief in a Jewish conspiracy. He conveniently overlooked (or made no attempt to discover) the fact that Jews had for centuries been

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<sup>41</sup> Considering the comic Golden Age and Saturnalia identified in terms of Jünger's World War I experience, it is understandable how Hitler branded the convalescing soldier who mocked the loyal and patriotic soldiers and bragged how he had cut his own hand on barbed wire to be sent back to Germany a „Feigling“ (Hitler 210).

<sup>42</sup> As Hitler notes earlier in his book, a section that Schickert refers to, he became a committed antisemite in his period in Vienna (1907-1913) when he was reading Lans von Liebenfels' *Ostara* magazines (Leiser 25). However, in terms of being able to ascribe to Jews the role of romance villain and the central part of the composite enemy in culture of defeat Germany, this war experience was a crucial "justification" for Hitler.

discouraged (or were forbidden outright) from participation in the military throughout Europe, as we have seen in the previous discussion of the 1911 volume of *Ost und West*. He overlooked the fact that the Jews had no military tradition since the exodus from Israel and that, given their literate tradition, they performed functions in the German military in World War I that they were deemed skilled at, just as ethnic Germans, based on their connection to their Germanic barbarian past, performed functions that the German military felt they were skilled at.

Towards the end of volume 1 of *Mein Kampf*, which was published in 1925, Hitler hammers home his vision of the Jews as the authors of the tragedy of World War I. Hitler's intention here is to frame the narrative of culture of defeat Germany in terms of tragedy in order to prepare the stage for the salvational romance narrative that he will offer Germans. In order to establish the lost war as a tragedy, Hitler, in his attempt to 'author' such a mythic narrative framework, must provide the core of the concept of tragedy identified by Frye, the revenge dynamic. Hitler insists that this dynamic is extant in the tragic narrative of Germany and World War I: „Im August 1914 stürmte deshalb auch nicht ein zum Angriff entschlossenes Volk auf die Walstatt, sondern es erfolgte nur das letzte Aufflackern des nationalen Selbsterhaltungstriebes gegenüber der fortschreitenden pazifistisch-marxistischen Lähmung unseres Volkskörpers. Da man auch in diesen Schicksalstagen den inneren Feind nicht erkannte, war aller äußere Widerstand vergeblich, und die Vorsehung gab ihren Lohn nicht dem siegreichen Schwert, sondern folgte dem Gesetz der ewigen Vergeltung“ (Hitler 361). One of the reasons that the inner enemy was not recognized, Hitler implies here and says explicitly elsewhere in his text, is because the connection between the Jews and pacifism and Marxism had not yet been made. His vision of the Jews as romance villains in the salvational, mythic romance that will lead Germany out of its culture of defeat, which Hitler is crafting here, is based on their supposed role in the tragedy narrative of World War I. The transition between these two mythic narratives for Germany is already set out in Hitler's foreword to the text.

In this brief statement he argues for the primacy of the political speech over the political book, a theme he will take up at length elsewhere in the text: this is ironic given that *Mein Kampf* will be printed several million times over, will be called by Nazi sympathizers „das deutsche Buch“, and will be compulsory on the shelves of every German family. In essence, this text was, as is the argument here, the shrine and



encapsulation of the tragedy narrative of Germany in *Dolchstoß* Weimar Germany and of its transformation to the romance narrative of Nazi Germany. While there is no doubt that Hitler's powers as an orator were a decisive factor in the Nazi take-over, it is equally not in doubt that *Mein Kampf* played a pivotal role in establishing and defining Hitler as the protagonist of the Nazi German romance, in essence transforming him into a collective figure, into the embodiment of Germany itself as protagonist of its romance narrative. This process is achieved, firstly, by Hitler concluding the Foreword with the geographical location of his writing, „Landsberg am Lech, Festungshaftanstalt“ (Hitler xxvii). The mythic narrative implication here becomes apparent with Hitler's attitude, and stated aims, in the book, along with its historical context: this prison sentence is not the end of anything, in fact, it parallels Germany's story, imprisoned as it is in the Treaty of Versailles and yet destined to be free. Here, victory in tragedy is evoked, for Hitler's incarceration added to his fame and allowed him to write this book which outlines his – and his Germany's – romance quest.

Beyond striking this victory-in-tragedy mythic note at the beginning of his text to indicate the transition, from the tragedy of World War I and Weimar Germany to that which he promises is coming, Hitler also expressly states this transition – through the Nazi race discourse:

Jede Niederlage kann zum Vater eines späteren Sieges werden.  
Jeder verlorenen Krieg zur Ursache einer späteren Erhebung,  
jede Not zur Befruchtung menschlicher Energie, und aus  
jeder Unterdrückung vermögen die Kräfte zu einer neuen  
seelischen Weidergeburt zu kommen – solange das Blut rein  
erhalten bleibt. (Hitler 359)<sup>43</sup>

This statement helps a modern reader living in a multicultural world, and witness to positive human relationships built over and through “racial” lines, to understand the fanatical attempts by Nazi Germany to fulfill Hitler's “pure” blood mania. Only in this way, does this self-proclaimed manifestation of the collective romance protagonist insist, can the transition from tragedy to romance for Germany be achieved: *only* this way. To underline this, Hitler concludes the penultimate chapter of volume 1 with the statement that the social goal of the Nazi movement „einen völkischen Organismus darstellt: Einen germanischen Staat

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<sup>43</sup> Schivelbusch echoes this: „Das wichtigste Erbteil der Niederlage aus der Hinterlassenschaft des Krieges ist die alte Vorstellung von dessen reinigender und erneuernder Kraft“ (Schivelbusch 43).

deutscher Nation“ (Hitler 362). To ensure that this personal obsession becomes the collective romance quest for the German people, Hitler casts himself in the protagonist role in the romance narrative of the Germany to come that he is writing. This implication is already evident in the foreword, but he makes it clear in the final chapter of volume 1 when he writes the following of the hundreds of thousands of Nazi supporters and himself: „Denn es ist das Bemerkenswerte aller großen Reformen, daß sie als Verfechter zunächst oft nur einen einzigen besitzen, als Träger jedoch viele Millionen. Ihr Ziel ist oft schon seit Jahrhunderten der innere, sehnsuchtsvolle Wunsch von Hundertausenden, bis einer sich zum Verkünder eines solchen allgemeinen Wollens aufwirft und als Bannerträger der alten Sehnsucht in einer neuen Idee zum Siege verhilft“ (Hitler 363).

Hitler goes on to conclude the first volume by listing the steps the National Socialist movement decided upon to create Germany's future romance narrative. In doing so he essentially indicates the obstacles that the romance protagonist must overcome in the *agon* stage of the romance narrative. Hitler expressly points out that the successful overcoming of this de facto *agon* stage requires that the antagonist be vanquished and that this vanquishing, this de facto *pathos* stage, will indicate the *agon*'s successful conclusion:

Die Gewinnung der Seele des Volkes kann nur gelingen, wenn man neben der Führung des positiven Kampfes für die eigenen Ziele den Gegner dieser Ziele vernichtet.

Das Volk sieht zu allen Zeiten im rücksichtslosen Angriff auf einen Widersacher den Beweis des eigenen Rechtes, und es empfindet den Verzicht auf die Vernichtung des anderen als Unsicherheit in bezug auf das eigene Recht, wenn nicht als Zeichen des eigenen Unrechtes. (Hitler 371)

He underlines precisely what he means by this revaluing of values formulation – which suggests that the *unwillingness to commit the genocide* that Hitler is foreshadowing would constitute proof that Germany is unworthy of demanding its rights – when he writes, „Die Nationalisierung unserer Masse wird nur gelingen, wenn bei allem positiven Kampf um die Seele unseres Volkes ihre internationalen Vergifter ausgerottet werden“ (Hitler 372), and „Ohne klarste Erkenntnis des Rassenproblems und damit der Judenfrage wird ein Wiederaufstieg der deutschen Nation nicht mehr erfolgen“ (Hitler 372).

This definitive establishment of the romance quest, the romance

protagonist and the romance antagonist already indicates why the Nazi romance narrative for Germany was, in the end, not successfully established, and why it led to a double tragedy instead. There are conflicting currents to Hitler's attempt to turn the Wilhelmine-World War I *Dolchstoß*-Weimar tragedy narrative into the Nazi romance. One of them lies precisely in the defining romance elements Hitler outlines. While it is true that the romance protagonist often slays the romance antagonist during the *pathos* of the romance narrative, the hateful and extreme way in which Hitler presents this questions the stability of these romance elements. Firstly, the romance protagonist – Germany as a whole – is called into question when its manifestation, Hitler himself, casts doubt on the protagonist's character. He does this by pointing out the mass's lack of knowledge and how it must therefore be manipulated through emotion and driven to a fanatical extreme: „Der Glaube ist schwerer zu erschüttern als das Wissen, Liebe unterliegt weniger dem Wechsel als Achtung, Haß ist dauerhafter als Abneigung, und die Triebkraft zu den gewaltigsten Umwälzungen auf dieser Erde lag zu allen Zeiten weniger in einer die Masse beherrschenden wissenschaftlichen Erkenntnis als in einem sie beseelenden Fanatismus und manchmal in einer sie vorwärtsjagenden Hysterie“ (Hitler 371) . Observations like this, whatever their empirical value (i.e. the Nazis definitely were able to manipulate the masses through emotion), suggests a denigration of the collective protagonist, Germany, and a manipulative objective in its *Bannerträger*, Hitler and the Nazis. Traditionally, in the archetypal romance *mythos*, the romance protagonist must embody values that are considered praiseworthy and desirable by society at large. Hitler does, in a Nietzschean attempt, offer revalued values to show his fitness as romance protagonist, such as his pure blood obsession and hatred of the Jews. And yet to what extent did these 'values' – along with his stated intentions to manipulate and drive the German people through hysteria – really represent values that the nation could consider praiseworthy in a romance hero? That a large part of the nation did not accept these as romance values, and thus did not 'buy' the mythic Nazi romance narrative, may be inferred from historical facts including the coercive measures needed by the Nazis to enshrine these values, the secrecy with which much of the consequences of these values were shrouded, the existence of resistance circles despite the terror used to enforce those values, and the ultimate failure of the Nazi romance. Other attitudes that Hitler expresses in his self-appointed role as incorporation of the

collective romance protagonist are also difficult to uphold as values, including his casual and positive attitude to violence: „Die Unruhestifter [at a meeting in October 1919] flogen mit zerbeulten Köpfen die Treppe hinunter” (Hitler 393). A further indication of the untenability of the Nazi romance is the fact that the Nazis must force these ‘values’ onto the collective romance protagonist *Gestalt* of Germany, and must consistently deny what were traditionally and culturally seen as moral and ethical values. This overt attempt to impose a new hierarchy of values – to perform a Nietzschean revaluing of values, as Hitler no doubt felt he was doing – culminates in Hitler’s statement, „Jede weltbewegende Idee hat nicht nur das Recht, sondern die Pflicht, sich derjenigen Mittel zu versichern, die die Durchführung ihrer Gedankengänge ermöglichen. Der Erfolg ist der einzige irdische Richter über das Recht oder Unrecht eines solchen Beginns, wobei unter Erfolg nicht wie im Jahre 1918 die Erringung der Macht an sich zu verstehen ist, sondern die für ein Volkstum segensreiche Auswirkung derselben“ (Hitler 377). For a culture like Germany, steeped in centuries of Christian ethics and morals, this bald defence of “might makes right” will be, like a skin graft or heart transplant, hard to accept and will ultimately be rejected by the body politic, as the *Grundgesetz* of 1949 spells out in point 1 of Article 1: „Die Würde des Menschen ist unantastbar. Sie zu achten und zu schützen ist Verpflichtung aller staatlichen Gewalt“ (Grundgesetz 15).<sup>44</sup>

A second current working against the successful establishment of the Nazi romance narrative is the presence, in *Mein Kampf*, of facets of the tragedy *mythos* that destabilize the attempt to establish the romance *mythos* framework. At the end of volume 1, one such facet of tragedy is evident, namely that of hubris. This comes in the form of Hitler’s anti-

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<sup>44</sup> The argument that such a sentiment, along with the entire post-war constitution of (West) Germany, was imposed from without by the Allies must be contrasted with the many currents in German culture, from Christianity to the human rights arguments put forward by artists like Schiller and Beethoven, that led to such a statement; while it is true that the Allied victory was necessary to remove the imposed Nazi hierarchy of values, this does not mean that the Nazi values were generally accepted by German society, a supposition supported by the very existence of the terror network of the Nazi government. Davidson notes, for example, “The Germans who later opposed the violent measures – and many of them did (the SD and other eyewitness reports are filled with examples of public resentment) – could do little about it. The German population reacted unfavorably to the boycott of Jewish stores led by Streicher in 1933, the burning of the synagogues, and the destruction of other Jewish property, as was remarked by Streicher, the SD, and foreign observers. But public opinion was of little importance; it was merely something to be manipulated” (Davidson 53-54).

parliamentarianism and definition of the *Führerautorität*, and how the *Führer* at all local and national levels is proclaimed from above. On first glance one can see the corruption and abuses that will inevitably result from such a system. Hitler does make the overall *Führer*, himself, an exception to this; the overall *Führer* is selected by the party in general and „Es steht den Anhängern der Bewegung frei, vor dem Forum einer neuen Wahl ihn zur Verantwortung zu ziehen, ihn seines Amtes zu entkleiden, insofern er gegen die Grundsätze der Bewegung verstoßen oder ihren Interessen schlecht gedient hat“ (Hitler 379). How seriously this was meant must remain unknown, but one can surmise the fate of an assembly of the Nazi party attempting to oust Hitler. Hitler himself ignored his own rule when he chose his successor in April of 1945. This second – and final – *Führer*, Dönitz, was thus not selected by the party but by Hitler himself. While this is a metanarrative example of hubris, the actual hubris commensurate with the tragedy *mythos* in this text comes in the statement, „Wer Führer sein will, trägt bei höchster unumschränkter Autorität auch die letzte und schwerste Verantwortung“ (Hitler 379). This, and its consequences, such as the army swearing an oath of personal loyalty to Hitler, will lead to the downfall not only of Hitler, but of the entire collective protagonist, Germany. That the *Führer* reserved for himself the ultimate authority in military and political matters led to the disastrous war and the even more morally disastrous Holocaust. Both were, in effect, tragedies on a grand scale.

Hitler expressly evokes the tragedy *mythos* on the last page of volume 1. He concludes his account of a successful speech he gave before the largest audience the movement had had by early 1920 thusly:

Ein Feuer war entzündet, aus dessen Glut dereinst das Schwert kommen muß, das dem germanischen Siegfried die Freiheit, der deutschen Nation das Leben wiedergewinnen soll.

Und neben der kommenden Erhebung fühlte ich die Göttin der unerbittlichen Rache schreiten für die Meineidstat des 9. November 1918.

So leerte sich langsam der Saal.

Die Bewegung nahm ihren Lauf. (Hitler 406)

In these few lines Hitler references the *Dolchstoß* tragedy myth of World War I, where, as Schivelbusch has argued, Siegfried's killing by Hagen became a national metaphor for the defeat of the German army. And yet, instead of making the transition from this tragedy to the coming

Nazi romance, Hitler expressly invokes Nemesis, framing the ostensibly romance-inspired National Socialist movement – intended as a national renewal to overcome the World War tragedy – in terms of the tragedy *mythos*. One can see here, as others have argued, that Hitler was motivated primarily by revenge, and the destruction of those responsible for the loss of World War I – the Jews, the communists, the bourgeois, the soldiers unimpressed by the war Saturnalia, the mothers rioting for butter, and civilians in general – was, in the end, more important than the romance he was “offering” to the German people. As A.J.P. Taylor has suggested, his true aim may have been the punishment of the German people as a whole for allowing the loss of World War I (Taylor 203). In essence, this ominous and significant concluding reference to Nemesis sets up two tragedy metanarratives.

The first is that of the Holocaust. This tragedy, it must be remembered, was written and orchestrated by Hitler and the Nazis, and thus they arrogated to themselves the right to define the elements of the tragedy *mythos* and assign them to the tragedy they were authoring. In their writing of this tragedy, the collective Jew is the tragic protagonist, brought down from his supposed heights as destroyer of the German army and supposed true ruler of the world, his hybris his supposed arrogance in presuming to stab the German army in the back. The revenge tragedy then takes its course, the terrible *pathos* then being the Holocaust and, particularly, Auschwitz.

There is, however, a second tragedy metanarrative that comes both from Hitler’s invoking of Nemesis and the events of the Holocaust themselves. This rests on the hybris of Hitler’s statement itself: here a human presumes to dictate to, or interpret, this force that the Greeks called a goddess and that Frye defines as the righting of imbalances in nature caused by humans. To not shy away from the metaphysical context Hitler sets this in when he says he “felt” the presence of Nemesis, let us accept the text as text and its assumption that Nemesis was indeed present that day. She may not, however, have been there in relation to November 1918; rather, as Hitler’s account suggests, the success of his speech and the resulting launch of the Nazi movement on its terrible trajectory was the immediate cause for Nemesis’ presence. The imbalance in nature, then, was not, as Hitler interpreted or insisted, November 1918, but the one that he himself, and his intentions, represented. Taken in the metaphysical context that Hitler’s text presents, the second tragedy metanarrative is the historical one where

Germany, again, takes on the role of tragic protagonist because of the hybris of its collective manifestation, Hitler, and its own acquiescence in this narrative: “He [*i.e.* Hitler] believed that with power he could do anything; and the Germans who supported him shared this belief. Though he was wrong, they were wrong also; and most wrong now, if they suppose they can shoulder all their faults and crimes on to Hitler’s shoulders” (Taylor 203). Hitler’s hybris here is not solely his attempt to usurp Nemesis, but his whole ‘might makes right’ twisting of the German national soul to achieve his fanatical obsessions and immoral aims, which finds ultimate expression in the Holocaust. This tragic metanarrative concludes with millions of corpses in Auschwitz and the other camps, the bombed ruins of German cities, millions of dead soldiers – including three million German ones – and a suicide in a bunker in Berlin. Hitler and Germany presumed to define the elements of tragedy and declare that Nemesis was coming for the Jews, but Nemesis, in fact, was coming for Hitler and Germany.

In the second volume of *Mein Kampf*, Hitler makes an effort to counter-act the tragic threads he has woven into his text, by re-asserting his position as incorporation of the collective romance protagonist. Over the space of a few paragraphs he uses the word tragedy several times in trying to dispel the tragic possibility of failure for Germany’s romance quest, to finally insinuate that he is the romance protagonist who can prevent a renewed tragedy: „Sicher wird auch hier, kraft natürlicher Ordnung, der Stärkste dazu bestimmt sein, die große Mission zu erfüllen; allein die Erkenntnis, daß eben dieser eine der ausschließlich Berufene sei, pflegt den anderen meistens erst sehr spät kommen“ (Hitler 570). In an otherwise meandering text, this passage is key to the mythic direction of the text. Later, in the context of confessional conflict in Germany, Hitler will attempt to transcend the conflict that pits Catholic German against Protestant German with a classic scapegoating tactic: by pointing at a common romance villain, the Jew, who, „Planmäßig schänden diese schwarzen Völkerparasiten unsere unerfahrenen, jungen blonden Mädchen und zerstören dadurch etwas, was auf dieser Welt nicht mehr ersetzt werden kann“ (Hitler 630). First he deflects from the issue of religious difference between Christians and then, in bold text that points to himself as *Führer*, he takes a position deliberately reminiscent of the romance hero’s divine, or semi-divine origins and argues: „**daß man nicht nur immer äußerlich von Gottes Willen redet, sondern auch tatsächlich Gottes Willen erfülle und Gottes**

**Werk nicht schänden lasse**“ (Hitler 630). In other words he, the manifestation of the collective romance protagonist, knows, better than either the Protestant or Catholic Churches, what God’s will is and that he knows how to defend the highest expression of God’s will – that there be innocent blonde German girls – against the romance villain. These statements literally drip with hybris and show, again, how the Nazi romance is always skirting the verge of tragedy.

The second volume of the text is replete with passages in bold print – *Führer* commands, essentially – intended to continually re-assert Hitler’s authority and right to be seen as the incorporation of the German romance protagonist. In fact, the latter part of the second volume contains almost more bold print per page than regular print, and the topics of these sections are primarily the Jews and how they must be perceived and accepted as Germany’s enemy, for example: „**So ist der Jude heute der große Hetzer zur restlosen Zerstörung Deutschlands**“ (Hitler 702).

Indications of the textual presence of another mythic narrative, however, still arise at the end of the second volume. On a page almost entirely in bold script entitled „**Wer Südtirol verriet**“ – which in retrospect is highly ironic as Hitler will not insist on Südtirol’s return to a German-speaking state when he is in a position to do so – another target, another romance antagonist is visible: broad sections of the German people.

**Südtirol hat „verraten“ erstens jeder Deutsche, der in den Jahren 1914-1918 bei geraden Gliedern nicht irgendwo an der Front stand und seine Dienste seinem Vaterlande zur Verfügung stellte;**

**zweitens jeder, der in diesen Jahren nicht mitgeholfen hat, die Widerstandsfähigkeit unseres Volkskörpers für die Durchführung des Krieges zu stärken und die Ausdauer unseres Volkes zum Durchhalten dieses Kampfes zu festigen;**

**drittens Südtirol hat verraten jeder, der am Ausbruch der Novemberrevolution – sei es direkt durch die Tat oder indirekt durch die feige Duldung derselben – mitwirkte und dadurch die Waffe, die allein Südtirol hätte retten können, zerschlagen hat;**

**und viertens, Südtirol haben verraten alle die Parteien und ihre Anhänger, die ihre Unterschriften unter die**



## Schandverträge von Versailles und St. Germain setzten. (Hitler 710)

In these words we see one of the two tragedy narratives that the Nazi romance will become. Hitler clearly wants revenge on the Germans he lists in broad strokes above, and he will get it. Südtirol, as his political moves will just as clearly show, is of no true concern to him: it simply permits him to express his desire for vengeance against all those who essentially attempted to turn him – like Jünger – from a potential romance hero during the war to an ironic and satirical failure. Hitler is determined, in the manner of the most committed *kalte persona*, that there will be no laughing at him, and he, like the paranoid fanatic he is generally perceived as, will take revenge on all those that he thinks tried to laugh at him.

He concludes the second volume with statements that not only make clear the tragedies to come (like his suggestion that twelve thousand Jewish Marxists should have been killed before World War I as a preventive measure (Hitler 772)), but also the political unconscious of this text. He concludes volume 2 with a re-iteration of the romance quest – in bold text, of course: **„An dem Tage, da in Deutschland der Marxismus zerbrochen wird, brechen in Wahrheit für ewig unsere Fesseln“** (Hitler 775). If one takes this as the quest, and one assumes that the *Machtübernahme* of 1933, the banning of the KPD and SPD, the *Gleichschaltung* of the unions and the terror that threw most Marxists into concentration camps all represent the completion of that quest, one can argue that the Nazi romance narrative actually ends sometime in the mid- to late 1930s. With that narrative trajectory ended, the mythic seasonal wheel of narrative turns further; and with so many tragic strands already woven into the national fabric, it is inevitable that the twin tragedies discussed above now dominate the stage, and this is perhaps most symbolically demonstrated in the announced theme of the 1939 Nürnberg Rally: Peace. Peace was Hitler's ultimate promise – an honourable peace for the German people, and choosing this as the theme for the Party Congress in a year when internal opposition had almost thoroughly been squelched represented an *anagnorisis* for the collective romance protagonist, Germany. But the tragedies had already been set in motion, and they forced the cancellation of this moment of *anagnorisis*.

Despite the tragic threads Hitler has woven into his text, he strives to the last, like Jünger, to present his narrative as a romance. For example, volume two concludes with Hitler denouncing the passive

resistance strategy to the French and Belgian occupation of the Ruhr and demanding, over and over again, action: this is not only a key aspect of the heroic romance hero, but also of the *kalte persona* who, through the texts of Jünger and Howard, becomes a central model for the romance hero on both sides of the Atlantic. Hitler also re-inforces the identification of the romance hero with the divine in the last two pages of the text. He does this by quoting his own speech at his treason trial and by invoking yet another goddess. Ironically, in an era dominated by the Marxist conception of history as the ultimate horizon of understanding, the goddess that Hitler invokes is History herself: „Die Richter dieses Staates mögen uns ruhig ob unseres damaligen Handelns verurteilen, die Geschichte als Göttin einer höheren Wahrheit und eines besseren Rechtes, sie wird dennoch dereinst dieses Urteil lächelnd zerreißen, um uns alle freizusprechen von Schuld und Fehle“ (Hitler 780). This metaphysical evocation of History as the ultimate horizon of understanding, Hitler finds necessary to make in order to combat the greatest challenge to him and his vision as romance protagonist: namely, his championing of traditionally questionable values. He reveals just how intricately the romance and tragedy *mythoi* are intertwined in his text and his vision, for his attempt to whitewash his morally questionable acts and intentions through a supposedly positive judgement by history is, in fact, another moment of hybris. That he concludes the book by dedicating it to the memory of Dietrich Eckart is a final attempt at buttressing his position as romance protagonist. Eckart was a minor writer and the first editor of the *Völkischer Beobachter* (Suster 99); Hitler links himself and Eckart by his dedication through a similar logic to that used by Jünger in *Der Kampf als Inneres Erlebnis*, namely the idea of prophecy. Eckart is linked to occult writings and groups (Suster 93) and apparently regarded himself, or Hitler could imply this, as prophet of Hitler's coming (Suster 99). Since the romance hero is linked to the divine, here Hitler attempts such a messianic symbolism for himself, ironically through a minor figure like Eckart.

The 1940 edition of the book (which underlines the book's *Veränderungspotential* on its flyleaf: „Gesamtauflage sämtlicher Ausgaben 6 400 000 Exemplare“) concludes with a *Schlusswort* where Hitler expressly reminds his readers that the romance protagonist *is* a collective protagonist: in other words, the hero is all Germany. Further, he reminds them that the quest can only be achieved through „der Pflege seiner besten rassischen Elemente“ (Hitler 782), but that the victory – the

successful *pathos* stage – is certain: „Wenn sie [*die Bewegung, i.e. Nazi Germany as romance protagonist*] in der Welt unserer heutigen parlamentarischen Korruption sich immer mehr auf das tiefste Wesen ihres Kampfes besinnt und als reine Verkörperung des Wertes von Rasse und Person sich fühlt und demgemäß ordnet, wird sie auf Grund einer fast mathematischen Gesetzmäßigkeit dereinst in ihrem Kampfe den Sieg davontragen“ (Hitler 782). This guarantee of victory is intended to solidify the Nazi romance narrative and entice the reader to embrace it, and willingly incorporate him or herself into the collective romance protagonist.

Hitler's text is most easily read in terms of a first horizon of political unconscious analysis, where the text is a symbolic resolution of social contradictions. Hitler describes these contradictions as he sees them, and offers solutions that will be, tragically, realized. The essential contradiction is between the idealized Germany which Theweleit describes – a militaristic, mystic, Nordic nation in a perpetual state of entering Valhalla – and the real Germany of comfortable bourgeois values. The symbolic resolutions the text suggests are in fact the two main *mythoi* that it presents. There is the romance, where the collective hero, this ideal Germany, defeats the Jewish/Marxist villain and becomes free. Then there are the tragedies: the official revenge tragedy emerging from the *Dolchstoß* legend, where the Jew is ultimately destroyed, and its necessary concomitant – one that is not spoken of, but which is chillingly present to a greater or lesser degree in all Germans except the blindest and most fanatical Nazis – the revenge tragedy of this collective Germany, where its outrages are eventually visited with destruction by Nemesis. These are the symbolic resolutions which will all come into effect.

It is in terms of the second horizon, where the text is an utterance in the antagonist class discourse, that we gain the greatest insights. Concluding statements like, „Man weiß ja nicht, was in dieser bürgerlichen Welt größer ist, die Trottelhaftigkeit, die Schwäche und Feigheit oder die durch und durch verlumpete Gesinnung. Es ist wirklich eine vom Schicksal zum Untergang bestimmte Klasse, die nur leider ein ganzes Volk mit sich in den Abgrund reißt“ (Hitler 772) make clear the class antagonism. Hitler, as the son of a marginal petty bourgeois („pflichtgetreuer Staatsbeamter“ (Hitler 2), initially aspires to petty bourgeois artistdom, slips into the proletariat and even lower, into the Vienna lumpenproletariat, climbs back into the proletariat by becoming a

soldier, and resolutely sides with the proletariat at the outset of his political career to prevent his permanent residence in that class. As a successful politician, he will ultimately raise himself and his close circle of followers into the upper reaches of the bourgeoisie. Of course, he will not characterize his ultimate wealth – in homes, cars, art, etc. – as bourgeois, but that is effectively what his economic status becomes.

In the text he makes his siding with the proletariat clear by explicitly stating that the National Socialist movement consists of „Arbeitnehmer“ (Hitler 374), and by trumpeting anti-bourgeois sentiments (Hitler 375). He attempts to remove his competitor for the minds and support of the proletariat by explicitly linking Marxism to the Jews that control the bourgeoisie, making communists and socialists themselves part of a Jewish plot (Hitler 350-351) to destroy the individual German personality, thus the nation and the race, which would allow the „minderwertige“ to then rule. The irony here is that Hitler, in his anti-bourgeois mode, upholds the bourgeois concept of the individual personality while his Nazi movement demands, as price for becoming part of the collective romance protagonist, that the individual personality be submerged in the racially pure German collective (Leiser 100).

All of this maneuvering represents a classic attempt by a petty bourgeois son of a customs official (Leiser 22) to identify with the proletariat to prevent his own permanent residence in it – particularly after having escaped a lumpenproletariat existence through the war: „Der Mann ohne Beruf, Familie und geregeltes Einkommen suchte in der Kriegarmee Ersatz für die ihm fehlende gesellschaftliche Bindung“ (Leiser 27). Hitler's political vehemence and thorough-going identification with the World War Golden Age and Saturnalia may be explained by the fact that this experience rescued him from the lumpenproletariat. Furthermore, his precipitous sinking two classes below his initial one may explain his manic and ruthless determination to fight his way back up. With the loss of the war, and the Versailles restrictions on the army, even his temporary respite within the proletariat was endangered, let alone an attempt to escape it. Hitler's sense of rightfully belonging to a higher class becomes apparent when he, like Luxemburg, reveals his class origins when he opines, for example, on the lack of culture of the German *Großstädte*. In this sequence he reveals his actual class distance from the proletariat (Hitler 288-289), and throughout *Mein Kampf* he reveals his ultimate disrespect for the masses in the terms he uses to describe their intelligence level and manipulability.

His militant anti-bourgeois rhetoric will not prevent him and his inner circle of Nazi associates from claiming all the bourgeois comforts they can lay their hands on, from their mansions, to their servants, to Hitler's own Berghof. In fact, this is the core of this textual utterance, read from a second horizon perspective: an elaborate strategy to use the power of the proletariat to remove, or at least partially replace, the existing bourgeoisie with select members of the petty bourgeoisie.

In terms of the third horizon of reading, the text as a window on cultural revolution, the text represents an attempt to accelerate the cultural revolution brought about by the economic, political and social changes occasioned by World War I. Just as Jünger will argue five years after the publication of volume 2 of *Mein Kampf*, the text supports the trajectory that the state capitalism industrial mode of production that came into being with World War I must be thoroughly embraced and pushed forward to mass mobilization and the most total and efficient use of resources. The text offers a recipe for how this form of thoroughly centralized industrial capitalism can work: a highly motivated and fanaticized proletariat mobilized by promises of world conquest under the absolute control of a single *Führer*, with sub-*Führers* responsible for transmitting the will of the *Führer*. The entire text, with its romance drive, aims at harnessing the German population to achieve this. This will be achieved by Albert Speer as Armaments Minister as he takes control of German industry. Even while Allied bombers pound German cities, Speer will still be able to optimize production; of course, this will not, as it turns out, undo the same law of industrial materialism that Jünger and the *Frontsoldaten* found in World War I; on January 30, 1945 Speer delivers a report to Hitler, "'From now on,' he concluded, 'the material preponderance of the enemy can no longer be compensated for by the bravery of our soldiers'" (Read and Fisher 225).

To conclude, *Mein Kampf* is a text that is written during the Weimar culture of defeat and it exemplifies that culture and helps to push it to the later stages of the culture of defeat dynamic that Schivelbusch describes. The initial desire for revenge for the lost war was quickly shifted away from the enemy nations to the enemy within through a focus on the 1918 revolution. The very idea of internal dissension blocked any immediate thought of re-newing the war and forced those who held such revenge fantasies, as Hitler and many on the right did, to come up with an explanation that made an enemy of this internal dissent rather than a manifestation of a plurality of opinions that

a healthy society should have. In order to make this polarization possible, Hitler and the Nazis seized on the idea of race. The idea of the purity of the German race was founded in the barbarian discourse, where the ancestor Germanic barbarians represented positive values and these values were simplistically linked to the mere fact of their Germanic-ness. The neat circularity of this thinking allowed Hitler and the Nazis to create out of the German ethnic origin what Schivelbusch terms a *citadelle sentimentale*: „Verstehen wir die aus der versagten Erfüllung des Rachewunsches entstehenden Mythen mit Freud als *Phantasien*, so führt uns dies einen Schritt weiter im Verständnis der psychischen Mechanismen der Niederlagenverarbeitung. Denn dann erscheinen die Mythen nicht nur als neurotische Gebilde, sondern zugleich als heilsame Schutzschilde und –räume, als »citadelles sentimentales« gegen eine ungeschützt nicht zu ertragende Welt“ (Schivelbusch 39). Hitler and the Nazis could only deal with the loss of the war by positing that true Germans did not, indeed, lose it, but ‘non-Germans’ like Jews and those Germans ‘contaminated’ by Jewish thought (i.e. Marxism) were responsible for the loss. *Mein Kampf*’s central objective is to buttress this ‘citadelle sentimentale’ and to make it the basis for a romance *mythos* narrative for future Germany.

Once in power, “Hitler’s basic policy of taking one step at a time to dismantle the Versailles system” (Davidson 168) will be the attempt to institute this romance vision, for the romance narrative of Versailles – with Germany as romance villain – must be denied and undone. This was the political consequence of the romance drive for German national ‘resurrection’. The culture of defeat myth that was created by writers, political agitators and front soldiers (like Jünger) after the war tried to connect the theme of *resurrection* with Germany. Like Christ, Germany suffered but, like Christ, Germany would rise again – and this symbolism marked the Nazi movement and gave it is deep, mythical psychological effect and power.

Of course, as mentioned above, there is always more than one mythical narrative thread running through any society, and the Nazis tried to put the romantic quest of the hero (Hitler as Germany) in the foreground. Yet, by basing their rule on the tragedy of World War I (especially by seeing it from the messianic third phase of tragedy), they were logically required to continue to play the tragedy in order to legitimize their rule.

## VI.2. Responses in the Anglo-Saxon World

### VI.2.1. *Tros* (1925-26)

#### VI.2.1.1. Introduction to *Tros* by Talbot Mundy

*Tros*, by Talbot Mundy, is a relevant text within the cultural archive of texts that we are considering in relation to Howard and Jünger. The stories of the character, Tros of Samothrace, take place during the time of the Roman invasion of Britain and began appearing in the pulp fiction magazine, *Adventure Magazine*, in 1925 (Clute 1999a: 669); they were the work of Englishman William Lancaster Gribbon, a.k.a. Talbot Mundy. A 1967 edition consulted for this dissertation reprints a story that appeared episodically in the pulp fiction magazine from 1925 to 1926. It is the story of the Greek hero Tros fighting against the Romans as they attempt to invade Britain, and the text has affinities with the texts of Howard and Jünger. Firstly, through the historical conflict that it chooses as its setting, it is, in fact, an utterance in the barbarian discourse of the day. The position that Mundy expresses in the barbarian discourse is closely linked to the Theosophy movement, which itself is an expression in that discourse. Significantly, in terms of what Hitler will demonize in that same year in his *Mein Kampf*, Mundy's text is also an utterance in the discourse of pacifism, an ideal that Jünger and Howard will both reject as well. Finally, its three layers of form are of interest, particularly the first, that of the romance *mythos*. The text's *Schreibweise* is that of the *Phantastik* and its third layer of form is the genre of the historical adventure story.

#### VI.2.1.2. The Text as Utterance in the Barbarian Discourse

The setting that Mundy uses, southern England and the adjacent coasts of France at the time of Caesar's invasion of Britain, puts the focus squarely on the conflict between civilization and barbarism. Civilized Rome conquering barbaric Britain: this is the traditional view of this historical event. With the tale's protagonist, Tros, siding with the Celtic barbarians of Britain, the 1925-26 reader is put onto the side of the barbarians through the romance convention wherein the hero represents the values of the reader. The brutality of the Romans, and Caesar's

depiction as a romance villain, make it clear that we are not dealing with the traditional negative view of the barbarian, for the reader is encouraged to view the British barbarians as heroic resisters to the incursions of the evil Romans. This textually expressed antipathy toward Rome is one thing that Howard and Mundy have in common. Howard will, in fact, use this historical setting himself in his *Bran Mak Morn* stories, shifting the action a few centuries and few hundred kilometers north to Hadrian's Wall and having the northern Picts be his heroic barbarian protagonists against the villainous attempts by the Romans to take Scotland.

Both authors make the Romans explicit romance antagonists. Mundy's Julius Caesar – the incarnation of the Romans as romance antagonist – is at once cavalier, effeminate, intelligent, vain, self-aware, brilliant, cruel and deadly. He epitomizes all that is corrupt and hateful about civilization, and both Mundy and Howard share this position in the barbarian discourse. However, both authors also inject a sense of inevitability into this barbarism versus civilization theme. *Bran Mak Morn*'s Picts seem to be a race on the brink of devolution and disappearance, and the Britons of Mundy's tale, for their part, are sometimes brave, yet also always fractious, hopelessly drunk and seemingly oblivious to the powerful druidic wisdom behind their comedically dissipative lives. One can admire characters like Caswallon and – Mundy's masterpiece – Orwic, but still feel that the Britons as a whole are doomed to fall to the thoroughgoing Roman brutality that Caesar has visited on their Gaulish cousins. In fact, if not for the Greek Tros and his father, the Prince of Samothrace, Caesar's legions would have held the Kentish beach on their first try (Mundy 103).

Mundy's portrayal of the Britons as less than ideal romance protagonists by depicting some of the negative traits that are traditionally associated with barbarism is an aspect of his own cultural connection to irony, and he does not fail to use Caesar as a mouthpiece to point out this irony. When the Britons break off the fighting for the night, Caesar makes a point of distinguishing the difference between 'civilized' Rome and the barbarians: "Barbarians' said Caesar blandly on the high poop. 'Such people rarely care for fighting when the sun goes down'" (Mundy 107). The irony here is that the barbarians do not fight at night out of a sense of sporting fairness, but the civilized Romans will use any tactic to gain victory. The positive barbarian value implied here is countered by the fact that they are not able to comprehend their adversary, and this,



along with their propensity to drink and other negative traits that Mundy's portrayal gives to the Britons, points to their imminent downfall and makes it clear that they require a champion.

The utterance within the barbarian discourse that this work implies, or constitutes, is one sympathetic to the barbarian, yet one that acknowledges the negative alongside the positive in the conception of the barbarian. The conclusion implied by this differentiated position, and woven into the text, is of barbarism's ultimate inevitable demise. Both Howard and Jünger will take a very different position on this, but Mundy does reveal his reluctance to acknowledge this position through the mystery religion that links the more-civilized Tros to the barbaric Britons.

#### VI.2.1.3. The textual Druidic Religion connects the Barbarian Discourse with Theosophy

One aspect that makes it clear to the reader that the barbarians are the protagonists (or co-protagonists along with Tros) is the barbarian Druidic religion and the respectful treatment it receives in Mundy's text. One of Tros' first textual encounters with Druidism is described thus: "And presently there began to be a crimson glow behind the trees. A chant, barbaric, weird and wonderful, without drumbeat or accompaniment, repeating and repeating one refrain, swelled through the trees as the crimson glow grew nearer" (Mundy 21). The explicit connection of the barbaric to the wonderful will not be lost on the reader. When Tros meets the High Druid after participating in a ceremony where he notes, "no druid had any weapon other than a sickle" (Mundy 22), the High Druid makes an impassioned defence of Druidism, clearly casting it in opposition to the romance villain, Caesar and Rome:

'Ye have heard – ye *must* have heard – how Cæsar has stamped out the old religion from end to end of Gaul, as his armies have laid waste the corn and destroyed walled towns. Cæsar understands that where the Wisdom dwells, freedom persists and grows again, however many times its fields are reaped. Cæsar does not love freedom.' (Mundy 23)

Mundy underlines the importance of this barbarian religion with the spiritually toned epigraphs he uses to begin each chapter, the "Sayings of the Druid Taliesan". Not only can one see the influence of these in the use of epigraphs in Howard's texts (Coffman 1), particularly the famous

opening for the Conan stories – “Know, O Prince...” from the sub-created Nemedian Chronicles, but Mundy’s epigraphs are used to underline the positive values of barbarism, even though the quoted sayings are intended to show how the Britons themselves are straying from their own path. In this way, the epigraphs play a central role in the conflict between civilization and barbarism in the texts.

The linkage between Druidism and the mystery religion that Tros is part of is a textual strategy to explain why Tros sides with the British barbarians, and shows Mundy’s further implication in the barbarian discourse through an occult movement of his own time. The implication in this text is that Druidic mysteries reach beyond Gaul and Britain, i.e. to Greece itself, and inform secret societies throughout Roman Europe. This secret spirituality fuels Tros’ internal conflict over violence and is a bridge between Mundy’s historically-based textual world and his metatextual reality, for he implies that the mystery religion from Tros’ time still exists, and it is, in fact, the Theosophy of his day, which he was interested in (Clute 1999a: 669). Clute explains Theosophy’s attraction by noting that “Just as important as the actual doctrines of Theosophy is the justifying narrative which accompanies their exposition. [...] In its content, and by virtue of the framing devices which intensify the effect of that content, Theosophy is a sacred drama, a ROMANCE and a STORY” (Clute 1999b: 940). Theosophy’s sacred romance narrative, which included secret societies responsible for disseminating and guarding this knowledge, is an acknowledged influence on both Mundy (“various novels by Talbot Mundy, in particular *Om: The Secret of Abhor Valley* (1924) – show the influence of Theosophy” (Clute 1999b: 940); “Talbot Mundy’s theosophical associations are well-documented” (Shanks 2)) – and Howard (“Nor is it insignificant that Robert E. Howard both (*sic*) made use of the Theosophical canon of earlier worlds” (Clute 1999b: 940)). As Shanks notes of Helena Blavatsky’s movement-founding text, “Among the motley jumble of metaphysical jargon to be found in *The Secret Doctrine*, is an outline of the theosophical ideas of human evolution and history, including discussion of lost continents and strange pre-human races. Many of these ideas would find their way into the works of the weird fiction and fantasy writers of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, including Robert E. Howard” (Shanks 2).

Mundy strengthens the hints that the mystery faith, which is somehow linked to Druidism and which Tros and his father follow, is a symbol for Theosophy itself toward the end of the book. Theosophy’s

links to pacifism – attested to, for example, by Mahatma Gandhi’s membership in the Theosophical Society (Clute 1999b: 940) – are expressed in ‘Tros’ conflict with the non-violence injunction of his mystery faith, identified as that of the Samothracian Hierarchs in the text. Confronted with the fact of his father being Caesar’s captive, ‘Tros says, “Understand me, Hiram-bin-Ahab: I am no Prince of Samothrace. If I don’t get my father, I will do such damage to the Romans as shall make them remember me” (Mundy 214). However, it is his position as heir to his father’s title, and the spiritual responsibility that it involves, which is a constant check on ‘Tros’ violence in the story. Mundy’s preoccupation with theosophical spirituality compels him to slow down his action to provide detail on ‘Tros’ spiritual stance and conflicts; Howard, although intrigued enough with theosophic thought to include aspects of it in his work, has his most famous romance protagonist believe in a god wholly indifferent to human agonizings about the divine, a god who demanded and rewarded action: the reward being the boon of being ignored.

#### VI.2.1.4. Pacifism as a Central Theme

The text’s concern with pacifism – expressed in ‘Tros’ internal conflict – is not only a function of Mundy’s interest in Theosophy, but also of pacifism’s resurgence in the post World War world (“Pacifism”: 242). Pacifism, as an international phenomenon (and one of the factors in the establishment of the League of Nations (“Pacifism”: 242)), was so significant that Hitler took pains to demonize it specifically and make it part of the collective internal enemy within the German culture of defeat in *Mein Kampf* in the same year that Mundy’s *Tros* stories began appearing in *Adventure Magazine*. ‘Tros, on numerous occasions, rejects and/or pontificates against violence, upbraiding, sometimes cruelly, his ever faithful, dog-like sidekick, Conops, whose ever-ready blade saves ‘Tros’ life on several occasions. The irony in this is part of the text’s charm, and provides some humour, particularly when ‘Tros crosses his own line and is forced to justify himself:

“So now you have a dead man to account for,” was all ‘Tros said, sparing him one swift glance as they rose over a big wave.

Conops looked surprised, indignant, irritated. He had expected praise.

“It was him or me,” he answered after a moment’s pause.

“Well – you killed him. Can you give him back his life?”

“But, master, *you* killed two men!”

“Not I! I gave them leave to swim!” said Tros.

“They could not swim. They are all drowned, master.”

“That is their affair. I never forbade them to learn to swim.” (Mundy 81)

At other points in the text, Tros’ non-violence leads him to plot or wait where Howard’s Conan would forge ahead. Even when Tros is in the thick of violence – such as the attempted landing by Caesar on Britain’s Kentish coast, or his confrontation with mutinous sailors – Mundy finds a way to employ Tros’ philosophical stance to ratchet down the action whereas Howard would drive the action to the most dizzyingly violent heights that he could. This difference, attributable to theosophical ideas and the philosophy of pacifism, forces Mundy into more detail and characterization. Mundy even allows himself historical asides in the form of footnotes as the action plays out in soon-to-be-Roman Britain, especially in Lunden and along the Thames. These factors change the focus of the adventure story from a Dionysian orgy of action to a focus on history and philosophy, suggesting the metatextual historical reality of the text’s writing.

That pacifism would be a central theme of a 1925-26 adventure story written by a British-born writer residing in the United States since 1909 is revealing of Mundy’s own past and of international discursive currents. While Mundy presented himself as having served 10 years in the British Foreign Service in India and Africa (1900-1910) before emigrating to the U.S., Clute notes, “His early life is obscure, though it is known that during the decade before 1909 he was a petty criminal, ivory poacher and confidence trickster in Africa, being twice imprisoned” (Clute 1999a: 669). Mundy’s personal experience of Africa and his interest in Theosophy both coincide with Gandhi: Gandhi was in South Africa fighting for the rights of Indians from 1893 to 1914 (“Gandhi, Mohandas Karamchand”: 476-477), and he was, as noted, a member of the Theosophical Society. Gandhi derived his pacifistic ideas from Thoreau, Tolstoy, and Hinduism (“Gandhi, Mohandas Karamchand”: 477), and he brought pacifism to international prominence. In 1906, in South Africa, Gandhi organized his first nonviolent civil disobedience campaign, and during the time Mundy would have been composing and publishing the adventures of Tros, Gandhi had been released from prison only to prepare his third *satyagraha* (“truth and firmness”)

campaign against the British colonizers in India (“Gandhi, Mohandas Karamchand”: 478). However, Gandhi’s form of non-violent resistance itself presents a less absolute form of pacifism: “Less absolute pacifists advocate other codes of behavior. For example, a second approach bars the use of force and urges moral persuasion, but also envisages passive resistance such as the resistance offered to British rule in 20<sup>th</sup>-century India” (“Pacifism”: 242). This struggle with the implications of pacifism is central to Mundy’s text: “In theory Tros was willing to admire the mystery-teaching of non-resistance and no vengeance. But in practice he had hung back from initiation beyond the novice’s degree – which imposed few obligations – and he forever chafed at his father’s prohibitions against taking life” (Mundy 210). In fact, Mundy uses the barbarian discourse, specifically the spiritual authority he has textually given the barbarian Druidic religion, to question this troubling injunction that Mundy has seemingly received from Theosophy and pacifistic movements arising in the wake of World War I, and which he is debating within his text. The epigraph to chapter XIII, attributed, like the others, to ‘the Druid Taliesan’, is worth quoting in full:

Though I have condemned you for brawling, never have I counselled peace at any price. I know but one man meaner than the coward so self-loving that he will not face the consequences of the common treasons against manhood. He is too mean to be worthy of death by ordeal; let him run; let him hide; let him live and be humiliated by his meanness. But he is a paragon of manhood in comparison to him who might have fought, and should have fought, but dared not fight, and who afterwards sneers at the vanquished.

There is nothing wholesome, nothing good in war except the willingness of each to face the consequences of the mischiefs ye have all wrought and condoned. It is your war and ye made it. Face it like men. There is no peace other than an earned peace worth the having. (Mundy 109)

As the applicability of these words in all the nations having fought World War I suggests, Mundy is not the only one wrestling with the moral questions that pacifism represents. Hitler wants to transcend the moral argument implicit in pacifism with a Nietzschean beyond good and evil approach in order to argue that pacifism is an obstacle to undoing the tragedy of World War I and to launching Germany on its Nazi romance quest. Marxists like Walter Benjamin criticize the implications of

pacifism as well. Benjamin, in the already cited review of a book Jünger edited in 1930, paradoxically, but effectively, equates the war-readiness of Jünger and his other right-wing nationalist contributors with absolute pacifism: “It is therefore quite astonishing to find, and on the first page at that, the statement that ‘it is of secondary importance in which century, for which ideas, and with which weapons the fighting is done.’ What is most astonishing about this statement is that its author, Ernst Jünger, is thus adopting one of the principles of pacifism, and the most questionable and most abstract of all its principles at that” (Benjamin 72). In other words, Benjamin’s implication that Jünger’s attitude is one that insists that the experience of war is always positive is as unreflectingly absolute as the pacifistic principle that war is always negative.

Mundy’s struggle with the issue of violence is reflected in the paradoxical contrast between his attempt to offer a romance protagonist not wholly given over to violence and Mundy’s skill – like Jünger’s and Howard’s – at textually evoking violence.

#### VI.2.1.5. The Three Layers of Form

While Mundy presents us with a clear romance antagonist in Caesar, a twin romance quest in the attempt to prevent the Roman conquest of Britain and to rescue Tros’ father, and a romance protagonist – however conflicted – in Tros, it is the conclusion of Mundy’s story that is most revelatory about his usage of the first layer of form. Tros’ ultimate success at rescuing his father after agonizing over ways and means at the end of the romance tale’s *agon* phase remains a success despite the subsequent death of the tortured Prince of Samothrace. In his deathbed speech, Tros’ father gives Tros the leave to do as he wishes – essentially allowing for the traditional romance *pathos* confrontation between hero and villain – but also foretells Caesar’s escape in the naval engagement at the mouth of the Seine. This father figure that Mundy presented from the first as a rival and equal to Tros, and whom Mundy kept off-stage until the climax of the story was about to begin, is done away with, thus affirming Tros himself as the true and only romance hero. He then embarks on the romance *pathos* scene where we see the remarkably super-villain-like romance antagonist, Caesar, come within instants of seizing Tros, but then himself making a courageous and dramatic super-villainesque escape. The lack of a satisfying *anagnorisis* moment – other than the fact that Tros thinks back to his father’s cryptic

dying words – is a factor of Mundy’s need to keep the readers in suspense and to return for the next installment of the serial, and is also a factor of the pacifism sub-plot. Tros is pressured by his father to behave in a pacifistic way, but is released by his father’s dying words to do what his nature would have him do – with the proviso that violence will not help him achieve the complete romance victory and *anagnorisis*.

The *Schreibweise* that Mundy employs in this text is that of the *Phantastik*. The magical and fantastic implications of the Druidic religion and the mystery religion of Tros and his father are always tempered by the *Unschlüssigkeit* effect that Lachmann describes. For example, this occurs in a scene when the High Druid speaks to Tros and Conops: “‘Caius Volusenus grows impatient because his ship lies close to a dangerous shore.’ But he did not explain how he knew that” (Mundy 75). Neither the reader nor Tros and Conops are certain that something *Phantastik* occurred here. When another character claims that a fortuitous storm is evidence that Tros’ father used his third eye and summoned the gods to aid them (Mundy 216), this is similarly inconclusive. The existence of supernatural powers is neither substantiated nor denied.

Mundy’s use of the *Phantastik* shows, as we shall see when we consider Howard’s work more directly, that the cultural and philosophical implications of the transition to the *Neophantastik* that Howard’s work demonstrates has not yet occurred.

Finally, as already noted, Mundy’s use of historical fiction as the genre of his text allows him to highlight the barbarian discourse and the barbarism versus civilization theme. By not opting for a *Neophantastik* *Schreibweise* and a properly Fantasy genre third layer of form, he is able to suggest an historical continuity for the ideas of Theosophy that would not be possible had he chosen those two layers of form.

#### VI.2.1.6. The Political Unconscious of *Tros*

To conclude, a political unconscious analysis of this text makes it apparent that its time of composition is decisive in establishing the discursive elements that are apparent within it. The concern with pacifism is a direct result of World War I and the fact that the Treaty of Versailles has plunged the world into a re-arming period, as Weber argues. Further, the epigraph credited to the Druid Taliesan, quoted above, suggests that Versailles is not a peace worth having, and the war

which many predicted would be the result of Versailles must be fought. In this way, this text speaks to both Germany, which considers Versailles a dishonourable peace, and to the Allies who, as Dillon argues, know that the Treaty represents a corruption of their ideals. Further, the text suggests that attempts to use an absolute form of pacifism to rectify the situation are doomed to the failure that the policy of Appeasement will be.

In Mundy's text, it seems clear that he struggles with the role of violence in the affairs of humanity. As an ex-citizen of the world's greatest empire settling in a nation destined to become (or already being) the dominant player on the world stage, colonialism rears its head as the social contradiction at the heart of Mundy's textual construction. Mundy textually puts his own ancestral countrymen in the role of bumbling, disorganized and "inferior barbarians" scheduled for colonization by "superior" Rome. As someone who lived and struggled in the British Empire and its colonial possessions, it is inevitable that Mundy would have asked himself the question, "What right does one people have to colonize another? If freedom is a human value, how can one deny it to others?" It is in this respect that Tros, who fights to prevent the colonization of Britain at the hands of the Romans, emerges as the textual agent charged by Mundy with resolving this contradiction.

As we have seen, Tros is able to sympathize with the barbarians because of a common spiritual perspective. This perspective is seen throughout the text and is a major textual cause for Tros' intervention: "So the sonorous chant of the druids began, and one drooped his head, but raised it because the hymn was of Mother Earth, who uplifts, from whom all human life emerges and to whom full reverence and loyalty and love is due" (Mundy 145). And yet, this spiritual affinity – linked metatextually to Mundy's own involvement with Theosophy – is not enough to prevent the colonialism. It does, however, put it into question, and this, as we have seen, is a major discourse in the post-World War I world on both sides of the Atlantic; Gandhi's crusade for Indian independence is the nexus of this discourse.

*Tros* reveals Mundy's class position. His fabricated past as a petty bourgeois official in the British colonial empire represents his sense of his own class status, and this is contrasted with the life of criminal and convict that he truly led in Africa, which was a de facto descent into the lumpenproletariat. Mundy's subsequent career as a writer is his attempt to climb back up to the petty bourgeois economic niche. The text



functions as an utterance in the antagonistic class discourse of the time when we consider Tros' attempts to prevent colonialism yet all the while consistently remaining in a mid-range leadership role amongst the soon-to-be-colonized and lower class Britons due to his intelligence and prowess. Tros' struggle with pacifism highlights its role in the hierarchy of values that the text presents, and yet Tros maintains his mid-range social status throughout the text through his inexplicable hold on Conops, his knife-wielding and utterly loyal right arm. The opportunism that Marx and Engels identify with the petty bourgeoisie is symbolized by such parts of the text.

The contention that the material dimension of culture influences the cultural product is also demonstrated by this romance *mythos* story of historical adventure. The ex-criminal, supposed British service veteran, Mundy, attempts to ensure the success of his attempt to escape his lumpenproletariat past, and not be forced into a properly proletarian worker's life, by clinging to the petty bourgeois pulp fiction writer's economic niche. He does this by employing the textual sleight-of-hand that is the serial cliff-hanger. The grand *pathos* moment where Tros and Caesar clash directly is only partially fulfilled and, in the main, deferred until the next installment of the series. The story is still a romance, because the *anagnorisis* stage is still promised, and has also been partially fulfilled in that the romance antagonist, who has demonstrated his superiority over everyone around him and is in the process of conquering an entire nation, is forced to flee from the romance protagonist. Mundy even feels that he must give a textual justification for this deferred romance closure by having Tros muse over his father's final words after Caesar has escaped, effectively deciding on "hating all deathbed prophecies, that undermined a man's nerve, and created indecision" (Mundy 239).

Finally, the text represents the cultural revolution of the day in its focus on the barbarian discourse, the linked concern with colonialism, and the additionally linked issue of pacifism. The text can be considered within the political prophecy concept, which is discussed elsewhere in this dissertation in relation to both Jünger and Howard, in that its detailed depiction of an invasion of Britain from the French coast is eerily prophetic, particularly when one considers the quotation from the Druid Taliesan which can be read as an admonishment against the coming policy of appeasement and a prediction of the next World War.

VI.2.2. *Winchester's War Records: Civil – Spanish-American – World* (1925)

At the same time that *Tros* was beginning to appear in the pages of *Adventure Magazine*, *Winchester's War Records: Civil – Spanish-American – World* was published by the town of Winchester, Massachusetts. This is a textual memorial of the wars the people of the town had fought in, particularly the First World War, and demonstrates just to what extent the mythic narrative patterning of the First World War permeated public life in the United States. In the works of the American 'Lost Generation' writers immediately after the war, the initial mythic narrative applied to the war was one of irony – as Allen notes when he states that the initial mood after the war in the United States was one of 'graceful acquiescence in defeat' (Allen 481). Of course, the United States was not defeated, but in a sense all of humanity was by the inhumanity of the war, not to mention the fact that President Wilson's 14 Points, which were intended to make of the war the "War to end all Wars", were rejected and instead replaced by the vindictive Treaty of Versailles which all but guaranteed another war. This distinctly complex, differentiated, and intellectual attitude was quickly subjected to the public need for a simpler and more heroic vision of the United States' participation in the war. In short, the people wanted to remember the war in the framework of a romance narrative. The frontispiece of this text, for example, notes that the town has commissioned a War Memorial statue which "symbolizes Peace and Justice" (Harris et al iii). This unequivocal placing of one's nation and oneself on the side of the good and moral was a luxury denied Germany by the war's outcome; indeed it was predicated on Germany's position as the romance villain which the Treaty of Versailles established. Like the people of Winchester, the American people were able – through innumerable cultural gestures like this – to frame the experience of the war as a romance narrative. As Erll points out, the construction of a narrative framework is a common strategy in preserving, or fabricating, collective memory (Erll 117).

The Memorial, and this commemorative text accompanying its erection, demonstrate the „Zusammenhang ,zwischen einem literarischen Text oder Textelement und einem extra-literarischen Kulturelement“ (Erll 121). In other words, the War Memorial and the text are dependent on each other, and both are dependent on the narrative established by the Treaty of Versailles, which shows that their connection is accomplished through the agency of „ein ,gemeinsames, drittes,

gesamtkulturell relevantes Element“ (Erl1 121). This element, which comprises, in effect a „kollektive[...] Erinnerungsakt[...]“ (Erl1 121) for both Germany and the United States was designed to be the “official” memory of World War I for not only Germany and the United States, but for all the countries involved in the war and the signing of the document itself.<sup>45</sup>

This text consists of military records and brief biographies of the men who served in the wars mentioned. It includes some introductory comments and extracts from letters sent home, including a very *In Stablgewittern*-esque letter by a Corporal Dennett entitled “Night Advance with the Guns”:

Think of riding with us to the front – a very lively front. You travel as fast as you can. I am on a single mount, four riders behind the captain. [...] Now you come to a cross road where they shell; you pass it on the double quick time and just as you pass and are out of danger, five shells burst there. [...] It is wonderfully exciting. You’ll never see fireworks like these again. [...] After a while I got used to it, got to be a fatalist and learned to admire the fireworks. [...] I’ve learned what Liberty is, and to appreciate it. (Harris et al. 72-73)

Dennett’s letter emphasizes the heroic and romantic, and a perspective like this is what the Memorial and the text want to enshrine for the town of Winchester and for the country. The text as a whole demonstrates to what extent the romance *mythos* was claimed for the United States: not just for the First World War, but as a general cultural framework.

### VI.3. Responses During the Middle Period of Weimar Germany

#### VI.3.1. “The Longing of Our Time for a World View” (1926)

In 1926, Hermann Hesse published the essay „Die Sehnsucht unsere Zeit nach einer Weltanschauung“ in *Uhu* number 2 (accessible to this author in its English translation, “The Longing of Our Time for a

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<sup>45</sup> Interestingly, in both the U.S. and Germany, this official memory was ultimately rejected – the Nazis used the rejection of this memory, i.e. Versailles, as their vehicle to power and their subsequent violent attempt to re-configure this memory (a central feature of this being the signing of France’s surrender in 1940 in the same train wagon used in 1918), and the US government refused to ratify the agreement.

World View”). Hesse strikes a tragic tone in the first paragraph when he writes of the cultural revolution ushered in by the war, “This development [*i.e. industrial state capitalism*] has so accelerated in the years since the outbreak of the world war that one can already, without exaggeration, identify the death and dismantling of the culture into which the elder among us were raised as children and which then seemed to us eternal and indestructible” (Hesse 2010: 64). Hesse points particularly to the loss of traditional religion and customary morals, something he implies will have dire consequences; the trajectory of Hesse’s argument suggests the *mythos* of tragedy with its downward movement. This impression becomes even more significant when Hesse insists that the individual has a need to be guided by some kind of ideal, and that meaning be attached to all that he does and strives for (Hesse 2010: 65): this suggests the romance *mythos* as a corrective for this tragic vision, as the romance protagonist must embody an ideal and struggle to complete a meaningful quest. Yet, if the protagonist in this case, the collective German protagonist, is lacking in morals, can there even be a salvational national romance narrative? And yet Hesse is hopeful, and he unconsciously reaches for the total quest *mythos* that Frye argues unifies and gives meaning to all the narrative *mythoi*, when he acknowledges the cyclical mythic movement of his time – and all times – when he writes, “But our life is an uninterrupted fabric of up and down, decay and regeneration, demise and resurrection” (Hesse 2010: 65). Hesse, as he demonstrated in *Siddhartha*, sees the complete cyclical motion of human existence, and from his initial tragic tone he evokes the rising comic, and ultimately romance, manifestations of reality: “Thus are all the dismal and lamentable signs of cultural decline matched by other, brighter signs that point to a reawakening of metaphysical needs, to the formation of a new intellectuality, and to a passionate concern for the creation of new meaning for our lives” (Hesse 2010: 65). Hesse then goes on to argue that while there are dangerous charlatans and quacks trying to exploit this “mighty current of desire” (Hesse 2010: 65) there are many genuine and truly spiritual movements and individuals offering positive *Weltanschauungen* including “a few pure, noble, unforgettable figures” from the German Revolution, among them, Rosa Luxemburg (Hesse 2010: 66).

All these thoughts, following the cyclical mythic trajectory, lead Hesse to a statement in which he embodies the political prophet: “Among some adherents of the new doctrines, in particular the young,

the happy mood of devotees confident of victory reigns, as if our epoch were destined to give birth to the savior, to give the world new certainties, new faiths, and new moral orientations for a new period of culture” (Hesse 2010: 66). Whether or not Hesse is intentionally obliquely referring to Hitler and the Nazis, the statement is chillingly prophetic. In fact, the youth movement within Nazism will see Hitler and the Nazis precisely in these messianic terms – and the messianic hero, whether Hitler himself or the Nazi vision of Germany as a whole, is the core of the romance *Weltanschauung* that Hesse is referring to. The conclusion of Hesse’s essay sets the preconditions for such a messianic future, preconditions that the Nazis will exploit and claim to have fulfilled:

None of today’s leaders, however enthusiastic or clever they might be, has the breadth and the significance of Nietzsche, whose true inheritors we have not yet learned to be. The thousand intersecting voices and paths of our time, however, have this one valuable thing in common: a coiled desire, a will born of the need to surrender. And these are the preconditions of all greatness. (Hesse 2010: 67)

It is not surprising that, in order to fulfill these criteria, the Nazis claimed Nietzsche for themselves, repeatedly quoting him in their texts. Hitler himself claimed to be Nietzsche’s inheritor, a fact that the famed photograph of Hitler with Nietzsche’s bust underlines. Further, the Nazis exploited the desire in the German people and the – in retrospect – frightening “need to surrender” that Hesse points out. This need to surrender will be used to forge the German people into the collective romance protagonist, one directed by the Führer who claims all direction of, and responsibility for, the collective protagonist. This surrender to the will and responsibility of the Führer will be engraved so deeply into the national consciousness by the Nazis that otherwise rational people will allow the concentration camps to come into being, will acquiesce to Hitler’s order for the inhumane killing of Jews and Russians on the Russian Front, and will continue to carry out Hitler’s mad orders at the end of an obviously lost war, often explicitly citing the Führer’s ultimate responsibility for their own actions.

### VI.3.2. *Volk Ohne Raum* (1926)

Another sentiment that the Nazis exploited was the one inherent in the title of Hans Grimm's *Volk ohne Raum*: the German desire for more space, expressed, for example, in the admiring jealousy of the vast American frontier in countless German westerns. This desire was made manifest and a cornerstone of Nazi Germany: the quest for *Lebensraum*. Grimm's long novel set in Deutsch-Südwestafrika is shaped by the *mythos* of tragedy, for the German colonial dream was subject to the same historical reality – the end of World War I – as Jünger's *In Stahlgewittern*. Grimm's novel has the same comic impetus as Jünger's work, and betrays the same yearning for romance. One thing that we see here, as we do in Jünger's work, particularly *Das Abenteuerliche Herz*, and in many of Howard's tales, is how the motif of Africa as the land of primal freedom is a major generator – or sublimated generator – of romance narratives for all these writers.

In this light, Grimm may provide the best linkage between Theweleit's body oppression thesis and the presence of the motif of Africa as the land of primal freedom in the works of these writers. Grimm's 1926 novel is constructed around this motif and a major scene brings the body oppression sub-text glaringly to the surface. That Theweleit's body oppression thesis applies to Grimm can be argued from several perspectives, one being that Grimm is a German male raised under the dominant paradigm of child-rearing in the German Empire, which Theweleit defines when he states:

Ich vermute, daß im wilhelminischen Deutschland nur sehr wenige Menschen das Glück hatten, einigermassen zu Ende geboren zu werden – (und im übrigen Europa nicht sehr viel mehr)<sup>46</sup>. Daß sich so viele Verbindungen vom Verhalten der soldatischen Männer zum »Normalmann« ergeben haben, dürfte eben darauf zurückgehen. Mit anderen Worten: ein in seiner Grundstruktur eher »psychotischer« Typ wäre der deutsche Normalfall gewesen [...]. (Theweleit 1987b: 212)

Another such perspective relates to the resulting need to belong to a „größere Leib“ which Grimm manifests throughout the novel and particularly in his preface: „Wem dürfte ich dann das Buch anders zuschreiben als meinen toten Eltern, und meiner Mutter zumeist, und meinen zwei Kindern, voran meinem jungen Sohne, zwischen denen ich

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<sup>46</sup> This point is important as Theweleit is not arguing that the German experience of this time was unique, but that this kind of socialization was common to much of the Western World.

Glied bin in der Kette und durch die ich zu meinem Volke gehöre“ (Grimm 5). Not only does this sentiment echo Nietzsche’s exhortation that the German national narrative be connected to the German past and future through *Geschlechterketten*, but it also agrees with Theweleit’s conclusion that, „Der Gestus des Zusammenfügens, den ich als Hauptgestus der faschistischen Art der Organisationsbildung und der faschistischen Propaganda beschrieben habe, dürfte aus dem nie versiegenden Bedürfnis des nicht zu Ende geborenen Typs nach der fehlenden Hälfte stammen, ohne die er nicht *ist*, aus der er einmal zu früh, unfertig und vergewaltigt entlassen worden ist, gezwungen mit Wunden zu »leben« (Theweleit 1987b: 215).

Grimm’s book became a central Nazi text, as Kirsch argued in 1937 (Wulf 294)<sup>47</sup>, and Grimm himself became, because of it, a Senator and member of the Präsidialrat within the new Nazi Deutsche Akademie der Dichtung (Wulf 35, 169). While Jünger dramatically rejected a seat in this academy (Wulf 10), Grimm accepted his seat. And yet, despite statements from Grimm like „Ich sehe im Nationalsozialismus mit einigen andern die *erste* und bisher *einzigste echte* demokratische Bewegung des deutschen Volkes“ (Wulf 294), and his expressions in favour of the racism so important to Nazism, thus reaffirming his need to belong to a „größere Leib“, in this case that of the white, Nordic people (Wulf 292), he seemed to have some doubts about Nazism: „über Hans Grimm schrieb ein Funktionär der Reichsschrifttumskammer am 13. August 1941 unter anderem er sei »der einzige unter den besthonorierten deutschen Schriftstellern, der seit Jahr und Tag mit peinlicher Genauigkeit vermeidet, unseren nationalsozialistischen Gruß »Heil Hitler!« auszusprechen. Der Name unseres Führers scheint Herrn Grimm irgendwo Mißbehagen zu bereiten«“ (Wulf 10).

We can see the action of *Volk ohne Raum* as a parallel to Jünger’s own youthful desire to escape Germany and get to Africa. One of the main characters, Cornelius Friebott, ends up pursuing that dream of freedom in Deutsch-Südwestafrika. On several occasions it is made clear what Africa represents to the German colonists: „Aber es muß doch in dem Deutschen stecken, und vielleicht haben die daheim nur zu viele

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<sup>47</sup> The book took on a quasi-religious status in Nazi Germany as the dedication on the flyleaf of the edition I have been working with makes clear: „Dir, lieber Günter, gewidmet zu deiner Einsegnung von Deinen Eltern. 2. April 1939“. (This edition, in fact, was apparently kept by this Günter throughout his life in the family house in Mahlow – throughout the DDR period, a potentially dangerous act.)

Hauptstädte aus ihrer Geschichte geerbt und zu ungleiche Sonne und zu wenig Gelegenheiten für Mut und zu viele Menschen; und wir hier, wir hier dürfen noch einmal anfangen, wo die alten deutschen Urväter aufhörten im großen Raume und bleiben dabei doch Menschen der Gegenwart“ (Grimm 809); and „wir brauchen doch mehr Spielraum für Arme und Beine und nicht so verschnürte und verrauchte Luft auf die Dauer“ (Grimm 934). This kind of freedom can be interpreted, as all the considerations of the motif of Africa as the land of primal freedom in this dissertation suggest, as a replacement for sexual freedom. This process, to use Theweleit’s terminology, is a sublimation of body oppression. This is thematized most poignantly when Cornelius and his cousin, George, establish their farm and an odd love triangle occurs with Greta, the woman George wants for a wife. Grimm makes it clear that Greta prefers Cornelius, and that there is real potential sexual attraction between the two (Grimm 901-902; 913-914), but Cornelius keeps avoiding and denying this until even Greta’s father (who initially did not want to part with her) is forced to confront Cornelius with his repressed behaviour: „Hören Sie mal, ich, ich hätte an des Mädchens Stelle auch lieber Sie als Ihren Vetter geheiratet. Aber George war jünger. Und George war zuerst da. Und nachher haben Sie sich wohl auch nicht gemuckst, obgleich Zeit genug war“ (Grimm 916). It is after this that Cornelius’ life becomes empty, for African land alone, it becomes apparent, isn’t enough to fulfill the promise of primal freedom for, indeed, the sublimated sexual element is key. Cornelius’ business partner points this out to him:

Was ist den das für ein Leben, das Sie führen? Auf einer Farm mit einem jungen Paare und Sie in irgend so einer Hütte, noch ’ne halbe Stunde vom Wohnhause weg, und ein paar Hottentotten und Schafe. Da ist doch schon was Verkehrtes bei! [...] Die Aufgabe heißt: Erholung, Wesertal und Frau, davon stellen Sie vornehin was Sie wollen. [...] Ein halbes Jahr müssen Sie aber wegbleiben, sonst haben Sie nichts davon. Und Sie, Sie finden auch so schnell keine Frau. (Grimm 933-934)

Cornelius returns to Germany to find a wife in order to deal with, to use symbolic terms borrowed from Theweleit, the original problem that provoked the journey to Africa: the issue of repressed sexuality. This textual example from the cultural archive demonstrates how the motif of Africa as the land of primal freedom is, in large part, predicated on



repressed or sublimated sexual desire in Europeans and white North Americans.

### VI.3.3. *Faust: Eine deutsche Volks Sage* (1926)

Before making the transition from the cultural archive back to early works by Jünger and Howard, we can consider Murnau's film from 1926, *Faust: Eine deutsche Volks Sage*. The *kalte persona*, the main expression of the *Verhaltenslehre der Kälte* – in which post-World War I man put on a cool exterior to hide his emotions beneath an armour, to cope with the threatened shaming rituals of a *Shamkultur*, and to 'shield' himself from female sexuality (as Theweleit argues) – had two competing personality types in Weimar Germany, one being the type of the *Kreatur* and the other being the *Radar-Typ* (Lethen 244). The particular tension between the *kalte persona* and the *Kreatur* was demonstrated by Murnau's 1926 film. The film, in its re-telling of Goethe's *Faust*, juxtaposes the tragedy and romance *mythoi* in the story of Faust and Margarethe, suggesting – in the ultimate victory of God over Mephistopheles after Faust and Margarethe burn to death at the stake – that a metaphysical romance narrative can transcend the tragic myth permeating the Weimar culture of defeat.

According to Lethen, the Creature is human nature at its most vulnerable and most pitiable, and Lethen argues that both the Creature and the *kalte persona* dominated the cultural landscape of the Weimar culture of defeat. Lethen warns against seeing the *Kreatur* as the opposite of the *kalte persona*, i.e. that the *Kreatur* represents an unmasked human state compared to the masked (and armoured) *kalte persona* (Lethen 244). Just as the *kalte persona* sublimated his desires into action, emotional distance, and hyper-awareness, for the *Kreatur* „Den Zwang zur Sublimierung der Triebansprüche erfährt sie in der Regel in der Form roher Gewalt oder in der Form von Zuchtanstalten“ (Lethen 248). The *kalte persona*, in effect, denied or re-directed desire before this denial could be forced on him. Both these personality types existed in an era marked by the tension „zwischen Panzerung und Entblößung, zwischen ungehemmten Täterphantasien und Kreatürlichkeit zum Erbarmen“ (Lethen 41). The Creature was often held up as a warning to adopt the cold persona before it was too late, for „Dem Anspruch, Täter der Geschichte zu sein, antwortet die Kreatur mit der Ahnung, einem ausweglosen Schicksal zu unterliegen“ (Lethen 248). In Murnau's film,

Margarethe is portrayed as the Creature personified. She gave into her desire to have sex with Faust, and she is punished with madness, prison and execution; the film's most powerful moments are when she is cast out into the snow with her dying baby, and she appeals pitifully for help but no one will help her.

Murnau, particularly with Margarethe in the stock, achieves the *Kreatur* that Lethen describes. Margarethe, the killer of her baby as far as society is concerned, stands like a martyr at the stock and then at the stake. And yet, Murnau seems to be arguing against the perceived need to adopt the *kalte persona* in a *Schamkultur*, and thus against the *Verhaltenslehre der Kälte* when Faust, who had obeyed Mephisto and fled society to save himself, returns and fights through the crowd to burn with her. Their death, on the one hand, concludes the tragic narrative that is their story; and yet it can be read as a victory in tragedy myth, for the film's framing narrative, that of the conflict between God and Mephisto, comes to a properly romance conclusion. The Arch-angel Michael appears and his announcement to Mephisto functions as an *anagnorisis* moment, for he declares that Faust is saved and that Mephisto has lost. The final image – the word “Love” shining brightly on the screen – seems an exhortation to undo the social effects of the *Verhaltenslehre der Kälte*. Murnau's message did not, in the end, have the lasting effect that he was apparently trying to convey. In fact, Faust and Margarethe's willingness to die could have played into the discourse of the self-sacrifice that Germans were expected to display during the Nazi regime.

#### **VI.4. “Red Shadows” (1928)**

Although Robert E. Howard had begun publishing stories in American pulp fiction magazines in the mid-1920s at the age of eighteen, it is in the late 1920s that he begins to write the stories that will make his later reputation. A brief re-introduction to Howard must stress his collective identity as a Southerner and a Texan, his problematic relationship to sexuality, and stress the relationship between these two aspects of his personality.

While we have seen Howard's self-identification as a proud Southerner and Texan in a previous chapter – and, apparently, proud of the slave-holding past of his family – an analysis of his work will make clear the extent to which the post-Civil War, culture of defeat narrative of

the South both influenced him and conflicted him. Particularly important is the later culture of defeat dynamic where the defeated nation sees in itself a moral bastion against gathering 'evil' forces in the new romance myth to come. Nazi Germany saw in itself such a bastion against a composite enemy including Bolshevism, Jewish world domination, and inferior races, and Howard shared this culturally-ingrained kind of world-view with Jünger:

Die eigene Niederlage als Spruch des Weltgerichts zu akzeptieren war eines, die Bedrohung der Menschheit durch künftiges Unheil etwas anderes. Und wer, so fragten die Verlierer, war besser geeignet zur moralischen Aufrüstung gegen diese drohenden Gefahren als derjenige, der ihnen schon einmal ins Auge geschaut hatte?

Was der amerikanische Süden nach 1865 der Welt offerierte, war neben dem widerspruchlosen Verzicht auf die Sklaverei die Mahnung, es niemals zur politischen Gleichberechtigung der Schwarzen kommen zu lassen. »Als er [der Süden; W.S.] den Kampf zur Verteidigung der Sklaverei führte, stand die ganze Welt gegen ihn. Jetzt hingegen, da er für die Vorherrschaft des weißen Mannes kämpft, ist aus seiner verlorenen eine größere Sache geworden. In diesem Kampf ist der Süden nicht mehr allein. Auf seiner Seite stehen der Norden und die ganze zivilisierte Menschheit.« (Schivelbusch 45-46)

Both Howard and Jünger would come to question their respective culturally-ingrained missions – including fighting for the global dominance of the white man – and this questioning forms a major aspect of their work.

Howard's reactions to sexuality were both complex and a source of textual content. In the meta-text of his own life, he avoided entering into a meaningful relationship with Novalyne Price – the only woman Howard is known to have dated – and used the excuse of having to care for his mother (Gramlich 13). This apparent avoidance of sexuality is a symptom of something deeper, possibly aspects of his up-bringing that neighbours were aware of: "During the father's absence, while on duties made by an ever-demanding patronage, mother and son keep close contact and are inseparable, portraying a devotion seldom known, even between parent and child" (Burns in Howard 2006b: 20). His father, Isaac, left widowed and childless in the same week in June of 1936 wrote:

When he was growing up he had no companion except his mother. I was in (and) out as any country practitioner is; never had time to cultivate and shape his course through the years. He had witnessed much of her suffering. Since Robert was a small child his mother has been from a semi-invalid to a complete invalid, and for two years she has suffered more than any one except Robert and myself. (I) knew this same sympathy he had felt always grew and deepened until he became totally unbalanced. And each time he saw her grow worse he began to prepare to suicide and finally when he saw she could live no longer he lost himself and nothing could stop him and he went. (Dr. I.M. Howard in Howard 2006b: 182)

In fact, Theweleit does argue that ‘excessive’ attention from the mother in the general context of the prevailing Western *Sauberkeitserziehung* of the time does have negative, even extreme consequences as the violence toward women evident in Howard’s early writings suggests. Such disturbing sentiments can be seen in “The Sheik” of 1923:

“I love you!” he continued, dragging her around the tent by the hair. “You shall be mine!” slamming her down on the floor and masterfully kicking her in the face.

“Kiss me, my dear,” he ordered passionately massaging her features with a pair of brass knucks. (Howard 2006b: 35)

and in “The Rules of Etiquette” from 1924:

If a girl stops you to talk while you are chasing your trains,  
And it looks like they’re going to lose ye,  
Just up with your musket and knock out her brains,  
Saying, “Miss, you’ll have to excuse me.”

(Howard 2006b: 53)

Theweleit’s discussion of Margaret Mahler’s theories (Theweleit 1987b: 210-212) seems entirely applicable to Howard’s situation,<sup>48</sup> particularly when Theweleit writes:

Die Männer von denen ich hier schreibe, haben dieses Stadium der Entwicklung [*d.h.* „ein »ich« geworden“] aller Wahrscheinlichkeit nach nie erreicht [...] durch den Zugriff

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<sup>48</sup> See Barbara Barrett’s masterful look at this in *Betwixt and Between the Twin Gates* vol. 2, no. 1, “Hester Ervin Howard and Tuberculosis: Part II: Collateral Issues” (in *REHupa* 215).

strenger, harter Hände, die die Lustempfindungen aus der Haut vertrieben, durch schmerzhaftige Eingriffe körperlicher Strafen aber möglicherweise auch durch gelegentliche oder andauernde »verschlingende« Emotionalität mütterlicherseits, die das Kind mit unverarbeitbaren intensiven Reizen »überschwemmt« vor denen es ebenso nach »innen« flüchten kann wie vor dem Schmerz.

Diese »erste« Sozialisation ließ das Kind ohne ein sicheres Gefühl äußerer Grenzen, ohne die psychische Instanz des »Ich« im Freudschen Sinne.

(Theweleit 1987b: 212)

A lack of the Freudian „Ich“ can explain a reluctance for intimacy, and it can explain the attraction to the *kalte persona* which shores up the uncertain sense of self with the adoption of emotional armour.

In this light, one can argue that Howard takes up the Africa as the land of primal freedom motif – which plays a significant role in his oeuvre (including the related ‘freeing of the slaves’ motif) – as a result of such body oppression. As a Southerner, Africa presented itself more directly to Howard than to Jünger in the form of the descendants of African slaves and the enduring racism against them. While the Oedipal complex<sup>49</sup> looms large in an interpretation of Howard, for he commits suicide because his mother is dying, his work suggests another sexual taboo that Howard was struggling with. This second taboo was linked to his identity as a Southerner.

Howard hints in several places that he finds black women attractive. Arney quotes Howard’s words to Preece in March of 1929: “A naked Negress is a rather fascinating study, when young and lissome” (Arney 2). This quote is embedded by Arney in a text which both reaffirms the prejudiced nature of Cross Plains, Texas society, and assures us – through the observations of Tevis Clyde Smith one of Howard’s best friends – that Howard shared the racist outlook of those around him (Arney 2). And yet, some of Howard’s texts contradict the cultural directive toward Blacks arising from the South’s culture of defeat.

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<sup>49</sup> In order to describe the same phenomena – i.e. the socialization and attitudes of men in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century – Theweleit and Lethen use many of the same terms and their conclusions tend to agree with each other; however, they do perceive the term ‘Oedipus Complex’ (Theweleit 1987b: 212-216) and the role of the father differently, as Lethen stresses the *Vaterlose Gesellschaft*.

The startling, sexually-powerful and extremely violent “Etched in Ebony” is an example of this contradiction. This short text originally appeared in an amateur publication Howard was involved with in the late 1920s, *The Junta*, and was later reprinted in Glenn Lord’s *The Trumpet* of May 1968 (in Van Hise 1999: 5). This story begins with a white man beating a black woman – but the violence is sexually charged. The first words of dialogue establish the textual and cultural conflict: “Tell me man,” the black woman says, “– don’t you like me bettuh’n any white gal you evah knew!” This enrages and excites the white male. He continues beating the woman but thinks, “Each blow was a mad caress. She knew – she laughed.” The brief piece concludes with these words: “White women are marble and ice; black women are supple steel and blasting fire” (Howard in Van Hise 1999: 5). This brief text demonstrates the nexus of cultural identity and sexuality in Howard’s texts, and illuminates his later textual usage of the motif of Africa (and Africans, and their descendents) as the land of primal freedom.

#### VI.4.1. “Red Shadows” as a Romance *Mythos* Narrative

This is a narrative that is firmly a romance, and how thoroughly Howard uses the romance *mythos* to pattern his story will be demonstrated by investigating all the facets of the tale that make it a romance. Howard’s embracing of the romance *mythos* is explained to some extent by the South’s own *Kultur der Niederlage*, which drew heavily on Scott’s romances.

“Red Shadows” appeared in the pulp fiction magazine *Weird Tales* in August of 1928. The mass produced pulps were given a boost by the economic expansion brought on by World War I and the United States’ role as post-war creditor nation. To recall Adorno and Horkheimer, it must be remembered that the pulp fiction industry manufactured the „Bedürfnis“ for pulp fiction in its consumers, and this begs the question of the *Veränderungspotential* of a pulp fiction romance like Howard’s: how much did a story like this affect the hierarchy of values of the readers? To answer this we must consider both the mythic romance narrative itself, and a central element of this narrative, the motif of Africa as the land of primal freedom. And we must relate both of these back to the linked issues from Howard’s life, the Southern cultural mission insisting on the inferiority of blacks and the related issue of repressed sexuality.

Interestingly, from a dialogic application of Frye’s archetypal

theories to Howard's adventure tale that plays out in Africa, and which is the first appearance of his Puritan<sup>50</sup> swashbuckler character, Solomon Kane, the story contains a sub-plot that demonstrates Howard's lifelong interest in, and agreement with, the concepts of racial memories and archetypes. Significantly, Kane was a product of Howard's youth: "Solomon Kane I created when I was in high school, at the age of about sixteen, but...several years passed before I put him on paper" (in Campbell xi). The Englishman Kane displays an instinctive understanding of the language of the drums that he hears in Africa, and he responds explicitly to the drums' awakening of deeply-rooted racial memories.

"Red Shadows" is, along with the bulk of Howard's work, a romance, and Solomon Kane's quest appears on the first page of the story. On a midnight road in France he comes upon a dying girl raped by bandit leader Le Loup, and swears to take vengeance. To avenge this raped and murdered girl is Kane's major adventure, and he undertakes a sequence of minor adventures that constitute the *agon* of the romance *mythos*. These include nailing Jean, "the most desperate bandit unhung" (Howard 1978: 22), to a tree, striking down the Spaniard Juan, dueling La Costa, executing the hermit's hut gambit, assaulting Le Loup's lair, pursuing Le Loup through Italy and Spain, sailing to Africa, meeting N'Longa, being captured by Gulka, getting tied to a stake and witnessing a zombie's attack. Only then does he move on to the *pathos* stage where he completes the major adventure during his climactic duel with Le Loup in the jungle. "Red Shadows" is essentially a phase 3 romance, what Frye terms a pure Quest romance. With the *agon* and *pathos* stages thus sketched out briefly, a consideration of the *sparagmos* and the *anagnorisis* stages of the romance will follow a more thorough discussion of the romance protagonist and antagonist.

As readers, our values are those of Kane, who heroically chooses to avenge a raped girl (and her whole village and the friar hung by Le Loup's men), and we do not sympathize with Le Loup, despite the temptation of succumbing to his obvious charisma and Howard's skill at evoking this character.

Howard also makes quite certain that the requisite associations

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<sup>50</sup> That the main character is explicitly labelled a Puritan is significant for reaffirming the body oppression aspect of the motif of Africa as the land of primal freedom, for Puritanism is known as being quite repressive of sexuality and yet Howard, as a young man, felt the need to identify with this Puritanism, and, indeed, to praise it.

with the divine and the satanic are front and centre throughout the tale, highlighting this through the initial confusion as to who really embodies satanic forces. Kane is identified as Satan twice by Le Loup's men (Howard 1978: 23), and as in some way satanic and Mephistophelean by the narrator himself (Howard 1978: 25). Epithets applied to Kane include 'demon' and 'fiend' (Howard 1978: 22), and the first words he speaks are, "The fires of Hades!" (Howard 1978: 20). Le Loup himself also consistently uses satanic curses – "Hell's devils!", "Satan's curses," and "Saints and devils!" (Howard 1978: 23). However, the proper divine and demonic associations are made when Kane confronts Le Loup and asks, "...are you prepared to meet your master, the Devil?" to which Le Loup replies, "I must say that I can at present render a most satisfactory account to his Horned Excellency" (Howard 1978: 26). Kane is also mocked by Le Loup as 'Galahad', the knight who achieved the Holy Grail (Howard 1978: 28), and Kane "considered himself a fulfiller of God's judgement, a vessel of wrath to be emptied upon the souls of the unrighteous" (Howard 1978: 34-35).

Along with an association with demonic forces, Frye gives a list of attributes of the romance antagonist, among them confusion and sterility. These fit Le Loup, particularly confusion, for Howard hints several times that Le Loup is mad, particularly in this exchange between Le Loup and Kane:

It was Kane who spoke next. "Why have you fled from me across the world? You do not really fear me."

"No, you are right. Really I do not know; perhaps flight is a habit which is difficult to break. ... – a whim of mine, a mere whim. Then – mon Dieu! – mayhap I have enjoyed a new sensation...." (Howard 1978: 36)

Sterility also fits Le Loup, for his sexuality results in death.

Besides the association with the divine, the other attributes Frye lists for the protagonist of romance – "spring, dawn, order, fertility, vigor, and youth" (Frye 188) – do not, at first glance, seem to fit Kane particularly well. Kane's dark appearance, and the fact that most of the story takes place at night, don't lend themselves to spring or dawn. Kane's mission to right a wrong does, however, fit with a sense of order, and he is certainly vigorous in pursuing his quest. Fertility is a paradoxical fit, and the motivation to avenge a raped girl's death suggests the presence of the body oppression factor.

In Frye's treatment of the romance *mythos*, he argues that



romance is dialectical and the characters oppose each other like pieces on a chess board. We see this already in Kane (a.k.a. Galahad, the white knight) opposing Le Loup (the black knight), and the pattern continues with Kane's African ally, and rightful leader of the village, N'Longa as the white king, while the usurping Songa represents the black king. The gorilla that comes to Kane's aid is the white rook and opposes Songa's right arm, Gulka, who represents the black rook.

The white king role is typically given to a character that Frye calls 'the wise old man' (Frye 195) and one who is often a magician. N'Longa fits this role, both by his aged appearance – "He was lean, withered and wrinkled. The only thing that seemed alive about him were his eyes" (Howard 1978: 32) – and his own statement of his magical ability: "Me, N'Longa, ju-ju man, me, great fetish. ... Me pow'rful ju-ju man" (Howard 1978: 32). This identification of N'Longa with a Prospero-like wise old magician will offer a surprising insight into Howard when we consider Songa as the black chess piece counterpart of this figure.

The white queen role is identified by Frye as the lady for whose sake the quest is performed (Frye 196), and Kane's quest is performed to avenge the raped and dying girl. She is represented by Howard with a queenly metaphor: she is the 'white rose' that Kane comes across at the beginning of the story. She has sibylline qualities as well, in that she – and the quest she represents – is an indicator of Kane's future: she will ultimately propel Kane to pursue Le Loup all the way to Africa. She also represents a bride-figure, and the fact that this "potential" bride waiting at 'home' as Frye puts it is dead before Kane even leaves on the quest is a further suggestion that Theweleit's body oppression theory is at work here.

Given that N'Longa and 'the white rose' "...are the king and queen of the white pieces..." (Frye 195), the psychological and literary complexity of Howard's work becomes apparent when we consider the opposing pieces in the tale: "The evil magician and the witch [...] are the black king and queen." (Frye 196). Kane, in fact, comes face to face with the black king in N'Longa's Village: "There in front of him loomed a shape hideous and obscene – a black, formless thing, a grotesque parody of a human. Still, brooding, blood-stained, like the formless soul of Africa, the horror, the Black God" (Howard 1978: 33). That the Black God acts very much in the nature of a game-deciding chess piece is made apparent when he acts through, and controls, Le Loup, Songa and Gulka. Howard makes this connection clear on several occasions, one being

when Gulka comes across the helpless Kane: "The Black God had been kind to his neophyte; had led him upon his victim helpless and unarmed" (Howard 1978: 48). In effect, Songa is only the nominal black king: he is the representative of the Black God, who is the true black king.

Besides the dead 'white rose' and the female gorilla Gulka kills, we seem to have no other female characters in "Red Shadows" to assign the role of black queen to. However, Kane himself suggests the presence of a black queen through his cryptic, drum-related comment – "Lies...jungle lies like jungle women that lure a man to his doom" (Howard 33). Given that the text then speaks no more about any specific "jungle woman", this very absence inexorably leads us to search for the black queen outside the text, in the metatextual narrative of Howard's life. This jump to the metanarrative level is justified when one considers the argument linking the Africa as the land of primal freedom motif with repressed sexuality, particularly Howard's text from the same time, the above-cited "Etched in Ebony". Not only was there an explicit cultural injunction to regard Blacks as inferior and to ensure that they remained that way, there was an explicit corollary injunction against interracial relationships. In effect, the black queen and the sexual attraction she represents permeates the text on both the inner-textual and extra-textual levels. That Kane is explicitly made to be a Puritan, a strict Protestant sect renowned for their sexual repression, suggests this, as does the fact that a sexual crime leads to the Slave Coast of Africa, i.e. the place where the black women Howard knows ultimately came from.

Frye notes that there is a character type that stands outside the usual dialectical structure of romance, a character that is or suggests a spirit of nature. Such a character represents a binary world: the morally neutral intermediate world of nature and, simultaneously, a world of mystery (Frye 196). In "Red Shadows" the African jungle is this binary world: it is nature unto itself, yet also a world of mystery to Kane, somehow sentient and supernatural, and expressing itself through the sensual drums of the story. The non-dialectical character who inhabits this binary world is the gorilla, and he is a child of nature who can be conceived of as being morally neutral. He does, however, as such characters in romance do, come to serve Kane in that he rescues him from certain death at Gulka's hands. However, he does not intervene out of a moral interest in their contest; he intervenes because he has been able to track, Gulka, the slayer of his mate. The sexual connection of this rescue of the romance protagonist cannot be underplayed in terms of

Howard's sexual repression, and the gorilla's symbolic vengeance on Gulka's corpse, in addition to the blood vengeance, needs to be underlined. Gorillas and gorilla-like creatures reappear throughout Howard's texts, and the possible psycho-sexual meaning of this strange recurrence needs to be considered, particularly as the gorilla can be considered a symbol of primal human sexuality.

The gorilla's arrival does reveal Kane's mysterious rapport with the binary nature of Africa and his connection to a sexually-charged Africa as the land of a primal freedom. The reader suspects this connection every time Kane hears the voice of the jungle – the drums – and acknowledges the validity of the message:

All this and more the drums roared and bellowed to Kane as he worked his way through the forest. Somewhere in his soul a responsive chord was smitten and answered. You too are of the night (sang the drums); there is the strength of darkness, the strength of the primitive in you; come back down the ages; let us teach you, let us teach you (chanted the drums). (Howard 1978: 31)

And:

Again, somewhere in his soul, dim primal deeps were stirring, age-old thought memories, veiled in the fogs of lost eons. He had been here before, thought Kane; he knew all this of old.... All this have I known, somewhere, sometime, thought Kane; now I am the main actor – (Howard 1978: 39).

Kane further proves his rapport with this binary nature of Africa by both surviving its conditions (not a given for a white man in the 17<sup>th</sup> century) and by heeding the injunction of its mysterious soul to “Flee if you would live” (Howard 1978: 52).

Frye compares the struggle of the romance protagonist to the struggle against the Biblical beast, the Leviathan, which represents a tyrannous society. Even though the story ends with the suggestion that the Black God retains an ultimate, supernatural control over N'Longa's village, in a sense, Kane does destroy the Leviathan. He overcomes the actual tyrannous society by challenging the evil triumvirate ruling N'Longa's village: Le Loup, Songa and Gulka. What makes this ruling group a Leviathan in Frye's sense is the anomaly in the group, namely the influence and power of the European outsider, Le Loup. This connection with the Leviathan is strengthened by Frye's insistence that the Leviathan is a sea monster and, symbolically, the sea itself. If the sea

represented anything to the Africans of the “Slave Coast”, it represented the monster that thrust itself upon them from the sea: European slavery and colonization. From this perspective, “Red Shadows” reads as a commentary on European colonization, much like Mundy’s *Tros* two years earlier. No less than four European nations are represented on the Slave Coast of Africa where our story takes place: the Spanish, in the form of the ship that brings Le Loup; the French, through Le Loup; the Portuguese, in the form of the ship that brings Kane; and the English, through Kane. Kane, as the romance protagonist messianic deliverer, destroys the Leviathan by removing the European colonial presence, Le Loup, from N’Longa’s Village and he does not challenge the Black God’s ultimate legitimacy. In fact, he obeys the “voice” of the binary world of Africa, the drums, and leaves Africa as well, thereby completing the destruction of the Leviathan by also removing *himself* as a European colonial presence.

If the romance protagonist can be considered in terms of the Biblical Leviathan symbolism that Frye argues characterizes the romance hero’s divine mission, then Kane must have the requisite ritual death and rebirth as well. Since the argument here suggests that the Leviathan symbolism of the tyrannous society is a reference to European colonialism, Kane’s ritual and metaphoric death must come during the *pathos* stage where he confronts the European who has been the instigator in turning N’Longa’s village into a tyrannous society. In fact, during the climactic duel with Le Loup, Howard demonstrates his skill at creating suspense and leaving the reader to wonder, momentarily, but intensely, if Kane has indeed just been killed: “...Solomon Kane reeled for the first time as he felt cold steel tear through his body” (Howard 1978: 47). This is intended to seem like a death pronouncement but, using similar romance writer sleight of hand techniques, the cut of Le Loup’s sword is shallow and Kane is thus textually ‘reborn’ and proceeds to win the duel and kill Le Loup.

With this death struggle of the Europeans ending with Kane’s victory, we then move to what Frye indicates is a sometimes optional third stage of romance, “*Sparagmos*, or the sense that heroism and effective action are absent, disorganized or foredoomed to defeat, and that confusion and anarchy reign over the world” (Frye 192). Kane, a.k.a. the hero, a.k.a. Galahad, the white knight, does in a sense disappear after slaying Le Loup. Not only does he feel a strange sense of futility afterwards, but he makes the mistake of laying aside his sword, the

source of his heroic power. Kane even seems absent when the gorilla arrives to save Kane from Gulka, for the battle between the two occurs as if Kane is – for all intents and purposes – invisible. The mutilation or physical handicap associated with the term *sparagmos* is present in the form of Kane’s wounds, particularly the last fatal-seeming cut by Le Loup. Kane proceeds to perform a classic purification and ritual rebirth by washing himself in a stream; Frye notes, “Mutilation or physical handicap, which combines the themes of *sparagmos* and ritual death, is often the price of unusual wisdom or power...” (Frye 193). The great wisdom or power Kane gains during this scene comes through his rescue by the gorilla. The fact that the gorilla, a force of Nature, does not see him indicates that Kane is innocent of the initial sin – i.e. Le Loup’s violent disturbance of the balance of power in the village – that disrupted the community and turned it into the Leviathan. Kane has gained the wisdom to understand the voice of the binary world of Africa, the drums – and the wisdom to heed them.

These associations are strengthened if we read this *sparagmos* stage of “Red Shadows” as shifting, or oscillating, from the “pure” third phase of romance, ‘the Quest’, to the fourth phase, the ‘Assault of Experience’. Frye makes clear in the spectral metaphor of his *mythoi* that the narrative structure of texts can incorporate elements from more than one phase of a narrative *mythos* – and this occurs in Howard’s text. While the narrative structure of “Red Shadows” is remarkably consistent with the third phase of romance that Frye describes, the theme of the fourth phase is present throughout the tale. For example, it is part of Kane’s motivation for pursuing Le Loup: Kane seeks to kill Le Loup in order to symbolically restore the initial innocence that Le Loup violated by raping and murdering the ‘white rose’. After killing Le Loup – in other words, during the *sparagmos* stage – Kane comes to realize the impossibility of actually maintaining or restoring the innocent world:

The trail ended here, and Kane was conscious of a strange feeling of futility. He always felt that, after he had killed a foe. Somehow it always seemed that no real good had been wrought; as if the foe had, after all, escaped his just vengeance. (Howard 1978: 47).

In terms of this fourth phase of romance, Frye also writes of “the difficult theme of consolidating heroic innocence in this world after the first great quest has been completed” (Frye 201), and Kane exemplifies this fourth phase theme by attempting to regain this innocence in two

ways.

First, during the sparagmos stage, "...he laid down his rapier and crossed, weaponless, to the stream. There he laved his wounds..."(Howard 1978: 47-48): as mentioned earlier, this is a classic purification ritual and the return to water is a symbol of rebirth. Kane's recovery, through this act, of his innocence is suggested when the gorilla arrives on the scene shortly afterwards and does not attack him, weaponless and helpless as he is, but instead saves him from Gulka. The narrator further underlines the impossibility of maintaining or regaining innocence by stating of the action that began the *sparagmos* stage and Kane's water-rebirth ritual – the laying aside of his rapier – that, "Here he made the only mistake of that kind that he ever made in his entire life" (Howard 1978: 47).

The second way Kane attempts to regain his innocence occurs during the fourth stage of his quest, the *anagnorisis*, and it is coloured by the social aspect of the fourth phase of romance in that, "The integrated body to be defended may be individual or social or both" (Frye 201). Kane's leaving the Slave Coast is both a way of preserving his own innocence and of defending N'Longa's Village from further corruption by the European Leviathan. However, Howard strips Kane of both these regainings of innocence by declaring Kane's first method a mistake and, metatextually, by undoing Kane's gesture of leaving Africa by having him return in later stories of the series<sup>51</sup> – in one of which, "Moon of Skulls", he is again faced with a colonial temptation.

As alluded to earlier, the 'white rose', the young woman raped and murdered by Le Loup, actually takes on the role of the white queen from Frye's archetypal character breakdown. The fact that she is dead before Kane even departs on his quest lends credence to the body oppression aspect of Howard's usage of the Africa as the land of primal freedom motif, for it can be argued that the white rose represents the Puritan's repressed sexuality, and that the quest to Africa for vengeance on her behalf is, in fact, a quest to reclaim that sexuality, or at least to experience a sublimated violent expression of that sexuality. This posthumous rescue – the romance quest – is intended to remove the stigma of rape from the 'white rose'. This quest suggests aspects of a

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<sup>51</sup> Howard *tries* to keep Kane out of Africa by setting subsequent tales in Europe – in England in "Skulls in the Stars", and in Germany in "Rattle of Bones" – before realizing that the *frisson* of the Kane stories lay in the Africa as the land of primal freedom motif, and so he has Kane textually return there.

consummation, or a marriage, through the sexual undertones in the initial scene where Kane comes upon the dying girl, touches her breast, and vows, “Men shall die for this”. Kane’s obsessive fury derives as much from the rape of the girl as her murder. In avenging her, Kane clears her of her stigma, in that way posthumously claiming her. This complicated equation of violence, death, stigma, frustration, and metaphoric union beyond death are expressions of Howard’s youthful desire which one can see in the light of the not-fully-developed-man that Theweleit describes.

With these ruminations on the nature and meaning of the romance quest itself in “Red Shadows”, one needs to consider the final stage of the romance *mythos*, the *anagnorisis*, the ‘Recognition of the Hero’. The *anagnorisis* of “Red Shadows” begins with Kane reclaiming his rapier and cleansing it. This is revealing, in that all Kane brings back from his quest is his rapier. The sword – a symbol of male sexuality – is all Howard allows Kane to take back from this quest, but one purified of a sexual crime (i.e. the blood of a sexual criminal). The winning *back* of this precious object (thanks to the gorilla) is a major part of the *anagnorisis*, for “Red Shadows” opens with an imposing sexual barrier: the death of the ‘white rose’. The only forms of “sexual” contact Kane has with her is the touching of her breast as she dies and the symbolic contact of running through her killer and rapist at the end. The reader recognizes Kane as the hero in that he has completed his quest and avenged the ‘white rose’, thereby also destroying the Leviathan that this rapist brought into being in his attempt to escape punishment. With this Howard does not (and possibly could not) follow the standard Quest romance paradigm to the traditional *anagnorisis* where the hero is rewarded, often with a bride. The only way that Howard seems to be able to approximate the union of male and female (not just in terms of Kane and the girl, but also in the parallel reality of the male gorilla and his mate) is to have the dead and violated female avenged by the male – a symbolic union at best.

Another major aspect linked to the completion of the quest during the *anagnorisis* is the recurrence of the Africa as the land of primal freedom motif in the form of the drums. It is they who provide the tale’s final wisdom: “‘The wisdom of our land is ancient; the wisdom of our land is dark; whom we serve, we destroy. Flee if you would live, but you will never forget our chant. Never, never,’ sang the drums” (Howard 1978: 52). Kane confirms himself the hero by heeding this aggressive anti-colonial wisdom, and we recognize, in his decision to return to the

ship with nothing more than his purified rapier, the textual defeat of the European colonial Leviathan. Thus, “Red Shadows” ends with a Kane who has, in some senses, recaptured his innocence. This completion of the romance *mythos* narrative trajectory with the hero’s victory will allow Kane to reappear in the next story, and the fact that he *does* demonstrates how Howard steadfastly continued to develop his fictions using the romance *mythos* narrative pattern.

#### VI.4.2. The Text’s Second and Third Layers of Form and Conclusion

The point of going on at such length to demonstrate the romance elements of Howard’s story is to establish just how faithful Howard was to the romance form, and how it articulates social contradictions and discourses that were intimately related to both his culture of defeat heritage and his textual expression of the *kalte persona* psychological type that many men of the Western world lived. The second and third layers of form that Howard’s text employs are certainly significant for an understanding of Howard’s oeuvre, but have not been established extensively by this analysis as the focus has been to demonstrate Howard’s use of the romance *mythos* as the basic narrative patterning of his work.

It should, however, be noted, particularly in terms of the development of Howard’s fiction, that Howard uses the *Phantastik Schreibweise* in “Red Shadows”. Consistent with the *Unschlüssigkeit* that Lachmann identifies as being central to this mode of writing, the intimations of magic and the supernatural are never totally verified in the text. The reader is left with the impression – and thus given the choice to decide – that Kane *may* be imagining the voice of Africa in the drums, and he *may* be imagining the words of the Black God in his mind. Even the raising of the zombies during the *agon* stage has the suggestion of inconclusiveness. As will be argued later, the use of the *Phantastik* allows Howard to keep a foot in two worlds. The uncertainty of the *Phantastik* allows him to suggest a new hierarchy of values through his evocation of socially marginal concepts to his Southern and Texan society, like his somewhat sympathetic portrayal of Africa and Africans, without directly challenging the hegemonic hierarchy of values. When Howard makes his shift to the *Neophantastik* later in his career, where the uncertainty factor of the *Phantastik* is dropped, his texts offer a more definitive hierarchy of values, as we shall see.



The genre that “Red Shadows” adopts as its third layer of form is also significant. On the surface it appears to belong, like *Tros*, to the historical adventure genre, but both the textual accents that Howard sets, and the audience he is writing for – the readers of *Weird Tales* – make the actual genre of the piece “Weird Fiction”. This is a genre identification that was current in the pulps of the 1920s, 30s, 40s and 50s, but is a term not as popular today. This genre is significant because it offered a conceptual space for writers like Howard to make the shift from the *Phantastik* to the *Neophantastik Schreibweise*. The pulp fiction magazine that “Red Shadows” appeared in, *Weird Tales*, has maintained a fame and notoriety over the decades that other pulp fiction magazines have not, and this is primarily because writers like Howard, H.P. Lovecraft and Clark Ashton Smith wrote stories that broke with the textual uncertainty game of the *Phantastik* and presented their supernatural fiction as “real”. This was not only a novelty, but it lent the stories of these writers, and the discursive elements that were woven into them, a power that other types of writing did not have, or did not have in the same way. Weird Fiction was significant in that it was a genre that opened up a *Neophantastik* perspective that was not predicated on scientific extrapolation, as science fiction was.

The text represents an utterance in the barbarian discourse, and a significant one for Howard’s later utterances in this discourse. Africa is portrayed as barbarous, and Kane arrives as a representative of civilization. The traditional dialectic that this implies is undermined by the sexual undertones that Africa represents, and by the fact that Le Loup, the romance antagonist, is also a representative of civilization. While negative stereotypes of Africa are contained in Howard’s use of the Africa as the land of primal freedom motif (“Our land is dark”), and they *do* reflect the hierarchy of values in small-town Texas in 1928, Howard does re-order these values into a new hierarchy through the *anagnorisis* of his story. It is interesting as well, in terms of the Southern culture of defeat, that the voice of Africa, that Kane hears, says, “Whom we serve, we destroy”. This reflects the culture of defeat rationale for the loss of the Civil War, which blamed the ante-bellum Southern regime for leading the South to its ruin by retaining the institution of slavery – i.e. that the originally-African blacks who ‘served’ their Southern plantation masters and their society, in effect ‘destroyed’ those masters and their system (Schivelbusch 87). Kane’s removing himself from Africa is in line with the ‘learning from the victor’ stage of the South’s culture of defeat,

in that no return to slavery is advocated, but rather a separation of the races, i.e. segregation (or apartheid, to use the South African term). Kane's return to Africa in subsequent stories suggests that this strategy is not sustainable – and that the barbarian has a bewitching 'call' as Kane will term it – and this shows continuing modifications of Howard's textual value hierarchies.

In fact, subsequent Kane stories will show steady development in the 'Reward of the Quest' stage of the romance *mythos* narrative. Not only is the bride-figure/white queen alive in Kane's next African adventure, "The Moon of Skulls", but Kane actually walks hand-in-hand with Marilyn Taferal into the dawn at its conclusion. An even more radical development occurs in "The Hills of the Dead" and "The Footfalls Within", where the female characters embodying the archetypal role of the white queen are living black women. The implication of these stories that show Kane fighting for the lives of black women and freeing them from slavery is that Africans (or African-Americans) have not only a right to life and freedom, but that a white man has a duty to fight for these things, and this represents a shift in the value hierarchies of Howard's texts, and ultimately of his society.

### **VI.5. *Das Abenteuerliche Herz* (1929)**

The purpose of this analysis of *Das Abenteuerliche Herz*, like the preceding of Howard's "Red Shadows", is primarily to establish Jünger's mythic narrative objective at this point in his career. As we shall see, he wrestles with an overall romance conception for his first layer of form; the *Schreibweise* that he employs here is that of the political prophet that he established in *Der Kampf als inneres Erlebnis*, but one less mystic and more diaristic; and the genre of this book is a hybrid of the diary, the memoir and the essay, all of which are meant to bring the political prophet with a romance message closer to the audience.

#### VI.5.1. *Mythos*, Discourse and Motif

A few months after Howard's "Red Shadows" appears in the pages of *Weird Tales*, Ernst Jünger publishes what will come to be known as the *erste Fassung* (i.e. first version) of *Das Abenteuerliche Herz*. Klett argues that the book is the „Schlüssel zum Jüngerschen Denken überhaupt“ (Klett 9), and Fürnkäs agrees, insisting that, „das AH 1 von

1929 [stellt] einen besonderen Schlüssel zum Schreiben und Denken Jüngers bereit[...]“ (Fürnkäs 59). In this text one sees many aesthetic, thematic and ideological similarities to the work of Howard, particularly in the text's concern with *Wahrnehmungsschärfe* (Lethen 188) and the decisiveness associated with the *kalte persona*: „Das *Abenteuerliche Herz* ruft seinen Leser zur Entscheidung und zur Entschiedenheit auf“ (Klett 8), and the purpose of this decisiveness is: „Die materielle Welt muß von uns verzaubert werden, sonst vernichtet sie uns“ (Klett 10). This attempt at *Verzauberung* of the world is something that both Howard and Jünger had in common as they both attempted to express a sense of mystery and magical meaning in their texts. Further, Jünger's and Howard's confrontations with „das Leben mit seiner trügerischen Dynamik in einer technisch weiter fortgeschrittenen, konfortzivilisatorischen, neu verbürgerlichten Welt [daß] naturferner und langweiliger [war] als zu der Zeit da sich überall in Europa Künstler und Intellektuelle an die Erneuerung einer sklerotisierten Kultur machten“ (Klett 11) led them both to embrace a romance *mythos* perspective on the world which they drew from their childhoods. Jünger reveals how *Das Abenteuerliche Herz* reinforces this cultural desire for romance when he writes, „Seien wir auf der Hut vor der größten Gefahr, die es gibt – davor, daß uns das Leben etwas Gewöhnliches wird“ (Jünger 2000: 20). Jünger goes on to prize the romance outlook of childhood, and to declare his wish – in no uncertain terms – to pursue life in that manner:

Wenn wir uns der Zeit erinnern, in der wir Kinder waren, des Schweifens durch Wald und Feld, wo das Geheimnis hinter jedem Baum und jeder Hecke verborgen war, der wilden, tobenden Spiele in den dämmerigen Winkeln der kleinen Stadt, der Glut der Freundschaft und der Ehrfurcht vor unseren Idealen, so sehen wir, um wieviel blasser die Welt geworden ist. Können wir noch eine Gestalt so verehren wie Sherlock Holmes, den hageren, nervösen Helden mit der kurzen Pfeife zwischen den Zähnen, oder ist uns irgend etwas noch so wichtig wie der grüne Papagei, der dem armen Robinson auf der Schulter saß? Robert, der Schiffsjunge, und Old Shatterhand, der Rote Freibeuter und Kapitän Morgan, der den Totenkopf im schwarzen Wimpel trug, der Graf von Monte Christo mit seinen Schätzen, Schinderhannes, dieser Freund der Hütten und Feind der Paläste, Dschaudar, der Fischer, dem sein Ring die Herrschaft über dienstbare Genien

verlieh, alle diese Abenteurer, Märchenprinzen, Seeräuber und edelmütigen Verbrecher – ich beklage nicht, daß sie dahingegangen sind, aber ich wünschte, daß sie mit jedem neuen Kreis, den das Leben uns öffnet, Nachfolger fanden, auf die die ganze Summe von Liebe und Glauben sich übertragen könnte, die ihnen gewidmet war. (Jünger 2000: 20-21)

Jünger's desire to frame his life and his life's work in terms of the *mythos* that Frye claims is the base form of all narrative, the romance, is expressed here.

Jünger writes the „erste Fassung“ of *Das Abenteuerliche Herz* in 1929, in a Weimar Germany whose founding act, the signing of the Treaty of Versailles, was in effect the surrender of Germany's romance *mythos Weltanschauung* and the official beginning of a culture of defeat. *Das Abenteuerliche Herz* is considered key to understanding Jünger's thought because this text is Jünger's declaration of his romance *Weltanschauung*, one that found its first dramatic expression in his romantic youthful fascination with Africa:

Gern denke ich an jene Zeit kurz vor dem Kriege zurück, in der ich eines Tages meine Schulbücher über die nächste Mauer warf, um nach Afrika zu ziehen. Der Dreißigjährige kann sich nicht entschließen, die Unverfrorenheit des Sechzehnjährigen zu mißbilligen, die auf die Tätigkeit von zwei Dutzend Schulmeistern verzichtete und sich über Nacht eine eindringlichere Schule verschrieb. Es entzückt ihn vielmehr ein früher, instinktiver Protest gegen die Mechanik der Zeit; und er erinnert sich eines einsamen Paktes, der durch eine geleerte Burgunderflasche besiegelt wurde, die er an einem Felsblock des Hafens von Marseille zerschmetterte. (Jünger 2000: 23)

Here we see how the desire for the romance narrative is linked, for Jünger as for Howard, to the motif of Africa as the land of primal freedom: „Afrika war für mich der Inbegriff des Wilden und Ursprünglichen, der einzig mögliche Schauplatz für ein Leben in dem Format, in dem ich das meine zu führen gedachte“ (Jünger 2000: 28); „Daß es noch Wildnisse gab, die nie ein Fuß beschritten hatte: dies zu wissen, bedeutete für mich ein großes Glück“ (Jünger 2000: 29); and:

Mochten sie in Deutschland anfangen, was sie wollten, das letzte seltene Tier ausrotten, den letzten Streifen Ödland

unterpflügen und auf jeden Gipfel eine Drahtseilbahn bauen – aber Afrika sollten sie in Ruhe lassen. Denn irgendein Land mußte doch noch auf der Welt bleiben, in dem man sich bewegen konnte, ohne bei jedem Schritt auf eine steinerne Kaserne und auf eine Verbotstafel zu stoßen, und in dem noch Herren möglich waren, die über sich selbst und über alle Attribute der Macht ungeteilt verfügen konnten. Daß aber die Einführung der Technik in ein solches Gebiet zugleich die Einführung der modernen Humanität und damit die Einebnung der unerbittlichen Rangordnung des natürlichen Lebens bedeutete, das war mir gefühlsmäßig klar. (Jünger 2000: 29)

The motif, with all the meaning that Jünger accords it, recurs several times in *Das Abenteuerliche Herz*, but its most relevant textual expression, for this analysis, is an expression of the motif almost identical to one Howard makes central to his 1931 Solomon Kane story, “The Footfalls Within”, namely that of Arab slavers in Africa.

Howard’s 1931 use of Arab slave traders as enemies of the primal freedom represented by Africa reads like (although it isn’t, literally) a direct response to Jünger’s 1929 evocation of those Arab slave traders as a *manifestation* of Africa’s primal freedom:

Ganz andere Kerle waren da doch die alten arabischen Sklavenhändler. Diese besaßen freilich nicht jene Energie, dafür besaßen sie Vitalität. Daher wußten sie auch, was Leben heißt in einem Lande, in dem der Überfluß des Lebens regiert. Sie waren Nachkommen Sindbads des Seefahrers, reiche und würdige Gestalten in einer magischen Welt. Dörfer zu verbrennen, Sklaven zu jagen und Köpfe auf den Sand rollen zu lassen – war denn das nicht ihr gutes Recht? Man hörte von ihnen nur in der ekelhaften Melodie der Puritaner als von Schädlingen, aber war das Bestreben, diese heiße und wilde Wiege des Lebens in eine große Fabrik zu verwandeln mit Maschinen, denen man die allgemeinen Menschenrechte zubilligte und die im übrigen die Bestimmung besaßen, fünfzig Pfund Gummi im Jahre zu liefern, nicht tausendmal teuflischer – oder, noch schlimmer, tausendmal langweiliger? (Jünger 2000: 30)

This eyebrow-raising passage is problematic on several levels. Firstly, Jünger is here implying that he is giving us the attitude he had before

World War I, and yet as his editing of *Das Abenteuerliche Herz* to produce a *zweite Fassung* in 1938 shows (as does his lifelong editing of his other works), one cannot be certain that this is truly the case. At best, one must insist on interpreting the text – as Jameson suggests – as a political unconscious rendering of the time of its composition and publication. Secondly, the mythic pattern that employs this use of the Africa as the land of primal freedom motif is problematic. Jünger, although under the Weimar cultural aegis of the tragedy *mythos* is, in fact, attempting to valorize the Arab slave traders as romance heroes; and yet, he is aware of the ‘puritanical’ interpretation of them as romance villains, which is precisely what Howard casts them as against his explicitly ‘Puritan’ romance hero, Solomon Kane. Jünger, in fact, uses the barbarian discourse to try to re-cast the Arab slave traders as heroes in the sense that they represent the opposite pole to the mechanized Western civilization that Jünger tries, in the reversal of the barbarian discourse, to cast as romance villain. Jünger attempts to answer his rhetorical question of whether or not the slavers had a right to burn villages, capture people to sell as slaves, and chop their heads off to roll in the sand, by using the barbarian discourse to re-value traditional values. In this he is using a tactic similar to the one Hitler employs when he decries pacifism, for example, and thus attempts to alter the hierarchy of values of German society at large to preserve his romance agenda.

Jünger’s publication of the edited *zweite Fassung* of *Das Abenteuerliche Herz* in the same year that Schwietzke’s popular fiction story *Deutsche Kämpfer in der grünen Hölle Kameruns* appeared (1938), and on the eve of Jünger’s major reevaluation of his life and work and the implications thereof in 1939’s *Auf den Marmorklippen*, suggests an evolution in Jünger’s perspective, and a new ordering of his internal value hierarchy. Jünger’s alteration of the text to bring its internal hierarchy of values back towards a more traditional value hierarchy foreshadows the ultimate failure of the Nazi hierarchy of values to claim a lasting hold on Germany.

However, much of the thrust of the 1929 version of *Das Abenteuerliche Herz* is an attack on modern 1920s Weimar society. Jünger’s savage criticism of cities and the form taken by ‘civilization’ – in other words, his utterances in the barbarian discourse – are positions that he and Howard have in common. Both authors despised the ‘decadence of civilization’ and each expressed this in their works. And yet, what could have been expressed satirically or ironically is approached in

romance terms, and turns the satiric object of attack – modern bourgeois society – not into something laughable, but into something evil in the sense of a romance villain. That Jünger expressly attacks bourgeois society helps establish the national romance narrative that Hitler and the Nazis are trying to sell, in that it insists that bourgeois society is part of the composite romance villain opposing Germany as romance hero. With this being done by people like Jünger, it makes Hitler's insistence on equating the bourgeoisie with the Jews that much easier to establish in the public eye.

Jünger's stance in *Das Abenteuerliche Herz* vis-à-vis the city – and thus the civilization implied by the modern city – is complex. He sees the city of his day as expressing the inner corruption of the bourgeois mentality. His descriptions of the city are marked by “satanic” epithets, metaphors and similes:

[...] ein Großstadtcafé [*kann*] einen teuflischen Eindruck erwecken [...]. Es ist sonderbar, daß dieses Gefühl an Stellen, an denen die Technik bereits fast rein auftritt, noch so selten empfunden zu werden scheint. Die Lichtreklame in ihrer glühend roten und eisblau gleißenden Faszination, eine moderne Bar, ein amerikanischer Grotteskfilm – dies alles sind Ausschnitte des gewaltigen luziferischen Aufstandes, dessen Anblick den Einsamen mit ebenso rasender Lust wie erdrückender Angst erfüllt. (Jünger 2000: 59)

And yet his evocation here of ‘Lucifer’ is ambivalent: on the one hand it suggests an attempt to re-value the hierarchy of values, and on the other alludes to the romance myth of the Bible where Lucifer comes to play the role of romance villain. However, the use of ‘Lucifer’, as the name of the angel who revolted against God as opposed to the name of the demon he became, Satan, suggests Jünger's fascination with a figure that also drew writers like Milton and Blake. The Luciferian revolt against “the tyranny of heaven” (Milton) alluded to here by Jünger suggests a romantic attempt to achieve justice in the face of overwhelming force, and so become ultimately tragic. The force here, to take the terminology of the barbarian discourse, is civilization, and the manifestations that Jünger describes – electric advertisements, a modern bar, American films – he somehow sees as uprisings of barbarian vitality. This positive interpretation of Jünger's use of the term ‘luciferian’ is further suggested by *Der Arbeiter*, where Jünger will see the romance Gestalt of the Arbeiter rising through this luciferian revolt. On the other hand, in *Das*

*Abenteuerliche Herz*, Jünger says of the city: „An den Gesichtern und besonders an den Farben der Großstadt läßt sich Entsprechendes beobachten. Die Hölle selbst könnte nicht mit giftigeren Prunklichtern ausgestattet sein“ (Jünger 2000: 70); and „Wir sind in die zuckende Nacht des Unglaubens getaucht, von der der höllische Aspekt unserer im Lichte flimmernden Städte ein schreckliches Gleichnis ist. Die Geometrie der Vernunft verschleiert ein diabolisches Mosaik, das sich zuweilen erschreckend belebt; wir erfreuen uns einer furchtbaren Sicherheit“ (Jünger 2000: 58). Not only is unbelief (in God) equated with the hellish, but civilization’s emphasis on reason is cited as something that deliberately obscures a diabolical reality. The supposed security of civilization is achieved at the cost of disbelief and hell. Howard, too, will thematize civilization’s ‘terrible security’ in his story “The Slithering Shadow”, as will Fritz Lang in *Metropolis*. All of these are echoes of H.G. Wells’ *The Time Machine* with its incarnation of this theme in the Eloi and the Morlocks. In fact, the forbidden city haunted by demonic monsters is a major recurring setting in Howard’s work, and thus one can speak of a common satanic city theme in the works of both authors. Later, however, Jünger will attempt to downplay the diabolic, frightening and terrible aspects of the city and argue that reason can harness these and give birth to the heroic Gestalt of the *Arbeiter*.

Jünger’s positive reference to St. Anthony’s spiritual struggle and his statement „Wie und weil das Leben durchaus kriegerisch ist, so ist es auch von Grund auf bewegt“ (Jünger 2000: 41) shows how much he values a life where one can fight for one’s right to life and success – the essence of the romance protagonist and his quest. This he opposes, throughout the text, to a life governed by a geometry of reason that hides a satanic reality. This satanic reality is the bland civilization promoted by the bourgeoisie, one that denies adventure, individual excellence and a thirst for raw life in order to promote an undifferentiated mass culture founded on security and comfort. Interestingly, the remedy for this bourgeois civilization and its attitudes that Jünger prescribes is what he and his contemporary, Hesse, called *Erstaunen*. In *Das Abenteuerliche Herz* he claims that he used this spiritual stance on the battlefield – even in the face of ‚Die Geometrie der Vernunft‘ manifesting as *Materialschlacht*: „Ich habe es immer als eine wichtige Aufgabe betrachtet, einen Menschen davon zu überzeugen, wie sehr er doch selbst ein wunderbares Wesen und der verantwortliche Träger wunderbarer Kräfte ist. Denn nur wenn uns dieses Gefühl beseelt, werden wir unwiderstehlich sein“ (Jünger



2000: 71). This idea, that if one is aware of just how amazing life is, particularly one's own, will allow one to be invincible and not in need of the satanic civilized life of security.

In such attempts to define what is good and what is bad, and thus to establish the qualities of a romance protagonist, *Das Abenteuerliche Herz* demonstrates Jünger's struggle to maintain romance in the face of the tragedy myth coming to dominate the culture of defeat around him. This necessity, expressed throughout the book, is particularly urgent because the *kalte persona* must avoid being laughable at all costs, and so no indication of irony or satire can be allowed to define this age. The *kalte persona's* need to remain in motion is linked to the romance impulse by Jünger when he notes, „Nur zu selten hat man das Glück, einem Sindbad dem Seefahrer zu begegnen, den eine innerste Unruhe vom Genusse seiner Güter hinweg zum siebenten Male in abenteuerliche Fernen treibt“ (Jünger 2000: 51). Jünger will make use of the figure of Don Quixote when irony and satire loom too large to be dismissed entirely: Jünger's interpretation of Quixote allows for a quick nod of acknowledgement to the presence of irony while carrying on with the romance trajectory: „Man muß es verstehen, dem Kinde zuzulachen, das man in sich trägt – gleichsam sein Cervantes und Don Quijote in einem zu sein“ (Jünger 2000: 37). His account of his reading *Tristram Shandy* while wounded is another case where he allows for this intertwining of romance and irony. As the soldier on his romance quest, he can allow for ironic destabilization, as long as he can then continue on his quest. In fact, he can turn the experience of irony and satire into a further impetus to his romance quest, be declaring „So trat ich unter würdigen Umständen in den geheimen Orden der Shandysten ein, dem ich bis heute treu geblieben bin“ (Jünger 2000: 18). In other words, Jünger is able to take this experience of the ironic and satiric and turn it into membership in a knightly order or secret society. In essence, the irony and the satire become 'secrets' that are hidden at the core of the romance trajectory. This is the essence of Jünger's insistence on the romance despite the irony of the ending of the war and the establishment of the Weimar Republic.

Jünger's insistence on not losing the romance leads him to utterances in the barbarian discourse for he, and many in Germany, rejected the charge implicitly and explicitly levelled at Germany in the Treaty of Versailles that Germany was uncivilized. This rejection was made in the revaluing perspective of the barbarian discourse, one that

suggests another measure of cultural worth, one that is within the German people:

Vorzüglich, und nur kein Mitleid mit uns! Dies ist eine Position, aus der sich arbeiten läßt. Dieses Maßnehmen an dem geheimen, zu Paris aufbewahrten Urmeter der Zivilisation – das bedeutet für uns, den verlorenen Krieg zu Ende zu verlieren, bedeutet die konsequente Durchführung eines nihilistischen Aktes bis zu seinem notwendigen Punkt. Wir marschieren seit langem einem magischen Nullpunkt zu, über den nur der hinwegkommen wird, der über andere, unsichtbarere Kraftquellen verfügt.

An das, was übrigbleibt, da es am Europäischen nicht gemessen werden kann, sondern selbst Maßgebendes ist, ist *unsere* Hoffnung geknüpft. (Jünger 2000: 115)

In other words, Paris – as a stand-in for the Allies in general – cannot be allowed by Germany to define what is civilized. To accept Paris' definition of civilization would mean to truly lose the war. Or, to put it another way, to accept both the defeat and the role as romance villain. Jünger calls this a nihilistic act, for it is, in effect, a negation of Germany's self-worth. Jünger acknowledges that Germany has been forced in this direction, and that the only way to get past this point of complete self-negation is to tap hitherto invisible sources of power. Jünger is pointing toward the barbarian vitality that Germany has claimed in the past. This barbarian vitality is not European, but a global phenomenon, a source accessible to all. By saying this, Jünger is not only recalling Germany's claim to represent a higher *Kultur*, which is beyond the mere civilization of the other Western nations, but also Nietzsche's exhortation to become new barbarians in order to reach a new *Ufer* of *Kultur*.

This re-framing of the ironic or tragic situation that Jünger, as political prophet, attempts by pointing to another measure of national self-worth, allows him to maintain a claim on the romance *mythos* and the *kalte persona* necessary to navigate this complex national situation. As a cultural product of Weimar Germany, *Das Abenteuerliche Herz* at first glance does not seem to expound the emotionally withdrawn *kalte persona*, but, in fact, offers a call to feel from the heart – from an adventurous, romantic heart. But this romantic heart has clearly been shaken by the experience of World War I, and the fact that this nihilistic march toward the *Nullpunkt* that must be overcome by tapping new sources of strength suggests a difficult path. This path implies a willingness to suffer, and to

stand outside the norms of European “civilization”, in effect „Das Lob der Kälte, das Einverständnis mit der Entfremdung, der Kult der Distanz und der Mut zur Entscheidung“ (Lethen 70) all come into play here.

The *kalte persona*, in effect, is what allows for the continued claim to the romance. Jünger acknowledges that the romance desire begins with an emotional openness, but once acquired must be expressed with all the hard qualities of the *kalte persona*. Jünger’s reminiscences about his Wilhelmine Germany boyhood bring to light the romance yearning that inspired him (Jünger 2000: 20) and his whole generation (Jünger 2000: 22). In so doing he reveals the interconnections between the *kalte persona* of this time – „Bewegung muß da sein und Drang nach Bewegung“ (Jünger 2000: 22) – and the conception of a romance hero, a knight waiting for the call to heroism: „Immer auf dem Posten sein, immer rüsten, immer bereit sein, dem Ruf zu folgen, der an uns ergeht — und es ist gewiß, daß der Ruf nicht ausbleiben wird“ (Jünger 2000: 22). Here Jünger is confirming Theweleit’s thesis that the militaristic Wilhelmine upbringing was the key psychological factor in the proto-fascist and fascist movements after the war. As the archetypal analysis of *In Stabgenittern* concluded, the humourous society of the father generation, of the bourgeois reality of Wilhelmine Germany, did in fact remain essentially entrenched in power, with only the uniforms of the feudal pretence – the „hochromantischen Inszenierungsstil“ that Schivelbusch speaks of (Schivelbusch 235) – being laid aside for more properly bourgeois attire. The romance hero that Wilhelmine Germany raised its boys to be could not accept such irony.

This romantic Haltung during Wilhelmine Germany could not be satisfied even „wenn auch wir Deutschen überall unser Kontingent gestellt haben, wo auf der Welt so etwas im Gange war“ (Jünger 2000: 23) (as during the Boxer Rebellion in China), and was in conflict with the cloying bourgeois reality of Wilhelmine Germany. This left Africa as the escape and the goal for many – and Jünger, particularly, speaks of the late spring/early summer day on which he decided to follow this *Drang* towards romance and Africa (Jünger 2000: 23-29). Here the motif of Africa as the land of primal freedom reveals its importance in this text and in the meta-text of Jünger’s life. Jünger also demonstrates a class-based reaction, for Jünger makes it clear in *Das Abenteuerliche Herz* that he comes from a petty bourgeois background (Jünger 2000: 24) and he was not the only one of his generation to attempt to escape – or romantically transcend – a middle class destiny.

Invoking the reading of adventure stories, the wanderlust and the rebellion of youth, Jünger recalled how, as a young boy, Africa had a magical attraction for him, how it seemed, in fact, a land of primal freedom. That Jünger takes up the Africa as the land of primal freedom motif as a sublimation or expression of his body oppression gains support when one considers that the young Jünger resolves to go to Africa as part of a youthful, pubescent rebellion (he was 16). That Jünger makes no mention of being motivated by sexuality or girls again confirms Theweleit's thesis, and the one youthful rite of passage that he does express in the text, the bottle of Burgunder that Jünger recalls smashing on the rocks of the harbour of Marseilles as he awaits his passage to Africa (Jünger 2000: 23), suggests the conflation of the adventurous and the repressed sexuality that we have argued give the motif of Africa as the land of primal freedom its power. In barbarian (i.e. more vital and authentic) cultures, rites of passage at that age indicate that the young person is now sexually mature and is, as far as the society in question is concerned, an adult ready to mate – in effect, a free member of the society; the fact that Jünger performs his bottle-smashing rite as he is about to embark for Africa suggests the tremendous significance Africa has for him: he has fled the bourgeois and militaristic Wilhelmine society that taught him sexual angst and guilt, for Africa, which offers him the promise of freedom, a freedom he characterizes in primal terms (as we have seen above), but whose pubescent sexual dimension he seems to be unconscious of. And yet, the way that Jünger recalls how Africa appeared to him as a Wilhelmine boy speaks to this conflation of desires at the heart of the *kalte persona*:

So aber leuchtete doch hier und da, im Geheimnisvollen, im Traum, im Schönen oder im Besonderen, ein Funke auf als eine beruhigende und doch zugleich spornende Bestätigung der anderen, im Weiten geahnten und dem Herzen näheren Welt. Es schien dies alles ein Versprechen des Glückes zu sein. Dieses Versprechen war wie ein von fern her klingender Ton, der tief und innig ausschwingen konnte in der schläfrigen Ruhe der alten Stadt. Es war wie ein vager Duft, von fremden Küsten verweht, in dem die Seele gierig ein Unbestimmt-Bekanntes witterte. Ja, und dieses Land des Glückes, das Land eines reicheren und sinnvolleren Lebens, der heißen, kühnen Bewegung und der großen, einsamen Abenteuer – es mußte wohl Afrika sein. (Jünger 2000: 44-45)

### VI.5.2. The Text's Political Unconscious: First Horizon

To speak in the language of a first horizon reading of a political unconscious analysis, the social contradiction that faces Jünger and many of his generation is that they went into the war as honoured heroes and returned to be implicated in a dishonourable defeat. Jünger himself could stand above this to some degree because of his personal decorations, but, as he will show again in *Der Arbeiter*, he will feel a certain responsibility to symbolically correct this social contradiction for his comrades – especially the fallen, so that they would not have fallen in vain.

He undertakes this romance project in an age that Weber characterized using the archetypal language of the seasons: „Nicht das Blühen des Sommers liegt vor uns, sondern zunächst eine Polarnacht von eisiger Finsternis und Härte, mag äußerlich jetzt siegen welche Gruppe auch immer“ (Weber in Lethen 65). In *mythic* terms, the post-war era will be a time of bitter irony and mocking satire, not a time for the heroic triumphs of sunny romance. Weber's apt pronouncement of the dawning of an age of irony and satire explains, for example, the success of a literary personage such as Brecht, whose Weimar-era masterpiece, *Die Dreigroschenoper*, is a satire through and through.<sup>52</sup>

In this ironic and satiric atmosphere, Jünger still attempts to realize his romantic project, trying, as noted above, to compartmentalize the ironic and subsume it in the romance project. His recollection of being unable to see the irony or humour in Cervantes as a boy is telling in this respect:

Als mir, ich mochte nicht viel älter als zehn Jahre sein, dieses Buch eines Mannes in die Hände fiel, dem Schwert und Feder mit tieferer Notwendigkeit beieinanderlagen, da fand ich keine Spur von Humor darin. Ich las es mit einem wirklich spanischen Ernst. Daß sich hinter dem Ritter vom Monde ein Friseur verbarg und daß es eigentlich unsinnig ist, Weinschläuche mit Degenhieben zu zerfetzen – ich habe es, bei Gott, nicht gemerkt. (Jünger 2000: 37)

Jünger notes that he did, however, understand the serious aim of irony

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<sup>52</sup> One can see much of what the Nazis demonized as „entartete Kunst“ as manifesting this ironic and satiric spirit, a spirit that the Nazis in their drive for a romance trajectory violently rejected.

and satire in the figure of Don Quixote: „Aber was mir heute noch genau so gefällt wie damals, das ist, daß dieser Mensch kein Jüngling mehr war, als er die Hintergründe entdeckte, die die Welt besitzt. [...] Allerdings ist die rechte Torheit, ebenso wie der rechte Humor, eine sehr ernste Angelegenheit“ (Jünger 2000: 37). However, his insistence on salvaging his original romance viewpoint of Don Quixote, where „Jedesmal, wenn das Schwert aus der Scheide fuhr oder die Lanze eingelegt wurde, um dem Gemeinen gegenüber Zeugnis zu geben für ritterliche Art, war ich auf meinen Herrn von der Mancha stolz“ (Jünger 2000: 37), will lead him – as Fischer notes, to draw on the title of her article – to spend, like the Man of la Mancha, much of his early career ignoring the irony within which his basic romance attitude is embedded; many of his actual adventurous experiences, Fischer concludes, were in fact failures (Fischer 90).

By using Don Quixote as a motif in *Das Abenteuerliche Herz*, Jünger is able to acknowledge the overwhelming irony and satire which has dogged his attempts at writing a romance narrative for himself and his country, but the symbolic resolution that he proposes in this more accessible, diaristic, prophetic *Schreibweise* is that the romance must be renewed. He does this by emphasizing the romance aspects of Don Quixote – and Simplizissimus (Jünger 2000: 34) – as he did when he was a youth, as an example to his readers. Fischer insists on Jünger’s basic romance quest attitude to both life and art (Fischer 88), and goes so far as to explicitly label him a knight (89). Despite – or because of – the ironic failures of his basic romance *Haltung* (most particularly the loss of the war, which led to the ironic comedy of *In Stablgewittern*), Jünger altered his focus to search instead for the romantic *pathos* moment in his solitary adventurous heart, in secret brotherhoods, dreams, studies, art and the subtle hunt for the essence of being (Fischer 90). In fact, this text, with its less mystic approach, shows how Jünger has already begun turning away from the national romance myth. This is not conscious, or strongly present, but the more human genre – part diary, part memoir, part essay – that he has chosen here shows him moving away from the mystic nationalist pomp that the Nazis are embracing at this time. As a result, his final attempt at re-casting the German national story as a romance – in part by embedding it in a global romance narrative – *Der Arbeiter*, will take a more intellectual than mystic approach.

The ultimate veering to the tragedy *mythos* as the basic patterning of Jünger’s later works is sparked by the loss of the *anagnorisis* phase of

the German World War I romance. Jünger relates in *Das Abenteuerliche Herz* how he imagined a victorious Germany would be rewarded (as a victorious romance hero is in the anagnorisis phase) with provinces and colonies and islands<sup>53</sup> (Jünger 2000: 101), but the absence of this will lead him instead toward the „magischen Nullpunkt“ (Jünger 2000: 96) cited above. In the process, and in the barbarian-inspired attempt to overcome this boundary, he will insist on the *kalte persona*, and being part of a flame that demands necessary pain and tragic discipline (Jünger 2000: 95). This psychological and metaphoric process is manifested in Jünger's attraction to martyrs (Jünger 2000: 40, 85, 86) who, in their mirroring of the apparent physical defeat of Jesus on the cross, reach for the victory-in-tragedy phase of tragedy. Jünger's text, in effect, is part of the tragedy *mythos* established in Weimar Germany. The great romance *Drang* – if not to victory and *anagnorisis* then to the endless *pathos* movement that Lethen characterizes as an intrinsic part of the *kalte persona* – leads Jünger to make a fateful pronouncement: „Es ist nicht die größte Sünde, böse zu sein, sondern stumpf, und das Wort von den Lauen, welche ausgespien werden sollen, ist ein herrliches Wort der göttlichen Unbarmherzigkeit“ (Jünger 2000: 39). This ‘beyond good and evil’ statement will mirror developments in German society, particularly the National Socialist movement, which will put similar re-valuing of values sentiments from Nietzsche on their banners. This statement, along with Jünger's evocation of the Arab slavers in Africa, shows how the determination toward romance will – to avoid the laughability of satire – provoke such a revaluation of values by the *kalte persona*. The obvious veering toward a true romance villain stance in this statement demonstrates how the symbolic resolution to the social contradiction of the romance inspiration to fight in World War I and the ironic return in defeat and disgrace is part of the ‘act provoking revenge’ of the tragedy *mythos* narrative that is being established underneath the ostensible romance.

### VI.5.3. The Text's Political Unconscious: Second Horizon

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<sup>53</sup> As the Waffenstillstandskommission's work points out, it was the Allies who were to gain all the treasure of a romance hero, and this even before the Treaty of Versailles was signed, when the Allies demanded of Germany a fortune in trucks, trains, and other equipment (Waffenstillstandskommission).

To read this text according to the language of antagonistic class discourse, Jünger demonstrates the antipathy of many in Weimar Germany against the bourgeoisie. Jünger writes of his „instinktiver Protest gegen die Mechanik der Zeit“ (Jünger 2000: 23) when he describes his decision as a 16 year-old to escape his own petty bourgeois, middle class background, but then goes on to lovingly describe the idyllic life of a romantic youngster growing up in his „uralte Städtchen“ (Jünger 2000: 24). His descriptions are detailed and sensual (Jünger 2000: 26) and one can sense the inner conflict between attraction to what is being described and the desire to reject it. But in the end, it is the guilt ascribed to the bourgeoisie in ostensibly colluding in Germany's defeat that causes Jünger to attempt to position himself as an opponent of the bourgeoisie without, in fact, calling for its complete overthrow. He is able to do this by ascribing to the communist party a similar petty bourgeois core and bourgeois mentality.

Entsprechendes läßt sich von der Haltung des Anarchisten sagen, nicht aber vom Kommunismus, vom *deutschen* Kommunismus, wohlgemerkt, der einen weit geringeren Zusatz vom Metall der Anarchie in sich verbirgt als etwa der russische – einem äußersten Kleinbürgertum, einer Aktiengesellschaft im Schrebergartenstil, deren Grundkapital der Schmerz und seine Reaktionen und deren Ziel nicht die Vernichtung, sondern eine besondere und langweiligere Ausbeutungsform der bestehenden Ordnung ist. (Jünger 2000: 140)

The communist leaders following Rosa Luxemburg can, in the main, also be traced back to petty bourgeois origins, and Jünger, as political prophet, sees in them his competition. Like the Nazis, he affects an anti-bourgeois position, but one suspects that his petty bourgeois motivation – unconscious – is partially out of fear or jealousy that this rival group of petty bourgeois will succeed, like the Nazis will, in taking control of, and thus ensuring their own entry into, the bourgeoisie:

So kommt es, daß der Kommunist warten muß, bis die Gesellschaft reif ist, ihm als Beute anheimzufallen, und daß er wiederum nur in Gesellschaft, nur en masse, diese Beute verwerten kann. Anders ausgedrückt: der Kommunismus ist zum entscheidenden Kampf gegen die Gesellschaft ganz unfähig, weil diese zu seinen Anschauungsformen gehört. Er ist kein Aufstand gegen die Ordnung, sondern ihr letzter und



langweiligster Triumph. (Jünger 2000: 141)

This „Kampf gegen die Gesellschaft“ rhetoric is the classic gambit of the petty bourgeois siding with the proletariat in a time of crisis to prevent her or his own slide into the proletariat. This is not to say that Jünger does not mean it, and *Der Arbeiter* will in fact be his colossal statement on how, exactly, he does mean it. Unconsciously, however, he is following the class trajectory Marx and Engels identified.

#### VI.5.4. The Text's Political Unconscious: Third Horizon

Finally, in the *kalte persona* that Jünger presents in his reminiscences in *Das Abenteuerliche Herz*, we glimpse the cultural revolution that was the collapse of Wilhelmine Germany at the end of World War I – and indeed, the entire collapse of the remnants of feudal Central Europe. Just as that collapse truncates the comic narrative of *In Stahlgewittern* and leaves it dripping with irony, it similarly marks a caesura in European culture – a veritable revolution. Lethen highlights just how revolutionary this moment was in the way he opens his book with a scene from the Nordbahnhof in Vienna that occurred on November 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> of 1918 (Lethen 16). The – at that date – impending collapse of the Central Powers was, in fact, part of a revolution in the mode of production, for the material and economic capabilities unleashed by the war and which were decisive in the Allied victory would usher in a new era of capitalism, one that required the abolition of residual feudal institutions from the feudal mode of production throughout Europe and the Western world. No longer, then, would the romance-inclined Jünger fight for feudal institutions and ideals, which he de facto did when he went to fight for the Kaiser in World War I, but he will search for motivations in keeping with the cultural revolution of his time and with the prevalent class-conscious antipathy for the bourgeoisie.

#### VI.5.5. Conclusion

To conclude, *Das Abenteuerliche Herz* represents an attempt, through its three layers of form, to preserve or recover a romance *mythos* narrative for Jünger and for Germany. This powerful desire for a romance *mythos* framework for life is common to both sides of the Atlantic as the cultural archive suggests. In fact, *Das Abenteuerliche Herz* reveals attitudes in

Jünger that parallel those in some of Howard's texts, especially in his Conan tales. These parallels are primarily found in attitudes that Jünger expresses toward the city and civilization, the basic life attitude of *Erstaunen* which allows one to transcend the ironic and satiric and preserve the romance, and an amoral or Dionysian attitude toward violence. All three of these points form the core of the utterance in the barbarian discourse that this text represents.

As several critics have noted, Jünger's main project is to make sense of the World War and to rescue from it some sense of romance. Referring to Bohrer's *Ästhetik des Schreckens*, Segeberg demonstrates how Jünger's conceptual architecture comes into play as he utopically redefines the catastrophic mass slaughter of WWI as the heroic-tragic creation of a New Man in *Der Kampf als inneres Erlebnis*, and goes on to repeat this prophetic process in *Das Abenteuerliche Herz* and *Der Arbeiter* (Segeberg 2004: 407). In this, Jünger is doing what was argued above, namely keeping the romance illusion while being aware of the presence of irony. Before the Nazi take-over Jünger is still playing his ideas out for a national audience and the national renewal that a culture of defeat strives for. After 1933, when it is clear that the Nazis have claimed this national renewal in their own name and have structured the new national romance in their racist and militaristic terms, Jünger will, in keeping with the inward movement of the *Innere Emigration* by intellectuals during the Nazi era, make this quest for romance a personal and aesthetic one. Fischer argues:

Der Kampf des Schriftstellers Jünger richtet sich vor allem gegen jene Kräfte, die den begehrten „Kern“ des Lebens verdecken und verborgen halten. Mit Schwert und Feder ficht er gegen den Verlust von Lebensintensität in dem „zweckmäßigen“ Formen des Lebens und das Nachlassen der symbolisierenden Kraft der Sprache. Er beruft sich in seiner Wendung gegen das „geborgte Licht“ der Aufklärung, das nur die karge Oberfläche der Dinge beleuchte, auf Novalis, „einen der tiefsten Träumer“. Karl Heinz Bohrer nennt daher sein Werk eine Art Endpunkt der spekulativen Romantik. (Fischer 88)

The mystic transcendence of a hard, ironic reality for Germany by Jünger in *Der Kampf als inneres Erlebnis*, begins, with *Das Abenteuerliche Herz*, to become a personal transcendence of a hard and ironic reality. If reason insists on irony, then it is concealing its own inner light, and it is this

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inner light, the romantic truth inside, that must be accessed to reveal the true romance narrative of the world.

## VII. Narrative Trajectories from the Great Depression to the Nazi *Machtergreifung* (1929-1932)

### VII.1. Glimpses into Howard's Narrative Development

#### VII.1.1. "The Mirrors of Tuzun Thune" (1929)

The *kalte persona* was just one expression of the cynicism toward civilization felt in the post-war generations on both sides of the Atlantic. It is through Howard's major characters that we can see elements of the *kalte persona* and the *Verhaltenslehre der Kälte* developing in his work during this same period. Specifically, we see the exteriorization that is characteristic of a *Schamkultur* in what is ironically an introspective tale featuring Howard's first major barbarian character, Kull of Atlantis. In "The Mirrors of Tuzun Thune" an existentially-challenged Kull goes so far as to doubt his own reality, which represents Howard's wrestling with the romance paradigm itself.

The adventurous life ceases to satisfy Kull – who has fought his way to the throne of the fantasy realm of Valusia – as if the drive of the *kalte persona* to always be in motion necessarily reveals itself to be empty once one has reached the highest possible destination. Kull's sidekick, Brule, who is uneasy at Kull's inertia and brooding, suggests that Kull continue to follow his adventurous heart – irregardless of seemingly being at the apex of an adventurous trajectory – and stay in dynamic motion. The events of the story will prove Brule to be correct, and the lesson to be taken here is that it is better to remain the *kalte persona* than risk metaphysical and psychological disintegration. Kull, in the house of mirrors of Tuzun Thune, will become fascinated by his own reflection, i.e. he will view himself from the outside as Lethen notes is characteristic of individuals in a *Schamkultur*. He will, in fact, doubt the very reality of the inner life required by a *Schuldkultur*. He will, as is consistent with a *Schamkultur*, come to ascribe more reality to his outer appearance than his inner life.

This tale is one of Howard's most unusual ones. One can argue that the first layer of form is still that of the romance *mythos*, but an incomplete one, as we shall see. Interestingly, again, the *Schreibweise* is an

oscillation between the *Phantastik* and the *Neophantastik*. Finally, the genre was considered to be Weird Fiction at the time of its composition, but it is now considered part of the Fantasy genre proper (and of the sub-genre, sword and sorcery). In terms of romance, it seems to be an entirely contemplative one, with Kull attempting to divine, with the ‘help’ of the wizard Tuzun Thune, if his reflection is another version of himself in another world. In “reality”, there is an attempt here by the romance villain, Tuzun Thune, to destroy Kull, and Kull is rescued by his faithful companion, Brule the Spearslayer. The *pathos* moment occurs at the moment where the story’s *Phantastik Schreibweise* seems to be giving way to a properly *Neophantastik Schreibweise* when Kull, disappointed at the lack of real magic in Tuzun Thune’s riddles and mirrors, seems to be about to step into a world beyond the mirror. However, before Kull can magically dissolve into smoke as he steps into the mirror, he is saved by Brule’s timely intervention.

The wise-sounding self-knowledge promoted throughout the tale by the wizard Tuzun Thune (i.e. precisely what is required of an individual in a *Schuldkultur*) is revealed to have been part of the wicked charm with which Tuzun Thune and his accomplices hoped to destroy Kull so that they could seize his throne. The *anagnorisis* of the story is Kull’s recognition of the plot and edict that no one would ever again visit the house of Tuzun Thune.

“The Mirrors of Tuzun Thune” is significant because it seems to briefly question the premises upon which not only Howard’s *kalte persona* characters are based, but also the romance *mythos* itself.

The business of the palace and the council went neglected. The people murmured; Kull’s stallion stamped restlessly in his stable, and Kull’s warriors diced and argued aimlessly with one another. Kull heeded not. At times he seemed on the point of discovering some vast, unthinkable secret. He no longer thought of the image in the mirror as a shadow of himself; the thing, to him, was an entity, similar in outer appearance, yet basically as far from Kull himself as the poles are far apart. The image, it seemed to Kull, had an individuality apart from Kull’s; he was no more dependent on Kull than Kull was dependent on him. And day by day Kull doubted in which world he really lived; was he the shadow, summoned at will by the other? Did he instead of the other live in a world of delusion, the shadow of the real world? (Howard 1976: 176)

Howard uses Kull's reflection in the mirror similarly to how E.T.A. Hoffmann makes Erasmus Spikher's mirror reflection – and his loss of it – the core conflict of “A New Year's Eve Adventure”. In Hoffmann's tale, the loss of the reflection is a sign that Spikher has sold his soul to the devil, and in Kull's tale his confrontation with his reflection is also a confrontation with the illusory nature of the concepts of good and evil. This is symbolized by Tuzun Thune himself, who seems to be aiding Kull and offering him wisdom, but who is, in fact, trying to overthrow him. The romance *mythos* – and the *kalte persona* premises of Howard's expression of this *mythos* – is textually doubted until that doubt is shattered by Brule the Spearslayer's shout of “Kull!” Brule intervenes before Kull can turn fully into mist and cross the line to the world of his reflection and thus end his earthly existence. Here we have a character initially presented as an expression of the *kalte persona* yet losing the *kalte persona* impetus of action and being emotionally armoured: he becomes fascinated with his own mirror image, which represents the *Gestalt* with simple contours that the *kalte persona* aims to be. In this tableau, the attraction to, and the weakness of, the *kalte persona* is symbolically explored, only to have the *kalte persona* reaffirmed at the end. All of Tuzun Thune's philosophizing is revealed to be a clever and evil trap, Kull returns to being the barbarian warrior king, and the romance concepts of good and evil are re-established. Howard's romance conclusion is an acknowledgement that it is easier to re-establish the line between good and evil and get a traditional, satisfactory romance closure with a neat division of the world into good guys and bad guys with the usual motivations: “Gold, power and position,” grunted Brule. “The sooner you learn that men are men, whether wizard, king, or thrall, the better you will rule, Kull!” (Howard 1976: 178).

As Frye points out, the romance *mythos* is predicated on a chess-like white vs. black conflict. Without good guys and bad guys, without the romance's strong dualism of light and dark, young and old, pure and decadent, this entire narrative pattern could not exist. Brule's timely entrance, and the subsequent smashing of the mirror that offered to erase the illusory line, does not only save Kull, but it saves Howard as a romance writer. And “Yet Kull upon his throne meditates often upon the strange wisdom and the untold secrets hidden there and wonders...” (Howard 1976: 179). Howard would later bend his romance narratives toward satire and irony with the Elkins stories, but even this success in the form of the publication of *A Gent from Bear Creek* would not be

enough to prevent Howard from complaining that, as a romancier, he was a writer for the masses, for that simplistic popular need for a neat division of the world into good and bad. His success as a pulp fiction writer would not be enough to stop him from taking his own life.

From the perspective of the first horizon of reading of a political unconscious analysis, the text as a symbolic resolution of social contradictions, one must situate the text in its publication context: it originally appeared in the September 1929 issue of *Weird Tales* – shortly before the stock market crash of October that ended the Roaring Twenties. In order to tease out the central social contradiction that the text is an unconscious meditation on, one needs to focus on the central conflict of the tale, Kull’s “great weariness” as “before him [moved] in an endless, meaningless panorama: men, women, priests, events and the shadows of events; things seen and things to be attained” and he felt the “longing in him for things beyond himself and beyond the Valusian court” (Howard 1976: 171). This sense of world-weariness just as the Twenties – an era in the U.S. that F. Scott Fitzgerald called “the most expensive orgy in history” (Fitzgerald 422) – were going to crash to a halt is significant and may well represent Howard’s unconscious questioning of the meaning of the materialistic outlook reigning in the society at large. Kull’s metaphysical broodings and desires, however, lead to the dangerous climax described above, and in the end he returns to his duties in the court. Howard, living in rural Texas and aware of the local prejudices against his chosen profession<sup>54</sup>, internalized these ideas and played out for himself a dynamic that Stearns described at the time: “The pioneer almost must of necessity hate the thinker, even when he does not despise thought in itself, because the thinker is a liability to a community that can afford only assets; he is non-productive in himself and a dangerously subversive example to others” (Stearns 334). In the end Kull returns to his duties in the material world of his fantasy Atlantis setting, just as Howard retreats from his excursion to the boundaries of the romance *mythos* in this tale. Howard will continue to be the “writer for the masses” and continue to pattern his tales according to the romance *mythos*, thus earning the money necessary for him to counter the objections of his materialist-oriented, pioneer-descended environment.

Reading the story as an utterance in antagonistic class discourse,

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<sup>54</sup> Price writes of Howard’s “conviction that his fellow townsmen considered him a worthless cuss who frittered his time away writing” (Price 152).

it is necessary to remember that Howard is the son of a frontier doctor, and thus has at least a foothold in the middle class of 1920s America. Kull, in the story, represents the highest class possible in the Valusia of Howard's setting, and the conflict of the story centres on a power struggle. To speak in terms of the ideologemes that Jameson notes as meaningful to this horizon of interpretation, a key figure in class representations in the story is the girl of the court who first whispers to Kull about Tuzun Thune. Through the characters, Howard questions the entire structure of reality and society, only to re-affirm not only the ideological premise of the romance *mythos*, but also the basic class parameters of the society he has sub-created. The authority of the king – of the upper class – is reaffirmed and thus, in pre-Depression America, this is Howard's political unconscious gesture of re-affirming the status quo. The mercy, however, that Kull shows the girl who initially betrayed him – an apparently lower class girl, perhaps clinging to a slightly higher niche in the sub-created society by acting as an agent for the other upper class faction working through Tuzun Thune – reveals Howard's class positioning. This gesture by Kull suggests a politically unconscious attempt to speak up for the lower classes caught in the power struggles of the powerful – just as Tolkien, a reader of Howard's stories, will do through the hobbits in *The Lord of the Rings*.

Read in the third horizon's purview of the cultural revolution, this tale presents a snapshot of America on the brink of the Depression. The disgust with material reality that Kull demonstrates may well figure forth the sense of satiation and emptiness that Fitzgerald suggests, and which Krutch evoked in 1927 when speaking of the temper of literature at the time: "The passions which swept through the once major poets no longer awaken any profound response, and only in the bleak, torturous complexities of a T.S. Eliot does it find its moods given adequate expression. Here disgust speaks with a robust voice and denunciation is confident, but ecstasy, flickering and uncertain, leaps fitfully up only to sink back among the cinders" (Krutch 370). Kull's crisis is revealing of the social discourses of the time of its composition and publication. The cultural revolution of an industrial capitalism given massive impetus by World War I toward speculation and excess was about to experience a major contraction before receiving renewed impetus from World War II and moving fully into its multi-national phase.

As Lethen argues, the *kalte persona* is an integral part of this post WW I social landscape as it embodies a *Verhaltenslehre* that we see in the



Avant Garde throughout the Western World. Howard's attempt to take his barbarian warrior character, an expression of the barbarian discourse and a *kalte persona* romance hero, into a decidedly action-less and contemplative story – only to reaffirm barbarian vitality, the Gestalt with definite contours and the drive to action that is the *kalte persona*, and the romance *mythos* itself – is a textual reaffirmation of those *Verhaltenslehren* and the romance imperative in the United States.

#### VII.1.2. “The Hills of the Dead” (1930)

“The Hills of the Dead” is a story that predates Howard's creation of Conan, and features Howard's earlier hero, Solomon Kane; this story brings out one of the most fascinating features of the Solomon Kane stories, and that is the obsessive fascination that a Puritan white man has with the continent and people of Africa. While Kane's Christianity causes him to vilify pagan Africa in no uncertain terms – “Truly this land is dedicated to the powers of darkness” (Howard 1979: 16) – he also finds himself accepting Africa on its own terms (insofar as Howard portrays Africa), such as when he takes up N'Longa's ju-ju staff and calls upon its voodoo powers.

The “call” which Kane feels draws him irresistibly to the jungle, and to Africa herself, is presented by Howard in the opening paragraphs of this story in terms of sexual and emotional torment reminiscent of that of Rimbaud's narrator:

Once I dared the jungle – once she nearly claimed my bones. Something entered into my blood, something stole into my soul like a whisper of unnamed sin. The jungle! Dark and brooding – over leagues of the blue salt sea she has drawn me and with the dawn I go to seek the heart of her. Mayhap I shall find curious adventure – mayhap my doom awaits me. But better death than the ceaseless and ever-lasting urge, the fire that has burned my veins with bitter longing. (Howard 1979: 1-2)

The story makes clear that Africa is more than her jungle, for Kane marches clear through the jungle and into the grasslands beyond, and still feels the call.

Kane pointed silently eastward.

“The call grows no weaker. I go.” (Howard 1979: 23)

Kane's initial evocation of the call can thus be related to Africa as a whole, and Africa – because of the feminine personification Howard uses – to black women. This again suggests the *Verhaltenslehre der Kälte* and the sublimation of desires of the *kalte persona*, and reveals that the 'Africa as the land of primal freedom' motif is such a sexual sublimation.

The very first thing that Kane finds on his quest "to seek the heart of her" is a young black woman, Zunna, and the manner of their meeting could again be construed to be a sublimation of the language of desire:

The grass parted and a slim figure came flying toward him like a wisp of straw blown on the wind – a brown-skinned girl, clad only in a skirt-like garment. ...

The girl fell at Kane's feet with a wail and a sob, and lay clutching at his ankles. (Howard 1979: 5)

While Kane notes physical details about Zunna throughout the story, the over-all language to describe her and the other black characters is surprisingly gentle – considering Howard's racist climate and his own recorded racist comments. Although Zunna is practically nude, Kane displays tenderness toward her rather than lust. He even makes an observation that is the kind of thing someone who loves someone else makes – a snapshot of a non-sexual physical moment that carries some mysterious and inexplicable emotional resonance: "Zunna slept, her cheek pillowed on her round, girlish arm" (Howard 1979: 11). Zunna is here presented as *Kreatur*, but Kane, the *kalte persona* personified, does not take advantage of her.

Kane is a character driven by over-powering (sublimated) urges and yet is capable of tenderness, which he displays after he rescues Zunna from a lion: he insists on escorting her home. When Kane learns that Zunna has a lover in Kran, he displays no jealousy about this. And yet the story contains symbols and metaphors – archetypes – that can be interpreted sexually, particularly by Freudian criticism: a cave, blood, fire, and a staff. Kane, who enters a cave in the Vampire Hills because of Zunna, finds himself beset by hordes of vampires. The City of the Vampires – yet another appearance of the corrupt civilization theme in Howard's work – is destroyed by fire, while Zunna is protected in her cave shelter by the ju-ju staff that Kane has adopted and has laid down to protect her.

The problematic nature of relationships between whites and blacks – and a possible source of anguish should Howard's stated

attraction to black women represent a Rimbaudian ‘season in hell’ for him – returns in the story with the fact that Zunna takes Kane for a god and both she and Kran call the white man, “master”.

In this tale we see Howard employ the romance *mythos* as its first layer of form. The ‘Africa as the land of primal freedom’ motif is what gives Kane his quest. He is recognized as the romance protagonist not only through his victory over the romance antagonists, but because he has maintained the freedom of movement that the *kalte persona* requires and which Africa has promised. Further, Howard’s protagonist is free to express a certain respect for the freedom of the Africans he meets, something that Howard would have been hard-pressed to do in his Texan context of lynchings and institutionalized racism.

### VII.1.3. “The Footfalls Within” (1931)

The motif of ‘Africa as the land of primal freedom’ recurs several times in Jünger’s *Das Abenteuerliche Herz*, but its most relevant manifestation in terms of a comparison with Howard is one that we have already noted, namely the related role of Arab slavers in Africa in Howard’s 1931 Solomon Kane story, “The Footfalls Within”. In the case of this similar use of the Africa as the land of primal freedom motif, it is instructive how the mythic master narrative of their respective nations colours it.

“The Footfalls Within” begins with Kane coming across – in a scene highly reminiscent of Kane’s discovery of the raped girl at the beginning of “Red Shadows” – a young African girl tortured and killed by Arab slave traders. In true romance *mythos* style, the Puritan adventurer vows (as in “Red Shadows”) to avenge her:

“Wo unto ye, sons of iniquity, for the wrath of God is upon ye. The cords be loosed on the iron necks of the hounds of hate and the bow of vengeance is strung. Ye are proud-stomached and strong, and the people cry out beneath your feet, but retribution cometh in in the blackness of midnight and the redness of dawn.” (Howard 1979: 86).

Again, true to the romance *mythos*, Kane finally accomplishes this, “Kane came to the wretched slaves and after some difficulty released them” (Howard 102). The *anagnorisis* of the story gives great insight into Howard’s perception and use of the Africa as the land of primal freedom

motif – and the often (as here) associated freeing of the slaves motif: “Then they would have knelt and kissed his feet, but he, in much confusion, forbade them roughly” (Howard 1979: 103).

These kind of attitudes must be considered in the context of the American South in Howard’s day where sentiments like those expressed by William Jennings Bryan to the Southern Society in Washington on May 19, 1923, and reported in Howard’s local paper, were taken for granted:

It is no reflection upon the black race to say that it could not formulate laws and administer government as well as the whites. It is only a few centuries since the ancestors of the colored people of the South were brought from Africa as slaves. They have made wonderful progress and they have been associated with and helped by white people. Slavery among the whites was an improvement over independence in Africa. (Bryan in Roehm 2011: 5)

And this was a mild sentiment compared to the fact that “In most years from 1889 to 1923, there were 50-100 lynchings annually across the South” (Barrett 2011: 14). Litwack commented on the photographs of lynchings:

One has only to view the self-satisfied expressions on their faces as they posed beneath black people hanging from a rope or next to the charred remains of a Negro who had been burned to death. What is most disturbing about these scenes is the discovery that the perpetrators of the crimes were ordinary people, not so different from ourselves – merchants, farmers, laborers, machine operators, teachers, doctors, lawyers, policemen, students; they were family men and women, good churchgoing folk who came to believe that keeping black people in their place was nothing less than pest control, a way of combating an epidemic or virus that if not checked would be detrimental to the health and security of the community. (Litwack in Barrett 2011: 14)

Howard even warned his almost-girlfriend, Novalyne Price Ellis, who had progressive views about Blacks not to speak them aloud: “‘Why girl,’ Bob said. ‘What you said about Negroes today no man in the town would understand, and they might even run you out of town, or tar and feather you’” (Price Ellis in Barrett 2011: 13). Before beginning her study of Howard’s 32 poems dealing with Africa, Africans, and African-

Americans, Barrett notes that Howard, born in 1906, “grew up in a world dominated by anti-black racism which was at its strongest between the end of the Reconstruction period and First World War” (Barrett 2011: 16), and acknowledges that Burke concluded that “Both Clyde [*Howard’s best friend*] and Bob were confirmed, unabashed racists” (Burke in Barrett 2011: 16). Yet, Barrett’s investigation of these poem’s reveals Howard’s complex attitude toward Africans and Africa.

She notes a positive attitude in several of Howard’s poems. She writes of Howard’s historical poem, “The Chief of the Matabeles”: “There is no sense of the tribe being an inferior group; there is no discrimination or prejudice nor the desire to subjugate or enslave them. It is an African tale of heroism that gives glimpses into the daily life of the tribe” (Barrett 2011: 19). She comments on his poem “Zululand” that it “shows a deep respect for the tribes and Africa itself” (Barrett 2011: 24).

Barrett does point out attitudes in the poem which are racist, yet puts them into Howard’s cultural context. She considers a Howard poem about an interracial relationship and points out that “while REH speaks disparagingly about the relationship in ‘To a Certain Cultured Woman’ there is no talk of punishing or killing the black man. Both of which would have been done by anyone who was a White Supremacist or a member of the Ku Klux Klan” (Barrett 2011: 30). Of another poem on interracial relationships, Barrett notes that “Again, REH shows a revulsion and a negative attitude towards such an interracial relationship and the sexuality of the African-American male” (Barrett 2011: 31). Barrett then provides an insight into Howard’s Southern culture, which Schivelbusch significantly notes was permeated by a Sir Walter Scott romance *mythos* attitude (Schivelbusch 66):

Putting white women on a pedestal meant that they must be adored and served but could not be desired sexually without strong guilt feelings. The frustrated white males’ recourse to black women became much more difficult after emancipation [...]. Given the prevailing myth of black hypersexuality, it was inevitable that repressed sexual envy would encourage conscious racial hostility and lay the foundation for fears that “oversexed” blacks would assault white women and usurp the sexual prerogatives that white males could claim but not fully enjoy. (Fredrickson in Barrett 2011: 31)

Here we see how the cultural embeddedness of the romance *mythos*, with

its visions of a pure crusading white knight rescuing a virginal damsel in distress, becomes the source of the *Feindbild* of the internal enemy after the war during the Southern culture of defeat. Barrett's point is that Howard has internalized this, and expresses it in his poetry.

Barrett goes on to analyze Howard's poems about black women some of which she characterizes as "erotic sexual fantasies" (Barrett 2011: 33), and provides a telling exchange between Howard and Price Ellis printed in her memoir of him, *One Who Walked Alone*. In this exchange, Howard argues against miscegenation, and Price Ellis retorts that white men should then also refrain from visiting the local black prostitutes. Howard's frustrated reaction to her comment leads Barrett to conclude that the exchange "is not conclusive proof that Howard himself frequented black prostitutes but does infer that it was a common practice" (Barrett 2011: 33).

Finally, and most significantly, Barrett considers Howard's poems about slavery, and comments on a poem that she relates directly to "The Footfalls Within". She notes that "it is a diatribe directed towards slave traders and those who engage in it" and "the deaths of the three slavers speak strongly of a fitting justice" (Barrett 2011: 53). Barrett's final conclusion on the issue of whether Howard was a racist is one where she acknowledges "that he held mainstream viewpoints about the intermixing of blood between the races. Contrast this with some of his unpublished poetry that reveals his sympathy for and even his identification with Africans and their tribal life. Definitely not the acts of a racist, even by modern definitions of the word" (Barrett 2011: 60)

Considering these observations about Howard's racial attitudes in the context of his society, his employment of the freeing the slaves motif, and the Africa as the land of primal freedom motif, is significant, particularly when this story demonstrates how black women characters in Howard's Solomon Kane stories shift from embodying the 'black queen' role in Frye's grammar of the romance to a 'white queen' role.

Howard wrote about a dozen tales about Solomon Kane, but discarded the character when he created Conan the Cimmerian. The last published Kane story was 1932's "Wings in the Night", and his first Conan the Cimmerian story appeared that same year. What this transition suggests is that Howard wanted an even more direct positioning within the barbarian discourse; not content to explore the civilized man's fascination with the barbarian, Howard will now play the story directly from the barbarian's point of view.

This is not to say that Howard was not already considering the barbarian position, as he was already publishing stories of Kull. This engagement with the barbarian discourse, and the positive valuing of the barbarian that the stories of Kull, and later Conan, represent need to be considered in the light of the argument that Lethen presents, namely that the cultural anti-sublimation process occurring on both sides of the Atlantic after World War I, expressed in the barbarian discourse but also in the *kalte persona* itself, is, in actuality, not a sign of primal vitality, but a sign of decadence and world-weariness in the post-war world.

#### VII.1.4. “By this Axe I Rule!” (1929-30)

In 1929-30, Howard was publishing a wide range of pulp fiction stories, including those of Solomon Kane and those of his barbarian character Kull. He began work on a Kull story to be entitled, “By This Axe I Rule!”, but the story was not published in this form. Howard would re-work the story to be the first story of his next barbarian character, Conan of Cimmeria, and it was published in 1932 as “The Phoenix on the Sword”. “By This Axe I Rule” is a significant story as it marks, along with Howard’s abandonment of the very popular Solomon Kane character, a transition in Howard’s writing. The transition from Kull to Conan, and these explicitly barbarian characters taken together, represent Howard’s most decisive foray into the barbarian discourse. Solomon Kane, as a ‘civilized’ white man, does explore the barbarian in his forays into Africa, and it would seem that the character may have been discarded by Howard because these *Annäherungen* to the barbarian were no longer enough, and that he required characters that did not only mediate and sympathize with the barbarian, but became the barbarian.

Kull, along with all of Howard’s pulp fiction romance protagonists, exhibits the *kalte persona* of the 1920s & 30s, and aspects of the *kalte persona* are evident in “By This Axe I Rule”. The story focusses on Howard’s recurring motif of the plot to overthrow the king (as in “The Mirrors of Tuzun Thune” and *The Hour of the Dragon*) and Kull, the king, is described as an embodiment of the *kalte persona*, particularly in how he manifests the *kalte Blick*:

This man would have stood out in a crowd of a million. It was not so much because of his unusual size, his height and great shoulders, though these features lent to the general effect. But his face, dark and immobile, held the gaze, and his

narrow gray eyes beat down the will of the onlookers by their icy magnetism. (Howard 1976: 122)

Howard's expression of the *kalte persona* is nuanced in that his *kalte persona* characters show, from time to time, that their emotional armour can come down: "The little slave girl looked into a dark immobile face, with cold, narrow gray eyes which just now were strangely soft" (Howard 1976: 126). It is revealing that Howard allows Kull to slip from the role of *kalte persona* when confronted by the issue of slavery, and this is yet another instance of the freeing of the slaves motif in his work. However, when the plotters burst into his room, he exhibits another key aspect of the *kalte persona* – alertness: "Kull faced them – not a naked Kull, roused out of deep sleep, mazed and unarmed to be butchered like a sheep, but a Kull wakeful and ferocious, partly clad in the armor of a Red Slayer, with a long sword in his hand" (Howard 1976: 129). Not only is Kull partially armoured, but his robust form resists wounds that would kill a lesser man, thus demonstrating how well his *ich* is *gepanzert*. Just as Jünger exhorted one to be at the parts of the Front where attacks are being carried out, Kull exhibits this quality as well: "No defensive fighter was Kull! He always carried the fight to the enemy" (Howard 1976: 130). Most strikingly, Kull presents an undeniable *kalte persona* tableau at the climax: "He made a terrible and primordial picture. Legs braced far apart, head thrust forward, one red hand clutching at the wall for support, the other gripping the axe on high, while the ferocious features were frozen in a snarl of hate and the icy eyes blazed through the mist of blood which veiled them" (Howard 1976: 132).

This unpublished text (in Howard's lifetime), whose first layer of form is Howard's usual one, the romance *mythos*, is significant in that its second layer of form is still more the *Phantastik Schreibweise* than the *Neophantastik Schreibweise* that Howard will use when writing of Conan. Further, this text shows in its third layer of form how Howard is leaving the 1920s Weird Fiction genre envelope and is helping to craft the modern Fantasy genre by presenting elements that will become standards of the form with the work of Tolkien in the 1950s, Moorcock in the 1970s, and the host of best-selling fantasy writers that emerge in the 1980s and 1990s.

The confluence of the three layers of form as inherently meaningful is evident when one notes a significant difference between this story and the Conan of Cimmeria story that it will become two years later. The *pathos* stage of the romance narrative in this story is the attack



by the conspirators. In “The Phoenix on the Sword”, there is a major supernatural element as a monster from the outer dark is summoned to help kill the king. The existence of this monster is not, in the end, textually questioned, and thus the story expresses the *Neophantastik*. In the original Kull version of the story, the assassins are entirely human. The story is written in a *Phantastik Schreibweise* in that only the setting is not familiar to the readers; here there is the *Unschlüssigkeit* effect as the reader is not certain if this is, or is not, real. Howard’s overt use of legendary place names like Atlantis show his use of the pre-history theories of Theosophy and, like Mundy, his text can imply that there is an historical continuity between Kull’s Atlantean time and the reader’s own. Howard will maintain that linkage when he builds the Hyborian Age sub-creation for his Conan stories, but the textually unquestioned presence of the supernatural goes beyond the *Unschlüssigkeit* effect into a properly *Neophantastik Schreibweise*. The Conan stories will also build on the Fantasy genre – and its Sword and Sorcery subgenre – that Howard is establishing with Kull, but it will be the *Neophantastik* that will finally make the decisive separation between Weird Fiction and fantasy.

At the resolution of the story the freeing of slaves motif reveals itself to be related to a class issue. Having reaffirmed himself as king by surviving the assassination attempt, Kull then changes the old laws of Valusia that had prevented him earlier in the story from permitting the marriage of the slave girl to a nobleman. Kull’s response is pure *kalte persona*:

“By this axe I rule! This is my sceptre! I have struggled and sweated to be the puppet king you wished me to be – to rule your way. Now I use mine own way. If you will not fight, you shall obey. Laws that are just shall stand, laws that have outlived their times I shall shatter as I shattered that one. *I am king!*”

Slowly the pale-faced noblemen and frightened women knelt, bowing in fear and reverence to the blood-stained giant who towered above them with his eyes ablaze.

“I am king!” (Howard 1976: 135)

This is the *anagnorisis* of this romance narrative, and Kull is rewarded by the court of Valusia’s acceptance of Kull’s absolutist stance, which underlines his own highest class status and the new hierarchy of values he wishes to establish. That this new hierarchy of values is marked by the freeing of the slaves motif is as significant as the apparent reference

to the symbology of fascism – through the axe – and fascism’s style of expressing power. The *kalte persona* at the core of fascism has, in fact, allowed Kull to not only survive the attempt to overthrow him, but to in turn essentially suspend the constitution of Valusia. This fascination with dictatorship must be contrasted to letters to fellow pulp fiction writer and admirer of fascism, H.P. Lovecraft, wherein Howard criticizes fascism and expresses his ideology:

If it came to a show-down, I suppose it would be natural for me to throw in with the working classes, since I am a member of that class, but I am far from idealizing – or idolizing – it or its members. In the last analysis, I reckon, I have but a single conviction or ideal, or whateverthehell it might be called: individual liberty. It’s the only thing that matters a damn. I’d rather be a naked savage, shivering, starving, freezing, hunted by wild beasts and enemies, but free to go and come, with the range of the earth to roam, than the fattest, richest, most bedecked slave in a golden palace with the crystal fountains, silken divans, and ivory-bosomed dancing girls of Haroun al Raschid. (Howard in Barrett 2011: 49)

This quotation shows how class identification and the barbarian discourse are related, and how they can be appropriated by fascism. Although Howard’s income and position as writer during the Depression is somewhat precarious, he is, in fact, marginally petty bourgeois and he explicitly notes that he would throw in his lot with the proletariat – in accordance with the petty bourgeois dynamic Marx and Engels noted. Howard links this statement of class loyalty to his fascination with the freedom of the barbarian, and the Nazis will do this as well when they evoke the Germanic barbarian as the source of the invisible power necessary to march through the *Nullpunkt* of nihilism prepared for Germany by the Allies.

The issue of class also occurs in the story as it is part of the motivation for the attempt to overthrow Kull. This revolt by other factions of the upper class is centred on a poet, Ridondo. Although Howard will rename this character ‘Rinaldo’ in “The Phoenix on the Sword”, the fact that he keeps this role essentially identical in both stories is significant. Ridondo is being used by his upper class co-conspirators because “He is our best bid for popularity, once we have achieved our design” (Howard 1976: 121). Ridondo’s motivation, a conspirator explains, is “Because he is a poet, and poets always hate those in power

and turn to dead ages for relief in dreams. Ridondo is a flaming torch of idealism, and he sees himself as a hero, a stainless knight rising to overthrow the tyrant” (Howard 1976: 121). We are told that Kull laughs at Ridondo’s songs, but that he does not understand why people are turning against him.

In this key text for both of Howard’s main barbarian heroes a major concern is the Ridondo/Rinaldo poet character and how his *satiric* verses can influence the people against the barbarian usurper-king by making him *laughable*. This is the major threat to the *kalte persona* and the reason he puts on his emotional armour. Howard plays out this threat, confronting his manifestations of the *kalte persona* with it. Here Howard, like Jünger, wrestles with the irruption of irony into the romance narrative of the warrior. This irony is the rallying cry of the romance antagonists, and Howard’s romance protagonists are able to overcome this irony-charged threat and thus reaffirm the romance paradigm. Jünger, as a German, is not able to so easily repudiate irony and sees his romance attempts shifted toward tragedy as he tries to resist the pull of irony.

We see in the fact that Howard’s heroes are manifestations of the *kalte persona* that Howard is expressing the cynicism toward civilization felt in the post-war generations on both sides of the Atlantic. Howard’s explicitly barbarian heroes, Conan the Cimmerian and Kull of Valusia, are never portrayed by the narrative voice as laughable and it is telling that Howard begins his sequence of stories about his most famous barbarian character, Conan, with this overcoming of the central threat to the *kalte persona*. The grim, violent seriousness that Howard insists his barbarian romance heroes be endowed with provoked a contemporary critic like Bloch to mockery, and a later one, Alpers, to accuse Howard’s Fantasy genre works of promoting fascism.

## VII.2. Romance *Mythos* and Barbarian Discourse Just Before the *Machtergreifung*

### VII.2.1. Nazi *Sprechchöre*

At about the same time that Howard is unconsciously working through the implications of fascism in his narrative trajectories and re-writing Kull to become Conan, a movement claiming a mythic romance

narrative is on the verge of seizing power in Germany. It expresses itself in songs or spoken word pieces that are performed while marching or demonstrating: *Sprechchöre* (speech choirs). Like that of pulp fiction, the audience is primarily the lower classes: the petty bourgeoisie, the proletariat, and the lumpenproletariat. The seriousness that it demands from its audience, and the seriousness with which these *Sprechchöre* demanded they be greeted, are related to their manifestation of the *kalte persona*.

These songs or chants are not presented here as evidence of any great literary achievement, but rather as evidence of the dynamic whereby the hierarchies of values extant in literary texts have the *Veränderungspotential* to change a society's hierarchy of values: in this case, the romance *mythos* used by the Nazi movement through these *Sprechchöre* helped it to its cultural dominance of Germany. We see this dynamic in certain *Sprechchöre* that the Nazi Schulungsamt distributed to its members in *Kommandobrücke* number 3, *Rundschreiben* number 2 on the 5<sup>th</sup> of October, 1931.

In „Sängerchor Jungarbeiter“ we see the romance *mythos* as the narrative form of the lyrics. The quest is indicated in the line „Seht ihr nicht die Zeichen?“ (Anonymous 1931a: 21) and the *agon* is foreshadowed in „Am Horizont stehen schwarze Wolken/Bald kommt der Sturm/Und findet er bereit/Doch Euch?“ (Anonymous 1931a: 21). The romance antagonist is then established in the second stanza, with „Erst verrieteten sie Deutschland“ and „Und als wir uns wehrten,/Unser Recht verteidigten,/Schickten sie den Terror“ (Anonymous 1931a: 21). The romance protagonist – those “true” Germans defending, and manifesting, Germany itself – is then affirmed in an evocation of the *agon*: „Doch nichts überwand uns!/Wir würden nur härter/stärker“ (Anonymous 1931a: 21). The antagonist is then more clearly identified as the „Bürger“ and „Marxist“ and the protagonist as „Die Junge Front“ which marches to the coming *pathos* – death struggle – with the antagonists under „Hitlers rote Fahnen“ „Dem Sturm entgegen“ (Anonymous 1931a: 21). The successful conclusion of the quest and the *anagnorisis* is stated in the final line: „Unser die Zukunft“ (Anonymous 1931a: 21).

This thorough-going identification of Germany as the collective romance protagonist and Germany's future elevation as the quest of this romance narrative was intended to change society and to implicate all Germans in the nationalistic romance. The use of the *Sprechchöre* and

other heavy-handed romance *mythos* propaganda tactics was fully in keeping with Hitler's manipulative strategy to achieve this objective:

Die Nationalisierung der breiten Masse kann niemals erfolgen durch Halbheiten, durch schwaches Betonen eines sogenannten Objektivitätsstandpunktes, sondern durch rücksichtslose und fanatische einseitige Einstellung auf das nun einmal zu erstrebende Ziel. Das heißt also, man kann ein Volk nicht „national“ machen im Sinne unseres heutigen Bürgertums, also mit soundso viel Einschränkungen, sondern nur nationalistisch mit der ganzen Vehemenz, die dem Extrem innewohnt. [...] Die breite Masse eines Volkes besteht weder aus Professoren noch aus Diplomaten. Das geringe abstrakte Wissen, das sie besitzt, weist ihre Empfindungen mehr in die Welt des Gefühls. (Hitler 370-371)

Why the nationalistic romance narrative, that we see in the Nazi movement and exemplified by „Sängerchor Jüngerarbeiter“, was so successful in establishing itself during the time of the *Verhaltenslehre der Kälte* Lethen suggests when he asks, „Dienen sich folgerichtig die Apparate der politischen Lager oder die »künstliche Masse« des Militärs an, um die natürlichen Mängel auszugleichen, weil sie als Institutionen die zauberhafte Eigenschaft haben, einerseits Reflexionsfiguren des deutschen Idealismus zu verkörpern und gleichzeitig die Wärme der Gemeinschaft zu verbürgen?“ (Lethen 11) There is a relentless reductive logic in the dynamic we see in this time, particularly in how all the philosophical complexities and nuances brought forth by German Idealism over the centuries end in the simple formula of ‘Germany-as-ideal’ as a way of compensating for the cold *Schamkultur* society ushered in by World War I and its loss. The Nazi movement, on the one hand, promoted an extreme *kalte persona* and, on the other, allowed for the longed-for social warmth in its rituals, essentially channelling the human desire into, and through, forms metaphorically hardened beyond human flesh, which is something that we see expressed in another *Sprechchor* text distributed in the same issue of *Kommando Brücke*: „Feuer der Freiheit“.

In this text by Hugo Maaß, beyond-human hardness and social warmth are juxtaposed. This is particularly evident through the direction printed with the lyrics: „Der Chor ist im Takte der Maschinen zu sprechen und der letzte Satz ist besonders zu betonen“ (Maaß 22). In the lyrics, the flame is symbolic of the spirit of the ideal Germany that is the protagonist of the romance narrative, and the opening lines make clear

that it is this flame that is animating the machine-like choir. The opening lines also indicate the romance antagonist and the romance quest:<sup>55</sup> „Ihr löscht / das lodernde Feuer nicht mehr / \ Das immer weiter / ins Volk / sich frißt /“ (Maaß 22). Interestingly, the romance antagonist is, by implication, the audience listening to the *Sprechchor*. These would be the bourgeois and petty bourgeois citizens forced to listen as the Nazi marchers come by, while the farmers, proletarians and lumpenproletarians in the audience could avoid identification with the „Ihr“ antagonist by allowing themselves to be „set on fire“ by the protagonist flame: „Ihr werdet die Flammen nicht dämpfen können / \ Die / einmal entfacht / \ In hunderttausenden brennen / / \“ (Maaß 22). In essence, the *Sprechchor* establishes the complete spread of the symbolic flame throughout Germany – minus the bourgeois, which the right, including Jünger, make clear cannot identify with the ideal Germany (Jünger 1982: 40) – as being the romance quest. The opening lines of the *Sprechchor* to its, at first, hostile listeners represents the *agon* of the narrative, while the lines just quoted about the the hundreds of thousands, suggests the *pathos* as the audience members willing ‘to be set on fire’ are themselves the overcoming of the „Ihr“ antagonist. The victorious romance *pathos* rushes to the *anagnorisis* in the final lines, including the last one, on which Maaß wants a particular machine-like emphasis: „Von Dorf zu Dorf / von Hof zu Hof / \ Von Berg zu Berg / von Grund zu Grund / \ Von Haus zu Haus / \ Ihr / löscht / das Feuer / nicht / mehr aus / \“ (Maaß 22). In the final line the romance antagonist is revealed as decisively defeated, and the victorious protagonist flame is rewarded – as befits the *anagnorisis* stage – with a national conflagration of immense power.

This *Sprechchor*, in particular, demonstrates how the Nazi torchlight formation rituals are an aspect of the barbarian discourse and, as Theweleit suggests, also how the body oppression common in Western European societies at the time is a major factor in the recourse to this discourse: „Im Ritual wird der Faschist so zum Darsteller seiner befreiten Triebe *und* zum Darsteller des Prinzips, das sie unterdrückt – der darin liegende Widerspruch kommt nicht zum Tragen, weil der einzelne während der Inszenierung an der Macht partizipiert“ (Theweleit 1987a: 447). We see in the lyrics how the social warmth that all Germans

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<sup>55</sup> Note that the “/” employed in this quotation is in the original and indicates the machine-like phrasing of the choir. In this quotation “\” indicates the line breaks in the text.

desire – „Brennende Worte und brennendes Hoffen / \ Allerort stehen die Herzen ihm offen / \“ (Maaß 22) – in the midst of the *Verhaltenslehren der Kälte* that the capitalistic bourgeois Weimar society seems to demand, is symbolized by a fast-spreading flame, but the cultural adoption of the body-oppressive *kalte persona* – based as it is, as Theweleit argues, on the tradition of Wilhelmine and Prussian militarism – has the people see themselves as machines who need this flame to animate themselves. Only in this way can they get in touch with a primal barbarian vitality, but one conditioned by what Jünger sees as the new revolutionary barbarism of technology. In this *Sprechchor*, finally, we see how the *Arbeiter Gestalt* is powered by the German workers who are willing to channel their primal desires into technology, their national unity bundling those desires into a flame, and the Nazi rituals providing the channel for the fire.

In fact, a third *Sprechchor* in that issue, „Das braune Heer“, emphasizes precisely this unity in its refrain („Weil wir einig sind“), and the conflation of work with freedom („Wir kennen nur eins / die Pflicht und das Recht / \ Das den Weg zur Arbeit / zur Freiheit find't / \ Weil wir einig sind / weil wir einig sind // \“) (Anonymous 1931b: 22); this is the core of Jünger's argument: that the *Arbeiter Gestalt* become manifest through the *Typus* of the German worker and come to rule the world through the revolutionary technology employed by the German worker, who will, in the process, become the ruling race of the world. In other words, in the quest for rulership, which implies freedom, Germany – German men, women and children – must surrender their individual freedom. Wünsch criticizes examples of this contradiction in Jünger's *Der Arbeiter*, including his objection to democracy, his championing of dictatorship, and his rejection of the concept of human rights.

How romance narrative rituals like these *Sprechchöre* are able to simultaneously demand self-oppression and promise freedom, Theweleit explains: „In der symbolischen Befreiung der Wünsche, in der hier inszenierten Triebbejahung (die in der Form des monumentalen Ornaments, dem Muster der Triebunterdrückung erscheint), wird vom Faschismus so der Anbruch der Freiheit inszeniert, einer Freiheit, in der sich der Faschist *nicht* auflöst“ (Theweleit 1987a: 448). One can see this literally mapped out in another document from around the time of the Nazi *Machtergreifung*, one produced by the HJ leadership entitled „Aufstellung zur Feier“ (Anonymous). The celebration being mapped out here is a graduation ceremony of Hitler Youth. The sketch

establishes where the HJ ranks are to stand, where the audience is to sit, where representatives of the organizations receiving the graduating HJ are to sit (SA, NSKK, Politische Leiter, NSFK and SS), and where the graduating HJ are to stand. All the groups mentioned above, except for the graduating HJ, are situated outside a square formed by torch bearers. The only groups within the square formed by torch bearers are the musicians and trumpeters, the graduating HJ and the HJ leadership. In order to stand – symbolically – within the fire, the graduating HJ accept moving from one organization that suppresses their individual freedom to another because they occupy the centre of the power – the symbolic flame of the ideal Germany – and, in fact, *are* that power for they represent its future and thus are the guarantee for the expansion of that power and thus Germany’s “freedom”.

#### VII.2.2. “The Phoenix on the Sword” (1932)

Howard’s first published Conan the Cimmerian story, “The Phoenix on the Sword” appeared in the December 1932 issue of *Weird Tales*. This story begins a published series of stories that constitute Howard’s most unequivocal utterances in the barbarian discourse for they foreground the conflict between civilization and barbarism and the related struggle between the Apollonian and the Dionysian. These utterances constitute an exploration of the *kalte persona* of the post World War I world. “The Phoenix on the Sword” has a first layer of form which is the mythic romance narrative, and its second layer, that of the *Schreibweise*, shows Howard’s continuing movement toward the *Neophantastik*, and we can, in fact, argue that this text is more *Neophantastik* than *Phantastik*; finally, its third layer of form, that of genre, is revelatory of the fact that with this story we can state that a genre development given a major impetus by William Morris has taken definitive shape: the modern Fantasy genre has come to be.

One of the central issues that must be addressed before analyzing the final form of the story initially entitled “By This Axe I Rule!” is the transformation of the main character from Kull of Valusia to Conan of Cimmeria. Howard maintains a linkage between these characters by positing that the sub-creation that is Conan the Cimmerian’s fantasy setting, the Hyborian Age, is actually an epoch occurring some thousands of years after Kull’s sub-created fantasy setting. In fact, this entire sub-creation is based on Theosophical concepts of Earth’s development, and



yet the most significant aspect of this sub-creation is the sub-created homeland of the central character: Cimmeria. Conan the Cimmerian begins his Dionysian wanderings through the Hyborian Age in this story – significantly – by looking back on his career. In the process we see how Howard’s Dionysian Cimmerian epitomizes the *kalte persona* and how Cimmeria itself forms the lynchpin of Howard’s Hyborian Age. In fact, Cimmeria functions as a motif within the texts, and within the barbarian and racial discourses that Howard addresses. Howard’s choice of Cimmeria as the homeland of his greatest character is of symbolic significance as Cimmeria becomes – for Howard as it was for authors before him – a vehicle for social criticism.

#### VII.2.2.1. The Textual Apollonian/Dionysian Conflict

This tale opens with the Conan character as a middle-aged man and in an unusually scholarly mode, writing with a stylus on a tablet. The character is at the height of his career<sup>56</sup>, is king of Aquilonia, and is expanding the maps, that Aquilonia possesses, of the Hyborian continent by filling in the northern regions that he has personally explored. As he does so, he complains of the Apollonian context within which he finds himself to Prospero, his friend and ally. He reminisces fondly of his wild days and evokes Dionysian images of ecstasy, revelry and fighting in keeping with the myths of Dionysus (Graves 104): Dionysus’ mythical rampage of slaughter over the known world covers much of the same ground as the historical Cimmerians did, and the god spread “joy and terror wherever he went” (Graves 106).

Howard, like Jünger, equated the Dionysian with the barbarian. Whereas Jünger makes this equation implicitly through his evocation of the *kalte persona Frontsoldat*, whose source of strength is the nation and thus its barbarian origins, Howard makes this connection explicitly. As Nietzsche argued, when you have the Dionysian, then you have the conflict with the Apollonian. This Apollonian/Dionysian conflict is featured in several ways in “The Phoenix on the Sword”: in the poet Rinaldo, in Thoth-Amon’s ecstatic desire for the Ring of Set, in the

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<sup>56</sup> Howard had a rough outline of Conan’s career in mind as he began writing the series. He related events in Conan’s fictional career in no particular order, but they all fit into his overall conception of Conan’s fictional life.

conflict between Mitra<sup>57</sup> and Set, and in Conan's dream encounter with Epemitreus, ancient priest-sage of Mitra.

Yet, the most direct connection between Conan and Dionysus exists in the fact that, when Conan reminisces about his past, Conan's career shows similarities with that of Dionysus. Just as Dionysus raged through the known world, slaughtering and conquering – “He reached India, having met with much opposition by the way, and conquered the whole country” (Graves 104) – Conan remembers: “Looking back now over the wild path I followed, all those days of toil, intrigue, slaughter and tribulation seem like a dream” (Howard 2002: 11). In fact, Conan's adoption of a Dionysian lifestyle is revealed here as making him something of a rogue Cimmerian, in that he has adopted traits of a people of Howard's Hyborian Age that are based on the historical northern Germanic barbarian tribes:

“What manner of men are these northern folk?”  
asked Prospero.

“Tall and fair and blue-eyed. Their god is Ymir, the frost giant, and each tribe has its own king. They are wayward and fierce. They fight all day and drink ale and roar their wild songs all night.”

“Then I think you are like them,” laughed Prospero.  
“You laugh greatly, drink deep, and bellow good songs; though I never saw another Cimmerian who drank aught but water, or who ever laughed, or ever sang save to chant dismal dirges.” (Howard 2002: 12-13)

Howard's connection of the Germanic barbarians and the Dionysian lifestyle is a significant parallel to similar thinking in Germany at this time.

Against this Dionysian Cimmerian character Howard pits Thoth-Amon. Thoth-Amon is textually marked as a priest of Set and he states: “King Ctesphon of Stygia gave me great honor, casting down the magicians from the high places to exalt me above them. They hated me,

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<sup>57</sup> In the supernatural framework of Howard's Hyborian Age, the god Mitra and his priests play a central role. The word ‘Mitra’ is clearly derived from Mithras, and Howard describes the religion of Mitra in a way congruent with the historical worship of Mithras as a forerunner to Christianity; the adherents of Mitra in Howard's Hyborian Age come off as Christian in their focus on morality, goodness, and the triumph of good over evil – aspects, it will be remembered, also of Horus worship in Ancient Egypt and the worship of Apollo in Greece.

but they feared me, for I controlled beings from *outside* which came at my call and did my bidding” (Howard 2002: 14). Thoth-Amon reveals that he, like Dionysus and his divine master Set, can pierce the veil of Mâyâ to the true reality beyond this one. Howard here picks up the Egyptian conception of what Set represented: what Nietzsche called the “Primordial Unity” beyond our little vale of earthly illusion is one of cosmic horror. It is significant that Thoth-Amon is not destroyed in this tale, and that he becomes the lurking power in the background throughout the Conan stories (he is the implicit instigator of the conflict in “The God in the Bowl”, for example). There is, then, a symbolic struggle that provides a narrative dynamic throughout the Conan stories; this is a struggle between two variants of the opposition to what Apollo and Horus represent: the eternal negation represented by Set as opposed to the eternal *Bejahung* represented by Dionysus.

While there is this tension between two possible metaphysical interpretations of the opposite pole to the Apollonian, the Apollonian/Dionysian conflict remains central to the Conan stories. The strongest evocation of the Apollonian/Dionysian conflict comes, *Phantastik*-ally, in a dream where Conan encounters the fifteen hundred year-old priest-sage of Mitra, Epemitreus. The Apollonian Epemitreus accepts the Dionysian barbarian when Conan says to Epemitreus,

“...you send forth your ghost on unseen wings to aid Aquilonia in times of need, but I – I am an outlander and a barbarian.”

“Peace!” the ghostly tones reverberated through the great shadowy cavern. “Your destiny is one with Aquilonia.” (Howard 2002: 18).

Conan then receives from him what Nietzsche terms an Apollonian dream-picture symbol: the phoenix, which Epemitreus inscribes on Conan’s sword.

Thus temporarily grounded by Apollonian dream inspiration, Conan emerges armed with the symbol of his connection to the Primordial Unity – and, revealingly, to Aquilonia, Howard’s sub-created stand-in for the World War I Allies, Britain and France – to face the schemers against his throne, which include the poet Rinaldo. Conan says of him:

No, Prospero, he’s beyond my reach. A great poet is greater than any king. His songs are mightier than my scepter; for he has near ripped the heart from my breast when he chose to

sing for me. I shall die and be forgotten, but Rinaldo's songs will live for ever. (Howard: 2002: 12).

This seems to be a Dionysian acceptance of the dominance of the Apollonian, but the subsequent battle during the assassination attempt, where Conan kills Rinaldo, reverses this again and reaffirms the Dionysian.

#### VII.2.2.2. The First Layer of Form: Romance

The story's first layer of form is that of a romance *mythos* narrative. Conan is set up as a romance protagonist in the values he represents in terms of the Apollonian/Dionysian conflict: both mature Apollonian wisdom in the symbol he bears on his sword and the nostalgic yearning for, and experiencing of, violent and exciting Dionysian energy. He is pitted against romance protagonists led by a textbook romance villain who represents the classic symbols of the romance villain: darkness, old age and death. Secondly, he undergoes an *agon* phase whose parameters are set by the barbarian discourse, as Conan explains to Prospero:

When I overthrew Numedides, *then* I was the Liberator – now they spit at my shadow. They have put a statue of that swine in the temple of Mitra, and people go and wail before it, hailing it as the holy effigy of a saintly monarch who was done to death by a red-handed barbarian. When I led her armies to victory as a mercenary, Aquilonia overlooked the fact that I was a foreigner, but now she can not forgive me. (Howard 2002: 11)

Thoth-Amon exploits this changeable public sentiment against the Dionysian barbarian – a reversal of the poles of the barbarian discourse dialectic – and sets the plot to overthrow Conan in motion. In the process he raises himself to the head of those plotters by calling upon the serpent of Set to bring a monstrous servant to him from “darker gulfs” (Howard 2002: 16). (This is a significant *Neophantastik*-toned change of the nature of the plot against the king from the “By This Axe I Rule!” version.) Before the *pathos* scene where Conan defeats both the plotters and the monster sent against him, he receives, as noted above, the romance hero's connection to the divine with his dream of the ancient sage of the god Mitra who bestows on his sword a magic symbol. In the *pathos* scene he kills all the plotters, particularly including Rinaldo, except

for Thoth-Amon, who will escape, and the monster, which has been wounded and has fled. A brief *sparagmos* scene occurs after the battle when knights, men-at-arms, councillors and ladies come and react to Conan's tale of the monster by saying that "The king is delirious" (Howard 2002: 26). The *anagnorisis* (which highlights the tension between the *Phantastik* and the *Neophantastik* in Howard's work) follows when a high priest of Mitra confirms that Epemitreus did indeed magically mark his symbol on Conan's sword, thus confirming him as the chosen hero and king of Aquilonia, and Conan is vindicated when a bloody outline of the monster that Conan vanquished is discovered by the assembled court. These two events show the oscillation between the *Phantastik* and *Neophantastik Schreibweisen* in Howard's work, and they textually point to the increasingly *Neophantastik* nature of Howard's work when the assembled court flees in terror.

### VII.2.2.3. The Second Layer of Form: The Transition from *Phantastik* to *Neophantastik*

This first layer of form, this basic mythic romance structure, is informed by the second layer's *Neophantastik Schreibweise*. Howard highlights the existence of this narrative strategy in his text by beginning the tale with Conan making a map of his world, and by presenting the tale and its setting as fully real to the characters in it, with no gesture toward the real world reader in terms of „plausibilisierender Vermittlung“ (Lachmann 2002: 108). Furthermore, Thoth-Amon's magical Ring of Set and his ability to commune with the god Set are also presented as facts to the reader, and such a textual approach is at the core of the *Neophantastik* where „Weder Held noch Erzähler befragen die Vorgänge und Phänomene des Irrealen“ (Lachmann 2002: 109). Interestingly, however, for this story and the next two Conan tales that Howard wrote ("The Frost Giant's Daughter" and "The God in the Bowl") Howard has not completely moved into a *Neophantastik* mode, and the *anagnorisis* scene of all three of these tales includes the central element of the *Phantastik*, *Unschlüssigkeit*, wherein the other characters in the tale doubt the supernatural encounter Conan claims to have had.

Howard discards this device for subsequent Conan tales, and it is interesting to note that the next Conan story to be accepted for publication by *Weird Tales* after "The Phoenix on the Sword" was the fifth one he wrote, "The Scarlet Citadel", which has no moment of

*Unschlüssigkeit* in its *anagnorisis*. Here we see, in a fascinating chronological development, evidence of Lachmann's statement „Die literarische Tatsache, daß die Unschlüssigkeit in der Neophantastik aufgegeben und nur bei einigen Vertretern des Neo-Gothic und der Science-fiction eine gemäßigte Doppelrolle spielt, bedeutet zum eine, daß das hermeneutische Spiel erklärlich-unerklärlich (natürlich-übernatürlich) ausgereizt ist und sein innertextliches Spannungsmoment verloren hat“ (Lachmann 2002: 95). Indeed, Howard clearly felt that the „erklärlich-unerklärlich (natürlich-übernatürlich)“ game was „ausgereizt“ and not necessary for the increasingly popular Conan tales. Dispensing with this central *Phantastik* device allowed him to use a fully *Neophantastik* strategy where „der Verzicht auf lebensweltliche Plausibilität die unumwundene Einstellung auf die andersgesetzliche Ordnung verlangt, in die die Realien und die normalen Verhältnisse eingespannt sind“ (Lachmann 2002: 95). This demand that the reader orient her/himself according to the „andersgesetzliche Ordnung“ leads one to the criteria of the specific genre that this *Neophantastik* strategy has made both possible and necessary.

Genres that do require the *Neophantastik Schreibweise*, like science fiction, fantasy, and science fantasy, still accomplish the one thing that does remain to unite the *Phantastik* and *Neophantastik* after *Unschlüssigkeit* has been abandoned by the *Neophantastik*, namely the fact that „Das Irreale, das der phantastische Text favorisiert, stellt die Kategorie des (vereinbarungsgemäß) Realen auf die Probe“ (Lachmann 2002: 10). As noted earlier, the *Neophantastik* achieves the same questioning of consensus reality, not by demonstrating uncertainty about consensus reality, but by positing another reality altogether. The social and political significance of this becomes apparent when one considers the specific genre of the text; science fiction and fantasy, for example, have very different basic *Weltanschauungen*. It should also be noted, as the chronological structure of this dissertation highlights, that this moment of transition, in Howard's texts informed by the barbarian discourse of the era, comes at the time of the Nazi *Machtergreifung* in Germany.

#### VII.2.2.4. The Third Layer of Form: Fantasy

“The Phoenix on the Sword” is an exemplar of the Fantasy genre as defined by Tolkien, and the Conan stories were milestones in the development of the Fantasy genre as it is popularly known today. These texts by Howard arguably represent the genre becoming solidified as

such after the pioneering work by Morris and Dunsany, among others, for it is his shift to the *Neophantastik* that allows for the clear emergence of the two central elements of fantasy, sub-creation and the supernatural – both in his own work and in the texts Howard’s work will influence, including Tolkien’s. In fact, Thoth-Amon’s verbal interaction with the Ring of Set is eerily similar to Gollum’s relationship with the One Ring in *The Lord of the Rings*.

When Tolkien writes that a fantasy author is a “story-maker [*who*] proves a successful ‘sub-creator’”, he defines what a successful sub-creator (and thus sub-creation) is:

He makes a Secondary World which your mind can enter. Inside it, what he relates is ‘true’: it accords with the laws of that world. You therefore believe it, while you are, as it were, inside. (Tolkien 36)

Howard takes pains to make his Secondary World believable to the reader by having his first published scene of the Conan character be a map-making scene which sketches out the parameters of the sub-creation. This occurs not only through Conan’s physical writing of the map, but also through the comments made by Conan and Prospero on the races and nations of that sub-creation.<sup>58</sup> The central nations (whose metaphoric meanings shall be discussed) of the Hyborian Age are all evoked: Nemedra, Aquilonia (including its semi-independent province, Poitain), Cimmeria, Asgard and Vanaheim (Howard 2002: 11-12). Furthermore, Howard also takes pains not to violate Tolkien’s rule for a successful Fantasy sub-creation – “The moment disbelief arises, the spell is broken; the magic, or rather art, has failed. You are then out in the Primary World again, looking at the little abortive Secondary World from outside” (Tolkien: 36) – by quickly resolving the moment of *Unschlüssigkeit* during the *anagnorisis*. The *Unschlüssigkeit* moment brings up an instant of doubt for the reader about the reality of the sub-creation, and this constituted an unnecessary danger for the continued success of the Conan tales once it was clear that most readers readily accepted the sub-creation and enjoyed their ‘escape’ into it.

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<sup>58</sup> Howard counteracted criticism of his liberal use of terms from history and mythology by adopting the same attitude as the characters of his Hyborian Age stories, namely that those names and terms were part of the Hyborian Age *first* and this was unquestioned in the sub-creation itself. Theosophical ideas of the Ages of Man may have prompted Howard to imply that “later” (i.e. historical) uses of these terms in our real world were, in fact, ancient racial memories of the Hyborian Age!

In this context it is interesting to note the portion of *Weird Tales* readers who preferred the Solomon Kane character to Conan (McHaney 2001: 15-16); Kane exists more on the *Phantastik* side of the *Phantastik/Neophantastik* divide: even though the supernatural elements of his stories are, generally, textually unquestioned, there is no sub-creation per se. His adventures primarily take place in Africa, a place where many readers (likely as an expression of the race discourse of their day) could imagine black magic/voodoo happenings.

In terms of the supernatural element of fantasy, Howard takes pains to establish that the magic of his sub-creation is indeed “magic of a peculiar mood and power, at the furthest pole from the vulgar devices of the labourious, scientific, magician” (Tolkien: 16), when Thoth-Amon describes his own sorcerous power (Howard 2002: 14). This description sets the tenor for the supernatural element of the Conan fantasy stories, and it is reinforced in this first story by Conan’s supernatural meeting with Epemitreus and the resultant *Neophantastik* magical inscription on Conan’s sword.

Tolkien argued that a Fantasy genre<sup>59</sup> story had the functions of ‘Fantasy’ (i.e. imagination), ‘Recovery’, ‘Escape’ and ‘Consolation’. Grabes argues that literature is an impetus to change; the Fantasy genre generates this impetus from these functions. As contemporary reader reactions indicate, the Conan stories did excite the imaginations of 1930s *Weird Tales* readers. For example, reader J. MacKay Tait of Nova Scotia praised just this function of the Conan stories when he wrote of Howard in May of 1936, “I think he is a splendid imaginative writer” (in McHaney 2002 b: 10). The ability to tap into the imagination to the great extent that the Fantasy genre allows, is linked to the Fantasy genre’s second function, ‘Recovery’. Tolkien defines the ‘Recovery’ function as “a re-gaining, re-gaining of a clear view” (Tolkien 52). How Fantasy accomplishes this re-gaining of a clear view is suggested by *Weird Tales* reader Robert Locke of Missouri when he comments on the news of Howard’s death in the February 1937 issue:

Conan lived, breathed, loved, fought with the sweat of his arms and blood from his wounds, felt hate, revenge, disgust, wonder, and a myriad of other emotions that are experienced by human beings. Conan’s world was Robert E. Howard’s idealization of the Golden Age. He created a dream-world

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<sup>59</sup> It must be remembered that Tolkien’s suggestion as a name for the genre he was defining was ‘Faerie Story’, but this term did not take hold.



such as Heine, Maeterlinck, Dunsany, or Poe did before him, a world peopled with chivalry, knights, magic, and wizards, star-spiraled cities, and gorgeous armies. Intrigue, mystery, adventure, wonder, all filled the pages of his stories, and once again the reader felt surge through him a sudden remembrance [*sic*] of the glamorous days of old. Perhaps if you have read Dante Gabriel Rossetti's [*sic*] gem, *Sudden Light*, you may remember that sudden nostalgic feeling expressed there. (in McHaney 2002 c: 14)

This reader's comments make clear that the Fantasy genre itself is an utterance in the barbarian discourse, and the clear view that it offers its readers is one that wipes away the emotionally chaotic and unnatural existence that civilization imposes on people. It reminds people of more essential and more vital aspects of being human, aspects which the civilized person has either lost altogether or has difficulty experiencing first hand. This 'Recovery' is directly linked to fantasy's third function, 'Escape'. As we have seen, Tolkien defends the kind of reaction that readers of the Conan stories, like Gertrude Hemken of Chicago ("I lose myself entirely in his adventures" (in McHaney 2002 b: 6), had. This 'Escape' into Howard's Fantasy sub-creation of the Hyborian Age is not, as Adorno and Horkheimer argue, an acquiescence to one's own oppression, but, in fact, an implicit condemnation of 1930s industrial, monopoly capitalist civilization. This condemnation, it is true, does not necessarily lead to direct revolutionary action, but it flows into the discourses of the day, particularly the barbarian discourse, which does affect the culture at large. It must be considered that the American entry into World War II was, on some levels, motivated by a thirst for adventure and violence extant in the culture, else isolationism would have prevailed. Finally, the 'Consolation' function of the Fantasy genre is closely linked to its overwhelmingly romance *mythos* patterning and its *Neophantastik* dismissal of our primary reality. As Tolkien notes of Fantasy genre stories, "there are [...] old ambitions and desires (touching the very roots of fantasy) to which they offer a kind of satisfaction and consolation" (Tolkien 54). The fantasy text's offer to help the reader mentally and emotionally transcend the limitations of civilization and the human body is the 'Consolation' the Fantasy genre offers. The deepest desire is to somehow be able to escape death, and the triumphant fantasy romance protagonist embodies that desire, the romance form itself suggesting what Tolkien calls the *encatastrophe* (Tolkien 60). While

Tolkien's view is derived from his Christianity, the Fantasy genre *does* encourage metaphysical thinking through the messianic romance protagonist's adventures in a sub-created world where the supernatural is real and unquestioned. This brings us back to the metaphysical role the author of the fantasy sub-creation takes on, for, "in Fantasy he may actually assist in the effoliation and multiple enrichment of creation" (Tolkien 62-63). Fellow *Weird Tales* writer, Clark Ashton Smith, commented on Howard's death with precisely this in mind: "It seems hard to realize that Howard's work is at an end, and that a whole world of noble myth and fantasy has perished in his dying" (in McHaney 2002 c: 10). Smith contradicts himself in the very next line, realizing that the 'enrichment of creation' that Howard's work represents has not, in fact, perished but will live on: "What he has left behind, however, may well outlast many things that have been acclaimed and widely touted as literature" (in McHaney 2002 c: 10). Smith's words would turn out to be prophetic.

#### VII.2.2.5. The Cimmeria Motif

Howard's Dionysian superman Cimmerian epitomized the *kalte persona*, while at the same time ritually enacting the romance narrative for an American public wanting the romance paradigm. One appreciative contemporary 1932 reader of this first Conan tale wrote: "*The Phoenix on the Sword* fairly took my breath away with its intrigue and excellent action and description. It was a magnificent story. Mr. Howard never writes but that he produces a masterpiece" (in McHaney 2001: 6). The character and the tough homeland he came from represented a reaction – through the contemporary barbarian discourse and the Cimmeria motif derived from it – against the sophisticated air of defeat permeating a corrupt, spiritually bankrupt materialistic society, that of the Roaring 20s, which was the context of Howard's youth.

In fact, Howard's choice of legendary Cimmeria as the homeland of his greatest character is of great symbolic significance. The symbolic significance of this choosing of Cimmeria – and the attendant integration of a Cimmeria motif into his Conan stories – is revealed when one investigates who the Cimmerians really were. One can begin this investigation with the ancient Greek historian Herodotus, and continue by seeing how the Cimmeria motif was used in other works of literature,

including Homer's *Odyssey*<sup>60</sup>, Voltaire's *La princesse de Babylone*, Goethe's *Faust II* and *Une saison en enfer* by Rimbaud.

Cimmeria, in fact, forms the lynchpin of Howard's fantasy sub-creation, the Hyborian Age. He builds the rest of his sub-creation around it, drawing from Theosophical ideas and historical sources of inspiration. The fact that the map of the Hyborian Age is based on a map of Europe is key to understanding the political unconscious of the Conan tales. Howard developed maps and notes for his sub-creation from the beginning of his work on the Conan stories, and in 1936 he published the completed form of those on-going notes as "The Hyborian Age".

The meaning of the term Cimmeria – and the literary motif it becomes – derives from its function in Homer's *Odyssey*. Sent by the witch Circe, Odysseus arrives in a country where Circe has instructed him to perform a ritual sacrifice which will call forth the spirit of the ancient prophet Tiresias. It is a place

[...] at the bounds of deep-flowing Oceanos.

There is the land and city of Cimmerian men,

Who are shrouded in mist and cloud. Never does the sun

Look down upon them, glittering with his rays –

Never when he climbs up into the starry heaven

Or when he turns back from the heaven to the earth,

But deadly night is stretched out for hapless mortals.

(Homer 145-146)

Homer's description of Cimmeria as a land of mist and cloud and night is adopted by Howard in his poem "Cimmeria" and in the Cimmeria of his hero, Conan. Homer portrayed the people and their ill-fated homeland as the gateway to the land of the dead. The geographical location of the original Cimmerian homeland near the eastern shore of the Black Sea was to ancient Greeks the bounds of Oceanos, the place where their ships could go no farther. Cimmeria, thus, for the seafaring ancient Greeks, represented the end of the world and thus a fitting place for the portal to the realm of the dead.

Howard related his creation of the Conan the Cimmerian character in a manner that is suggestive of just such a gateway, or a communing with the dead:

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<sup>60</sup> Prospero's identification of 'dismal dirges' with Cimmerians in "The Phoenix on the Sword" points to the Homeric Cimmeria.

...I have sometimes wondered if it were possible that unrecognized forces of the past or present or even the future – work through the thoughts and actions of living men. This occurred to me, especially, when I was writing the first stories of the Conan series. I know that for months I had been absolutely barren of ideas, completely unable to work up anything salable. Then the man Conan seemed suddenly to grow up in my mind without much labor on my part and immediately a stream of stories flowed off my pen – or rather, off my typewriter – almost without effort on my part. I did not seem to be creating, but rather relating events that had occurred. [...] The character took complete possession of my mind and crowded out everything else in the way of storytelling. (Howard in Van Hise 2001: 32)

Just as Odysseus' encounter with the spirit of dead Tiresias in Cimmeria proves a pivotal moment in his quest, so does Howard's 'encounter' with his Cimmerian character. Not only will this character outlive its creator and go on to popular culture fame – as Clark Ashton Smith predicted – but in the same letter Howard indicates that his ability to write of Conan may well be over (Howard in Van Hise 2001: 32), and only several months later he makes his fateful decision to take his life.

Although Howard's use of Cimmeria does not have, for example, the Enlightenment inspiration that Voltaire uses when he writes of a peaceful matriarchal Cimmeria in his *La princesse de Babylone*, he does incorporate into it the barbarian discourse's positive valuing of the barbarian's closeness to nature. McCollum analyzes Howard's Cimmeria and comes to this conclusion: "A life in the cold hills and wild woods of Cimmeria would tie one tightly to nature, to a life lived loose and free" (McCollum 5).

In *La princesse de Babylone* Voltaire does evoke both sides of the dialectical tension within the barbarian discourse. He wrote at a time when it seemed that a civilization of rationality and reason purged of religious dogma was attainable. While Voltaire criticizes the civilization of his time, he holds that a civilization drawing from the positive, natural aspects of the barbarian could be established. Howard, on the other hand, wrote in the aftermath of the mechanized slaughter of World War I, one which had broken much of humanity's faith in a coming rational civilization, and the desublimation dynamic of the time accelerated the

fascination with ‘primitive’ or barbarian societies. This fascination can be traced back in a direct line to the Romanticism in the early 1800s, which was a reaction to, and refutation of, the rationalism of the Enlightenment. This historical movement explains the differing interpretations of the barbarian discourse and its Cimmerian aspect by Voltaire and Howard, yet Howard’s Cimmeria, anchored in a romance mythic framework, serves the same function as Voltaire’s satiric Cimmeria: namely to criticize reality as it appeared to the two men.

Whereas Howard’s Cimmerian hero expresses a criticism of the stunted, circumscribed, weak and corrupted approach to life typical of civilization through the same kind of vital, elemental embracing of life that Jünger champions, Voltaire’s Cimmerian queen seeks to stamp out the lingering – to her, ‘barbaric’ – irrationalities and antagonisms that oppress humanity by viewing all the world’s people as her subjects and by insisting on laws that accept and honour all of them.

Avant elle, des hommes malheureusement puissants envoyaient des troupes de meurtriers ravir à des peuplades inconnues et arroser de leur sang les héritages de leurs pères: on appelait ces assassins des héros; leur brigandage était de la gloire. Notre souveraine a une autre gloire: elle a fait marcher des armées pour apporter la paix, pour empêcher les hommes de se nuire, pour les forcer à se supporter les uns les autres; et ses étendards ont été de la concorde publique. (Voltaire 88)

Here Voltaire deliberately denies any romance perspective on war and warriors of the type that the historical Cimmerians were, demonstrating again how satire, which is the archetypal *mythos* of his text, is so dangerous to the romance for it denies it and its bloody heroic illusions. Conan is never explicitly depicted doing the acts that Voltaire’s Cimmerian queen is clearly revolted by (as was Voltaire himself, as his letters to Frederick the Great show); these acts, if Conan does commit them, happen almost entirely off stage, and on the rare occasion that they happen on stage, there is a compelling reason that allows the reader to continue to identify with Conan as a romance protagonist. Howard, like Jünger, takes great pains not to allow irony or satire to destabilize his archetypal romance stories.

Another noteworthy appearance of Cimmeria and the motif it represents in literature is in Goethe’s *Faust II*. In fact, Faust himself is presented by Goethe as a Cimmerian warrior, and this is done in the context of the barbarian discourse and its presence in, and relevance to,

Germany in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. This occurs in the text when Faust forces Mephisto to transport him to mythical ancient Greece so that Faust can win the love of the most beautiful woman of all time, Helen of Troy. To accomplish this, Mephisto, ever desirous of claiming Faust's soul, re-casts Faust as a Cimmerian warrior-king and inserts him into Helen's timeline.

Mephisto provides 'Faust the Cimmerian' with a back story – which may or may not have truly occurred – wherein he becomes the leader of a wandering band of Cimmerians who fight their way into Greece from Asia Minor. They found their new kingdom – with Faust as king – in the mountainous valley north of Sparta. The Taygetos Mountains form the western border of the kingdom and the holy Eurotas River is a lively stream at its centre. Mephisto explicitly labels Faust and his warriors as Cimmerians when he tells Helen of Faust and his men: „Dorthinten still im Gebirgtal hat ein kühn Geschlecht / Sich angesiedelt, dringend aus cimmerischer Nacht“ (Goethe 261) The fact that they come from “Cimmerian night” alludes – through the Homeric interpretation of Cimmeria as gateway to the realm of the dead – to the fact that Mephisto has somehow opened a gateway from Faust's time to that of Helen, who is, as far as Faust's time is concerned, long dead. However, it is Faust and his men who have come out of Cimmerian night, implying that *they* are the ones who have arrived from the realm of the dead, or that they have been in Cimmeria to access the same gateway to come into Helen's long-dead time that Odysseus accessed.

By noting the similarities in the usage of Cimmeria by major figures in world literature including Homer, Voltaire and now Goethe, we can now properly speak of a Cimmeria motif. Its central themes are death and violence. The motif suggests the plot movement of the death theme in two ways: with Cimmeria acting as a gateway to the realm of the dead and with Cimmeria being associated with unending war. The violence theme associated with, and arising from, the death theme sees this unending battle passing through a series of ultimately meaningless romance victories to an ultimately tragic end. Voltaire's satire plays on these associations and reverses them to make his Enlightenment point: if the Cimmerians can become a society of peace that reveres life, why not the rest of the world? Goethe, however, employs the Cimmeria motif in its unreversed form, and this becomes apparent when Helen and her girls begin their journey north to Faust's castle and are surrounded by fog. The chorus of girls imagine that they see Hermes, and more specifically

Hermes' wand, the Caduceus, waving in the mist. They fear that they are not journeying to a place of earthly safety, but rather that Hermes has come to guide them to Hades and the Underworld. When they do arrive at Faust's castle they are unsure if they are in the Underworld or not. This ambiguity reinforces the identification of Cimmeria, as the gateway to the realm of the dead, with Faust's realm, for Hermes, (a.k.a. Mercury) in the Greek religion, is the psychopompus, the guide of the souls to the after life.

One of Faust's men, Lynkeus, relates the history of Faust's Cimmerians to Helen. The history he presents is strongly reminiscent of the story of the historical Cimmerians (Goethe 269) and their war-like *Völkerverwanderung*:

Von Osten kamen wir heran,  
Und um den Westen wars getan;  
Ein lang- und breites Volksgewicht:  
Der erste wußte vom letzten nicht.

Der erste fiel, der zweite stand,  
Des dritten Lanze war zur Hand;  
Ein jeder hundertfach gestärkt,  
Erschlagne Tausend unbemerkt.

Wir drängten fort, wir stürmten fort,  
Wir waren Herrn von Ort zu Ort,  
Und wo ich herrisch heut befahl,  
Ein andrer morgen raubt und stahl.  
(Goethe 269)

Not only does this poetic account paint the picture of a decidedly Dionysian people, it also agrees with Herodotus' history of the Cimmerians. Lynkeus notes the fleeting nature of Cimmerian rule in any one place and how as much booty as possible was taken along when the Cimmerians moved on. Goethe then makes a connection between the Cimmerians and the Germanic barbarians, which, as we have seen, Howard does as well by identifying Conan as a Cimmerian but giving him what his friend Prospero notes are 'Nordic' (i.e. Germanic) characteristics.

When Menelaus discovers Helen's absence, Faust dispatches his forces to counter Menelaus' advance. Faust names the individual 'units' of his forces as he dispatches them: he sends the Germans (i.e. Germanic

tribesmen) to defend Corinth's bays; the Goths to hold Achaia's hundred valleys; the Franks to Elis; the Saxons to Messene; and the Normans to dominate the sea and make Argos great (Goethe 274). With this Goethe has merged the Cimmerian with various historical manifestations of the Germanic, a not insignificant point. While Faust, the Cimmerian, is able to escape with Helen for a time and live a brief romance *anagnorisis* with her, ultimately he loses her and their son, and is forced back through the gateway to his own time.

Finally, as noted at the beginning of our view of the cultural archive, the Cimmeria motif is present in the work of Rimbaud. This 19<sup>th</sup> century poet's use of the term "Cimmeria" seems to be directly inspired by the *Odyssey*: in *Une saison en enfer* the narrator's journey of inner torment comes to the edge of Cimmeria, the gateway to the land of the dead. It is this textual encounter with Cimmeria which leads the narrator back from the brink. Since an association between the narrator and Rimbaud is made, it is telling that, after this textual encounter with Cimmeria, Rimbaud departs for Africa.

Howard's textual use of Cimmeria is more intensive than either Homer's or Rimbaud's, for his use of the motif spans many stories and provides an internal dynamic to the Conan the Cimmerian character at the heart of those stories. In fact, there is an implicit aspect of communing with the dead (or with another supernatural world) that is implied by Howard's use of the *Neophantastik Schreibweise*, and Howard textually evoked this in his letters, as noted above. This metatextual communing, in fact, becomes a textual turning point, for Howard's creation of the Conan character was a major factor in terms of his success as an author during his lifetime and afterwards.

To conclude, Cimmeria, for the ancient Greeks, represented a portal to the realm of the dead, and this cultural belief – and its famous literary manifestation in Homer – combined with the later tragic history of the Cimmerians that Herodotus relates, gives the motif of the Cimmerian warrior a mythic and dramatic depth. The themes of death and fate are inextricably intertwined, and the plot trajectory required by the motif leads the character, or characters, identified with the motif on a series of violent adventures that will ultimately end in defeat. Significantly, this fey reality is not lost on the character or on the plot structure, as the archetypal narrative of tragedy is all-pervasive in stories employing this motif – even when the tragedy is delayed by a series of romance successes that come before. The Cimmerians were a doomed



warrior people, in essence a *Kultur der Niederlage* doomed to fight itself into extinction, partially because of a traumatic internal division at the beginning of their story that led to a civil war and then propelled the survivors on their long, violent and tragic trek (Herodotus 295).

That Howard would choose Cimmeria as the nationality of a hero he strongly identified with, and about whom he wrote stories patterned according to the romance *mythos* (wherein the reader's values are bound up with those of the hero), *despite* the tragic narrative of the historical Cimmerians, sheds light on Howard's perception of his own reality and its mythic narrative trajectory.

One can also see parallels between the Cimmeria motif and the German situation after World War I – and, in fact, to earlier stages in German history, particularly the Thirty Years War. Jünger, without naming it as such, employs this motif in his works, and how he employs this motif will be discussed below. The motif's presence in the cultural discourse of Germany and the resulting historical narrative seems undeniable, particularly given the fatalistic drive to self-annihilation that the country embarked on under the NS regime – which included initial fratricidal episodes, from the street fighting of the SA against the Communists, to the internment and killing of political opponents in the earliest days of the regime, and finally to the killing of the German Jews in the Holocaust. That a conscious knowledge of the motif was present in German culture and literature is suggested by no less a figure than Goethe, who made explicit use of it in *Faust II*.

### VII.2.3. *Der Arbeiter* (1932)

When we turn to Germany and Ernst Jünger in 1932, we are in an historically crucial year: the eve of the *Machtergreifung* by the National Socialist Worker's Party of Germany. Many people in Germany were aware that Germany, and the world, were on the razor's edge and that the time of decision was upon them. This is evidenced by, for example, the „öffentliche Kundgebung“ of Monday, 18 July 1932 in Berlin, which was initiated by an „Appell“ authored by Albert Einstein, Heinrich Mann, Ernst Toller, Arnold Zweig, Käthe Kollwitz and Freiherr von Schönaich. This co-authored call to the German people to step up to their historical moment of decision was one that used the romance *mythos* as its implied narrative pattern, and one that defined a different romance

protagonist than the one the Nazis were suggesting. This statement offered a different archetypal *Weltanschauung* where the romance quest was to achieve internationalism and social inclusiveness instead of nationalism and social division, and it presented this as a political choice and strategy: „KPD und SPD sollen sich auf Grund gemeinsamer Kandidatenlisten zu einem Einheitsblock zusammenschliessen“ (Sandvoß 13). We see the same kind of archetypal textual construction of a *Weltanschauung* in the famous long essay that Jünger published that year, *Der Arbeiter*. This text is a central work of Jünger's oeuvre. Its archetypal mythic narrative is influenced by, and influences, the *Verhaltenslehre der Kälte* and the *Kultur der Niederlage*. A political unconscious analysis of this work is particularly revealing of Jünger's cultural role and political positioning on the eve of the Nazi take-over.

### VII.2.3.1. *Mythos*

In *Der Arbeiter* there is a serious attempt by Jünger to once more order reality into a romance *Weltanschauung*, but there are elements of tragedy evident. The tragic, in fact, is what drives the romance, as it does in Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, and in the increasing political success of the NS party. Being of the young generation that was tragically stabbed in the back during World War I – as the national *Kultur der Niederlage* myth goes –, Jünger writes with approval of the late Weimar youth movements and their promise of romance:

Schon heute dürfen wir sagen, daß die Erschöpfung im wesentlichen überwunden ist – daß wir eine Jugend besitzen, die ihre Verantwortung kennt und deren Kern für die Anarchie unangreifbar war. Es ist undenkbar, daß Deutschland an guter Mannschaft jemals Mangel hat. Wie dankbar ist diese Jugend für jedes Opfer, das ihr zugemutet wird. Es kommt aber darauf an, diesem so willigen und so bereiten Stoff der Natur eine Form zu geben, die seinem Wesen entspricht. (Jünger 1982: 210)

The „Erschöpfung“ that he writes of here is the ironic and self-satirizing counter-current that right-wingers equated with the German Revolution, the loss of the war, the Hyperinflation, the democratic inheritance of Weimar Germany, and the Depression; and all these things they branded tragic. Jünger writes of giving this force of nature, the youth, a form in keeping with its being: this form, this *narrative* form, will be that of the romance

*mythos*. This 1932 youth will not be fighting, as in comedy, to *overthrow* the father-generation – which would be an undesirable phenomenon after the imminent *Machtergreifung* that Jünger (now of the father-generation) argues for<sup>61</sup> – but to represent the ideals of that new society. In short, he argues that this 1932 youth should become the champion of the new society about to be established (whether on the barricades or through political maneuvering, whether as an expression of a popularly received *Weltanschauung* or through simple individualistic admiration of the ‘strong man’): in other words, its romance hero. Jünger, in fact, seems to be referring to the youth movement, within the National Socialist party, that is being inculcated with the Nazi romance mission. Yet his use of a favourite word of the National Socialists – „Opfer“ – hints at more than the usual *agon* of the romance hero, but to the ritual of sacrifice that Frye argues is at the heart of the tragedy *mythos*. The ultimate tragic turn of the right wing nationalist youth romance that Jünger and the Nazis are supporting is already foreshadowed here: the youth of Germany will be sacrificed to appease the revenge fantasies of the *Frontsoldat Gestalt* of World War I. Jünger makes explicit the on-going influence of the World War I *Frontsoldat* in *Der Arbeiter* when he writes, „der deutsche Frontsoldat [erwies] sich nicht nur als unbesiegbar, sondern auch als unsterblich. Jeder dieser Gefallenen ist heute lebendiger als je, und das kommt daher, daß er als Gestalt der Ewigkeit angehört“ (Jünger 1982: 39).

Jünger, like the Nazis, is proposing a mythic narrative that fluctuates between the romance and the tragedy. He formulates this tension as a transcendental *Weltanschauung* that requires a *kalte persona* attitude:

Wir müssen einsehen daß wir in eine Landschaft aus Eis und Feuer geboren sind.<sup>62</sup> Das Vergangene ist so beschaffen, daß

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<sup>61</sup> „Es ist auch kein Unterschied ob die »Ergreifung der Macht« sich auf den Barrikaden oder in der Form einer nüchternen Übernahme der Geschäftsordnung vollzieht. Endlich ist es belanglos, ob die Akklamation der Masse bei diesem Vorgange unter der Vorstellung eines Sieges kollektivistischer Weltanschauungen geschieht oder ob die Akklamation des Individuums in ihr den Triumph der Persönlichkeit, des »starken Mannes«, erblickt.

„Es ist vielmehr ein Symptom der Notwendigkeit dieses Vorganges, daß er sich unter Zustimmung selbst der Leidenden vollzieht“ (Jünger 1982: 270).

<sup>62</sup> Jünger here consciously or unconsciously reconnects with ancient pagan Germanic cosmology, wherein the primordial ice meets the fire of Muspellheim in Ginnungagap

man an ihm nicht haften, und das werdende so, daß man sich in ihm nicht einrichten kann. Diese Landschaft setzt als Haltung ein Höchstmaß an kreigerischem Skeptizismus voraus. Man darf nicht an den Teilen der Front angetroffen werden, die zu verteidigen sind, sondern an denen, wo angegriffen wird. Man muß verstehen, die Reserven an sich zu ziehen, daß sie unsichtbar und sicherer als in gepanzerten Gewölben geborgen sind. Es gibt keine Fahnen außer denen, die man auf dem Leibe trägt. Ist es möglich, einen Glauben ohne Dogma zu besitzen, eine Welt ohne Götter, ein Wissen ohne Maximen und ein Vaterland, das durch keine Macht der Welt besetzt werden kann? Das sind Fragen, an denen der Einzelne den Grad seiner Rüstung zu prüfen hat. An unbekanntem Soldaten ist kein Mangel; wichtiger ist das unbekannte Reich, über dessen Existenz keine Verständigung nötig ist. (Jünger 1982: 96)

Jünger is defining a grim romance protagonist here, one marked by the thematic elements of the Cimmerian motif: the eternal fighter who fights on until death, like the Unknown Soldier, because that is his fate, like that of the Nietzschean Superman who accepts the Eternal Return. Although Jünger sets the mythic tone of romance, the questions he poses hint at the possibility of tragedy. He transcends the tragic fate by speaking of the unknown Empire whose existence needs no explanation, suggesting that the individual is part of some over-arching meaning, and this points toward Frye's overarching Christian romance that incorporates all the *mythoi*, and which Tolkien calls the *eutastrophē*. In this passage the romance protagonist that Jünger evokes – and whose armour he metaphysically tests – is the *kalte persona*.

### VII.2.3.2. *Verhaltenslehre der Kälte: Kalte Persona to Romance Mythos Hero*

Helmut Lethen, in fact, focusses on *Der Arbeiter* as one of the three central texts exhibiting the *Verhaltenslehre der Kälte* of the 1920s and 30s (Lethen 12). According to Lethen's argument, Jünger expresses aspects of Helmuth Plessner's *Grenzen der Gemeinschaft. Eine Kritik des sozialen Radikalismus*, the 1924 text that is Lethen's starting point. Of this text, Lethen writes, „Plessners Anthropologie kann als Kompendium von

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and gives birth to the giant Ymir, whose slaying by Odin/Wotan and his brothers provides the raw material for the creation of Mittelgard, a.k.a. Middle Earth.

Maximen zivilisierten Verhaltens aktualisiert werden“ (Lethen 11). He historicizes this starting point and „Die Historisierung macht verständlich warum sich die deutschen Spielarten der Verhaltenslehren der Distanz nie frei machen konnten von Anflügen des »Heroismus«, warum sie entweder mit der asketischen Haltung »selbstgewählter Unseligkeit« oder dem Amoralismus des Dandy-Soldaten aufgetreten sind – und warum sie das Sich-Einlassen mit dem Zivilisatorischen als Element eines »Kults des Bösen« begriffen, als sei ihre freundliche Verhaltenslehre eine »Inversion der Heilsgeschichte« von der sie sich nur unter Schmerzen trennten“ (Lethen 10). If one puts the Weimar-era *Verhaltenslehren* in their historical context, one sees how the German variants of such behavioural teachings are never free of the influence of the heroic, which leads to asceticism on the one hand and the amorality of the dandy-soldier on the other. The culture of defeat dynamic of learning from the victor, in this case to adopt the civilization concept (as opposed to the *Kultur* concept), was seen as an acceptance of a ‘cult of evil’ and that this supposedly friendly advice about behaviour constituted an inversion of the traditional path to salvation.

A quotation from *Der Arbeiter* that speaks directly to a quotation that Lethen uses both to begin his introduction – „Die Kältetendenz rührt vom Eindringen der Physik in die moralische Idee“ (Lethen 7) – and again in the body of his introduction (Lethen 10) is „Es kommt nun auf die Erziehung eines Menschenschlages an, der die verzweifelte Gewißheit besitzt, daß die Ansprüche der abstrakten Gerechtigkeit, der freien Forschung, des künstlerischen Gewissens sich auszuweisen haben vor einer höheren Instanz, als sie innerhalb einer Welt der bürgerlichen Freiheit überhaupt wahrgenommen werden kann“ (Jünger 1982: 42). This *höheren Instanz* can be traced to the phenomenon Lethen is citing, namely, that there are the cold laws of the universe that supersede or make irrelevant what are increasingly seen as human-made ideals of justice, conscience, and independent inquiry. Jünger is manifesting the phenomena that Lethen speaks of, demonstrating the amorality of the dandy-soldier by clearly advocating an amoral attitude toward these traditional moralities<sup>63</sup>; and such an *Erziehung* will also happen in the Nazi state with Jungvolk, BdM and HJ. These children are raised to look to the *höhere Instanz* – which will be defined as Germany as romance protagonist itself and, when the national narrative shifts decisively to

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<sup>63</sup> And yet, he also seems to warn of following such a course (Jünger 1982: 46).

tragedy, to the vengeance and sacrifice the *Frontsoldat Gestalt* demands of the German people – and they are raised to ignore precisely those aspects Jünger argues need to be dismissed, including abstract ideas of justice, independent inquiry, and an artistic conscience.

In order that this „höhere Instanz“ be broadly perceived and obeyed, Jünger, as does Hitler, supports the Führer-principle in order that the collective romance protagonist, Germany itself, or rather the *Arbeiter Gestalt*, can come into being: „Gehorsam, das ist die Kunst zu hören, und die Ordnung ist die Bereitschaft für das Wort, die Bereitschaft für den Befehl, der wie ein Blitzstrahl vom Gipfel bis in die Wurzeln fährt. Jeder und jedes steht in der Lebensordnung, und der Führer wird daran erkannt, daß er der erste Diener, der erste Soldat, der erste Arbeiter ist“ (Jünger 1982: 15). Here Jünger, ignoring the irony that so often works its way into the dramatic language of the right (by evoking the lightning bolt that goes from the crown of the tree into its root, most likely to kill it), proposes that military *Verhaltenslehren* modelled on Frederick the Great be re-valued as freedom (Jünger 1982: 15). Freedom is a central value of the traditional romance protagonist, so it cannot be ignored in the romance project that Jünger is suggesting. Therefore, true to his text's intention to present a new hierarchy of values – or to recall Wilhelminian militarism as an “authentic” opposition to the artificiality of Weimar – he re-values what most others would call mechanical obedience into an expression of freedom. In this he pursues Plessner's goal „die Künstlichkeit der Gesellschaftsformen als *natürliches* Milieu des Verhaltens zu erschließen, um die in der deutschen Kultur versäumte Verhaltenssicherheit zu gewinnen“ (Lethen 9). In the case of Jünger and the Nazis, the social hierarchy of the army is taken to be the natural milieu within which Germans will be socially comfortable and find security as opposed to the awkward, chaotic and artificial existence during Weimar.

Jünger, on the one hand, seems to accept the machine-like *Verhalten* necessary in the age of the *Arbeiter* – „Menschen als Bewegungsmaschine, seine Gefühle als motorische Gebärden“ (Lethen 10) – as his above-cited statement about obedience and the electric-switch-effect of orders suggests, and yet, on the other hand, he shows sympathy for resistance to the worker's machine age by „Ritter, Priester und Bauern“ and expressly uses a mythic label when he terms this resistance tragi-comic (Jünger 1982: 76). He criticizes the *Kälte* and *Distanz* of the *Verhalten* that de facto exist within the Weimar Republic

when he notes „die maskenhafte Starrheit des Gesichtes, die ebenso wohl erworben ist, wie sie durch äußere Mittel, etwa Bartlosigkeit, Haartracht und anliegende Kopfbedeckungen, betont und gesteigert [...]. D]ieser Maskenhaftigkeit, [erweckt] bei [den] Männern eine metallischen, bei [den] Frauen einen kosmetischen Eindruck [...]“ (Jünger 1982: 122), and yet does not see the irony in presenting a robotic and militaristic alternative.

The fact that the *kalte persona* and the *Verhaltenslehre der Kälte* exist cannot, in Jünger's view, be undone, but can be drawn upon and channelled into the passionate romantic hero:

Was bleibt, ist das elementare Leben und seine Motive, aber immer ändert sich die Sprache in die es sich überträgt, ändert sich die Besetzung der Rollen, in denen das große Spiel sich wiederholt. Die Helden, Gläubigen und Liebenden sterben nicht aus; sie werden in jedem Zeitalter von neuem entdeckt, und in diesem Sinne rage der Mythos in jede Zeit. (Jünger 1982: 94)

The elemental life that Jünger speaks of here is that animating the *kalte persona* and the *mythos* that he speaks of here, that of heroes, believers and lovers, is the romance *mythos*. The romance will, as he argues, be re-discovered in every age and will always find new actors to take its roles, and in this case the *kalte persona* will be the one to take the role of hero. Not only does he explicitly use the language of formalism here to insist on this eternally recurring narrative pattern, but if one recalls his statement about the unknown Empire, he implies the existence of the total quest myth that Frye argues subsumes all the *mythoi* within it.

That Jünger is sympathetic to such a total romance *mythos* parallels the national process that Schivelbusch argues is occurring in Germany at this time, where – after initial ironic, satiric and decidedly untragic narratives are suggested for the war –

Heinrich Manns Bemerkung, der deutsche Zusammenbruch »könnte ein Heldenschauspiel sein, wäre es nicht eine Krankengeschichte«, gibt ziemlich treffend die allgemeine Beurteilung des Kriegsendes wieder – in Deutschland selbst, im gegnerischen Lager und in der neutralen Welt. Übereinstimmend wurde das völlige Fehlen tragisch-heroischer Größe festgestellt. Deutschland war weder Hektor noch Achilles. (Schivelbusch 231)

the *mythos* of tragedy, as we have seen, does prevail, and indeed quickly

becomes the victory-in-tragedy phase that promises a transition to romance. This movement is also evident in the mythic project at the core of *Der Arbeiter*. Jünger will make the argument throughout the book that it was not really for the feudal-seeming, but in reality bourgeois-infiltrated, Wilhelmine system that the German front soldier died, but, in fact, for the Gestalt of the *Arbeiter* that arose throughout the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and became, with the *Materialschlachten* of WW I, the figure now dominating the world, and thus its new collective romance protagonist. Positing the efforts of the war as part of the process to bring this new heroic figure to the fore of world history is Jünger's attempt to ultimately recast WW I as a romance:

Daß der Arbeiter wirklich eine entscheidende Position einnimmt, ist schon daraus zu schließen, daß sich heute jede Größe, die Willen zur Macht besitzt, zu ihm in Beziehung zu stehen sucht. So gibt es Arbeiterparteien, Arbeiterbewegungen, Arbeiterregierungen mannigfaltiger Art. (Jünger 1982: 73)

This attempt to claim the Gestalt of the worker that Jünger identifies explains the vehemence of Hitler's and the Nazis' hatred for socialists, communists and Marxists of all stripes: for these groups contend with the National Socialists for possession of the *Arbeiter* Gestalt which the *Frontsoldat* apparently died for. In this casting of the *Arbeiter* Gestalt as the new hero of history, Jünger reinforces the *kalte persona* by positing people as the weapon of this hero: „Die Existenz eines neuen Menschentums ist ein Kapital, das noch nicht in Anspruch genommen worden ist. Dieses Menschentum ist die schärfste Angriffswaffe, das oberste Machtmittel, das der Gestalt des Arbeiters zur Verfügung steht“ (Jünger 1982: 74). Not only is this a clear evocation of the worker Gestalt as a warrior hero, but in amorally reducing people to capital and weapons Jünger seems totally oblivious to the Swiftian implications of such a statement. Again, one sees how Jünger's resistance to irony and satire allows him to re-interpret them from a romance perspective. In the process, he makes his new romance hero into a true giant: „In den modernen, mit den letzten technischen Mitteln gerüsteten Heeren ficht nicht mehr ein ständisches Kriegerstum, das sich dieser technischen Mittel bedient, sondern diese Heere sind der kriegerische Ausdruck, den die Gestalt des Arbeiters sich verleiht“ (Jünger 1982: 76).

Jünger is, however, aware – at least since the ironic debacle of the ending to *In Stahlgenüßern* – of the pitfalls of identifying with romanticism



and takes pains to distance his romance *mythos* project from a traditionally romantic *Haltung* (Jünger 1982: 54-56). He defines romanticism as a bourgeois *Haltung*, as a half-hearted dreamy ‘commitment’ to romance’s combative and heroic stance, one that the weak-kneed bourgeois cannot really carry out and which thus becomes more of an escape than a true warrior’s way. In contrast, he describes the movement *from* a bourgeois-infected romanticism back *to* its mythic root as a return to the elemental reality of true romance. As does Jameson, he equates true romance with revolution (Jünger 1982: 227). His language in relation to the *Arbeiter* Gestalt and the age dominated by that Gestalt centres on the main aspects of the romance. For example, he defines the ultimate quest of this global revolution as „Raumbeherrschung von Pol zu Pol“ (Jünger 1982: 227). This *Raumbeherrschung* that Jünger foretells here is, in fact, contemporary multi-national capitalism’s burgeoning conquest of all parts of the globe – and human consciousness – that Jameson cites as capitalism’s development in the twentieth century. Jünger also defines the romance protagonist in relation to this quest when he writes that, „Der natürliche Raum, auf den sich Herrschaft und Gestalt des Arbeiters beziehen, besitzt planetarische Dimension“ (Jünger 1982: 227). Again, here we see industrial capitalism (monopoly capitalism and the rising multi-national capitalism), propelled by its proletarian engine, being represented as an heroic Gestalt conquering the planet. Jünger is certainly stripping this process – which he decries in *Das Abenteuerliche Herz* – of any bourgeois romantic trappings, and yet retains the form of the romance. That Jünger felt he needed to demonstrate this kind of de facto hardness against his romantic youthful self is certainly part of the *kalte persona* itself.

While the *Arbeiter* Gestalt is a *kalte persona* romance protagonist, Jünger still manages to fulfill the romance requirement that the protagonist represent the reader’s values. Jünger is writing to an audience which, presumably, accepts, as he does, the coming era of the rule of the *Arbeiter* Gestalt with its planetary implications; and yet, despite the *Kälte* of this narrative dynamic, he takes pains to give his protagonist the greatest of motivations, and the highest of values when he states the ultimate object of the *Arbeiter* Gestalt’s *Raumbeherrschung* quest: „Es ist der Erdball, den ein neu aufkeimendes Erdgefühl als Einheit begreift – ein Erdgefühl, das kühn genug zu großen Konstruktionen und tief genug zur Umfassung seiner organischen Spannungen ist“ (Jünger 1982: 227). In order to achieve this apparently praiseworthy state of feeling that the

Earth is One and thus being able to conceive of monumental constructions and to understand the Earth's organic tensions, the *Arbeiter Gestalt*, fueled by the revolutionary impulse of the romance of industrial technology, must manifest as a *Typus*: „Weltrevolutionär ist die Technik als das Mittel, durch das die Gestalt des Arbeiters die Welt mobilisiert, weltrevolutionär der Typus, in dem dieselbe Gestalt sich eine herrschende Rasse schafft“ (Jünger 1982: 227). While Jünger may have conceived of this ruling race, this *Typus*, as that segment of the human race able to control and direct the revolutionary energy of technology, Nazi readers of the text would take such a statement to mean Germany and the Aryan race. In fact, Jünger's nationalism makes this jump plausible, as Jünger elsewhere exhorts Germans to become this *Typus*, to aspire to embody this manifestation of the *Arbeiter Gestalt*. Jünger's text allows for the transference of the romance protagonist's role from the semi-divine *Arbeiter Gestalt* to its earthly representative, the *Typus* that physically carries out its work, i.e. Germany as a whole.

Jünger reinforces the romance *mythos* first layer of form of this text by stating that the *agon* phase of the romance narrative he describes has already begun: „Der Angriff hat bereits begonnen, und obwohl seine revolutionären Phasen noch im Ablauf sind, so ist doch auch hier seine planetarische Anlage nicht zu übersehen“ (Jünger 1982: 227). In indicating the *pathos* phase of this romance narrative centred on the *Arbeiter Gestalt*, Jünger re-adopts his role as political prophet, thus demonstrating the prophetic *Schreibweise* of the text's second layer of form: „die Auseinandersetzungen zwischen den großen Lebenseinheiten streben weltkriegerischen Charakter an“ (Jünger 1982: 227). He stresses that the *anagnorisis* will not take the traditional romantic form, for the protagonist's weapons and values are „nicht mehr das Schwert der Macht und Gerechtigkeit, das allein den Frieden der Dörfer, den Glanz der Paläste, die Einigkeit der Völker verbürgt“ (Jünger 1982: 228). And yet the mythic narrative of this coming world will be a romance, for the desire for a clear-cut romance *anagnorisis* is still present everywhere: „Und doch ist diese Sehnsucht überall irgendwie lebendig, in den Träumen der Kosmopoliten wie in der Lehre vom Übermenschen, im Glauben an die Zauberkraft der Ökonomie wie im Tode, dem sich der Soldat auf dem Schlachtfelde entgegenwirft“ (Jünger 1982: 228). Jünger cannot avoid the lessons of the ironic so he stresses that the *anagnorisis* will not occur in that traditional form, and he wears the mantle of the political prophet in doing so: „Aber gleichviel, wer triumphieren, wer untergehen möge:

Untergang und Triumph künden die Herrschaft des Arbeiters an“ (Jünger 1982: 228). To put this conception arising from the *Verhaltenslehre der Kälte* in traditional romance terms, the *Arbeiter* Gestalt – working through whatever *Typoi* and *herrschende Rassen* – will, in the end, be acknowledged, and crowned, as the king of the world.

### VII.2.3.3. Barbarian Discourse and the Struggle with Irony

This whole romance narrative dynamic propelled by the *Arbeiter* Gestalt is presented by Jünger as an utterance within the barbarian discourse. The ultimately triumphant *Arbeiter* Gestalt is a global manifestation of the barbarian: „Es gibt keinen Raum, kein Leben, das sich diesem Vorgang entziehen kann, der seit langem den Stempel einer barbarischen Völkerwanderung trägt mit den mannigfaltigen Formen von Kolonisation, Besiedlung von Erdteilen, Erschließung von Wüsten und Urwäldern, Ausrottung von Urbevölkerungen, Vernichtung der Lebensgesetze und Kulte, geheimer und offener Zerstörung von sozialen und nationalen Schichten, revolutionärer und kriegerischer Aktion“ (Jünger 1982: 228). Here Jünger echoes Howard’s statement from “Beyond the Black River” – in which Conan states that barbarism is the ultimate fate of humanity and that it will always ultimately triumph over civilization – by presenting both perspectives of the barbarian in the same sentence. By equating the European conquest of the world – Europeans here as the manifestation of the *Arbeiter* Gestalt – with a barbarian migration, and by highlighting the facts of colonization and the snuffing out of primal peoples with distinctly negative language, he pits the negative aspects of the barbarian – primarily violence – against the positive aspects of the barbarian. In essence, he suspends the traditional dualism of the barbarian discourse by implying that all involved in this global romance narrative are barbarians, some more readily identified with what has traditionally been valued as negative, and some more readily identified with positive values. In a Nietzschean manner, Jünger denies value judgements – although they creep into his language – on this violent dynamic by noting „Die Konflikte sind vieldeutig, während die Fragestellung eindeutig ist. Die chaotische Gewalt des Aufruhrs enthält bereits den strengen Maßstab einer künftigen Legitimität“ (Jünger 1982: 228). In other words, just as Conan (“the Barbarian”) prophesies the ultimate victory of barbarism as he attempts to stop the barbarian Picts

from destroying the frontier settlements of “civilizing” Aquilonia<sup>64</sup>, the ostensibly civilizing revolutionary technological dynamic of the *Arbeiter Gestalt* is itself a form of barbarism and is thus legitimate in precisely the sense of Conan’s words. With such passages Jünger attempts to free a primal *kalte persona* conception of romance from bourgeois romanticism, thus re-asserting his position – stated in *In Stablgewittern*, *Der Kampf als inneres Erlebnis* and *Das Abenteuerliche Herz* – that World War I itself was a return to an elemental reality that recognized and celebrated the barbarian in the romance warrior.

Jünger also takes pains to specifically distance his project from irony, and in the process reveals the unacknowledged influence of irony on his text and thinking (as in *In Stablgewittern*). Jünger speaks of the *menschliche Komödie* (Jünger 1982: 64) as a formless, pointless existence, and to avoid such a confusion of pointlessness and ultimately cacophonous nothingness he wishes to direct this energy in a specific – in this case romance *mythos* – direction. Marcel Reich-Ranicky claims to dislike Jünger’s work, in part, for its lack of irony and yet, as we have seen, the ironic influenced Jünger’s conceptions. For example, a chilling passage that Nazi supporters would certainly have appreciated is fundamentally ironic, but rings with an heroic romance attitude: „Der Typus kennt keine Diktatur, weil Freiheit und Gehorsam für ihn identisch sind“ (Jünger 1982: 151). Freedom and obedience represent, for the average reader, if not opposing concepts, then at least concepts with implicitly diverging trajectories. However, Jünger is able to make such a statement without intending or implying the least bit of irony because he, in his political prophet *Schreibweise*, is adopting a concept made familiar to German and European society by Christianity. In fact, Jünger’s position on freedom and obedience actually forms a continuity with this central dilemma of Christianity, a dilemma Jünger’s contemporary Reinhold Schneider described when he wrote: „So ist das Christentum das zugleich Notwendige und Unmögliche, der lebendige Widerspruch zwischen Freiheit und Gehorsam“ (Schneider 448). As has been noted, Jünger’s romance conception of knighthood – particularly in *Das Abenteuerliche Herz* – is heavily influenced by Christianity. His Nietzschean attempt to revalue values in *Der Arbeiter* and doggedly proclaim the existence of a unifying romance narrative for his time owes

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<sup>64</sup> Howard’s sub-created Aquilonia is itself a cipher for frontier America, whose barbarism is readily on display in such eye-witness/perpetrator accounts such as Capt. W.F. Drannan’s *Chief of Scouts: Piloting Emigrants Across the Plains of 50 Years Ago* of 1910.

much to the dynamic that Schneider describes, and also mirrors Jünger's equally Christian-influenced contemporary Hesse<sup>65</sup>, who voices a similar concern with unity in *Siddhartha*<sup>66</sup> and – in an expressly Nietzschean sense – in *Steppenwolf*. This Christian-inspired, romance attempt to create a union of freedom and obedience is an heroic and quixotic attempt to trump apparent irony with romance, and thus erase the irony. This mythic intention is behind much of Jünger's work, and such statements provided the Nazis with yet another opening to heroically declare their oppression and dictatorship the ultimate expression of freedom for the *Typus* of the German worker who will, for all intents and purposes, replace actual German individuals once Nazi policies are in force. In *Der Arbeiter* Jünger argues that this focus on the *Typus* rather than the individual *should* be the case, for being an obedient piece of the *Typus* will be a sort of freedom.

To be fair to Jünger, and to dispel the notion that he himself was a Nazi, his statement that race, in the almost metaphysical landscape of work that he is describing, has nothing in common with biological conceptions of race, would have puzzled die-hard anti-Semites with its romance-trumping-irony re-definition of a concept so dear to racists; and Jünger's statement, that the total duty required of each nation in the world war brought forth a brotherhood between the enemies that humanitarian thinking could never understand, contains a similar ironic reversal of central aspects of the discourse of the day. Both of these statements, and this last one particularly, are an acknowledgment by Jünger of the discursive desirability of the concepts in question (i.e. race and brotherhood among the combatant nations), but are also at the same time an insistence upon a re-orientation of the terms based on Jünger's attempt to romantically re-write his ironic revelations.

A central pillar of this ironic impulse in Jünger's thinking – one demanded by the historically-imposed ironic conclusion of *In Stahlgewittern* – is his analogy of a pyramid representing the changes in the character of work. Jünger argues that bourgeois concepts of the individual person are, in fact, being replaced by the *Typus*. This dynamic is marked by the interchangeability of individuals in a social landscape wherein such replaceable individuals require order and *Unterordnung*, and

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<sup>65</sup> See Hesse's statement about the New Testament in „Der Holländer“, for example.

<sup>66</sup> In fact, in Hesse's autobiographical „Der Holländer“ he states that unity was his central concern.

thus cannot recognize dictatorship for what it is. Jünger states, „Dieser umfassendsten Stufe, dieser Basis der Pyramide, gehört jeder Einzelne ohne Ausnahme an, ähnlich wie jeder Einzelne innerhalb eines Heeres als Soldat anzusprechen ist, gleichviel ob er als General, Offizier oder Mann rangiert“ (Jünger 1982: 152). By employing the metaphor of the army to explain the fundamental equality of existence at the base of this hierarchical pyramid of work, Jünger is unconsciously hearkening to the hierarchical pyramid of feudalism and is, in fact, describing a new form of serfdom. The fact that *everyone* is part of the base of the pyramid and thus part of this new industrial serfdom is, again, inherently ironic, but Jünger’s romance vision – inspired, as we have seen in Jünger’s admiration for knighthood and Christian saints, by the medievalism lingering from the feudal mode of production – again re-writes this irony. Jünger expresses this new socio-economic state of affairs using his semi-metaphysical political prophet *Schreibweise*, thus adding a mystic dimension to what Marxists would see as the reality of the cultural revolution of monopoly capitalism transforming into multi-national capitalism. His *Schreibweise* serves his romance agenda here, as throughout *Der Arbeiter*, for he is able to over-write the ironic serf-like condition of the individual who is now a replaceable member of the *Typus* at the base of the pyramid. He does this by invoking the metaphysical concept of transcendence: if the individual fully identifies with the active *Typus* – i.e. sees his existence in, and as, the collective *Typus* – then he has achieved the second stage of the pyramid which Jünger states constitutes an ‘Order’. This is a term that Jünger consciously borrows from medieval knightly orders, and he states that the values necessary for the individual to transcend to this second stage of the pyramid are *Mut*, *Bereitschaft* and *Opferwillen*; the ultimate representative of this second stage, Jünger declares, is the Unknown Soldier. The ironic basis of the pyramid – that freedom and obedience are one and the same – leads to this faceless second stage of the pyramid, where the individual who has a metaphysical and Gestalt-based relationship to the concept of the Worker is exhorted to behave like a romantic knight, but one who has no illusions as to his individual heroic character. Müller argues that *Der Arbeiter* is, in fact, evidence that Jünger has moved away from a *personal* romance framing of life and war when he quotes Jünger writing that the „Kampfkraft des Soldaten ‚kein individueller, sondern ein funktioneller Wert‘ ist und die Tugend des Kämpfers darin liegt, daß er ersetzbar ist“ (Müller 24). Jünger invokes

metaphysical transcendence when he declares that the third and highest stage of the pyramid will be achieved when the anonymous and knight-like individual of the second stage, who is fully submerged in the active *Typus*, has broken through old social and cultural boundaries. This third stage is characterized by the need to accept the commands of the *new* socio-economic boundaries, boundaries which gain their meaning and legitimacy through their unifying of contradictions in this cultural revolution where the individual only exists in relation to the total character of work. Only here, at the third stage of the pyramid, is true statecraft possible, Jünger argues, and statecraft at this level implies and requires ruling the world.

While Jünger was speaking of the *Arbeiter Gestalt* as the world ruler, one can imagine how Nazi readers reacted to such exhortations to 'rule the world'. Texts like Jünger's gave the Nazi dreams of conquest a metaphysical basis and a practical guide, encouraging them to treat the German people as a faceless source of reinforcements for both the fighting army and the work army. Concepts like those Jünger expresses here parallel Nazi decisions to style its organizations, like the SS, as Orders, as if they were following in that spiritual German tradition. Like Jünger, the Nazis were able to put a romantic face on an essentially ironic position, which seems boldly Nietzschean on the surface, but this process was cold-blooded, against the human spirit and the German spirit as well. Ultimately, this whole dynamic was the result of the attempt to rescue a romance meaning from World War I, and to make a virtue out of the experience of the fighting. Jünger's romance project was to make a hero of the soldier who carried out his duties in the face of madness and whose freedom consisted in following orders. Germany and the world were not to see this soldier as a villain, or a poor pawn perpetuating the conflict of nations, but to see in his actions, and those of the working nation that stood behind him, a *de facto* brotherhood with the opposing nations; this brotherhood was insisted upon by highlighting the planetary character of industrial work that binds everyone together. In essence, the catastrophic mass slaughter of World War I was the heroic-tragic creation of a New Man (Segeberg 2004: 407). Instead of recognizing this new socio-economic reality as being some kind of fatalistic and ironic dead-end, Jünger tries to transcend this reality by positing this basic position as the first stage in a pyramid of reality where that upward movement – that essentially romantic trajectory that Frye points out – is still possible, and this possibility consists of totally

accepting this situation: accepting, as a collective and as a faceless individual in that collective, the commands of this system. That this is all to be celebrated as a cultural revolution in which the contradictions of earlier ages are now – if not in fact, then by fiat – unified, is chillingly Orwellian, precisely because the irony upon which this whole new pyramid of existence is based is presented in heroic, romantic terms.

The *kalte persona* is one who accepts this new, chilling – or, to recall Weber, downright arctic – reality, and he moves through it using the *Verhaltenslehre der Kälte* which are necessary to successfully navigate it. One who accepts himself as a faceless individual – and therefore adopts the *kalte Blick* and uses his face like a mask – sees in this almost religious self-denial an heroic dimension. For such a *kalte persona*, other people are merely objects and obstacles to be navigated around or through. Paradoxically, it was also possible to adopt the *kalte persona* if one did not accept this new reality and perceived it as a threat. In order to avoid being cast as the Creature, the *kalte persona* and the *kalte Blick* function as a sort of disguise. Such an individual follows the dictates and rules of the *Verhaltenslehre* without embracing them, remaining aware of the irony of the world around them. This was the strategy of many of those who went into “internal exile” (*die innere Emigration*) once the Nazis were in power.

#### VII.2.3.4. *Kultur der Niederlage*

With the *Arbeiter* Jünger is manifesting precisely what Schivelbusch argues a losing culture does – „Die Orientierung der Verlierer an der Erfolgsmodell der Sieger“ (Schivelbusch 47) – and Jünger’s almost-metaphysical conception of the *Arbeiter Gestalt* is the literal application of Schivelbusch’s explanation of how this process occurred in Germany after World War I:

Die salvatorische Formel, mit der Verlierer zu erklären pflegen, warum für sie das Erfolgsmodell der Sieger so überaus wichtig ist, lautete im sich fordisierenden Deutschland: »Ford-Methoden bedeuten nichts anderes als die Wiedererweckung des preußisch-deutschen Dienst- und Arbeitsgeistes.«

Da sich mit solchen Behauptungen allein die tatsächliche technisch-ökonomische Überlegenheit Amerikas jedoch nicht auf Dauer kompensieren ließ, war ein tragfähigeres Ideenfundament notwendig. Mit anderen Worten, der



materiellen Produktivität Amerikas war die geistige Macht Deutschlands gegenüberzustellen, besser noch: Deutschland als geistige Potenz über die bloß materielle Macht Amerikas zu etablieren. Dies aber war nur möglich durch eine genuin deutsch, von allen amerikanischen Assoziationen freie Begrifflichkeit. (Schivelbusch 331)

The *Arbeiter* Gestalt is the almost literal expression of this dynamic: with the conception of this Gestalt, assembly-line industrial methods are praised, emulated and improved *and* given an apotheosis through metaphysical German intellectualism. What better way to re-awaken the Prussian-German spirit of work than to declare its actual metaphysical presence in Germany? What better way to insist on German *geistige Potenz* as a surpassing of the adopted American success model by incorporating this *geistige Potenz* in the form of the *Arbeiter* Gestalt? Here was an application of genuinely German intellectual *Begrifflichkeit* completely free of American associations. This *Kultur der Niederlage* dynamic, where lessons are learned from the victor, gives us insight into Jünger's life-long rejection of America: „Ungeachtet seiner Verachtung und expliziten Ablehnung der Amerikanisierung war ihm dennoch klar, daß die „brutale Wirklichkeit“ der modernen technischen Welt noch lange von einer amerikanischen Dominanz geprägt sein würde“ (Berggötz 64). Further, Berggötz argues that Jünger adopted Nietzsche's attitude toward the U.S.A. wherein it is „Symbol für Materialismus und Geistlosigkeit“ (Berggötz 62). With the *Arbeiter* Gestalt Jünger acknowledges the brutal reality of the modern technical world dominated by the U.S.A. but at the same time counters its *Geistlosigkeit* by literally giving the era a *Geist*: the *Arbeiter* Gestalt which, alongside its *kalte persona* aspects, Jünger imbues with the ideal of the romance protagonist.

Jünger's enthusiasm for the mythic romance world dominated by the *Arbeiter* Gestalt is, in effect, an expression of the utopic. Segeberg analyzes Jünger's use of utopia in his work, and Segeberg's definition of the utopic combines the desire for romance with the actual cultural processes of the *Kultur der Niederlage*. We see this when Segeberg identifies three stages of the utopic in Jünger's development (Segeberg 2004: 403), and defines the utopic architecture of Jünger's century-long work: there is no evolution without catastrophe, the more complete the catastrophe the more radical the new form that follows it. In this application of the barbarian Germanic Ragnarok motif to the world of the 1930s, we see how Jünger's conception of the evolution following the

catastrophe is essentially the dynamic Schivelbusch describes whereby a losing culture adopts the success model of the winning culture but attempts, as quickly as possible, to disguise this by erasing associations of the new cultural dynamic with the winning culture.

The *Kultur der Niederlage*-learning-from-the-victor dynamic that leads to Jünger's combination of German *Geistigkeit* with American assembly-line industrialism is evident in other German cultural productions of the time. Wilczek argues that Fritz Lang's 1927 film, *Metropolis*, mirrors, and possibly inspires, representations of the technologization of society in Jünger's *Der Arbeiter*. Wilczek notes that Jünger saw the film in 1927 (Wilczek 447), and Wilczek juxtaposes sections of *Der Arbeiter* with scenes of the film to demonstrate the affinities of the two in the technology discourse of Weimar, particularly the influence of the cult of technology (Wilczek 453). Wilczek argues that the film visually manifests Jünger's idea of "organic construction" (Wilczek 454), which Jünger represents with the metaphor of the pyramid while arguing for this utopia of work.

#### VII.2.3.5. The Text's Political Unconscious

The text is revealing about Jünger's mythic narrative patterning and his relationship to the *Verhaltenslehre der Kälte*, and it also reveals Jünger's political unconscious positioning – which does not always run parallel to, or support, his conscious political positioning. Reading the text from the perspective of the first horizon, where the text is a symbolic resolution of social contradictions, the contradiction remains Jünger's central romance project: his quest to find a meaning for the apparently meaningless sacrifice of World War I. The *Arbeiter* Gestalt *is* this symbolic resolution, but Jünger's need to posit the creation of the *Arbeiter* Gestalt as the higher meaning of World War I leads him to support, for example, political terrorism in order to bring his *Arbeitsdemokratie/Arbeitsstaat* into being (Wünsch 467). In order to give this Gestalt an authority and an attraction, Jünger employs typically modernist transcendent syntheses of oppositions in describing the *Arbeiter* Gestalt, which would appeal to readers on both the right and the left of the political spectrum (Wünsch 471). Jünger attempts to counter the Allied mythic narrative dictated by Versailles, wherein Germany and the heroically-inclined German *Frontsoldat* are the villain, by just such a transcendent synthesis when he transcends the national – „Es erklärt sich

so zunächst die Tatsache, daß es in jedem der beteiligten Länder sowohl Sieger wie Besiegte gibt“ (Jünger 1982: 158) – and so he makes the *Frontsoldat* a manifestation of the Gestalt of the *Arbeiter*, of that Gestalt which the war and its relentless mathematics of material have now made the triumphant figure of world history. Further, in adopting the *Panzer* of the *kalte persona*, and in draping this *Arbeiter* Gestalt in Modernist, Nietzschean concepts, he attempts to transcend the characterization of villain (which Hitler and the Nazis will concede is the propagandistic triumph of the Allies in World War I and will attempt to counteract with their own propaganda), by claiming, in effect, a very Marxist-seeming historical necessity for the emergence of this Gestalt. Further, he expresses this necessity in the terms of the barbarian discourse, insisting on a ‘natural’ and vital dynamic which is “beyond” good and evil.

In the second horizon of reading, where the work is seen as an utterance in antagonistic class discourse, observations by Ansel, Martus and Baron shed light on Jünger’s political unconscious positioning. We have seen how Jünger has – based on his own youthful rejection of Wilhelmine bourgeois society – chimed in with the contemporary Weimar class thinking of both the extreme left and extreme right in villifying the bourgeoisie. Jünger, the petty bourgeois, stepped outside his class origins in his military service, which acted as a class-leveller, particularly in the experience of the German storm troops of the late war in which distinctions between officer and men were increasingly erased in order to mould the effective warrior that Jünger writes about in the “Fire” chapter of *Der Kampf als inneres Erlebnis*. As lieutenant, Jünger ends the war in the military equivalent of his petty bourgeois origin, and we can see his post-war literary career as his attempt to maintain this class status and even improve on it. To this end, he re-creates himself as a political prophet, siding with the proletariat in his exaltation of the *Frontsoldat*, and *Der Arbeiter* is the transcendent expression of this dynamic whereby the the Gestalt of the *Frontsoldat* is both the forerunner of, and the de facto *Arbeiter* Gestalt. One is struck to the extent to which Jameson’s concept of ideologemes applies to an analysis of *Der Arbeiter*: Jameson argues that ideologemes manifest in texts as class fantasies, wherein characters represent the different classes in opposition. The *Arbeiter* Gestalt is, in effect, an ideologeme, and Jünger uses it to highlight his proposition that the proletariat has, in fact, taken over the world. It is not conscious of this power, and it needs to organize itself in the pyramidal social form that Jünger suggests. This not only represents a

textual “siding with” the proletariat, but allows other classes that are traditional competitors with the proletariat to integrate themselves into the Gestalt instead of fighting it. *Der Arbeiter*, in effect, represents Jünger’s attempt to manifest himself fully as the prophet of this new worker’s reality. He is claiming to be not just a representative of this class, but its prophet: i.e. having an elite status in the new worker’s paradigm as the only one who truly understands the real nature of the working class. Therefore, *Der Arbeiter* is an attack against the bourgeoisie on behalf of the proletariat (Wünsch 405) wherein Jünger, as petty bourgeois, follows exactly the strategy that Marx and Engels outlined for the petty bourgeoisie: the text itself is a strategic act to further establish himself as an author (a petty bourgeois position) in the material reality of Weimar Germany (Ansel 19). Martus argues that Jünger profited from his position on the meaning of the defeat in World War I both economically and politically (Martus 261), and he knowingly used his awarding of the *Pour le Mérite* to accomplish this (Martus 262). Baron suggests that Jünger’s goal was to reach a state of enjoyment rather than work (Baron 38) – the textbook bourgeois ambition for a member of the petty bourgeoisie. Jünger’s written work arose within the political discourse of Weimar, and was thus available for the NSDAP to co-opt, yet he himself became „zunehmend intellektuel anschlußfähig und interessant“ (Fröschle 142) – thus allowing him to maneuver away from the Nazi radicalism that tried to claim him, and toward a more stable petty bourgeois existence. An existence that – to follow Baron – demonstrated the usual petty bourgeois ambition in the direction of a fully bourgeois lifestyle. The publication of *Der Arbeiter*, despite its conscious political and social trajectory, shows Jünger beginning to withdraw into a purely literary sphere – a sphere his amassing of political and social capital (Ansel 20) allowed him to enter.

When one reads the text within the third horizon of reading, the text as a ‘window’ on cultural revolution, the ideological implications of the three layers of form reveal the influence of earlier modes of production on the society in which the text is embedded. In *Der Arbeiter*, Jünger’s insistence on the romance *mythos*, and his proposal of a serf-like basis for industrial activity, reveals the lingering cultural and structural echoes of the feudal mode of production in 1930s German consciousness. This romance arises from Jünger’s experience of military service, and the Wilhelmine context of this service is expressive of a feudal *Lebenspflicht* mentality. The strange new proletarian and industrial

form of the romance implied by *Der Arbeiter* is a result of the romanticism of the feudal mode being discredited by the fall of the Wilhelmine social system, and of the solid social establishment of state capitalism – engendered by the war that bourgeois Wilhelmine Germany, with its feudal remnants and trappings, romantically embarked on. The political prophet *Schreibweise* that Jünger employs hearkens back even further, to the shamanic and priestly roles within the gens mode of production, and this *Schreibweise* demonstrates how Germany's chaotic social reality during Weimar makes *Rückgriffe* to early social forms (particularly one that emphasizes kin relationships) attractive. This cultural attraction to the gens mode of society based on kin relations is exploited by the Nazis, and Jünger's text is a sign of how a sense of national unity can be manufactured using this cultural attraction in the technological age of state capitalism and workers' movements. Finally, the genre of the *Großessay* speaks directly to the industrial, economic and social changes around Jünger. In hindsight it is hard to resist the temptation of seeing the text as being instrumental in bringing many aspects of the great changes of that year and the next into being. The accusation that Jünger was a *Wegbereiter* for the Nazis is a testament to the extent to which this text, particularly, foresees – if not encourages – the cultural revolution that the Nazis would claim that their movement was. The revolutionary factors that World War I unleashed – not the least of which were the phenomenon of the communist-inspired Soviet Union and the concomitant intensification of global capitalism, which Jünger metaphorically and metaphysically clothed – were as sweeping as *Der Arbeiter* argues.

#### VII.2.3.6. *Neophantastik* Gestalts and Conclusion

To conclude, this text demonstrates, through its three layers of form, how Jünger's vision has been decisively shaped by the narrative impetus of World War I. Jünger, like any representative of a *Kultur der Niederlage* is not content to let the matter rest there: „Man muß dort stehen, wo die Zerstörung nicht als Abschluß, sondern als Vorgriff aufzufassen ist. Man muß sehen, daß die Zukunft in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart einzugreifen vermag“ (Jünger 1982: 92). The attempt is here, as Wunsch argues, to reach back to the World War and include it in a longer term romance narrative where the future *anagnorisis* is the planetary triumph of the *Arbeiter* Gestalt. Although it is not really evident in the

essay genre, Jünger does manage to include an element of the *Neophantastik Schreibweise*, namely his insistence – through his decisive language – that the *Gestalts* he writes of, and not only that of the *Arbeiter*, are more than metaphysical phenomena: for example, when he consciously utters his class attack, like the Nazis, against the bourgeoisie, condemning the bourgeois citizens of betraying the Gestalt of the German *Reich*: „Es ist aber zugleich Landesverrat, insofern der Bürger versuchte, die Gestalt des Reiches in seine Selbstvernichtung einzubeziehen“ (Jünger 1982: 40). Wünsch explains Jünger’s conception of the existence of Gestalts:

Lexikalisch schließt Jünger sich hier zunächst einmal an die Gestaltpsychologie an, wie sie sich als Wahrnehmungspsychologie seit von Ehrenfels 1890 entwickelt hat. Jünger macht daraus freilich eine Art metaphysischer Kategorie, die in etwa den Status einer platonischen Idee zu haben scheint, wenn die historisch-situierbare Erscheinung des Frontsoldaten zur außerzeitlichen unsterblichen Gestalt gemacht wird. Die Wahrnehmung von „Gestalten“ wird bei ihm eindeutig einer analytisch-begrifflichen Zerlegung der Realität konfrontiert, womit er sich zugleich an die bekannten Konzeptionen von „Hermeneutik“ und „Geisteswissenschaft“ seit Dilthey anlehnt. „Gestalten“ sind offenbar als nicht zerlegbare „Ganzheiten“ gedacht, als „Totalität“, von der gilt „Das Sehen von Gestalten ist insofern ein revolutionärer Akt, als es ein Sein in der ganzen und einheitlichen Fülle seines Lebens erkennt, womit er zugleich noch das typische lebensideologische Lexikon abrufte.“ „Gestalt zu sein“ auf der ontologischen Ebene wie „Gestalt zu erkennen“ auf der epistemologischen Ebene sind bei Jünger gleichermaßen Kriterien eines elitären Ranges. (Wünsch 465)

Wünsch’s conclusion that the being, and recognition, of Gestalts indicates, for Jünger, an elite level of existence does not strip Jünger’s conception of the Gestalt of its *Neophantastik* character, for the bourgeois’ inability to be, or have a real relationship with, them is a sign of the bourgeois’ weakness, not a sign that they are not real, as Jünger insists when he writes, „Den Arbeiter in einer durch die Gestalt bestimmten Rangordnung zu sehen, hat das bürgerliche Zeitalter nicht vermocht, weil ihm ein echtes Verhältnis zur Welt der Gestalten nicht

gegeben war“ (Jünger 1982: 38). As noted, the Gestalts of the *Arbeiter* and the *Frontsoldat* are ideologemes manifesting the class utterance in favour of the proletariat by Jünger. That the bourgeoisie cannot see them is a sign of the bourgeoisie’s powerlessness in the face of this class conflict. The Gestalt of the *Reich* – or the state fetishism of fascists that Theweleit writes of – is a way, that Jünger offers, of transcending class differences by acknowledging one’s oneness with this Gestalt. The bourgeoisie – in the right-wing *Dolchstoß* tragedy myth of the *Kultur der Niederlage* – betrayed the Reich Gestalt by, supposedly, denying their oneness with it and acting against the army and the *Frontsoldat* Gestalt. This *Neophantastik* use of Gestalts by Jünger is a way for him to fight the class fight on behalf of the worker and yet transcend it. He, like the Nazis with their idea of *Das dritte Reich*, will hold out the promise of a transcendence of the class conflict with a metaphysical acknowledgement by an elite – open to the members of all classes – that they are part of a larger community through their oneness with the Gestalts of *Reich*, *Arbeiter* and *Frontsoldat*.

#### VII.2.4. *Germanien* (1932)

That the Nazi *Sprechbühne* rituals and the equation of technologically-organized mass work with freedom<sup>67</sup> that Jünger presents in *Der Arbeiter* are utterances in the barbarian discourse of the day, become evident when one considers the magazine *Germanien* and the organization responsible for it, *Das Abnenerbe*. Control of the barbarian discourse is a central ideological struggle of the 1930s and 1940s in Germany, and the magazine reveals the issues of the struggle, and its intensity, in the periods just before and just after the Nazi take-over.

In *Germanien* #3 of 1932, General Haenichen writes several articles about the attempts by the Roman Empire to conquer Germanic tribal territory in the first century A.D through Varus and Germanicus. Haenichen explicitly identifies Armin der Cherusker (Hermann, Arminius) as Siegfried (Haenichen 67), and attempts to accomplish two things with his article. Firstly to reclaim Germany’s barbarian ancestors for modern Germany and secondly to create of Armin-Siegfried a

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<sup>67</sup> This received its most chilling apotheosis in the phrase made infamous by concentration camps like Sachsenhausen, where it was welded into the gate: „Arbeit macht frei“.

romance hero. His overview of the fighting between the year 9 and 16 portrays Armin as an accomplished military strategist, and Haenichen concludes with the parallel lines, „Siegreich stand Armin wieder auf seiner festen Landesgrenze – der Gegner zog nach Hause, keinen neuen Angriff mehr wagend“ and „Sieger geblieben war Siegfried, „der gewaltigste der Heerkönige““ (Haenichen 68). By 1932, the stab-in-the-back legend of World War I and the image of Siegfried stabbed by Hagen were solidly entrenched in the *Kultur der Niederlage* of Weimar Germany, and Haenichen’s article represents not only an attempt to claim the barbarian ancestor who resolutely withstood the attack of the more powerful enemy from the West (Rome in history, the Western Allies in Weimar *Kultur der Niederlage* symbolism), but also to re-write the tragedy of his story – both of the actual Armin/Hermann and of the fictionalized Siegfried derived from him in *Das Nibelungenlied* – into a romance, as was occurring elsewhere in Weimar Germany, particularly with Hitler and the Nazis. For this reason, later historians like Wolfram condemn the equating of Armin with Siegfried: „Eine auf sehr dünnen Beine stehende Spekulation, der noch dazu das Odium deutschnationaler Rhetorik anhaftet“ (Wolfram 35).

While English and French historians after World War I deepened the identification of Germany as global romance villain – established by Allied propaganda during the war – by arguing that the success of the barbarian Germanic tribes in resisting the Roman conquest accounted for Germany’s lack of civilization and the lingering evil barbarism in its national soul, men like Haenichen were not the only ones to reverse the traditional European association of civilizing Rome as the protagonist of history and the barbarians as antagonists. This theme is, in fact, a major theme in Robert E. Howard’s work, with his fictional historical barbarian hero Bran Mak Morn fighting the Romans in Britain, and his fantasy barbarian hero Conan fighting the Hyborian Age nation that metaphorically stands for England and France, Aquilonia, at Venarium, where the Aquilonians are symbolic stand-ins for the Romans.

The political significance of such developments in the barbarian discourse in Germany, particularly the proud identification with the barbarian tribal Germanic past, is made evident by Hitler’s opposition, in *Mein Kampf*, to the scholars promoting this dynamic. Hitler sees his authority threatened by them, as they have found a source to empower the German national re-birth that is demanded by the dynamic of the *Kultur der Niederlage*, and he feels compelled of „jenen deutschvölkischen



Wanderscholaren warnen müssen, deren positive Leistung immer gleich Null ist, deren Einbildung aber kaum übertroffen zu werden vermag“ (Hitler 395). That this „völkisch“ seizing of the barbarian discourse was a very real threat to Hitler is underlined when he writes, „Es ist das Charakteristische dieser Naturen, daß sie von altgermanischem Heldentum, von grauer Vorzeit, Steinäxten, Ger und Schild schwärmen, in Wirklichkeit aber die größten Feiglinge sind, die man sich vorstellen kann“ (Hitler 396). In fact, the decision to call the movement a party was made to discourage these „völkischen Schlafwandler“ who would have taken the movement in a different direction.

In 1932, on the eve of the *Machtergreifung*, the barbarian discourse had to be controlled and directed. The learning from the victor precept of a *Kultur der Niederlage* insisted on an adoption of the technological intensification that American industry had begun, and the barbarian discourse could not be allowed to be used as a properly romantic reaction against technology. Instead, it had to be harnessed and re-directed, as Jünger did in *Der Arbeiter*, and as the Nazi Sprechchöre did: it was the source of the fire, of the revolution, but its form needed to be that of technology, more specifically of the dedication to technology implied by the *Arbeiter* Gestalt.

#### VII.2.5. “The Nemedian Chronicles” and “The God in the Bowl” (1932)

At the same time that General Haenichen is claiming the barbarian for Germany in the pages of *Germanien*, Robert E. Howard is in the midst of launching his most famous character, the barbarian Conan of Cimmeria. Central to the success of the series of stories was a major component of the Fantasy genre that Howard was in fact establishing with these stories, a component requiring the *Neophantastik Schreibweise*: sub-creation. The stories Howard published in *Weird Tales* about his most famous warrior hero are set in this character’s sub-created Secondary World, the sub-creation termed “the Hyborian Age” by Howard. This sub-creation is, in fact, a metaphor for his real, or primary, world of 1932, for he based the Hyborian Age on the map, peoples, history and mythologies of Europe, Africa and Asia. Howard used historical or mythological place names from our primary world (or derived from the primary world) in his setting – for example, Shem,

Argos, Stygia, Iranistan and Aquilonia – and used aspects of their primary world origins to flesh them out and deepen their believability and resonance. Ditommaso notes how the race discourse of Howard’s social origins also plays into the creation of the Hyborian Age sub-creation: “Howard’s special preoccupation with race and race migrations underpins the ‘history’ of the Hyborian world” (Ditommaso). Beyond this racial association, Howard also implicitly made reference to aspects of the cultures and histories those names were associated with, and yet he never transgressed Tolkien’s stipulation that the sub-creation be complete within itself and accord to its own laws. In other words, Howard’s Argos has nothing to do with Greece in the stories of Conan, and yet the bridge that this term, and other historical terms, make between Howard’s sub-created world and the history, legends and mythology of our primary world cannot be overlooked when investigating the political unconscious meaning of Howard’s work. This is particularly true when one notes a concern with the post World War I geo-political landscape in Howard’s map of the Hyborian Age of the Conan tales.

Howard’s working out of the Hyborian Age sub-creation represents pioneering work in the Fantasy genre, and it includes an aspect that will become a staple of the genre: building a pantheon of gods for the sub-created world by using historical gods and goddesses, or aspects of them. In the pantheon of the Hyborian Age we have Mitra, whose name derives from Mithras and whose worship and aspects in Howard’s stories have a definite Christian flavour, reflecting the fact that the cult of Mithras was largely co-opted by early Christianity: “Many Christians did not make a clear distinction between this sun-cult and their own. They referred to Christ ‘driving his chariot across the sky’; they held their services on Sunday, knelt towards the East and had their nativity-feast on 25 December, the birthday of the sun at the winter solstice” (Johnson 67). We also have Conan’s own god, Crom, who is modelled on the Germanic Wotan/Odin; there is Set, who is taken directly from Egyptian myth; and there are lesser deities as well, including Bel, the God of Thieves, who seems to be modelled on Hermes/Mercury, and Ibis, modelled on Thoth, while Ishtar, Ashtoreth, Derketo and Adonis (all mentioned in the Conan story, “Queen of the Black Coast”) are present as well. Some modern fantasy authors make an attempt to create gods not taken from human mythologies, but the very attempt to describe gods is bound to have parallels with historically existing deities.

#### VII.2.5.1. “The Nemedian Chronicles”

Most interesting is the political metaphor that the sub-created Hyborian Age represents. As noted, the initial ironic reaction to World War I in the United States was overcome in short order as American collective memory was cast in the archetypal romance narrative pattern in which a hero (the U.S. as a whole) overcomes obstacles before a climactic showdown with the villain (Germany), which the hero wins. Texan Howard was presented with this perspective on the war by his culture, yet, as a Southerner, Howard also inherited portions of tragedy and irony to consider. A sign of Howard’s – perhaps unconscious – reaction to World War I and Versailles is the fact that Germany plays a central role in the Hyborian Age sub-creation. Henderson and Louinet have shown that Howard prepared his map of the Hyborian Age by superimposing it on a map of Europe. The nation that he labels “Nemedia” occupies the position of Germany on the European map. As has been argued by Tompkins, Nemedia is Howard’s Hyborian Age cartographic translation of Germany. Given this, and considering as well the narrative device that Howard employs – framing the Conan stories as being part of a sub-created historical record known as “The Nemedian Chronicles” – points to the centrality of Germany in Howard’s allegorical map-based narrative. In fact, the nation of Nemedia, and Nemedians as characters, figure prominently in the first three Conan tales Howard wrote. In other words, Howard’s metaphoric Germany was central to the founding conception of his most famous work. Further, the only Conan novel, *The Hour of the Dragon*, in which Conan is king of Aquilonia – a nation whose superimposed European boundaries significantly coincide with those of France and England – features Nemedia as the main threat to Conan’s rule.

In the final analysis, the purpose of the sub-creation was to give his barbarian hero a stage to exist on. As such, the sub-creation gave Howard a vehicle to make utterances in the barbarian discourse of the day. Ditommaso notes of the Hyborian Age that: “the pure blood of the barbarian is strikingly vital and alive. As Marc Cerasini and Chales Hoffman note, Howard was ‘obsessed with the unspoiled superiority of the barbarian as opposed to his civilized counterpart’. This barbarian vitality is superbly illustrated in the pseudo-history” (Ditommaso). Howard’s thinking about barbarians at the same time that Haenichen is

claiming the barbarian for Germany in the pages of *Germanien* and Jünger is providing a new expression of the barbarian in *Der Arbeiter* is made explicit in a November 2, 1932 letter that Howard wrote to Lovecraft. After taking pains to insist to Lovecraft that he has “no idyllic view of barbarism”, Howard goes on to write a rather idyllic portrait of the barbarian:

But he was lithe and strong as a panther, and the full joy of strenuous physical exertion was his. The day and the night were his book, wherein he read of all things that run or walk or crawl or fly. Trees and grass and moss-covered rocks and birds and beasts and clouds were alive to him and partook of his kinship. The wind blew his hair and he looked with naked eyes into the sun. Often he starved, but when he feasted, it was with mighty gusto, and the juices of food and strong drink were stinging wine to his palate. Oh, I know I can never make myself clear; I've never seen anyone who had any sympathy with my point of view, nor do I want any. I am not ashamed of it. I would not choose to plunge into such a life now; it would [be] the sheerest of hells to me, unfitted as I am for such an existence. But I do say that if I had the choice of another existence, to be born into it and raised in it, knowing no other, I'd choose such an existence as I've just sought to depict. (Howard in Connors 105-106).

As Connors argues, Howard's position in the barbarian discourse here is very similar to the position in the barbarian discourse taken by representatives of what Connors calls the *Volkstumbbewegung* in Germany (Connors 104). It needs to be stressed, in the spirit of dialogism, that Jung's theories of the unconscious that underlie this analysis (being the inspiration, as they are, for both Frye's theory and Jameson's) are predicated on this interpretation of the barbarian discourse: i.e. that our archetypes are the lasting legacy of our barbarian ancestors.

The similarities between Howard's utterances in the barbarian discourse and those of like-minded thinkers in Germany (particularly the professors of Germanic studies that Hitler despises and the writers for *Germanien*) are most striking in the connection to Wotan/Odin. In the Conan story “Queen of the Black Coast” Howard has Conan essentially paraphrase the above-cited letter to Lovecraft, and to preface the whole with a description of his own sub-created Cimmerian god, Crom. From the description it is clear that Howard has taken aspects of Odin/Wotan

and renamed the god Crom. Howard's choice of this patron god for his character is as significant as Howard choosing Nemedra as a focal point for his sub-creation and Cimmeria as the homeland of his hero.

Not only does Howard present his barbarian, Conan, in a positive light so that the reader would want to emulate him, but this presentation represents a textual challenging of the hierarchy of values given to Howard by society, which he points out when he tells Lovecraft that he can't find anyone to sympathize with his views. However, the popularity of the character and the stories about him, as shown by the letters from readers sent to *Weird Tales*, attests to the *Veränderungspotential* of the Conan stories. As was noted earlier, Fluck's aesthetic transfer explains how Howard's Conan tales are able to pull more people into the interpretation of the barbarian discourse common to Howard and the *Volkstumbewegung* in Germany.

Central to the barbarian concept that is being promoted here by Howard are the *kalte persona* values of courage, action, and emotional control. However, part of the aesthetic attraction of a story like "Queen of the Black Coast" is the emotional bond between Conan and Bêlit. They are attracted to each other because they both incorporate aspects of the *kalte persona*, and Louinet's investigation of earlier drafts of the story show how Howard struggled with his portrayal of Conan's emotions. Here Howard seems to be promoting, or at the very least presenting, what Müller and Kindt have identified as a typical hybrid modernist position that eschews ethical reflection in favour of an elemental connection to life in which moral considerations play a lesser role. This is expressed, in the barbarian discourse, as the barbarian's vital experience of life, and this is what Plaßmann – the SS officer made the editor of *Germanien* once the magazine has been *gleichgeschaltet* and put under the auspices of the SS organization, *Das Ahnenerbe* – will highlight in his interpretations of the Germanic past in *Germanien*.

Conan – and many of Howard's other heroes – represent the *kalte persona* and thus, through the barbarian discourse, the cynicism toward civilization felt in the post-war generations on both sides of the Atlantic. The *kalte persona* and the hard warrior values that this psychological type promoted helped to prepare the world for World War II. Lethen and Theweleit both argue that the position of such a *kalte persona* warrior man – who looked back upon the barbarians with approval – was inextricably interwoven with attitudes toward women. Howard's "Queen of the Black Coast" features Bêlit, one of the most

interesting female characters that Howard created, and the story can be read as a cautionary tale warning the *kalte persona* about dropping his emotional armour. This story portrays the Conan character in the most intimate – emotionally and physically – relationship with a woman of all the stories in the series. This intimacy leads Conan to make errors in judgement, which lead to the death of Bêlit. The tale's *anagnorisis* consists in the reader recognizing Conan as the romance protagonist as Bêlit's spirit returns from the dead to rescue him, yet the physical relationship has ended.

#### VII.2.5.2. "The God in the Bowl"

After "The Phoenix on the Sword", Howard will write several Conan stories before the publication of "Queen of the Black Coast", and in them all Howard highlights the conflict between civilization and barbarism. The second Conan story that Howard wrote, "The Frost Giant's Daughter", shows Conan living a barbarian life in a barbarian setting within the Hyborian Age sub-creation: the expressly barbarian and Germanic north (Louinet A10). The story of a battle in the snow and a long pursuit in arctic conditions underlines the barbarian vitality that Howard admired and that the barbarian discourse ascribes to the positive barbarian.

His Hyborian Age metaphor for Germany, Nemediia, is the setting for the third Conan story Howard wrote, "The God in the Bowl". Howard indicates that his sub-created Nemediia is, in fact, Germany on the maps he drew, and he reveals his attitudes to Germany in his tales. In the "The Phoenix on the Sword" he portrayed Nemediia as a collective romance antagonist and threat to Conan's rule of Aquilonia. While the main threat in the story comes from the Aquilonian upper class which cannot accept a low-born usurper on the throne (a sentiment expressed by the minstrel Rinaldo in his *The Lament for the King*, for "He sees in Conan a red-handed, rough-footed barbarian who came out of the north to plunder a civilized land" (Howard 2002: 8-9)), there is a Nemedian connection: "Through [*Count Volmana's*] princely kin in Nemediia, it was easy to persuade King Numa [*i.e. of Nemediia*] to request the presence of Count of Poitain, seneschal of Aquilonia; and of course, to do him honor, he'll be accompanied by an imperial escort, as well as his own troops, and Prospero, King Conan's right-hand man" (Howard 8). In other words, Nemediia will lure away Conan's most trusted men so that

the plot can succeed. In “The God in the Bowl” Howard fleshes out his metaphor for Germany, Nemedía, but he does not portray Nemedía as a barbarian country. He portrays it as a civilized one that seems very Roman, from the Latin names of its citizens to the Roman culture that they seem to have. In this Howard unconsciously seems to take a cue from Hitler himself, who, as Wolfram noted, preferred civilized Rome to the barbarian Germanic tribes, and imbued his Nazi movement with identifiably Roman elements, including the Führer-salute, the standards that his Nazi marchers bore aloft, and the mania for pseudo-Roman architecture. The Nemedía that Howard depicts in “The God in the Bowl” is riven by a rivalry between the followers of Mitra (Howard’s sub-creation metaphor for Christianity) and the followers of Set (the clearly borrowed Egyptian god of evil). Howard does not grant his metaphor for Germany an association with the positive barbarism that he admires, and portrays it as a civilization riven by a struggle between good and evil.

Howard composed this third Conan story, “The God in the Bowl” in March–April 1932 (Louinet A11), and Nemedía is already emerging as central to the story cycle, the opposite pole to Aquilonia – a dialectic that will inform the only Conan novel, *The Hour of the Dragon*. The centrality of Nemedía to Howard’s conception of the Hyborian Age is also reflected in the introduction to the Conan stories that Howard composed at the insistence of the editor of *Weird Tales*. This ‘excerpt’ from *The Nemedian Chronicles* lists Nemedía first among the Hyborian nations, even though it then focuses on Aquilonia. Significantly, Howard has Conan speak of “Nemedian sceptics” in “Queen of the Black Coast”, the only major identification he makes between one of his sub-created nations and a non-metaphysical stance. If Nemedía is a metaphor for Germany, this would be a reference to the major philosophical currents popular in Howard’s time related to scepticism about metaphysical phenomena, namely the ideas of Marx and Nietzsche. Further, after casting Nemedians as accessories to the plot to overthrow Conan in “The Phoenix on the Sword”, in “The God in the Bowl”, the Nemedians who form the core of the story are the “all-powerful police” (Howard 2002: 45). Of these characters, Demetrio is a bit of a better type than the rest, who are clearly Nazi-like thugs, especially Posthumo.

The bowl itself is intended for Kalanthes, a priest of Ibis. Howard’s Hyborian Age Ibis is taken from an aspect of the god Thoth in Egyptian mythology: “In later times, when Thoth came to be represented

by the ibis bird, his attributes were multiplied, and he became the god of letters, science, mathematics, etc.; at the creation of which he seems to have played a part not unlike that of ‘wisdom’” (Budge 112). In what will turn out to be an attempt by worshippers of Set to kill a priest of Ibis, we see a textual manifestation of the Apollonian/Dionysian conflict that forms for Howard, as it does for Jünger, a sub-text throughout his work. Thoth represents an Apollonian position against the negative Dionysian aspects that are manifested by Set, and this dynamic was ritually enacted in Ancient Egypt, as an hymn from the *Papyrus of Hunefer* suggests (Budge 90-91). That Howard would have Conan (unknowingly) foil a plot by the priests of Set to kill a priest of the God of Letters, and to set this in Nemedea, is very revealing.

There are also Mithraic and Christian references in the story. Howard comments on Christianity through his sub-created Hyborian deity, Mitra, particularly through Promero, a worshipper of Mitra. Promero’s character is of interest because once all the characters begin to suspect the threat from Set, his response is to pray to Mitra. He is slapped for his pious response by a character identified by Howard as “a materialist” (Howard 2002: 55), which is a direct philosophical labelling for this character who plays the Nemedian sceptic throughout, the prefect of the police of the Nemedian city of Numalia, Dionus. Additionally, Demetrio, “chief of the Inquisitorial Council of the city of Numalia” (Howard 2002: 43), directly mocks the possibility of supernatural realities (Howard 2002: 51).

Most telling for an analysis of this story is a scene which is a direct reference to the Biblical account of Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane. Conan, surrounded by the very Roman-esque Nemedian police, is in an analogous situation to Christ about to be arrested by the Romans. Unlike Christ, Conan defends himself and, after killing the fop nobleman Aztrias, lops off Dionus’ ear (i.e. the materialist’s ear). Howard’s use of this highly-charged scene from Christian belief is evidence of his Christian background and the fact, that his hero does not take the role of Christ from the famous scene but rather the role of Peter, constitutes a commentary on Christian ethics; it is thus an utterance in the barbarian discourse. Conan, unlike Peter, is not rebuked by a higher power, and his romance *mythos* role as the romance protagonist carrying the values of the reader indicates how Howard’s text makes its statement. This is particularly evident when Conan kills the monster, the child of Set, during the *pathos* scene and escapes the



Nemedian police in the *anagnorisis*: his reward is his freedom. That Howard puts his barbarian hero in this scene in the first place is telling, because several sources argue that one of the major difficulties in the conversion of the Germanic barbarians to Christianity was the injunction to ‘turn the other cheek’. The Germanic barbarians converted to Christianity by recognizing Christ as their new „Gefolgsherren“ (Glaser, Lehmann, Lubos 17) and thus continued their martial tradition and preserved a *Weltanschauung* of „eines tapferen und auf gegenseitige Treue ruhenden Gefolgschaftswesens“ (Glaser, Lehmann, Lubos 17). As a result, the scene in the Garden of Gethsemane received particular attention during the conversion process because Peter’s armed defensive reaction was one they could understand. The early German poem *Heliand* makes much of Peter in this scene,

Da brauste im Zorn auf  
der Kühne Petrus,            der kräftige Degen,  
wild wallt’ ihm sein Mut, kein Wort konnt’ er sprechen  
vor Harm im Herzen,        daß den Herrn man ihm dort  
mit Banden wollte binden;        erbot sich er hin,  
der kampfkühne Degen, vor den König zu treten,  
hart vor seinen Herrn,        im Herzen nicht schwankend,  
in der Brust nicht verzagt,        und zog sein Schwert  
zum Streit von der Seite und stob entgegen  
dem vordersten Feind        mit der Fäuste Kraft. (Schönfelder  
30)

This portrayal allowed the barbarian values to shine forth in the new Christian context, and Howard uses precisely this scene to do the same thing, namely highlight the primal vitality and values of his barbarian hero.

Howard also blends this scene with the Biblical scene where Peter denies Christ three times. Once again, Conan’s role in the romance *mythos* story highlights Howard’s championing of a barbarian ethic over civilizing Christian teachings. The reason Conan breaks into the building where the Nemedian police come to seize him is because the nobleman Aztrias hired Conan to steal; when Aztrias is confronted with this suspicion, he denies Conan twice despite the fact that Conan remained loyal to Aztrias by not revealing his name in the face of threats and grilling from the Nemedian police. Howard does not have Conan turn the other cheek to this betrayal, nor does he wait for a third denial before killing Aztrias.

The symbolic resolution that this text suggests to the social contradiction that Howard is apparently responding to – the divide between Christian teachings and the necessity for self-preserving violence – is revealed by the fates of the characters at the conclusion of the story.

The child of Set is slain by Conan; Posthumo's Nazi-like brutality, revealed to the reader in the anecdote of how he plucked the eye out of a girl in court, is avenged by Conan's taking out of his eye. This literal eye for an eye scene is a clear indicator of the symbolic resolution Howard is aiming at. Dionus leaves holding the stump of his ear, and Demetrio, wounded in the thigh also flees: "The Inquisitor had the courage to face the unknown, but he was unnerved and wounded, and the sword that had struck him down was still near him" (Howard 2002: 57). Thus are the sceptics and materialists driven to flight. Kalanthes, without ever knowing of the threat to him, is saved, while Promero, the worshipper of Mitra, is slain by the child of Set. This suggests that one should have more faith in wisdom and knowledge than a Christ-like god. Finally, Conan, in his slaying of his betrayer, the chastising of his would-be captors, and his rejection of the 'turning of the cheek' injunction suggests an acceptance of a Dionysian, and properly barbarian, embracing of life. But, significantly, the power and attraction of the darker side of the Dionysian is not done away with as all the characters flee the child of Set, Conan fleeing even after he has slain it. The final image of a "beautiful head" and "the shimmering, headless coils of a gigantic serpent" (Howard 2002: 58) lingers with the reader.

Here – as in "The Phoenix on the Sword" and "The Frost-Giant's Daughter", the first two Conan tales that Howard composed in 1932 – we also see the transition between the *Phantastik* and the *Neophantastik Schreibweise* that Howard's texts demonstrate. When the dying characters emerge from the room with the bowl, there is a moment of *Unschlüssigkeit* – for the other characters and the reader don't know if there really is something supernatural going on. Conan's discovery of, confrontation with, and slaying of, the god in the bowl represents a moment of the *Neophantastik* and a definitive statement that the Conan tales are truly of the Fantasy genre that Tolkien defined through an insistence that the supernatural in such a story be textually presented as real and undoubted. Similarly, in "The Frost Giant's Daughter", Conan, the wounded last survivor of a battle in the Germanic-styled north of Howard's sub-creation, crosses the line from the *Phantastik* to the *Neophantastik*. He chases a nearly-naked woman who turns out to be a

goddess who lures mortals into the snowy wastes so that her divine father, the frost giant Ymir, can devour them. When Conan is found lying in the snow at the tale's conclusion by other members of the Æsir tribe that he fought for, they conclude that his story is delirium brought on by his wounds and exposure. This is a classic *Phantastik* response to the supernatural elements of a narrative. Yet, they then pry open Conan's tightly clenched fist to find the shred of shimmering unearthly fabric that Conan tore from the goddess, proving that he had touched her and that his story was true. In this tale, then, Howard makes use of the *Unschlüssigkeit* effect of the *Phantastik* before dismissing it with a thoroughly *Neophantastik* conclusion. Howard's use – and dismissal – of the moment of *Unschlüssigkeit* underlines the vitality and groundedness of the barbarian. All uncertainty is banished in these first three Conan stories by the barbarian who ushers in a new cognitive paradigm, where another world exists and cannot be doubted. This is the source of this text's *Veränderungspotential*: Howard's position in the barbarian discourse is to be considered without an uncertainty factor. Conan's barbarian attitude is meant to be favourably contrasted to the Christian teachings it implicitly makes reference to.

Howard's position in the barbarian discourse is not as idealistic as Haenichen's approach to Armin was in *Germanien*. Howard does the same thing that SS officer Plaßmann will do once he gains control of the magazine: present the barbarian perspective in an unpretified way while still admiring the barbarian's vitality and virtues. In the above cited November 1932 letter to Lovecraft, Howard's disclaimer statement attempts to make this distinction clear: "I have no idyllic view of barbarism – as near as I can learn it's a grim, bloody, ferocious and loveless condition. I have no patience with the depiction of the barbarian of any race as a stately, god-like child of Nature, endowed with strange wisdom and speaking in measured and sonorous phrases" (Howard in Louinet x) Lovecraft was a proponent of civilization in the barbarism vs. civilization debate that he and Howard carried on in their correspondence, and Howard was stressing that the hierarchy of values that he was offering did not consist in re-defining the barbarian *as* civilized, but in accepting the barbarian precisely because his values were not those of civilization.

#### VII.2.6. "The Tower of the Elephant" (1932)

In the fourth Conan tale that Howard wrote, in April of 1932 (Louinet A13), “The Tower of the Elephant”, the *Unschlüssigkeit* moment is entirely absent, and the narrator’s statements about barbarism and civilization are similarly unequivocal. This story is also further evidence that Conan does represent a *kalte persona* for he responds in the manner of a *Schamkultur*. Finally, this story depicts how the race discourse of his time is part of the rationale for Howard’s Fantasy genre sub-creation, and how the race discourse is a central component of the barbarian discourse.

Lethen notes how status inconsistencies are said to be ‘greenhouses of social shame’ and therefore „Wenn das zutrifft, dann wird die Weimarer Republik mit ihrer ständig drohenden Diffusion sozialer Grenzziehungen erhebliche Hitzegrade aufzuweisen haben. Wer diesem sozialen Klima der Beschämung entgehen und sich unterscheiden wollte, mußte Attitüden der »Kälte« einsetzen und sich eine Verhaltenslehre zulegen“ (Lethen 26). This definition does not only hold for Weimar Germany and Jünger, but also for the United States and Howard. Not only does the Depression threaten his hold on his petty bourgeois existence, but, as he told Novalyne Price, positive attitudes toward blacks, and the very real possibility of shaming rituals like tarring and feathering that could result from any overt *Schuldkultur*-like expressions of such positive attitudes toward blacks demonstrate how he, too, must adopt *Verhaltenslehren der Kälte*.

This deduction is given credence through a scene that occurs in the *agon* stage of the romance *mythos* story that is “The Tower of the Elephant”. A seventeen year-old Conan enters a tavern in the Maul, a dangerous part of an Hyborian Age city, and suggests that he will break into the fabled Tower of the Elephant and steal a gem called the Elephant’s Heart. He is laughed at by the representatives of the different Hyborian Age nationalities present in the tavern, and this moment of ‘laughability’ – the central threat in a *Schamkultur* – is presented in a manner that shows Conan to be both a barbarian, in the sense of the positive valuing of the barbarian in the barbarian discourse, and a *kalte persona* who demonstrates all the aspects of the hard, almost metallic warrior whose skin is like armour:

This person was as much out of place in that den as a grey wolf among mangy rats of the gutters. His cheap tunic could not conceal the hard, rangy lines of his powerful frame, the

broad heavy shoulders, the massive chest, lean waist, and heavy arms. His skin was brown from outland suns, his eyes blue and smoldering; a shock of tousled black hair crowned his broad forehead. [...] The Cimmerian glared about, embarrassed at the roar of mocking laughter that greeted this remark. He saw no particular humor in it and was too new to civilization to understand its discourtesies. Civilized men are more discourteous than savages because they know they can be impolite without having their skulls split, as a general thing. (Howard 2002: 62-63).

While the primal honesty of the barbarian is stressed here, and the fact that the *kalte persona* is presented as a personality type fitting such a barbarian *Weltanschauung*, Conan's identification as a Cimmerian points to the narrative under-current evoked by the Cimmeria motif's tragic narrative trajectory. Not only is Howard unconsciously reflecting the despair that he communicated to Lovecraft that no one supports or understands his position in the barbarian discourse, but he is also unconsciously evoking the fascist oscillation occasioned by such a barbarian *Weltanschauung*.

Whatever Howard's ultimate belief in the re-ordering of his culture's hierarchy of values, his pro-barbarian stance is combined in this story with what Ditommaso calls "race-conscious descriptions" (Ditommaso). The depictions of the nationalities in the Maul reinforce racial and national stereotypes that Howard has inherited from his culture and has built into his sub-creation. For example, Jews are Hyborian Age Shemites and East Asians are the Hyborian Age nation of Khitai. Ditommaso catalogues these races and their stereotypes: "Shemites, who are born liars and hooked of nose, and the men of Khitai, the 'yellow-skulled' workers of poisons" (Ditommaso). In his presentation of the different nationalities of the Hyborian Age, Howard reveals their real-world counterparts through his Hyborian Age map based on the map of Europe (and adjoining continents). All of these are connected with civilization, and Conan the Cimmerian, the barbarian, shines in contrast with these exemplars of civilization. Conan responds to the attempt of the *Schamkultur* of the Maul to shame him with an outburst of violence: "The Cimmerian, with the unerring instinct of the barbarian, had killed his man in the darkness and confusion" (Howard 2002: 64).

These and other statements throughout the story – "No civilized man could have moved half so quickly as the barbarian moved" (Howard

2002: 70); and “A civilized man in his position would have sought doubtful refuge in the conclusion that he was insane; it did not occur to the Cimmerian to doubt his senses” (Howard 2002: 75) – reaffirm not only Howard’s position in the barbarian discourse, but his recourse to the *Neophantastik* to emphasize his questioning of his culture’s traditional assumptions about civilization and barbarism. In fact, Howard demonstrates how the ideologeme that Fischer-Fabian reported was inculcated into German schoolchildren as soon as the Nazis took power – »Hochkultur gleich *Aufnordung* – Verfall gleich *Entnordung*« – is present in the United States. This is done through Conan, where he, of the sub-created northern land of Cimmeria, is presented as culturally superior to all of the nationalities in the Maul – including those who are identified as northern folk who did not keep their bloodlines pure (e.g. the Hyperboreans). Yag-Kosha, the captive creature that Conan befriends, not only is evidence that the *Neophantastik Schreibweise* is the story’s second layer of form, but extends the Hyborian Age sub-creation for the reader by incorporating the barbarism and civilization dynamic the Theosophists promoted as central to the sub-creation: “We saw new savages drift southward in conquering waves from the arctic circle to build a new civilization, with new kingdoms called Nemedias, and Koth, and Aquilonia and their sisters” (Howard 2002: 78). In this we see again the centrality of Nemedias – the Hyborian Age Germany – to Howard’s conception of his sub-creation. In fact, Conan is allied to a Nemedian, Taurus, in the early part of the story. While Taurus helps Conan in his romance quest for the Heart of the Elephant at the outset, Conan is apparently betrayed by the Nemedian. The Nemedian dies as a result of his attempted treachery, and the metaphorical message – here as in the Solomon Kane story, “The Rattle of Bones”, where Kane is betrayed by a German – is a symbolic warning against Germany.



## VIII. Narrative Trajectories after the *Machtergreifung* (1933-1936)

### VIII.1. The Barbarian as Guarantor of Freedom

#### VIII.1.1. “The Slithering Shadow” (1933)

The ninth Conan story that Howard wrote, in November-December of 1932 (Louinet A20), originally entitled “Xuthal of the Dusk” but published as “The Slithering Shadow” in September of 1933, continues Howard’s utterances in the barbarian discourse. Howard here brings the civilization vs. barbarism theme to the fore by taking up precisely the aspects of cities that Jünger mentions, particularly how a ‘geometry of reason’ obscures the satanic core of the city so that people go on living in the city despite knowing the hellish truth of their existences. Conan comes upon the isolated city of Xuthal and discovers a technologically advanced civilization whose every need is taken care of while the population lies in a drugged stupor brought on by the black lotus flower.

They manufacture their own food out of the primal elements. They are wonderful scientists, when they are not drugged with their dream-flower. [...] But much they have forgotten. They take little interest in waking life, choosing to lie most of the time in death-like sleep. [...] Sleepers of the lotus are like the dead. Animation is apparently suspended. It is impossible to detect the slightest sign of life. The spirit has left the body and is roaming at will through other exotic worlds. (Howard 2002: 230).

This death-like state, like the *maskenhafte Starre* Jünger mentions, is overlaid by the glitter of a technological civilization able to create – like the flashing lights and movies of Weimar German cities – wonders like the radium lights Conan encounters (Howard 2002: 236). At the core of Xuthal is a terrifying satanic reality: a monster the people worship as a god, Thog, lives beneath the city and, like H.G. Wells’ Morlocks, stalks among the city people when he is hungry and eats. When Conan discovers this he is shocked.

“Crom!” he ejaculated, aghast. “You mean to tell me these people lie down calmly and sleep, with this demon crawling



among them?”

“It is only occasionally that he is hungry,” she repeated. “A god must have his sacrifices. [...]” (Howard 2002:231)

Howard here, in romance form, has textually manifested the city’s fearsome security, contrasting the decadence and decay inherent in civilization with the vitality of barbarism, which prefers self-reliance in nature over surrender to the symbolically cannibalistic reality of civilization.

### VIII.1.2. *Germanien* (1934)

While Howard was making his utterances in the barbarian discourse by establishing his barbarian character in Fantasy genre-*Neophantastik Schreibweise*-romance *mythos* short stories in the pulp fiction magazine *Weird Tales* from 1932 to 1934, the barbarian was also the central figure in the romance *mythos* essays appearing in the pages of *Germanien* magazine in Germany in those years. The Nazi takeover of the magazine did alter the focus of this valuing of the barbarian, and gave it a new urgency, as we see particularly in the treatment of *Hermann der Cherusker*, a.k.a. Armin, or a.k.a. Siegfried. Wolfram discusses this change:

Die Arminius-Begeisterung der deutschen Studienräte währte bis in die Dreißigerjahre, fand jedoch während des Nationalsozialismus nicht die erwartete Fortsetzung und Erfüllung. Die Germanen waren nicht unbedingt nach Hitlers Geschmack, weil er sich mit ihrer barbarischen Geschichte Mussolini gegenüber stets zurückgesetzt fühlte. Auch konnte die Hermann-Verherrlichung ihre konservativen Ursprünge in den Freiheitskriegen niemals verleugnen, weshalb sie für Heinrich Himmlers Vorstellungen eines dynamischen Germanentums wenig brauchbar schien. (Wolfram 34)

The barbarian discourse in Nazi Germany was thus caught in a tension between Hitler’s decidedly Roman leanings and Himmler’s attempt to use the barbarian past to structure and legitimate the police state. Fischer-Fabian recalls just how the Nazis did appropriate the barbarian discourse about the *Germanen* and Germany through the implementation of the ideologeme noted above:

Auf dem Gymnasium hatten wir einen Geschichtslehrer, der

gerade – man schrieb das Jahr 1934 – auf einem Schulungskurs mit neuester Geschichtserkenntnis versehen worden war und nun mit Feuereifer daranging, sie uns zu vermitteln. Es war eine einfache Erkenntnis, und manch einer von uns fand sie allein deshalb befriedigend, weil sie leicht zu lernen war. Sie bestand aus der Formel »Hochkultur gleich *Aufnordnung* – Verfall gleich *Entnordnung*«. Womit gemeint war, daß Staaten und Kulturen immer dann morsch wurden und zum Untergang reif, wenn nordisches Erbgut sich durch Vermischung verflüchtigt hatte.

Die Träger dieses »Blutes und Gutes«, die Germanen, waren blond und blauäugig, hehr und hochgemut und ständig bemüht, ihre heldischen Gesinnung eisenklirrend zu entsprechen. In dieser Form bekamen wir unser Germanenbild geliefert. (Fischer-Fabian 13)

The process Fischer-Fabian recalls as a 1934 Gymnasium student in textually apparent in the pages of *Germanien* at the same time.

General Haenichen concluded his articles in 1932 with a re-iteration of his romance narrative association of Armin with Siegfried. He did this by stressing a classic *anagnorisis* scene of hero recognition: „Sieger war Siegfried, der Drachentöter, der gewaltigste der Heerkönige, wie ihn das *Sinfjötllök* nennt. Mit Recht steht sein stolzes Bild auf der Grotenburg“ (Haenichen 71).<sup>68</sup> By 1934, SS Hauptsturmführer Dr. J. Plaßmann is beginning to dominate the magazine as it comes firmly under Himmler’s control; Plaßmann continues the focus on Armin. He will not content himself with superficial attempts to frame the barbarian discourse about Germany’s ancestors as a romance narrative, but will delve deeply into the negative charges of barbarism. He will endeavour to re-value these negative aspects as *positive* barbarian values in order to counter not only the traditional proponents of Roman civilization vs. Germanic barbarism in England, France, Germany and the U.S.A., but also the opponents *within* the Nazi movement, most importantly – but never stated, of course – Hitler himself.

Plaßmann delves into an issue that Haenichen avoided, namely

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<sup>68</sup> Wolfram sees this, in the present day, in terms of the ironic and satiric when he writes, „Heute steht Hermann zwar immer noch auf seinem klassizistischen Unterbau und macht den Grotenberg zum Ausflugsziel aus nah und fern; seine nationalistische Schlagkraft scheint jedoch für immer einer touristischen Vermarktung gewichen zu sein. Und das ist eigentlich gut so“ (Wolfram 34).

the charge that Hermann, his Cheruskers, and their other barbarian Germanic allies engaged in human sacrifice after the victory over Varus' legions, and practiced human sacrifice in general. In his defense of Germany's barbarian ancestors, Plaßmann argues that these sacrifices were, in fact, executions for Roman transgressions against the sacred woods that they had cut down during the battle. Plaßmann insists, „Wir müssen bedenken, daß es sich jedenfalls hierbei um eine hochkultische Angelegenheit handelte, denn „barbarischer Blutdurst“ oder „wilde Rache“, wie man es sonst zu deuten pflegte, sind zu abgestandene Begriffe, als daß man sie zu wissenschaftlichen Argumenten machen könnte“ (Plaßmann 1934: 111). Plaßmann cites rural courts which, as late as 1720, still had laws indicating that those found guilty of cutting down fruit trees or border trees would have their own heads cut off on the stump of the tree that they had cut down (Plaßmann 1934: 112). He argues that the barbaric punishment visited on the defeated Romans in the Teutoburger Wald was the result of a deeply-held cultural belief demonstrating the positive, close-to-nature view of the barbarian. Plaßmann's conclusion shows how the Nazis associated with the Ahnenerbe and *Germanien* re-valued the barbarian discourse, insisting on a focus on the vital, close-to-nature aspects of their forefathers and symbolic role-models. This line of argumentation follows the dynamic that Hall describes as a recurring motif of the barbarian discourse: “This schizophrenic vision of inferiority and of utopia gives rise to an inherently contradictory portrayal of the barbarian world. It is the home on the one hand of tyrants and savages, and on the other of idealized peoples and harmonious relations with heaven” (Hall 149).

Significantly, in that same 1934 issue of *Germanien* featuring Plaßmann's defence of Armin, Suffert criticizes comments about Germany's pagan and barbarian past delivered by Cardinal Faulhaber in his New Year's sermon of 1934. Faulhaber, alarmed by the now state-sanctioned support for Germanic paganism (at least from Himmler) and attacks on Christianity, speaks out as soon as the Nazis take over: „Weithin große Beachtung finden 1933 seine Adventspredigten, in denen er das von den Nationalsozialisten als „jüdisch“ diffamierte Alte Testament verteidigt“ (Gedenkstätte Deutscher Widerstand 5.3). Suffert attempts to counter the Catholic cardinal's religious and moral authority by arguing in the same vein as Hitler, who – despite Germanic barbarism not being entirely to his taste – made the connection between „völkisch“ and „religiös“ in *Mein Kampf* (Hitler 416) and who had attributed

Germany's collapse in 1918 to Christianity failing the German people. Hitler criticized the Wilhelmine churches for not providing a thoroughgoing national *Weltanschauung*: „Alle diese Verfallserscheinungen sind im letzten Grunde nur Folgen des Mangels einer bestimmten, gleichmäßig anerkannten Weltanschauung sowie der daraus sich ergebenden allgemeinen Unsicherheit in der Beurteilung und der Stellungnahme zu den einzelnen großen Fragen der Zeit“ (Hitler 292). Hitler's implication is that National Socialism could *be* this religion and could offer this unified *Weltanschauung*; Himmler's intention, through the SS and its departments like the Ahnenerbe, was that Germanic barbarian beliefs would provide much of the content of this National Socialist religion. Suffert supports this project by countering Faulhaber's assertion that Christianity was necessary to bring the Germanic barbarians to a higher level of existence: Suffert argues that this barbarian past is part of the German national character and that a people's character cannot be altered (Suffert 113). It cannot be altered because the Nazi racial theories (*Rassenbiologie*) deny this possibility: the Germanic barbarians – as Fischer-Fabian was taught as a boy – were already the height of human potential and their spirituality was therefore superior to that of any other human culture. The barbarian discourse is thus crucial in the argument that ultimate religious authority remains within the German people and cannot come from outside (i.e. Rome); thus, with the Nazis seizing the barbarian discourse and propagating this interpretation of it, that ultimate religious authority *de facto* rests with the Nazi leadership.

An expression of this attempt to claim religious authority are the rituals that the Nazis enacted around the funeral of President von Hindenburg in 1934. Hindenburg was elected President during the turbulent Weimar Republic because, to many, he represented Germany. Although the Kaiser was nominally the head of Imperial Germany during World War I, Hindenburg was recognized nationally as a romance hero due to his decisive victory over the Russians at Tannenberg in 1914. As the war dragged on and the national economy came under increasing state control in order to fuel the war effort, it was Hindenburg who emerged as the true leader of Germany. In effect, the national Gestalt of Germany was identified with Hindenburg, and this would prove Germany's undoing in 1933 as the National Socialists were able to use propaganda posters to successfully link Adolf Hitler with Hindenburg – despite Hindenburg's class-based dislike of Hitler. Then, when Hindenburg died in 1934, they were able complete their coup by

portraying Hitler as Hindenburg's successor. Hitler was able to unify the offices of chancellor and president because Hindenburg, to a great degree, had legitimized Hitler as his successor by – reluctantly, it is true – naming him chancellor. Significantly, Hitler only moved to demand the oath of personal loyalty from the German military (Kinder & Hilgemann 195) *after* the ritual of Hindenburg's burial at Tannenberg which Hitler presided over. With its militaristic pomp, deliberate evocation of the Gestalt of the Frontsoldat of World War I and Nazi staging, the burial had that pagan religiosity that the Nazis strove to associate with their rule and, de facto, transferred Hindenburg's role as the incorporation of Germany to Hitler.

Parallel to this attempt deny Rome, or any other outside power, spiritual and moral authority over Germans, by insisting on Germany's barbarian spiritual heritage, is the announcement in that issue of *Germanien* that a foundation to overlook the Germanic barbarian religious site at Detmold, the *Externsteine* – a Stonehenge-like place of Germanic ritual – was being re-organized. The executive of the foundation would henceforth consist of two appointed members of the foundation, the mayor of the city of Horn, the Landrat of the Kreis of Detmold, and „dem jeweiligen Reichsführer der Schutzstaffeln der NSDAP“ (Riecke 130).

## VIII.2. Cultural Re-Alignment under National Romance Narrative Pressure

### VIII.2.1. *Blätter und Steine* (1934)

In 1934 Jünger was still being courted by the Nazis (Wulf 11), despite having already refused his appointment to the new Nazi academy of arts. He was still closely associated with the nationalist conservative right wing which was largely in a wholesale transition to Nazism as advertisements accompanying Jünger's *Blätter und Steine* for other books published by his publisher, Hanseatische Verlagsanstalt Hamburg, make apparent. These works include, *Albert Leo Schlageter* by Rolf Brandt: „Zum Gedenken unseres unvergeßlichen Märtyrers für die deutsche Freiheit...“; *Der Löwe von Brezoziny* by Theodor Jakobs: „Eine der größten Heldentaten des Krieges wurde durch das persönliche Beispiel eines einzelnen vollbracht“; *Hitlerbuch der deutschen Jugend* by Heinz Schramm; *SA räumt*

*auf!* by Heinz Lohmann; *Der 9. November 1918* by Gottfried Zarnow: „Die Tragödie eines großen Volkes“; and *Matrosen, Soldaten, Kameraden* by Max Burcharty und Edgar Zeller. An advertisement for Jünger’s own *Der Arbeiter* is included at the end of *Blätter und Steine*, along with reviews of the book. One, from *Nationalsozialistische Nachrichten*, stresses the anti-bourgeois attitude that Jünger shares with the Nazis: „Er [*i.e.* Jünger] sieht in dem Ringen unsere Zeit einen neuen Menschentyp, den Arbeitertypus, der nach dem Zusammenbruch der bürgerlichen Welt das Erbe antritt und Volk und Gesellschaft neu formt“ (Hanseatische Verlagsanstalt).

Within the text, Jünger’s growing discomfort with his association with the Nazis is suggested by some of his Nietzsche-inspired aphorisms. For example: „Der Angriff gegen die Autorität beginnt durch Akklamation“ (Jünger 1934: 216); „Wo das Bewußtsein die Brantfackel hält, wird künstliches Leben gezeugt“ (Jünger 1934: 217); „Die Schauspieler der Macht ernten Lorbeer, der in Treibhäusern gewachsen ist“ (Jünger 1934: 218); and „Die Masse ist ihr eigener Tyrann“. While these might be veiled critiques of the Nazis, in 1934 Jünger still shows himself to be in the current of the barbarian discourse being expressed in the pages of *Germanien* and *Weird Tales* when he writes, „Das Gegenteil der Humanität ist nicht die Barbarei, sondern die Divinität“ (Jünger 1934: 216). In other words, the barbarian is synonymous with the human, and the attempt to favour civilization over barbarism is an error. This is Plabmann and the SS’s position as well, as they attempt to win the barbarian Germanic heritage for the NS political agenda.

Between 1934 and 1939 Jünger will distance himself from the Nazis and public life, retreating into the petty bourgeois existence as an author that his amassing of social and political capital had made possible. He is not the only one who chooses this internal exile: while many German artists and writers choose, or are forced into, actual exile, like Brecht and Thomas Mann, others, like Jünger, stayed. As Gisevius argues, the impression that a tragedy was unfolding in Germany became more and more apparent even as the Nazis trumpeted their ‘beyond good and evil’ romance quest throughout society. In fact, Jünger wrote to his brother in 1934 and explained that he intended to pursue his planned stance of „Nichtbeteiligung am Niedrigen“: a not-so-veiled reference to the Nazis, whose lumpenproletariat character was often cited not only by the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie, but also by petty bourgeois like Jünger and his brother who considered themselves part of the ‘geistige’ elite. He wrote to this brother that he planned to show who he was

by not referencing the time (Schwilk 144). His choice to make veiled critical references to what was happening in Germany through his aphorisms in *Blätter und Steine* while being published by a publisher clearly catering to Nazi readers shows his increasingly precarious political position, not to mention gestures like the fact that he „trat gleichzeitig aus dem Traditionsverein ehemaliger »73« aus, da der Verein seine jüdischen Mitglieder ausgestoßen hatte“ (Wulf 10). This very precarity will lead him, by 1938, to the less exposed textual opportunities afforded by the Fantasy genre, its *Neophantastik Schreibweise* and the symbolic and allegorical possibilities inherent in its structural elements of sub-creation and the supernatural.

#### VIII.2.2. “The Grisly Horror” (1935)

“The Grisly Horror”, published in *Weird Tales* in February 1935, is not, aesthetically speaking, one of Howard’s best stories. If one compares it to some of his best work from around the same period, this story seems to represent a step backward in several thematic areas for Howard. The portrayal of blacks in this story shows a marked contrast to their portrayal in the Solomon Kane stories and some of Howard’s poetry, for example. Here, as in the Kane stories, the motif of Africa as the land of primal freedom is a major shaper of the action, but the freeing of the slaves motif that Howard twinned with the primal freedom motif in the Kane stories is denied and even reversed. This is testament to Barrett’s acknowledgement:

At times, REH talked like a racist in his use of offensive racial slurs and stereotyping. There were times when he walked like one in that he held mainstream viewpoints about the inter-mixing of blood between the races. Contrast this with some of his unpublished poetry that reveals his sympathy for and even his identification with Africans and their tribal life. (Barrett 2011: 60)

Positive examples of Howard’s use of the motif of Africa as the land of primal freedom and the freeing of the slaves motif stand in stark contrast to the negative uses of these motifs in “The Grisly Horror”. In essence, Howard’s championing of the barbarian contrasted with his received hierarchy of values, and put him in a position of tension vis-à-vis his society. This story, with its romance *mythos* first layer of form, its

*Phantastik-Neophantastik Schreibweise* second layer of form, and its weird fiction genre, represents a politically unconscious movement back toward the mainstream of his time.

The relatively positive depictions of blacks in the Solomon Kane and Conan stories (of course, in juxtaposition to negative depictions in those same stories) possessed *Veränderungspotential* and suggest, as Barrett and others argue, that Howard was not a fanatical racist. However, attitudes Howard expresses in “The Grisly Horror” also suggest that the cultural revolution he is in some ways contributing to in the United States will be a long and problematic process. The setting and the genre are key reasons why this story shows Howard in oscillation toward the less socially progressive side of his culture. Such oscillations in position are not unusual for humans – indeed, they are central to the concept of contradictions that form the basis of the dialectical method of analysis – and they are very revealing of Howard’s own position socially and personally. In this story the hero enters a Southern Gothic setting to save a white damsel in distress and ends up in the middle of a black revolt stirred up by mixed race priest of Zambabwe but, differently from Conan and Solomon Kane, he shows no sympathy with them and the story ends with their destruction.

The Fantasy genre, powered by its *Neophantastik* rejection of any textual connection to the ‘real’ world, offered Howard (and is in the process, at this point in time, of offering Jünger) a safe conceptual space to challenge social norms, but this weird fiction story that falls back on the *Phantastik-Neophantastik* oscillation, is set in Howard’s own time and place, and this changes everything. “The Grisly Horror” is set in the South in the 1930s present, and this drives Howard’s textual hierarchy of values to be more conservative than those of his stories removed in time and space. In fact, the story’s principal villain, John De Albor, is the villain precisely *because* he is not fully black and is textually identified as an “octoroon”, in other words, one-eighth black. As the citation of Barrett above points out, Howard’s ability to identify with Africans and African-Americans ended at the point of ‘miscegenation’, i.e. the mixing of the races. This, too, is in keeping with the barbarian discourse of the day on both sides of the Atlantic, because racial purity is one of the central values, that was agreed upon, that the barbarian possessed. Despite the fact that the story is full of black antagonists as the hero and heroine find themselves in the midst of a slave uprising, Howard casts de Albor as *the* romance villain of the piece because his mixed race heritage makes him



particularly dangerous to the values that Howard shared with the rest of his culture. The threat that de Albor represents is analagous to the one that concerned the Imperial German officials in Deutsch-Südwestafrika in 1915: the mixing of races implies a de facto natural equality which threatens the colonial control of the white man. This challenge to the position of white Americans in the 1930s becomes a textual issue because this story narratively set in Howard's present suddenly rings alarm bells in the head of the same man who will have Conan slaughter a shipful of whites to free blacks off the far-off fantasy shores of the Hyborian Age just a few months later in *The Hour of the Dragon*.<sup>69</sup>

In "The Grisly Horror" Howard yet again makes use of the mythic romance pattern in which the hero, Bristol McGrath, who is archetypally linked to symbols of light and youth and who represents values held in common with the reader, faces off against the villain, John De Albor, who is archetypally linked to symbols of darkness and age and represents values not shared by the reader.

In the first paragraph of the tale we meet McGrath, and Howard immediately calls forth the symbolism of youth:

Vague ancestral dreads stirred at the back of McGrath's mind; for he was born in the pine woods, and sixteen years of roaming about the world had not erased their shadows. The fearsome tales at which he had shuddered as a child whispered again in his consciousness; tales of black shapes stalking the midnight glades....

Cursing these childish memories, McGrath quickened his pace. (Howard 2008: 75)

Even though McGrath curses his childhood memories, he begins the story and enters its conflict bearing with him this self-same childhood attitude. In fact, the child in him is validated, for the fearsome tales are

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<sup>69</sup> The fact that Conan wanted to use the blacks to further his own ends only mitigates this stark contrast somewhat: I submit that a committed, fanatical racist writer would never entertain such a plot development and would re-direct the plot to avoid such an event. While Price Ellis noted that Howard was "aghast at my prediction of the advancement which Negroes would make" (in Roehm 2012: 4), Barrett has also shown, through a look at Howard's poetry, Howard's positive depictions of Africans and his anti-slavery sentiments (Barrett 2011: 59). Even an hypothetical or story-telling justification for shedding white blood to free blacks would be inconceivable for a white supremacist, whereas it would not be for someone in a, for his time, middle position on the race issue (i.e. a lip-service supporter of Southern-style apartheid but neither an activist for black equality nor a member of the Ku Klux Klan).

proven in the story to be true.

That McGrath represents the values of the reader (or the surmised values of the average *Weird Tales* reader) is intimately bound up with the setting. McGrath recalls:

For a hundred years the Ballvilles had ruled supreme over this back country, first over their wide plantations and hundreds of slaves, and later over the submissive descendants of those slaves. Richard, the last of the Ballvilles, had exercised as much authority over the pinelands as any of his autocratic ancestors. Yet from this country where men had bowed to the Ballvilles for a century, had come that frenzied cry of fear, a telegram that McGrath clenched in his coat pocket. (Howard 2008: 78)

In other words, our hero has come in answer to the call of a Southern white whose authority seems to be threatened to such an extent that he has given voice to a “cry of fear”. In the way this passage is framed, the reader can already suspect that this challenge to white authority comes from the previously “submissive descendants of those slaves”. This Southern *Kultur der Niederlage* issue is apparently obscured, or subsumed, by the traditional romance ‘damsel in distress’ plot device, which the reader recognizes when the reader discovers the contents of the telegram. While McGrath will, as the unfolding plot will demonstrate, in fact be fighting a black revolution in this Southern pinewood backcountry, his primary motivation as a romance protagonist is to win the damsel at the concluding *anagnorisis*. One can argue that a truly racist writer would have found the love interest angle unnecessary to dispatch a hero to quash the black uprising, and yet the text is explicit that McGrath would not have come if not for the prospect of the romance quest of “getting the girl”:

It [*i.e., the message to come*] reached him by telegraph in that Far Western city where McGrath had resided since his return from Africa. He would have ignored it, but for the mention of Constance Brand. (Howard 2008: 79)

McGrath, in his quest to find Constance – “the only woman Bristol McGrath had ever loved” (Howard 2008: 79) – comes across, in true Southern Gothic style, signs of the South’s decline and decay:

He was passing through what had once been fields, in the days of Richard’s grandfather, running almost up to the spacious lawns that girdled the Manor. But for half a century they had been abandoned to the advance of the forest. [...]

The young pines had even invaded the once generous lawns. The whole place wore an aspect of decay. Behind the Manor, the barns and outhouses which once housed slave families were crumbling in ruin. The mansion itself seemed to totter above the litter, a creaky giant, rat-gnawed and rotting, ready to collapse at any untoward event. [...]

He was looking into a great dusty chamber which might have served as a ballroom in antebellum days; its lofty ceiling was hung with cobwebs, its rich oak panels showed dark and stained. (Howard 2008: 80-81)

By presenting the setting this bluntly, and having McGrath observe it without sentimentality, it suggests – particularly when one considers descriptions like “rat-gnawed and rotting” – that McGrath represents “New South” attitudes and values such as those of Woodrow Wilson that Schivelbusch quotes: „»*Weil* ich den Süden liebe, halte ich den Untergang der Konföderation für einen Segen. [...] Durch das Fortbestehen der Sklaverei wäre zweifellos unsere gesamte Wirtschaft ruiniert worden«“ (Schivelbusch 99).

Interestingly, as archetypal romance hero, McGrath’s connection to the symbolism of light comes to him from outside himself. Constance’s last name, Brand, and the repeated references to her “soft white flesh” and blonde hair suggest that she is his guiding light, and it is the metaphoric torch he holds for her – and *only through her* a concern with white dominance – that propels him ever deeper into the *agon* stage of the romance narrative. Howard makes this symbolism of light emanating from Constance and enveloping McGrath unmistakable when he writes:

“*Constance!*” It was a cry of hunger and yearning that burst from his livid lips.

Echoing the cry, the girl started up, staring wildly, her hands at her temples, her lambent hair rippling over her shoulders. To his dizzy gaze she seemed to float in an aureole of golden light.

“Bristol! Bristol McGrath!” she echoed his call with a haunting, incredulous cry. Then she was in his arms, her white arms clutching him in a frantic embrace, as if she feared he was but a phantom that might vanish from her. (Howard 2008: 95-96)

The fact that this symbolism of light, this angelic halo that connotes the

divine affiliation of the traditional romance hero, comes to him from the outside, from the damsel – and that she, as will be noted below, represents white dominance and functions as the symbolic prize thereof – demonstrates that McGrath takes up that mantle of defender of the whites due to his heroic liason with the damsel in distress. De Albor's name, and *its* symbolism of light, marks him not only as a “racial pretender”, but a pretender to the role of romance hero. In fact, Howard allows the implication of De Albor as hero to the oppressed blacks of the Ballville estate to exist sub-textually until the necessity of saving the damsel drives the narrative to an insistence on dde Albor's romance villain associations with darkness.

In terms of the villain, the opening prominence of the ‘damsel in distress’ device that obscures the ‘threat-to-white-dominance-of-the-South’ sub-plot presents an interim villain – the conflict with whom represents the conflict between the Old South and the New South. Both McGrath and Constance enter the tale with Richard Ballville as their opponent. While McGrath comes to doubt this with Ballville's telegraphed “cry of fear”, and knows finally that Ballville is not the main villain when he witnesses the man's death, Constance is only disabused of this notion when McGrath rescues her – for the first time:

“Three years!” the girl was sobbing. “Three years I've waited. I knew you'd come! I knew it! But we must be careful, my darling. Richard will kill you if he finds you – kill us both!”

“He's beyond killing anyone,” answered McGrath. “But just the same, we've got to get out of here.”

Her eyes flared with new terror.

“Yes! John De Albor! Ballville was afraid of him. That's why he locked me in here. [...]” (Howard 2008: 96-97)

At this point, the Arab assisting McGrath, “Ali,” clubs the previously drugged McGrath over the head and reveals himself as John De Albor. Thus does De Albor take the role of main villain – and in the process is characterized as more black than the term “octoroon” suggests:

The man had thrown off his turban and glasses. And in the murky whites of his eyes, McGrath read the truth with its grisly implications – the man was not an Arab. He was a negroid mixed breed. Yet some of his blood must have been Arab, for there was a slightly Semitic cast to his countenance,

and this cast, together with his oriental garb and his perfect acting of his part, had made him seem genuine. But now all this was discarded and the negroid strain was uppermost; even his voice, which had enunciated the sonorous Arabic, was now the throaty gutturals of the Negro. (Howard 2008: 97-98)

Here Howard describes his newly revealed romance antagonist by combining the negatively-valued concept of miscegenation with negative racial stereotypes, creating an antagonist in keeping with the race discourse of his day. Further, he uses the archetypal romance symbolism (derived from European culture) of light and dark to connect De Albor with the symbolism of darkness. Even if Howard continually refers to De Albor as an octoroon, the above description and others in the text insist that he is “black” in both the sense of race and romance villain symbolism. In fact, right at this moment of the revelation of the true romance villain, the damsel in distress device merges with the race issue. To thoroughly identify De Albor as the villain, the symbolism of darkness must be textually stressed, which it is when De Albor unnecessarily volunteers information on his background: “I was born in East Africa and grew up a slave in the house of an Arab – before I ran away and wandered to the land of Zambebewei” (Howard 2008: 99). The implication of his slavery is that De Albor is to be considered black, doubly so as he had taken refuge in the text’s symbolic “Heart of Darkness” and the textual core of the motif of Africa as the land of primal freedom: Zambebewei / Zimbabwe<sup>70</sup>.

The symbolism of age that is associated with the romance villain – and the negative values he represents – are both indicated in this story by the term ‘Zambebewei’. Zambebewei reinforces the symbolism of darkness for it functions as the untapped reservoir, the unconquered homeland, of what makes the African truly African – or, to use the racial shorthand applied to visible minorities, what makes the black man truly black. Howard is drawing on knowledge of the famous ruin complex in Zimbabwe which “was excavated by the British archeologist James Theodore Bent (1852-1897), who advanced the theory that Zimbabwe is the remains of a city of ancient Ophir, the country in which, according to the Bible, King Solomon’s mines were located” (Zimbabwe 454).

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<sup>70</sup> “Zambebewei” is Howard’s appropriation of, and re-writing of, the historical term “Zimbabwe”. Howard’s naming strategies for his fiction often consisted of re-writing mythical and historical terms and this is evident throughout his oeuvre, most famously in his shortening of “Hyperborea” to “Hyboria”.

Although this theory was later rejected, the implications of a centre of advanced technology in ancient Africa leads Howard to use Zimbabwe as a lightning rod empowering the black man and provoking white resistance to this empowerment. When De Albor and McGrath have the following exchange, it reveals how Zimbabwe is the focal point for the motif of Africa as the land of primal freedom in this text:

“They are out of hand – mad with blood lust. But even I, who know black men as none else knows them, I had forgotten that not even a priest of Zambebewei can control them when the fire of worship runs in their veins. I am their priest and master – [...]”

[...] “To get possession of Constance Brand, you made devil-worshippers out of the black people. You deserve death for that. When the European authorities that govern Africa catch a priest of Zambebewei, they hang him. You have admitted that you are a priest. Your life is forfeit on that score, too. [...]”

[...] “But I have a plan – yes, I am a priest of Zambebewei. When I was a boy I ran away from my Arab master and wandered far until I came to the land of Zambebewei. There I grew to manhood and became a priest, dwelling there until the white blood in me drew me out in the world again to learn the ways of the white men. [...]” (Howard 2008: 107-109)

The fact that De Albor is identified as a priest of Zimbabwe / Zambebewei shows that he, despite his mixed-race heritage, represents the black man; further, this intimate identification with the spiritual and existential core of African-ness is considered subversive *by the white authorities ruling Africa*, which reveals the empowering political significance of Zambebewei / Zimbabwe and its incarnation of the Africa as the land of primal freedom motif. In classic Howardian archetypal fashion, the secret of Zambebewei, the ancient secret of what empowers the African, and what empowers the blacks of the pinewood backcountry to revolt, to become “devil worshippers”, is a *Zemba*: a Howardian ape creature, here also styled as ‘the Black God’, recalling the Black God of “Red Shadows”. The appearance of the Zemba also marks the text’s oscillation from the *Phantastik Schreibweise* to the *Neophantastik*. Up until this moment in the text, the reader is not certain that anything supernatural has really occurred – *Unschlüssigkeit* reigns. With the Zemba’s appearance, like that of the ape-like monster in “The Phoenix

on the Sword”, we move into the *Neophantastik*. The fact that Howard, who had crossed this divide and had begun to dispense with the *ausgereiztes Spiel* of the *Phantastik*, returns to it is reflected in the text’s more conservative hierarchy of values and its lesser aesthetic quality – particularly compared to such polished exemplars of the romance like “The Tower of the Elephant” and “Beyond the Black River”.

In the Zemba we see this villainous association with great age and with negative values – in this case an unleashing of the ancient African primal freedom in a terrifying way. This terrifying unleashing manifests in the text as a carnivorous ape-thing, but is clearly a signifier for a meta-textual signified that not even a relatively progressive person like Howard is prepared to consider: black empowerment, a value which is here portrayed as negatively as possible. And yet, as noted, this is one of Howard’s most plodding stories, where he seemingly forces himself through his standard romance pattern to an unconvincing result. This is significant, for, as Fluck argues, it is the aesthetic quality of a text that allows for the transference to the reader of its inherent ideas, or hierarchy of values. This uninspired text, structured around Howard’s use of the motif of Africa as the land of primal freedom in a contemporary setting, hits too close to home, and Howard, mindful of the social repercussions he noted to Price Ellis, goes through the motions. As a result, the invitation to the reader to transfer these attitudes to himself or herself, is weak. In this paradoxical way, through the lesser aesthetic quality of his text, Howard unconsciously reveals his more politically and socially progressive views on African-Americans.

The textual employment of the Africa as the land of primal freedom motif almost requires that the freeing of the slaves motif come into play, at least in Howard’s texts. It is one thing for Solomon Kane to free black slaves from their Arab masters in 17<sup>th</sup> century Africa, or for Conan to free black galley slaves off the Hyborian coast, but it is another thing altogether when these 1930s blacks, who have been freed from their paternal white ruler Ballville, and who have also transcended the control of their partially white priest De Albor, engage in a ritual in which they worship the subversive power at the heart of Zambewei:

From the shadows of the trees came a file of black men and women, young, naked except for a mantle of monkey-skins and parrot-feathers thrown over the shoulders of each. More regalia brought by John De Albor, undoubtedly. They formed a semicircle at a safe distance from the chained brute,

and sank to their knees, bending their heads to the ground before him. Thrice this motion was repeated. Then, rising, they formed two lines, men and women facing one another, and began to dance; at least it might by courtesy be called a dance. They hardly moved their feet at all, but all other parts of their bodies were in constant motion, twisting, rotating, writhing. The measured, rhythmical movements had no connection at all with the voodoo dances McGrath had witnessed. This dance was disquietingly archaic in its suggestion, though even more depraved and bestial – naked primitive passions framed in a cynical debauchery of motion. (Howard 2008: 115-116)

Here Howard moves to the opposite pole of the barbarian discourse as this ‘barbaric’ ritual is meant to be disturbing to the white *Weird Tales* reader through its sexual suggestion, its blasphemous nature and its implied political subversion. When the Zemba comes in answer to this dance, the Howardian romance hero must overcome the overpowering, primal embrace of the naked male ape-thing – the Black God – in order to lay claim to the white damsel in distress.

Barrett’s references to the lynching culture extant in the South at the time of Howard’s text offers a strong suggestion for the psychological associations for this creature: black sexuality. Barrett notes, “The Jim Crow and anti-miscegenation laws were enforced by lynch mobs who burned to death or hanged any blacks who did not respect the color line” (Barrett 2011: 12). Given this culturally widespread fear among the whites of “sexual transgressions” (Barrett 2011: 14) by blacks, and the linkage of this fear to white political dominance of blacks as a whole – which we see played out in Howard’s text – the black ape thing, the winged black men and other ape monsters in Howard’s oeuvre represent Howard’s textual manifestations of this fear. This fear – expressed metaphorically and symbolically in the texts of a man who “grew up in a world dominated by anti-black racism which was at its strongest between the end of the Reconstruction period and First World War” (Barrett 2011: 16) is so deep and so strong that it recurs throughout his work.

This unreasoning fear is derived from, and embedded in, the social contradiction that this text is founded on. This contradiction – the core of a first horizon political unconscious analysis – is the one haunting the South in the 1930s: how can the blacks be freed from slavery and yet be



de facto slaves in the apartheid reality of the contemporary South? This contradiction cannot continue to exist: the tension within it will logically explode the contradiction. The symbolic resolution the text proposes follows the cultural logic that a revolt *will* occur; the text then proposes that a white hero will intervene to prevent the white blood, that such a revolt would require, from being shed – this white blood being symbolized by Constance. Further, and more significantly, the text symbolically – and unconvincingly – resolves the contradiction’s logical black revolt by having the blacks be destroyed by their own empowerment, i.e. by the Zemba ape-thing that symbolizes their subversive political empowerment. This aspect of the plot is informed by the wide-spread belief in the South that blacks were incapable of independence and any attempt at self-rule would descend into chaos and carnage. In this literal enactment of that belief, the first to die is the partially white De Albor who betrayed his white side by siding with the blacks through his becoming becoming a priest of Zambabwe and bringing the Zemba to the South from Africa.

Ravaging, the monster charged among the votaries, clawing and ripping and smiting, screaming intolerably. Zambabwe spoke, and death was in his bellowing. Screaming, howling, fighting, the black people scrambled over one another in their mad flight. Men and women went down under those shearing talons, were dismembered by those gnashing fangs. It was a red drama of the primitive – destruction amuck and ariot, the primordial embodied in fangs and talons, gone mad and plunging in slaughter. Blood and brains deluged the earth, black bodies and limbs and fragments of bodies littered the moonlighted glade in ghastly heaps before the last of the howling wretches found refuge among the trees. The sounds of their blundering, panic-stricken flight drifted back. (Howard 2008: 118-119)

The blacks’ revolt is quashed by their own empowerment; this is the classic racist paternal claim: the white man’s burden is to govern these chaotic black children who would just slaughter each other without the wise guiding hand of the white man.

One of the significant aspects of the race discourse is that it obscures and subsumes the class discourse, producing a distraction that leaves the class hierarchy unquestioned. This was reflected in the Civil War itself, where poor whites fought, essentially, for the rich slave

holders because their race identification overrode their class identification. This dynamic is reflected in the text – the text being read here, in the second horizon of the political unconscious, as an utterance in an antagonistic discourse between the social classes – by the fact that De Albor looms large. The votaries discussed above, as descendants of actual slaves and themselves wage slaves on the Ballville estate, are the lowest class possible. Deprived of their employment on the Ballville estate by their own revolt, they are the lumpenproletariat: ultimately, as their scattering during the tale's climactic death struggle attests, they are no real threat to the class structure. But De Albor, an octoroon, is another story. He is clearly a threat: dynamic, resourceful, intelligent – he has the resources to climb out of his slave heritage and challenge both Ballville and McGrath for the ultimate prize, the ultimate symbol of the Southern white upper classes: the white damsel. Schivelbusch underlines the importance of the white Southern belles in the medievalist, Walter Scott-inspired chivalry cult of the land, when he notes the *anagnorisis* role of Southern women in the tournaments young Southern gentlemen engaged in (Schivelbusch 68). In this story we see Howard expressing his own socio-economic position as a representative of the white petty bourgeoisie. This is a position he has been born into through his father, and a position – including its ultimately bourgeois ambitions – he has fought to maintain with his writing career in the midst of the Great Depression. The partially white De Albor represents a threat to the white middle class, represented in the text by McGrath. It is symbolically significant that Howard, as writer, is willing to sacrifice the upper class, Old South aristocrat Ballville to De Albor. Howard's class sympathies in this more conservative story are unable to take the usual petty bourgeois route toward the proletariat, and so the story valorizes the hero who symbolizes petty bourgeois ambitions and carries its values, McGrath. McGrath, through his elimination of the symbol of black empowerment, the Zemba, by shooting it, is able to ensure that both class threats, the black lumpenproletariat and the upstart mixed race petty bourgeois aspirant, are nullified. By finally wresting Constance, the symbol of the white classes, from both the upper class whites and the mixed race petty bourgeois pretender, McGrath's success as romance hero represents the white petty bourgeoisie in the text's utterance in the antagonistic class discourse, overlaid as it is by the race discourse.

The final horizon of analysis, the text as a window on cultural revolution, has been considered all along. The text's own aesthetic

failings suggest its inauthenticity and the untenability of its symbolic attempts to unconsciously address the situation of the 1930s in the U.S., in the South, and in Texas. The far more aesthetically successful Solomon Kane and Conan stories are more convincing because they parallel the cultural revolution/cultural evolution occurring not only in the South, but worldwide – as gathering colonial independence movements indicate, particularly that of Gandhi; indeed, the *Veränderungspotential* of those texts suggest that they help this cultural evolution along. In the final analysis, even the overtly racist regime in Nazi Germany represents a desperate, and ultimately hopeless, attempt to stem the on-going cultural evolution towards racial equality.

In terms of the economic modes of production that we see through this textual window on 1935, we must remember that the 1930s represent a transitional phase between monopoly capitalism and burgeoning multi-national capitalism. Constance, in fact, functions as a commodity in the story. At the beginning she – reified as a commodity – is controlled by Ballville who has a monopoly on economic activity in the pinewood backcountry. The multinational concept is introduced by Ballville's Arab servant – a bizarre element in the story. Why a backwoods Southern aristocrat with a decaying economic base would have an Arab servant is explicable only by the fact that it allows De Albor, and his attempts to seize the Constance-commodity, to enter the story. Not only does De Albor have connections to East Africa (and thus the ability to impersonate an Arab) and Zambabwe / Zimbabwe, but he plans to bring Constance back to Africa and he has the necessary infrastructure to accomplish this – a motorboat on the river, a way of packing and transporting his valued commodity, and access to a ship to cross the Atlantic. McGrath too comes into the story with international connections, as he has just returned from Africa, including Zambabwe / Zimbabwe. In the end, his enterprise is the one that gains control of the Constance commodity. This strange, unwieldy and rickety setting-structure makes sense when we see it as unconscious mirror of the expanding economic realities of Howard's time. It is precisely these economic realities – and the impetus they will be given by the state-run economies established on all ideological sides by the World Wars – that are at the core of the cultural revolution occurring at the time of the story's publication. In order for multinational capitalism to function, it requires – as it expands across the globe – a level playing field. In other words, capitalism is, in this manner, the progressive force Marx declared

it to be<sup>71</sup>, for ultimately economics are colour-blind and racial prejudices will be swept aside if they interfere with the making of money. As the cultural revolution of economic changes progresses, culture evolves in step with those economic changes. Just as slavery caused social and economic malfunctions – as Woodrow Wilson and the representatives of the New South argued – and was ultimately removed by the dynamic of history in the capitalist mode of production, so, too, will the apartheid of the post-slavery South eventually give way.

### **VIII.3. The Ultimate Victory of Barbarism**

#### VIII.3.1. “Beyond the Black River” (1935)

In the May and June 1935 issues of *Weird Tales* appeared what many consider one of Howard’s finest stories, “Beyond the Black River”. This is a major utterance in the barbarian discourse and it highlights the theme of civilization vs. barbarism by embroiling Conan the Cimmerian in border fighting between an expansionistic civilized Aquilonia and barbarian Pictish tribes. Aquilonia, as noted before, is Howard’s sub-created metaphor for England and France and this story has Conan trying to help Aquilonian settlers, who have moved into Pictish territory, to survive a native uprising.

This story is an allegory of the American frontier and, despite Conan’s ironic position as fighting against the barbarians, the story still features Howard’s championing of barbarism and the purity of the savage. The story’s vivid evocation of the terrors of the frontier between civilization and barbarism had its source in Howard’s nightmares about Indian raids that had their origin in tales told to him as a boy by survivors (Trout 2004: 60-61). Prevailing cultural attitudes about the Native Peoples of the U.S. also play into Howard’s depiction of the Picts, and yet “Beyond the Black River” is also characterized by what Trout calls Howard’s “somewhat-sympathetic view of the Indian” (Trout 2004: 64),

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<sup>71</sup> “The bourgeoisie, historically, has played a most revolutionary part” (Marx and Engels, 37).

which is expressed when Conan criticizes the entire civilizing and colonizing project of the Aquilonians:

This colonization business is mad, anyway. There's plenty of good land east of the Bossonian marches. If the Aquilonians would cut up some of the big estates of their barons, and plant wheat where now only deer are hunted, they wouldn't have to cross the border and take the land of the Picts away from them. (Howard 2008: 193)

Not only does Howard bring the class discourse into the discussion, but the story as a whole leads to a culturally-differentiated portrayal of the stand-ins for the Natives in the story, the Picts. Howard is able to offer this textual hierarchy of values that differs from that of his mainstream society because the *Neophantastik Schreibweise* he employs here, and the Fantasy genre, allow him to fully express his stance in the barbarian discourse without concern for real world consequences.

The swinging of the pendulum between the poles of the barbarian discourse was an aspect of Modernism and can be seen in the works of Eliot, Pound and Picasso, for example. In Pound, specifically, and in his subsequent role within Fascist Italy, we see illustrated again the importance of this discourse for fascism. Howard's correspondence with Lovecraft, an early fascist sympathizer, shows how central the barbarian discourse is to the political discourse of the 1930s, particularly in Howard's letter to Lovecraft on December 5th, 1935 where he discusses the Italian invasion of Abyssinia:

Your friend Mussolini is a striking modern-day example. In that speech of his I heard translated he spoke feelingly of the expansion of civilization. From time to time he has announced: "The sword and civilization go hand in hand!" "Africa must be brought into civilization!" It is not, of course, because of any selfish motive that he has invaded a helpless country, bombing, burning and gassing both combatants and non-combatants by the thousands. Oh, no, according to his own assertions it is all in the interest of art, culture and progress, just as the German war-lords were determined to confer the advantages of Teutonic Kultur on a benighted world, by fire and lead and steel. Civilized nations never, never have any selfish motives for butchering, raping and looting; only horrid barbarians have those. (in Herron 175)

Not only does Howard's letter demonstrate how quickly the pendulum can swing within the barbarian discourse, and how quickly the positions of civilization and barbarism can change, but his championing of Abyssinia (Ethiopia) without reference to skin colour is revealing of Howard's position on race, which is dictated by his position within the barbarian discourse, which puts him at odds with his mainstream Southern and Texan culture – the stress of which results in narrative retrenchments like “The Grisly Horror”. In ostensibly accepting Mussolini's framing of the barbarian discourse – which makes of Italy the representative of civilization, and Abyssinia that of barbarism – Howard's unmistakable sympathy for the Abyssinians descends from his pro-barbarian position and makes the aspect of race (which Mussolini is implicitly including in his assignment of the positions of civilized and barbaric) a neutral quality. This is a striking position in a world where, just a few months earlier, the Nazi regime promulgated the „Gesetz zum Schutze des deutschen Blutes und der deutschen Ehre. Vom 15. 9. 1935“.

The key moment in the story, where the barbarian Conan is the only one capable of saving the civilized Aquilonian settlers in the face of the uprising by the barbarian Picts, functions as the *anagnorisis* of this romance *mythos* tale. The story is replete with references to civilization and barbarism; the experience of the Aquilonian settlers who rely on Conan to save them leads one of them to conclude the story by underlining the story's utterance within the barbarian discourse with one of the most quoted statements ascribed to Howard:

“Barbarism is the natural state of mankind,” the borderer said, still staring somberly at the Cimmerian. “Civilization is unnatural. It is a whim of circumstance. And barbarism must always ultimately triumph.” (Howard 2008: 276)

This statement, despite its unequivocal nature, is nevertheless a source of debate within the nascent community of Howard scholarship. It comes out of a conflicted narrative context where the barbarian romance *mythos* hero, Conan, is fighting *on the side* of the settlers from civilized Aquilonia – a fact which even one character in the story refers to as “queer” (Howard 2008: 193) – and Conan's inner narrative trajectory, determined by the Cimmerian motif woven into the character's design, points to an ultimately tragic outcome for the barbarian: to become “civilized”.

Furthermore, Howard makes a national association between the American and the barbarian implicit when he describes the difference

between Conan, a true barbarian, and the Aquilonian settlers in the Pictish wilderness, who are metaphoric stand-ins for the Americans themselves (and the country they took from the First Nations of North America):

They were wild men, of a sort, yet there was still a wide gulf between them and the Cimmerian. They were sons of civilization, reverted to a semi-barbarism. He was a barbarian of a thousand generations of barbarians. They had acquired stealth and craft, but he had been born to these things. He excelled them even in lithe economy of motion. They were wolves, but he was a tiger. (Howard 2008: 215)

Howard's ascribing of a state of semi-barbarism to his narrative representatives of the American settlers he was descended from is meant as a compliment to his country and an indication that the United States was closer to a state of noble and positive barbarism than other countries – especially Germany, which he singles out in his letter to Lovecraft as the ultimate exemplar of hypocritical and bloody civilization by deliberately employing a German word meant by some within Germany – as Lethen points out – to elevate Germany in the debate over which nations are most civilized, i.e. *Kultur* above 'mere' *Zivilisation*.

The conflicted narrative position of the representative of barbarism in these stories (this one and "The Phoenix on the Sword" particularly), and the geo-political aspects woven into Howard's fantasy sub-creation of the Hyborian Age – particularly the gravitational pull on a positive valuing of the barbarian toward fascism – are unconsciously all registered by Howard and find expression in his only novel about his Conan character, *The Hour of the Dragon*.

## IX. A Prophecy of World War II (1936)

### IX.1. *The Hour of the Dragon* (1934-36)

#### IX.1.1. Personal and Geo-Political “Context” of the Novel

Robert E. Howard composed his only novel-length Conan work in the spring of 1934. He wrote it at the suggestion of a British editor who noted that short story collections were not popular in the U.K. at the time, even though the editor liked the stories Howard had sent him (Wagner 279). The Conan stories had a clear appeal, and one can surmise that all three layers of form were instrumental in creating this appeal. The eternal appeal of the romance *mythos* – which Frye characterized, as we have seen, by noting “no matter how great a change may take place in society, romance will turn up again, as hungry as ever, looking for new hopes and desires to feed on. The perennially child-like quality of romance is marked by its extraordinarily persistent nostalgia, its search for some kind of imaginative golden age in time or space” (Frye 186) – was certainly a factor. The fresh *Neophantastik Schreibweise*, which dispensed with any real world framing or textual doubting about the supernatural events being presented was certainly another factor. The Fantasy genre itself, which had been forming in Anglo-Saxon culture since the medievalist impulses of the Pre-Raphaelites, becomes fully established by these stories, and this, too, was a factor in their popularity. If criticism is any indicator of success, Howard’s Conan stories were singled out for scathing criticism within the pages of *Weird Tales* itself. Robert Bloch, later to gain fame as the author of *Psycho* and other tales of horror and suspense, lambasted Howard’s Conan in a letter to *Weird Tales*, published in the November, 1934 issue. Bloch himself was endeavouring to be published by *Weird Tales* and he complained of a lack of character development both within the individual Conan stories and from one story to the next: “Conan is rapidly becoming a stereotyped hero [...]. I am awfully tired of poor old Conan the Cluck, who for the past fifteen issues has every month slain a new wizard, tackled a new monster, come to a violent and sudden end that was averted (incredibly enough!) in just the nick of time, and won a new girlfriend, each of whose penchant for nudism won her a place of honor, either on the cover or on the inner illustration” (Bloch in McHaney 2002 a: 11).



Bloch's criticism, in fact, is a concise – if negative – acknowledgement of the interrelation of the three layers of form of Howard's Conan stories, and the British editor clearly did not share Bloch's dismissal of them.

The writing of this novel represented an ambitious step for Howard in his career. It was an attempt to diversify his markets and possibly put the pulps behind him in his quest for a “serious” writing career. As such, and as an acknowledgement of the ability of the Conan stories to reach beyond a limited pulp fiction audience – and, in fact, as a foreshadowing of the huge popular culture success these stories would gain in the decades to come – this novel is a key part of Howard's oeuvre and needs to be seen and analyzed within the full scope of its cultural embeddedness.

The concentration of industry that had begun in the mid-nineteenth century continued unabated, leading to, particularly since the end of WW I, “the new economic order in which industrial capitalism became state capitalism” (Weber 870). The economic crisis of the Great Depression aided this process, for government intervention would be necessary to fix an American economy that, in 1928, had produced 2/5 of the world's goods (Weber 872), yet in 1932 was producing only half the American industrial output of 1929 (Weber 872). Prices for major products were falling, and in 1933 an important crop like cotton was selling for 34% of its 1930 price (Weber 873). U.S. unemployment hit 13 000 000 in March of 1932, and in 1931 the Harriman Committee had initiated state intervention to buoy the economy with deflationary measures (Weber 874). The powerful financial position the U.S. had achieved during World War I, through which all the European nations had become the U.S.'s debtors, was being eroded as all those nations, save Finland, defaulted in the early 1930s; the U.S. tried to stem this hemorrhage with the Johnson Act in 1934, with provisions aimed at those defaulting nations. Further, Congress adopted measures designed to assure U.S. neutrality in international conflicts and, beginning in 1934, further measures prohibiting credits, loans and exports of arms to belligerents were enacted (Weber 976). This was Howard's domestic context; Texas was, of course, affected by all these currents, but its position was somewhat mitigated due to the strong oil industry.

Internationally, Hitler had been in power a little over a year. Germany had officially been a one-party state since July of 1933 (Weber 926) and Hitler effectively had no more internal opposition (Weber 928). Under Nazi rule, Germany was adopting Keynesian economic measures

whereby state agencies negotiated bilateral agreements with other nations. This would, for example, see the percentage of imported goods in Bulgaria rise from being 22% German-produced in 1934 to 58% German-produced by 1938 and, conversely, see a Bulgaria that exported 30% of its goods to Germany in 1934 become a Bulgaria that exported 63% of its goods to Germany by 1938 (Weber 875). Elsewhere, the U.S.S.R. had become the world's third largest industrial producer in 1932 (Weber 917) and had already altered its second 5-Year Plan, eschewing the promised consumer goods to prepare for the threat of a German invasion (Weber 918). This threat had become evident through the violent anti-communism of the Nazis and had become imminent when the Nazi government signed a German-Polish non-aggression treaty in 1934, which ended the relationship between Germany and the U.S.S.R. established by the Treaty of Rapallo in 1922. These developments prompted the U.S.S.R. to join the League of Nations and to open formal relations with the U.S. in 1934.

While these events were taking place on the macro-level, the U.K. publisher that had proposed Howard write a Conan novel went bankrupt, so Howard turned back to *Weird Tales* to publish the novel, which it did, serializing it from October of 1935 to April of 1936. In the intervening year and a half, industrial concentration continued around the world, with 18 companies in the U.K. being responsible for 2/3 of iron and steel production, 1% of Italian companies possessing half that nation's industrial capital, 14 trusts in Japan controlling 2/3 of investment capital and holding 3/4 of all bank deposits, and, in Germany, 200 companies controlling 2/3 of investment capital (Weber 875-876). The Night of the Long Knives happened in Germany and laws against the Jews were passed. British public opinion prevented a possible British-Italian alliance due to Italian aggression in Abyssinia, and this effectively drove Mussolini "into Hitler's arms" (Weber 894). The U.S.S.R., meanwhile, had concluded mutual assistance pacts with France and Czechoslovakia (919).

As a political unconscious analysis of *The Hour of the Dragon* will point out, these large-scale economic and geo-political developments are the expression of the varied discourses of the mid-1930s that establish what Foucault would call the episteme of this international context, and which has an integral role in Howard's work; the extent to which such things are percolating in Howard's unconscious guide his choices on the mythic, *Schreibweise* and generic levels. Some of these choices are very

conscious, some less so. For example, Howard makes a very conscious choice to write in the modern genre of fantasy. *The Hour of the Dragon's* third level of form is fantasy as defined by Tolkien for it adheres to the two basic structural elements cited by Tolkien.

### IX.1.2. The Novel's Fantasy Genre Elements

The supernatural, as is required in fantasy, is an essential part of the Hyborian Age world of *The Hour of the Dragon*. Magic, as specified by Tolkien, is accepted as part of the setting by all the characters in the story. Magic is not, as in the *Phantastik*, an irreal irruption into an ordinary, non-magical reality, but is a very real part of the setting. The Nemedian priest Orastes, for example, uses magic to wake the ancient Acheronian sorcerer Xaltotun from the dead. Other supernatural elements, such as gods, are treated as textually immanent even if they do not appear directly: they are acknowledged as the sources of the magical abilities of the Priests of Asura, of Orastes and of Xaltotun himself. Further, vampires and other monsters are real inhabitants of this textual world.

This textual presence of the supernatural as real is part of fantasy's second structural element, sub-creation, and *The Hour of the Dragon* adheres to this structural principle as well. As Tolkien notes in defining this term, the fantasy author is acting like a "Creator" in the sense that s/he creates a world for her/his characters to move in and for their plot to unfold in, a setting which is explicitly not the mundane world of the readers, or any known historical era.<sup>72</sup> This sub-creation must function like the real Creation in that it must be internally consistent (i.e. the author cannot arbitrarily allow things to occur that contradict other elements of the sub-creation) and the supernatural must be part of this internal consistency. *The Hour of the Dragon* takes place, like the other Conan stories Howard wrote, in the Hyborian Age, a fictional time that Howard situates between Ice Ages in a remote era, adapting similar ideas

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<sup>72</sup> It has been pointed out by Tompkins (Tompkins 1999: 17) that the most successful fantasy works are characterized by sub-creations reminiscent of/ drawing their energy from – so to speak – aspects of the real world. This drawing may be conscious or unconscious, but it must not be obtrusive to the internal consistency of the sub-creation as THE reality for the characters of the story. It is precisely in the metaphoric and analogical implications of the sub-creation and the events that play out there in the novel that the political unconscious of *The Hour of the Dragon* is revealed.

from the Theosophists (Shanks 2010 b: 1). The Hyborian Age has its own history, with the movement of tribes of different races eventually coming to found the kingdoms of Conan's present. Most significant of these for the story are Aquilonia, the kingdom Conan rules; Nemedra, the kingdom of Conan's enemies; Zingara; Argos; and Stygia. In all these kingdoms there are priests and shamans who worship gods who are generally accepted as real aspects of the sub-creation, and who either appear directly in the Conan stories, or are represented by semi-divine figures or monsters (as in "The Phoenix on the Sword"). Further, both within these religions and outside them, it is accepted that magic exists and that spells are often cast which directly affect events in the villages, cities, waterways and countryside of the kingdoms of the Hyborian Age. In the novel, Orastes, renegade priest of Mitra, not only casts the spell that raises Xaltotun, but assists Xaltotun in further magical rituals in the hills of Nemedra. The Priests of Asura, especially Hadrathus, cast a spell that causes a fog to descend on Valerius' army in the hills of Gunderland which thus counters Xaltotun's rain-making spell. The Aquilonian witch, Zelata, casts a spell which creates a green mist through which Conan can glimpse scenes of the future.

### IX.1.3. The Novel as Romance

The story's first level of form is the romance *mythos*. As a writer of pulp fiction – arguably itself a genre defined by the economic realities of popular fiction of the 1920s, 30s and 40s – Howard studied, and came to master, the narrative structure of romance. This is the dominant narrative mythic paradigm in the United States, as we have seen, and this is the archetypal mythic structure that Howard employs to tell the story of *The Hour of the Dragon*.

#### IX.1.3.1. Establishing the Romance Antagonists

Howard strikes the notes of romance right away as he presents a group of conspirators, one of whom helps establish for the reader the important aspect of romance in which it is the romance protagonist who represents the values of the reader and the antagonist who represents values antithetical to those of the average reader. The Aquilonian member of the conspiracy, Valerius, strives to unseat Conan as king by joining in this plot spun by the traditional enemies of Aquilonia, the

Nemedians. Valerius states that he is willing to “...sell one’s soul for a throne” (Howard 1977b: 20). Such an immoral, materialistic and anti-spiritual outlook – in the dialectic of opposition that is a central characteristic of the romance – is thus posited as the antithesis of values held by the reader and which will be championed by the romance protagonist when he arrives on the scene. Just in case the reader may have missed this, the narrator describes the antagonists as “men whose courage was as profound as their lawless ambitions and capacity for evil” (Howard 1977b: 22).

Howard uses several literary devices to prepare for the central romance antagonist’s arrival (or revival, in this case): the symbol of a scarlet dragon (Howard 1977b: 17), and the foreshadowing implied by a dog’s mournful howl (Howard 1977b: 18, 29). The ancient wizard, Xaltotun of Acheron, is brought back to life after 3000 years and he fulfills the symbolic criteria of the romance villain: age, sterility, darkness, sickness and negative values.

Howard also introduces the quest element that is central to romance as a whole, and a phase three romance in particular, in the classic trope of the fabulous gem that must be possessed: the Heart of Ahriman (Howard 1977b: 24). It is described immediately as being the only means possible of countering the wizardry of Xaltotun (Howard 1977b: 24) and its suitability as a quest object is heightened by the fact that it had been kept under a temple of Mitra in the Aquilonian capital of Tarantia. In Howard’s sub-creation, the god Mitra (derived, as noted, by Howard from the historical Mithras, whose cult in the real world was a forerunner to, and was absorbed by, Christianity) is analogous to the Christian god, and followers of Mitra in the Conan stories are often given attributes and reactions reminiscent of Christians. That the Heart of Ahriman – this jewel that can bring the dead back to life and can overcome evil – has been in the safe-keeping of this sub-creation’s Christians in the capital of this sub-creation’s nation that represents the Western/Allied nations of the real world is highly symbolic, as is the fact that it is an ex-priest of Mitra, Orastes, who betrays his religion and steals the gem in order to bring the central romance antagonist back to life.

Howard also ties the barbarian discourse to his romance antagonists, again revealing the pro-barbarian values that the romance protagonist embodies. Xaltotun, the representative of an ancient and evil civilization, says of the Heart of Ahriman once he has been brought back to life 3000 years after his death, “At last it was stolen, and in the hands

of a feathered shaman of the barbarians it defeated all my mighty sorcery” (Howard 1977b: 24). Orastes, the renegade priest of Mitra, repeats the Hyborian Age sub-creation origin by stating, “The barbarians who overthrew Acheron set up new kingdoms [...]. Where the empire had once stretched now rose realms called Aquilonia, and Nemediā, and Argos, from the tribes that founded them” (Howard 1977b: 25). The opposition to, and betrayal of, barbarians – through their descendants – is part of this romance antagonist’s profile, thus setting the pro-barbarian value quite high in the internal hierarchy of values that Howard’s novel presents. We see this when Orastes continues his history lesson, “the tide of my barbarian ancestors rolled over them and wiped them out. They – my ancestors – had suffered much under the kings of Acheron”, and in Xaltotun’s response to it: “Aye! Many a barbarian, both man and woman died screaming on the altar under this hand. I have seen their heads piled to make a pyramid in the great square in Python when the kings returned from the west with their spoils and naked captives” (Howard 1977b: 26). Orastes making common cause with Xaltotun is thus a betrayal of Orastes’ barbarian heritage and puts him on the corrupt civilization side of the barbarian discourse that this text represents.

These conspirators identify themselves as romance antagonists in the story’s first chapter with their plans of regicide and two political coups – Valerius to kill and replace Conan as King of Aquilonia, and Tarascus to kill and replace Nemedides as King of Nemediā – and then Howard introduces the romance protagonist, Conan. Orastes, through his magic, shows Xaltotun who Conan is. Conan is described as “a Cimmerian, one of those wild tribesmen who dwell in the gray hills of the north. [...] He is a true son of that savage race, and has proved himself, thus far, unconquerable” (Howard 1977b: 29).

### IX.1.3.2. Establishing the Romance Protagonist

While the narrative makes clear that Conan is not young – he is in his mid-40s – and thus does not seem, at first glance, to fulfill the important youth criteria of the romance hero, this description specifically calls Conan a “son” of Cimmeria and, set against the 3000 year-old antagonist, Conan does, in fact, fulfill the role of youth. This description is connected to the larger story of Howard’s sub-creation in which entire peoples and grand sweeps of history are presented in terms of a youth vs.

age antagonism, in which the “young” kingdoms of Aquilonia and Nemediā, descended as they are from vital barbarian tribes, are contrasted with older, more settled kingdoms like Ophir, Corinthia and Koth, and are set in opposition to the ancient and evil civilization of Acheron. As noted earlier, Howard has adapted Theosophist versions of pre-history current in his time for his sub-creation and has used the name of a river in Hell that Dante features in his *Inferno* to make romance’s good vs. evil dialectic – the previously mentioned white and black chesspiece set-up – clear. That Conan is described as a son of these historically young kingdoms allows him, even as a 44 year-old, to adopt the mantle of youth. The fact that Orastes describes him as “unconquerable” makes it clear that he is our hero.

### IX.1.3.3. The *agon* Stage

With the romance *mythos*’ character constellation set, Howard plunges into the *agon* stage of the romance. Xaltotun demonstrates his associations with sickness and death by unleashing a plague in the Nemedian capital of Belverus, which does away with the king of Nemediā and his heirs and allows the conspirator Tarascus to take the throne (Howard 1977b: 30). This immediately sets up the next phase of the *agon* stage as the full plan of the conspiracy proceeds:

Such a wave of enthusiasm and rejoicing as swept the land is frequently the signal for a war of conquest. So no one was surprised when it was announced that King Tarascus had declared the truce made by the late king with their western neighbors void, and was gathering his hosts to invade Aquilonia. His reason was candid; his motives, loudly proclaimed, gilded his actions with something of the glamor of a crusade. He espoused the cause of Valerius, “rightful heir to the throne”; he came, he proclaimed, not as an enemy of Aquilonia, but as a friend, to free the people from the tyranny of a usurper and a foreigner. (Howard 1977b: 31)

This sets up the Battle of Valkia where the medieval hosts of Nemediā, with their knights “in shining armor with their pennons streaming above their helmets” (Howard 1977b: 31), fight those of Aquilonia. The reader will expect the romance protagonist to prevail, yet the story has just begun and the romance’s conventions demand a long and difficult *agon* stage, with many reversals, before the climactic *pathos* scene. Howard

provides some setting sun symbolism (Howard 1977b: 32), and the romance antagonist Xaltotun uses his sorcery to paralyze Conan just before the battle. Deprived of the romance hero's leadership, the reader suspects that the Aquilonians will fall even when an Aquilonian disguises himself as Conan and leads the Aquilonians into battle. Again, Xaltotun's magic tips the scales onto the side of evil as the cliffs at Valkia collapse onto a great portion of the Aquilonian army. Conan's apparent death at this moment leads to a complete rout of the Aquilonians. The obstacles of the *agon* stage seem insurmountable at this point, as the helpless real Conan is taken prisoner.

The standard romance outcome of the *pathos* stage – where the protagonist overcomes the antagonist – is foreshadowed by Howard when Xaltotun chooses not to kill Conan and arrogantly states in the process “even a dog has uses” (Howard 1977b: 50), and again when he states,

I wanted you alive and unhurt. You may fit into my scheme of things. There is a vital power about you greater than the craft and cunning of my allies. You are a bad enemy, but might make a fine vassal. (Howard 1977b: 57)

This first face to face meeting between protagonist and antagonist allows the reader to again see the contrasting values that these figures represent. Xaltotun of ancient, civilized Acheron represents slavery and dishonour and Conan the barbarian represents principle and freedom when he rejects Xaltotun's offer of alliance (Howard 1977b: 56). Even Xaltotun is moved to remark “Hypnotic suggestions would not have invaded your mind, even in the madness of battle, to make you mad, and rush blindly into the trap laid for you, as it did the lesser man who masqueraded as you” (Howard 1977b: 57).

The *agon* for the protagonist continues as Conan is imprisoned in the dungeons. Even in chains, he proves his heroism by attacking one of the jailers (Howard 1977b: 63), and the positive, barbaric values he represents are emphasized during these scenes of torture and terror: “The Cimmerian did not curse, scream, weep or rave as a civilized man might have done” (Howard 1977b: 65).

At this point we are introduced to the romance character Frye calls the “white queen”, the slave girl Zenobia. Conan's first sight of Zenobia is filled with the symbolism of light that one connects with the romance hero and it also underlines the beauty traditionally associated with the romance *mythos'* damsel in distress:



The dim glow behind her outlined her supple figure through the wisp of silk twisted about her loins, and shone vaguely on jeweled breast-plates. Her dark eyes gleamed in the shadows, her white limbs glistened softly, like alabaster. Her hair was a mass of dark foam, at the burnished luster of which the dim light only hinted. [...] Tears sparkled like jewels on her long dark lashes. (Howard 1977b: 66, 67)

Her connection to the romance hero is foreshadowed not only through the light symbolism, but because she also represents positive values, as she swears by Mitra (i.e. has Christian values) and demonstrates love. That she represents a bride figure is apparent by her words during the scene, and this will be borne out by the story's *anagnorisis*. She assists Conan in escaping the dungeon for she has discovered that Tarascus disagrees with Xaltotun's sparing of Conan and plans to have a monstrous ape kill Conan while the latter is shackled in the dungeon.

This scene represents the romance protagonist escaping the lowest point in his *agon* stage, and the readers are further encouraged in his rising fortunes as the rift between the conspirators widens and Tarascus – believing it to be the source of Xaltotun's power – has the Heart of Ahriman stolen and dispatches an emissary to cast it into the ocean. A moment later an escaped Conan appears in Tarascus' chamber and attempts to kill the Nemedian king, but the *agon* stage is far from over, so Conan stumbles, fails to kill Tarascus, and flees.

Conan heads for Aquilonia but he is followed by two magically-controlled ravens,<sup>73</sup> which allows the romance tradition of bringing the romance hero in contact with the spirits of nature to occur. He saves the witch Zelata, who then is re-united with her wolf and she has her eagle slay the pursuing ravens. Zelata and her group of animals represent the child of nature figure in romance (Frye 196-197). Zelata herself strengthens her identification with this role when she says, "The children of the wild are kinder than the children of men.' Her hand briefly stroked the ruff of the sleeping wolf. 'My children were afar from me today, or I had not needed your sword, my king'" (Howard 1977b: 98). It is she, through her communion with the wild, who acts as an oracle for Conan even as the Nemedians are occupying the capital of Aquilonia. It is through her that Conan's quest is articulated and the identification of

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<sup>73</sup> Contrast this symbolism with the article Plaßmann writes under the pseudonym of Hugin and Munin.

the novel with a third phase romance is reaffirmed: Zelata tells him that he must search for the (metaphorical) Heart of his kingdom. Zelata does not know of the Heart of Ahriman, but in her wild child role that is associated with moral neutrality and a sense of cosmic natural order and balance, she both reaffirms and expands the romance quest. The reader, and later Conan, concludes that it is that gem that her prophecy has identified. While the symbolic connection of the jewel hidden beneath the temple of Mitra in Tarantia is significant here (i.e. that the sub-creation's cipher for Christianity assures the safety of Conan's nation and, when the full scope of Xaltotun's plan to restore ancient Acheron is revealed, the whole Hyborian Age), the *anagnorisis* suggests that Zelata's prophecy indicates that it is the white queen, Zenobia, who is ultimately the heart of Conan's kingdom.

The *agon* continues and Conan reaches the capital of Aquilonia, Tarantia. Here he again demonstrates his romance protagonist qualities by rejecting the suggestion of a loyal noble, with whom he takes refuge, to go into exile. Instead, he rescues a loyal and young and beautiful noblewoman from the executioner before escaping from Nemedian occupying forces. Conan requires the assistance of other loyal followers to make good the escape attempt and is aided by worshippers of the god Asura. This cult, we discover, is perceived as an enemy to Mitra, but they describe their worship as one "whose cult it is to seek below the aspect of illusion" (Howard 1977b: 131), which suggests Howard is making a reference to Gnosticism. It is the Asura priest Hadrathus, who represents the white king in Frye's scheme of romance, who then enables Conan's escape from Tarantia.

The *agon* stage continues and Conan reaches Poitain, a loyal province unwilling to accept neither Valerius as king of Aquilonia nor the Nemedian hegemony. Conan rejects his Poitainian lieutenant's suggestion to abandon Aquilonia and found a new empire, saying,

Let others dream imperial dreams. I but wish to hold what is mine. I have no desire to rule an empire welded together by blood and fire. It's one thing to seize a throne with the aid of its subjects and rule them with their consent. It's another to subjugate a foreign realm and rule it by fear. I don't wish to be another Valerius. No, Trocero, I'll rule all Aquilonia and no more, or I'll rule nothing. (Howard 1977b: 151)

In order to maintain the quest aspect of the romance and the narrative focus on the romance protagonist, Howard has Conan reject Trocero's

suggestion that it be made public that he did not die at Valkia. Instead, he pursues the Heart of Ahriman as a solo adventurer.

The *agon* continues with a series of reversals where the Heart changes hands – violently – several times to ultimately be stolen by a Stygian priest of Set in the port city of Messantia. Meanwhile, the *agon* is further deepened as Valerius, plotting on his own account, sends four mysterious Khitans<sup>74</sup> to kill Conan.

Conan is able to pursue the ship that the priest of Set is sailing on, back to Stygia by freeing the black slaves manning an Argossian merchant ship. Conan and the slaves kill all the white crew members and take up the pursuit (Howard 1977b 193-196). The freeing of the slaves motif is not necessarily a by-product of the barbarian discourse but is logically associated with it in Howard's Southern case. In order to champion the barbarian, he must – especially as he is a descendent of slave owners himself – take into account those often labelled as barbarians in his own midst. This scene is arguably the most powerful example of the freeing of the slaves motif in Howard's work – even more powerful than examples of it in the Solomon Kane stories – for Conan slaughters an entire crew of white Argossians to free the ship's black slaves. This is a striking example in Howard's work of the intertwining of the barbarian discourse, the race discourse, the freeing of the slaves motif, and the Africa as the land of primal freedom motif.

Once in the Stygian port city of Khemi, Conan enters a pyramid in search of the Heart. Here he encounters a character taking on the role of Frye's black queen. This is Akivasha, a legendary beauty of ancient times who exudes a sexual menace analogous to that described by Frye, and who suggests a Jungian archetypal connection to Theweleit's work on male psychology of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Frye argues that the black queen “is appropriately called by Jung the ‘terrible mother,’ and he associates her with the fear of incest and with such hags as Medusa who seem to have a suggestion of erotic perversion about them” (Frye 196). Conan realizes – after a tell-tale moment when Akivasha's eyes glow in the dark (Howard 1977b: 216) – that she is a vampire, which prompts the following narrative comment:

The legend of Akivasha was so old, and among the evil tales told of her ran a thread of beauty and idealism, of everlasting youth. To so many dreamers and poets and lovers she was

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<sup>74</sup> The Asians of Howard's sub-creation.

not alone the evil princess of Stygian legend, but the symbol of eternal youth and beauty, shining forever in some far realm of the gods. And this was the hideous reality. This foul perversion was the truth of that everlasting life. Through his physical revulsion ran the sense of a shattered dream of man's idolatry, its glittering gold proved slime and cosmic filth. A wave of futility swept over him, a dim fear of the falseness of all men's dreams and idolatries. (Howard 1977b: 221)

He escapes her, and the *agon* turns to Conan's advantage as the Khitans arrive in the pyramid and attack Thutothmes, the priest of Set who has the Heart in his possession and who plans to use it to return the mummies of ancient Stygians to life. In another moment that again suggests the romance hero's affinity with, and defence of, that sense of natural and cosmic balance that the tragic hero, in contrast, transgresses, one of the partially revived mummies simply hands Conan the Heart, saying, "I was Thothmekri; I am dead" (Howard 1977b: 229). The *Neophantastik* juxtaposition of the verb tenses here underlines the imbalance that *must* be righted, in this case, by surrendering the coveted jewel to the romance protagonist.

The *pathos* stage is prepared through the foreshadowing of the romance protagonist's ultimate victory when the reader discovers Valerius's plan to ruin all his co-conspirators (Howard 1977b: 233). While Aquilonia begins to rise up on the strength of rumours that Conan still lives (Howard 1977b: 235), Orastes reveals the full extent of Xaltotun's plot (Howard 1977b: 237) and is promptly killed by Xaltotun (Howard 1977b: 239). At this point, Xaltotun is undeniably the black king of the chesspieces, and has asserted his role as the central romance villain (Howard 1977b: 242).

#### IX.1.3.4. The *pathos* Stage

The *pathos*, in dramatic romance fashion, is a decisive battle in the appropriately named Valley of the Lion. The reader – and Xaltotun's co-conspirators – sense the romance antagonist's approaching romance *mythos* fate as a storm that Xaltotun summons to prevent Conan's host from crossing the Shikri River and joining with his Gunderland allies fails. The next stage of the *pathos* – and a further foreshadowing that the protagonist will prevail – comes when Valerius and five thousand men are led into a trap and destroyed by a rag-tag host of Aquilonians that

Valerius had oppressed and driven to economic ruin<sup>75</sup>. Howard here demonstrates more faith in the lumpenproletariat than Marx, who argues that they will always be bought or otherwise co-opted by the ruling class. The battle proper is then joined and Howard makes a point of noting that “The Nemedians fought as gallantly as their traditions of high courage demanded” (Howard 1977b: 264) but “Slowly, stubbornly, sullenly, the grim knights fell back, counting their empty saddles” (Howard 1977b: 264).

It is the white king, Hadrathus the Asura priest, and Zelata, the child of nature figure, who confront the romance antagonist directly while Conan leads the Aquilonian army against Tarascus’ Nemedian/Aquilonian army. Xaltotun is felled by a blinding bolt of blue light (Howard 1977b: 268) after Hadrathus reveals that he has the Heart and has been using it against Xaltotun. The uncertainty as to the provenance of the light is not overshadowed by Conan’s rout of the Nemedians: “the Nemedians gave way as a barrier bursts under the surging impact of a tidal wave” (Howard 1977b: 271).

One could argue that Conan’s subsequent defeat of Tarascus in single combat (Howard 1977b: 272) forms the transition between *pathos* and *anagnorisis* with Howard eschewing the optional *sparagmos* phase. His motives for excluding a *sparagmos* similar to the one he used in “Red Shadows” may be to underline the completely optimistic nature of this story, or perhaps to present his potential British audience with an unambiguous romance.

#### IX.1.3.5. The *anagnorisis* Stage

At any rate, the *anagnorisis* begins with Conan offering Tarascus quarter, for in this offer we recognize his heroic qualities: “Life for you and all your men who throw down their arms” (Howard 1977b: 272). Conan’s recognition as romance hero is strengthened by his ability to dictate terms to Tarascus (Howard 1977b: 273), a dictation strongly reminiscent of the *Versailler Diktat*. Further, Howard’s uncharacteristic breaking of the illusion of his sub-creation to state, “He loomed gigantically against a background of blood and slaughter, like some grim pagan hero of mythology” (Howard 1977b: 274), reinforces Conan as hero. More traditionally, we see the *anagnorisis* fulfilled in Conan’s

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<sup>75</sup> He literally turned them into the lumpenproletariat.

announced triumphal procession to Tarantia and inevitable hailing as hero. Finally, and most importantly, Conan claims the Heart of his kingdom by demanding Zenobia be released from slavery<sup>76</sup> in Nemediā to become his queen: “I will come to Belverus for her as I promised. She was a slave in Nemediā, but I will make her queen of Aquilonia!” (Howard 1977b: 275)

#### IX.1.4. The Map of the Hyborian Age as Key to a Political Unconscious Analysis

To begin the analysis of this romance *mythos* tale, it needs to be noted that, in terms of the second layer of form, the tradition of the *Phantastik* gives Howard the historical impetus to textually explore and, indeed, to highlight the “irreal”, while the completed movement to the *Neophantastik* that this text demonstrates allows him to textually divorce himself from mundane reality entirely (with the exception of the one violation of his Hyborian Age sub-creation noted above). The third layer of form, the Fantasy genre, provides the structures of sub-creation and the supernatural to help situate, shape and organize Howard’s narrative. His underlying romance structure is a conscious choice and a major aspect of craft as a professional pulp writer. The political unconscious aspect of this mythic choice on Howard’s part arises from a consideration of what story, what metaphors, what symbols and what analogies are coded into the romance structure of *The Hour of the Dragon*. The key to this political unconscious significance is the map of the Hyborian Age. Not only is a map of the Hyborian continent the first thing we are shown Conan working on in the first story written and published about him, “The Phoenix on the Sword”, but in this novel the first thing the conspirators do upon bringing the romance antagonist back to life is to give him a history lesson of the sub-creation (Howard 1977b: 25) and show him the map of the Hyborian Age (Howard 1977b: 26).

As we have seen, Howard based the map of his sub-created Hyborian Age on that of Europe, and many paperback editions of the Conan stories show the Hyborian Age map superimposed over a map of the contours of Europe. Henderson and Louinet have shown through their research to what extent, and with what forethought, Howard based

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<sup>76</sup> Again, the freeing of the slaves motif.

his map on Europe, with Africa and Asia representing the furthestmost limits of the adventures of Conan, both regions fading away into terra incognita on the map. Howard does not, however, break the rule of fantasy's sub-creation being textually divorced from the real world, for none of the characters or events depicted in the Conan stories ever show an awareness of, or reference to, the actual Europe, unlike stories like *Alice in Wonderland* or *Waterbabies*, where the real world is textually present. While it is true that all textual worlds are NOT the real world (as Gymnich noted of possible worlds theory), the real world referred to, for example, in *Alice in Wonderland* and *Waterbabies*, (stories that Tolkien would exclude from the fantasy canon because they violate the structural principle of the sub-creation) is intended to reference the real world of the reader. This said, what gives the Hyborian Age its power and appeal is that its setting is nourished by, or drawn from, the real world as Tompkins and Leiber argue good fantasy must be (Tompkins 18), and – as Orastes' history lesson for Xaltotun within the text suggests – the Hyborian Age is an analogy for, or metaphor of, the Europe of Howard's time.

Most importantly for this metaphor or analogy is – as noted above – the significance of the two central nations of the Hyborian Age, Aquilonia and Nemedias. Aquilonia geographically takes in parts, or all, of the following regions of Europe: France, England, Ireland, Belgium, and (through Poitain), the Basque region of Spain. Nemedias is essentially the Germany of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, with bits of Holland, Alsace, Poland, Austria, Switzerland, Bohemia and Northern Italy. The capital of Nemedias is named Belverus (which exhibits four of the six letters in 'Berlin'), and the only other city in Nemedias that Howard names is Numalia, which has some similarity with Nuremberg. The name Aquilonia is derived from the French region of Aquitaine, ownership of which was contested by England ("Aquitania" 179), and, in naming Nemedias, Howard shows his interest in his Celtic heritage, for the Nemedians figure in the myths of the earliest days of Ireland. They are accepted as being a people that occupied the island ("Ireland" 410), but "These men that come from the east / With their spears that achieve valour" (Matthews 94) have an ambivalent role in Irish ancestral legacy despite the fact that their druid and historian, Mide, gave his name to the county of Meath. The shape-changing immortal Tuan mac Carill, who relates the history of Ireland as he experienced it in various forms to St. Finnian of Moville (Matthews 93), gives the Nemedians a villainous

disposition when he states of “the children of Nemed”: “They [*exist*] at the will of the demon of God” (Matthews 97). The opposition of Aquilonia and Nemed is a central element in Howard’s Hyborian Age sub-creation, and in giving Nemed, the eastern neighbour of the nation metaphorically representing the core Western European Allies of World War I, the name of the villains of early Irish myth, he is upholding, consciously or unconsciously, the *Feindbild* of Germany built up in the Western consciousness by the propaganda the Allies issued during World War I (Dauerausstellung). As Schivelbusch notes, Southerners in the U.S. were particularly attracted to the adoption of this *Feindbild*<sup>77</sup> as it released them from the role of the pariahs of Western civilization. The character of Conan himself figures forth this process (as carrier of the reader’s values) in a stage of the novel dominated by the freeing of the slaves motif (Howard 1977b: 195).

#### IX. 1.4.1. First Horizon Analysis

The text as symbolic resolution of social contradictions is made graphically apparent by this metaphoric map; Howard gives an impression of the social contradictions he perceived when he wrote to his correspondent and fellow *Weird Tales* author H.P. Lovecraft in December of 1934.

As for war, [...] that will come when international capital is ready. I do not believe, and have never believed, that Mussolini, Hitler and the other European strong-arm, he-man dictators are anything but figure-heads and tools for international capitalism. The same crowd that recently approached Smedley Butler with a proposition to overthrow the government and set up a Fascist dictatorship; the same gang that would have made Hoover dictator if they had dared. The same gang that is now opposing everything Roosevelt tries to accomplish. (Howard in Burke 24).

Not only does this show that Howard was thinking about events in Germany and Italy and nationally, it shows that he thought about these political matters as he was composing *The Hour of the Dragon*.

Howard’s perception of a contradiction between the “big picture” political events of the early 1930s as they are presented to the

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<sup>77</sup> For example, Nemedian is referred to as the “hated accent” (Howard 1977b: 127), and of no other Hyborian language does the narrator of the Conan stories say this.



general public and the economic machinations behind them is suggested by the facts. After the Ruhr occupation and the resulting general strike that nearly caused the collapse of the German economy, it was loans and investments from the West, largely from the U.S. and U.K. (Weber 888), that revived the German economy. Mussolini in Italy, as Howard perceived, pursued conventional politics under the guise of radical-seeming gestures (Weber 883, Klenner 86), and the trend of Western democracies to accept dictatorships in Europe as long as they “respected property” (Weber 890) allowed Hitler to come to power.

What such conscious perceptions – which come out of Howard’s reality as a Democrat and supporter of Roosevelt (Burke 24) – lead to, in a political unconscious analysis, is Howard taking up the role of political prophet, for *The Hour of the Dragon* is eerily prophetic given the metaphoric map of Europe that it is based on, and on which its events play out. Further, just as the romance hero carries the values of the reader, and given Howard’s political opinions in his letters, the romance protagonist Conan the Cimmerian acts as the carrier for Howard’s textual hierarchy of values.

The way the political prophecy unfolds in its textual metaphoric form begins with the Nemedian conspirators who – similarly to the ‘gang’ that Howard mentions – take over political power in Nemedia to further their own ambitions. With the Nemedias-as-Germany metaphor as an indicator, this seems a reference to the Nazi take-over, one financed and supported by capital in Germany (Weber 927, Davidson 229-230). The awakening of Xaltotun and his dark occult forces to power this re-newed Nemedian threat seems to reference the disturbing, ritualistic, openly pagan, *Volkstümlich*, and anti-Christian aspect of the Nazis (Suster 107). This much was known to Howard about events and conditions in Germany when he sat down to compose the novel. And even a statement like “invaded Aquilonia” (Howard 1977b: 31) reflects Howard’s perception of news reports of the day and the logical conclusions to be drawn from them: that newly Nazi Germany would, sooner rather than later, invade France. Using his text then to symbolically resolve the contradictions between the seeming unknowability of international events and the certainty Howard felt that war would come when international capital was ready for it, Howard posits events in his metaphoric sub-creation that can be described as nothing less than prophetic. The propaganda that the coup leader Tarascus, the new Nemedian king, disseminates after having Nemedias

invade Aquilonia (Howard 1977b: 31), is prophetic in that the Nazis, when they conquer France, and other nations, will claim to be freeing them from the tyranny of Jewish control.

Having set his plot in motion based on his attempt – consciously or unconsciously – to symbolically resolve the contradiction between how Howard’s society saw, or was taught to see, world events and Howard’s perception of what was truly occurring, events in the metaphoric Hyborian Age unfold in a fashion eerily reminiscent of how they would three years after Howard’s death in 1936.

#### IX.1.4.1.1. The Prophetic Aspect of the Symbolic Resolution

Informing this prophetic aspect of the text are apparent references to WW I, whose events and experiences decisively shaped WW II, and so their textual presence link as logically to Howard’s prophetic narrative as they did to the actual events of WW II. For example, the opening battle at Valkia is described in terms reminiscent of the trench warfare of WW I. The knights of Aquilonia and Nemedica come to grips in a river, and the muddy chaos of WW I trench fighting with artillery firing from behind is evoked by the description that “Pikemen and swordsmen fight hand to hand in the stream, and behind them the bowmen ply their shafts” (Howard 1977b: 44). Later in the story, Conan confronts a Nemedian warrior of the ‘Adventurer type’ whose description – from repeated references to his grey uniform and his fighting characteristics – is reminiscent of the *Sturmtruppen* of WW I (Howard 1977b: 88). There is a reference, through the Nemedian metaphor, to German fighting prowess during WW I (Howard 1977b: 264), and a reference to the dynamic of events before and during the collapse of the German front in October 1918 (Howard 1977b: 270, 271). Finally, the most striking parallel with WW I – and a further testament to its centrality to post-WW I discourses and its mythic narrative shaping of the post-WW I world – is the very Versailles-like terms that Conan dictates to Tarascus at the end:

Surrender to me all your present holdings in Aquilonia. Order your garrisons to march out of the castles and towns they hold, without their arms, and get your infernal armies out of Aquilonia as quickly as possible. In addition you shall return all Aquilonians sold as slaves, and pay an indemnity to be designated later, when the damage your occupation of the

country has caused has been properly estimated. You will remain as hostage until these terms have been carried out.

(Howard 1977b: 273)

Considering this clear Versailles reference, one might deflect the argument that the novel is prophetic of WW II by concluding instead that Howard is simply translating aspects of WW I into fantasy terms. What makes the novel prophetic is that events in the novel are not locked in a military stalemate at the Aquilonian/Nemedian border, as a translation of WW I events would dictate, but we are instead shown that Nemedica conquers and occupies almost all of Aquilonia, as Germany did to France in WW II.

At this point an observation about a geographical detail of Howard's Hyborian Age sub-creation needs to be made, one that shows a striking similarity to an aspect of Jünger's fantasy sub-creation four to five years later in *Auf den Marmorlippen*. In this similarity we again see unconscious aspects at work in the common trans-Atlantic discourses, namely the fact that both Howard and Jünger situate a mountain range between their respective metaphoric Frances (i.e. Aquilonia and Alta Plana) and Germanys (i.e. Nemedica and Große Marina). While it is true that the real world Vosges are an aspect of the German-French border region, they are not so imposing or so impassable as to require passes through them as Howard describes the mountains between Nemedica and Aquilonia (Howard 1977b: 54, 91) or as Jünger describes the passes in the mountains of Alta Plana (Jünger 1998: 134). While it is true that Versailles will push Germany's border back to the Rhine, which is regarded by France and other Western nations as Germany's "natural" border<sup>78</sup>, for Howard's generation the Rhine frontier was a novelty and did not figure in memories of, and the psychological impacts from, WW I. Indeed, it was the bitter, largely immobile trench warfare on French and Belgian soil, relatively close to the border of Germany, that built up in the psyches of all the nations fighting WW I that there was a barrier

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<sup>78</sup> Touting the Rhine as a "natural border" ignores the fact that ethnic Germans originally resided on both sides of the river. Further, Plaßmann, at the time of Howard's writing and publishing of *The Hour of the Dragon*, is printing articles in *Germanien* that argue that the use of rivers as borders was alien to Germanic barbarian culture. The supposed "naturalness" of the Rhine frontier was a function of Allied military and political expediency, a policy descending from the Roman Empire's desire to establish the Rhine as a defence against the Germanic tribes, which we see documented in the *Agricola*. The Rhine as the frontier gave both Rome and France the ability to assimilate and integrate the left bank ethnic Germans into Gaul/France.

akin to a mountain range far more imposing than the Vosges between the two nations. This unconscious impression is revealed in the metaphoric fantasy sub-creations of both Howard and Jünger.

Despite this great barrier, the stunning victory of the Nemedians at Valkia – Xaltotun's bringing down of the cliffs on the Aquilonians being analogous to the decisive effect of the Wehrmacht's Blitzkrieg (Guderian 80-84) – leads to scenes reminiscent of events six years after the composition, four years after the serialization, of the novel. Firstly, the news of the defeat at Valkia and Conan's apparent death leads to reactions in Tarantia (Howard 1977b: 58) similar to those in Paris in 1940. The Nemedians' swift movement across the Aquilonian countryside and unopposed entry into Tarantia (Howard 1977b: 100) resembled the entry of the Wehrmacht into Paris (Dumont 7), whose traumatic effect will lead to an enduring fascination with the Nazis on the part of popular French history magazines and book publications throughout the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, including this account from 1971:

Le premier commandant du Gross-Paris se nomme Georg von Studnitz. Un peu après 8 h, il s'installe à l'hôtel *Crillon*, y sable le champagne; le drapeau de guerre du Reich claque déjà au-dessus de la place de la Concorde.

Puis le général de division Kurt von Briesen remonte les Champs-Élysées, à la tête des troupes de sa division légère de Silésie.

Vers 11 h du matin, la longue colonne parvient sur la place de l'Étoile où résonnent les fifres, les tambours plats et les courts clairons d'une musique militaire menée par un immense tambour-major à la canne garnie de pompons noir, blanc, rouge.

A la fin de la matinée, la parade est finie; l'occupation commence. Elle va durer quatre ans et deux mois. (Dumont 8-9)

The hopeless acquiescence of the Aquilonians, and especially the citizens of Tarantia, to their fate is described as selling themselves to slavers and butchers (Howard 1977b: 100), a sentiment echoed by many in 1940 France. The terror tactics employed by the Nemedians in their occupation of Aquilonia (Howard 1977b: 109) foreshadow similar German tactics during the occupation of France. The situation of occupied France, with Valerius taking on a Petain-like role, is

metaphorically described through the Nemedian occupation of Aquilonia: “Nemedians swagger like lords through the streets” (Howard 1977b: 111).

More chillingly, in the scenario Howard has created in which his sub-creation metaphorically allows events to unfold following the logic dictated by the contradiction between the perceived and actual events of his own day, Howard foresees that a Nemedian occupation made possible by dark, abominable forces will make use of the deportations and slave-labour that marked the Nazi occupation of France: “Valerius does not protect his subjects against his allies. Hundreds who could not pay the ransom imposed upon them have been sold to the Kothic slave-traders” (Howard 1977b: 112). It was a similar policy which resulted in over a hundred thousand Frenchmen being used as slave labour in Germany (Read & Fischer 156). Such policies, of course, require Gestapo-like tactics, as Conan is informed when he secretly returns to Tarantia:

The council has been disbanded. Some were imprisoned, some banished. Many of your loyal subjects have been put to death. [...] In these days none is safe. Spies and informers creep among us, betraying the slightest deed or word of discontent as treason and rebellion. (Howard 1977b: 115)

In the actual France of the 1940s, these tactics terrorized a population to the point that popular works were still delving deeply into the minutiae of Gestapo activities decades later, as Dumont’s four volume *Histoire de la Gestapo* attests. As bad as such activities were in the novel, they were only the prelude: “...now we enter an age of horror and slavery” (Howard 1977b: 133). When Orastes reveals to the plotters the full extent of Xaltotun’s plans, he uses phrases and descriptions that could well describe the concentration camps and killing camps of the Holocaust (Howard 1977b: 237- 238). In a sense, the relationship between Xaltotun and his Nemedian co-plotters resembles the relationship of conservative and nationalistic Germans, particularly in the military, who hungered for vengeance for WW I, and Hitler, whose ruthless romance drive served as a unifying force (Weber 884), and whose stage-managed romance myth promised – and delivered – the success of 1940. Thus many Germans were swept along until the full extent of the horror could no longer be avoided (Weber 929). Indeed, Hitler’s aims were, in practice, similar (Taylor 202) to Xaltotun’s intention that “the blood and bodies of the people of the world today”

would “furnish the mortar and the stones for the rebuilding” (Howard 1977b: 238).

Howard, in true romance fashion, cannot allow the romance antagonist to actually carry out these ultimate atrocities before the decisive *pathos* moment occurs where the romance villain will be defeated. After Orastes indicates the coming Holocaust-like horrors and their imminent reality in the sub-created Hyborian Age with emphatic insistence, “*But I have seen!*” (Howard 1977b: 238), the text flashes forward to events prophetic of the Liberation of France. The uprisings and revolts preceding Conan’s army suggest the increased underground resistance activities after D-Day and the return of the Free French under de Gaulle. In this prophetic reading, Conan symbolizes the decisive American role in all this, as Conan represents – as Burke and others have suggested – the manifestation of the quintessential American in his frontier mentality, his self-made man populist approach and his rags-to-riches trajectory within the Conan series of stories. It is repeatedly made clear throughout the novel that, without Conan, Aquilonia cannot be liberated from the Nemedians, as France could not have been liberated without the Americans. While Howard’s prophecy of the unfolding of the geo-political dynamic of his day takes no account of the Soviet Union (who could, arguably, have ultimately liberated France had the D-Day invasions failed), the Nemedians are hampered in their ability to reinforce their troops in Aquilonia because they must be concerned about a possible invasion by their southern neighbour, Ophir (Howard 1977b: 244). Ophir, on the Hyborian Age map, basically occupies territory that would be Italy on the map of Europe, and here Howard might be unconsciously transposing implications from the time of the novel’s composition when a U.K./Italy alliance seemed plausible (Weber 894), or being prophetic about the Sicily invasion of 1943. A prophetic analogy to the desperate fighting in France following the D-Day landings is indicated when it is made clear that the Nemedians are courageous and fight hard (Howard 1977b: 264) against the turning tide, and the real world equivalent of this last stand fighting will be considered when a document produced by the SS Frundsberg Division is discussed. With Xaltotun’s death – and this by divine intervention as Howard’s text suggests – the Nemedians are smashed and broken (Howard 1977b: 271).

It is at this point that the prophetic aspect of the narrative runs its course. The novel does not foresee, as was the case in reality, the complete conquest of Nemedias/Germany. In fact, it can be read to posit

a reality where the Stauffenberg assassination attempt was successful. The dark, sorcerous aspect that Xaltotun embodies – and that Hitler is repeatedly connected with through the “spell” that he was said to cast with his oratory, and through popular culture research that connects him with secret societies like the Thule Gesellschaft (Suster 102) and with receiving training from magicians (Suster 102) – is defeated, as was the intention of Stauffenberg and his co-conspirators („Die Planung der Operation „Walküre”“); thus regular military authorities submit to surrender terms.

Howard symbolically resolves the contradiction inherent in a view of 1934 events where the ostensibly independent machinations of world leaders clashes with a perspective that these events are interrelated – if not coordinated – and will lead to war “when international capital is ready.” This is not to argue that Howard is necessarily correct in his perception, but the novel *is* – even if unconsciously – *his* symbolic resolution. Given his assessment of the situation and the fact that his Hyborian Age sub-creation is a metaphor for Europe, his symbolic resolution is eerily prophetic of the actual unfolding of events in the real Europe within a decade of the publication of the last installment of the novel in *Weird Tales* in the spring of 1936.

#### IX.1.4.2. Second Horizon Analysis

Reading the novel as an utterance in the antagonistic class discourse of the day, Howard’s position as a petty bourgeois Democrat doing relatively well as a writer of the pulps during the Depression is expressed and defended in the text. The text’s ideologemes are expressed through characters who represent the different classes in opposition, and Howard’s distrust of the ‘gang’ of international capital – i.e. the upper class/bourgeoisie – is made manifest through the Nemedian noble, Amalric, whose wealth was behind the plot to put the figureheads of Valerius and Tarascus on the thrones of Aquilonia and Nemedica and who “was the real ruler of Nemedica, behind the scenes” (Howard 1977b: 31). Howard’s championing of the sub-created Hyborian Age lower classes again shows how his position in the barbarian discourse intersects with a petty bourgeois class strategy of supporting the proletariat. This becomes apparent when Conan rejects the prospect of acquiescing to the defeat at Valkia with kingly dignity by

underlining his common origins: “‘I have no royal blood,’ ground Conan. ‘I am a barbarian and the son of a blacksmith’” (Howard 1977b: 48). Ironically, it is such a sentiment – and the narrative trajectory within it, whereby Conan used violence to take his throne (as established in the first Conan story “The Phoenix on the Sword”) – that has opened up Howard and other writers of the fantasy sub-genre of Sword and Sorcery to charges of fascism (Alpers 1978: 29), for both Hitler and Mussolini rose up from common origins and used “barbaric” violence to secure their positions, and used populist rhetoric to justify their claims, such as Conan does when he argues that he has come to power in Aquilonia and rules with the consent of the people (Howard 1977b: 151). Hitler himself often referred to the legality of his takeover (Taylor 217) and Goebbels reminded the German media – or what was left of it – during his last press conference on April, 21 of 1945 that the German people had consented to Nazi rule: „Ich habe ja niemanden gezwungen, mein Mitarbeiter zu sein, so, wie wir auch das deutsche Volk nicht gezwungen haben. Es hat uns selbst beauftragt ... Jetzt wird Ihnen das Hälschen durchgeschnitten!“ (Fest 71)

Howard’s Conan tales, particularly *The Hour of the Dragon*, are a textual coming-to-terms with the fascist impulse coming out of a particular interpretation of the barbarian discourse and the antagonistic class discourse. Howard is apparently uncomfortable enough with this dynamic of a lower class revolutionary impulse ending in a fascist state – with an accompanying de facto rise to bourgeois social status – that he attempts to forestall this dynamic by textually removing the barbarian king from his throne. This is a major part of the plot of *The Hour of the Dragon* and it is significant that this overthrowing the king motif also occurs in the very first Conan tale, “The Phoenix on the Sword”, and was prominent in the original Kull story that Howard re-wrote, symbolically entitled “By This Axe I Rule!”. It is also a central aspect of the Kull story in which Kull questions the nature of reality, “The Mirrors of Tuzun Thune”. All this suggests Howard’s discomfort with the implications of his barbarian characters’ political stance in terms of class discourse. It is likely that this uneasiness at the fascist implications of his barbarian romance protagonists is partially responsible for the strong structural role of the freeing of the slaves motif in the stories, particularly in this novel. Howard was likely as concerned with mitigating his hero’s fascist implications as he was with helping to change the South’s hierarchy of values when Conan frees the black slaves aboard the merchant ship.



Ironically, the scene in which he does so reminds the reader not only that racism is still strong, even in as non-mainstream a Southerner as Howard, but that the fascist element is present as well:

Blows and abuse and hellish suffering were avenged in one red gust of fury that raged like a typhoon from one end of the ship to the other, and when it had blown itself out, but one white man lived aboard the *Venturer*, and that was the blood-stained giant about whom the chanting blacks thronged to cast themselves prostrate on the bloody deck and beat their heads against the boards in an ecstasy of hero-worship.

Conan, his mighty chest heaving and glistening with sweat, the red ax gripped in his blood-smeared hand, glared about him as the first chief of men might have glared in some primordial dawn, and shook back his black mane. In that moment he was not king of Aquilonia; he was again lord of the black corsairs, who had hacked his way to lordship through flame and blood. (Howard 1977b: 195)

The text further symbolically displays Howard's petty bourgeois class sympathies with the downtrodden (in this case the lumpenproletariat) by having Valerius destroyed by the horde of tatterdemallions, and he reinforces Conan's man-of-the-people aspects by having him choose a slave girl to be his queen in Aquilonia.

The ideologemes around which this narrative is structured, and which become apparent in a second horizon interpretation, are those of socialism and the American Dream. In socialism, an ideologeme of global power in Howard's day, the romance class fantasy posits a working class revolution that will usher in a classless society where all are equal and all have justice. Howard's sympathy with this is evident in the values his romance protagonist exhibits, but his skepticism of the viability of this ideologeme is unconsciously expressed through the textual presence of the overthrowing of the king motif. The symbolic axe – of the rods and the axe indicated by the Latin *fasces* – figures prominently in the Conan scene quoted above and in the title of the Kull story that launched both characters, and seems to give credence to the charge of fascism: “What then is being glorified by HF [*i.e. Heroic Fantasy, another term for the Sword and Sorcery sub-genre of Fantasy*]? There is but one word that sufficiently sums up all these ideological elements: fascism” (Alpers 31).

This charge misses the mark in regard to Howard, when one

considers the Marxist perspective behind J's second horizon of reading: "For Marxism, however, the very content of a class ideology is relational, in the sense that its 'values' are always actively in situation with respect to the opposing class, and defined against the latter: normally, a ruling class ideology will explore various strategies of the *legitimation* of its own power position, while an oppositional culture or ideology will, often in covert and disguised strategies, seek to contest and to undermine the dominant 'value system'" (Jameson 1994: 84). Howard, from his petty bourgeois social and economic niche, understands the revolutionary impulse toward fascism and the attraction of the strong man who seizes power, and yet he forces his apparently fascist romance protagonist to legitimize himself by allowing the minstrel Rinaldo to express criticism in "The Phoenix on the Sword" – even to the point of a coup – and by forcing Conan to re-take his own throne with popular support in *The Hour of the Dragon*. Howard is, in a sense, expressing the idealistic belief in feudalism that characterized the Gothic revival in Britain and informed the work of the Pre-Raphaelites. The king, in this ideal picture of the social pyramid of feudalism, *is* the land as King Arthur is said to be, and a king thus legitimated ensures the proper hierarchical working of the feudal pyramid. While this is one of the historical or legendary roots of the romance *mythos* itself, one might still argue that the Conan figure *de facto* represents fascism, whatever romance myth is invoked to justify it. Hitler's brand of fascism was conceived of as an opposition to the hegemonic dominance of international capital controlled by Jews, and was itself fueled by a romance myth whose idealistic coding was marked by the extremes evident in Goebbels' radio address on the eve of Hitler's 56<sup>th</sup> birthday on April 19<sup>th</sup>, 1945: "It was a remarkable speech, a rambling and emotional panegyric to Hitler as the saviour of his people, whom they should follow 'faithfully, without reservation, without excuse or limitation [...] God will throw back Lucifer, as he has done before when the dark angel stood before the gates of power, back into the abyss from whence he came'" (Read & Fisher 329). Yet Howard's world view – as expressed in the letter to Lovecraft cited above – perceived fascism as part of international capital. In that case, "the individual utterance or text is grasped as a symbolic move in an essentially polemic and strategic ideological confrontation between the classes" (Jameson 1994: 85): Howard, as a representative of the petty bourgeoisie, demonstrates the typical petty bourgeois tendency to identification with the proletariat during times of economic crisis, but he does so through the agency of the

barbarian discourse. His Conan figure is a self-professed barbarian, and throughout the tales he works his way up from penniless wanderer, to thief, to mercenary, and finally to king; in this we see the socialism ideologue at work, wherein the working class – here represented and embodied by Conan – overthrows the existing order and takes power for itself. In a sense, Conan represents the fulfillment of the socialist romance, for the values he espouses – and thus the value hierarchy represented by a text like *The Hour of the Dragon* – are those of the common good. One could argue, of course, that Hitler also believed his ideas were for the common good – of ethnic Germans only – and that Conan thus still represents a fascist ideology. In the end, despite authorial intention, a political unconscious analysis can only point to the tension in the fascist presence in the Conan texts.

The fascist impulse is undeniably present, descending from the same pseudo-socialist motivations as in Italy and Germany and expressed in the same individualistic fashion, thus leaving the responsibility for the common good in the hands of an absolute ruler. The tenuousness of this position, and the ultimate argument against Conan being a fascist figure, leads Howard to twice remove Conan from the throne in the Conan tales, only to have him be swept back into power through a popular uprising. He thus attempts to preserve the socialism ideologue and the rags-to-riches proto-capitalist ideologue in the same structure, but its instability is not only apparent, but is the very sign of Howard's determination not to allow his class utterance in favour of the petty bourgeoisie and the proletariat against the hegemony of international capitalism to be misinterpreted as fascism. He makes it clear in the above-quoted statements by Conan that his is a regime without terror to support it, thus marking it as sharply different from Italian fascism and Nazi Germany which could not have existed without terror. Howard's realization, however, that he was skirting the precipice of fascism – despite his best intentions to the contrary – may well have been a prime motivation for his Breckenridge Elkins satires which he began writing at this time, and in which he satirically explores the negative consequences of the strong man with "good intentions". In fact, those stories will make clear something that the Conan stories hint at, namely that the social reality of the post World War I world and the barbarian discourse combine to create a psychological type that is drawn to fascism, even if unconsciously.

While perhaps too much has been made of the Oedipal

implications of Howard's upbringing – and a corresponding detour into speculative biographical criticism is to be avoided – it must be noted that the post-World War I fascination with *Schamkulturen* does apply to Howard. As Lethen argues, „Die »Schamkultur« scheint es dem Menschen zu erlauben, aus dem familiären Machtverband, dem ödipalen Dreieck von Vater, Mutter und Kind, das der Hauptgenerator des Gefühls der Verschuldung ist, auszuscheren und funktionsgerechtes Verhalten in einer »vaterlosen Gesellschaft« zu erlernen. Diese »reine« Konstruktion [*enables one*] die immensen Erfordernisse, welche die rapide Modernisierung an das bürgerliche Individuum herantrug, aushalten zu können“ (Lethen 33). The *Schamkultur* person not only escapes the Oedipal triangle at home, but is able to withstand the immense social changes brought on by capitalism, particularly after its intensification during, and after, World War I. Lethen's statement that „die deutschen Schriftsteller die »Schamkultur« als Modell modernen Verhaltens in der Regel im Rahmen einer »heroischen Welt« präsentieren, [...] im Rückgriff auf eine vorbürgerliche Anthropologie [...] entwerfen“ (Lethen 35) clearly applies to Howard as he uses the barbarian discourse, and the positive valuing of the barbarian, to create his textual heroic fantasy world where his *Schamkultur*-generated *kalte persona* romance hero wins his throne.

#### IX.1.4.3. Third Horizon Analysis

In terms of the 3<sup>rd</sup> horizon, that of the text as a window on cultural revolution, the cultural revolution of the 1930s is, as we have seen, economic, demographic and technological, and is expressed in the barbarian discourse. As already noted, on the economic front the late 1920s and 1930s continued, on both sides of the Atlantic, to move in the direction of developments coming out of WW I when “Production and distribution had to be planned, supplies rationed, prices controlled, manpower directed, the whole economy co-ordinated” (Weber 868). This war economy, which applied Taylorism throughout society (Weber 981; Schivelbusch 305), led to a concentration of labour and industry and “was the firm base and the raw material of the new economic order in which industrial capitalism became state capitalism” (Weber 870). This increased cog-ization of people – so brilliantly captured in Lang's 1927 *Metropolis* – Howard railed against, and its concomitant enfeebling of society led to reaction: “Reaction reared against machines, against individualism, against science and alienating rationalism, against the

technological advances causing unemployment, against the class struggle, against mechanization and mass production (glorifying guilds, artisans, and peasants)” (Weber 879). Whereas Jünger had tried, in *Der Arbeiter*, to come to terms with this era of mass labour, mass industry and mass economy by positing it as the romance Gestalt of the worker moving triumphantly into the future as the expression of a non-individual class victory, Howard more decisively adopted the barbarian vs. civilization theme of the Avant Garde, as evidenced in the novel when,

Servius was again aware, as in the past, and now more strongly than ever, of something alien about the king. That great frame under the mail mesh was too hard and supple for a civilized man; the elemental fire of the primitive burned in the smoldering eyes. Now the barbaric suggestion about the king was more pronounced, as if in his extremity the outward aspects of civilization were stripped away to reveal the primordial core. Conan was reverting to his pristine type. He did not act as a civilized man would act under the same conditions, nor did his thoughts run in the same channels. He was unpredictable. It was only a stride from the king of Aquilonia to the skin-clad slayer of the Cimmerian hills. (Howard 1977b: 116)

This barbarian discourse – particularly such a perspective on it as is demonstrated here – is part of the cultural revolution that is accelerating changes to the mode of production because it offers both resistance to these changes and a suggestion as to how to survive them. Just as Jünger argued in *Das Abenteuerliche Herz* that modern technology and the ways of being and perceiving that it brought with it was making people more barbaric, thus more civilized, we see here that the king of Aquilonia – the most civilized nation of the fantasy sub-creation – is a good king because he has this barbaric simplicity and vitality. In *Auf den Marmorklippen*, Jünger will back off from such a supposition, seeing the unleashing of “barbaric” characteristics such as those associated with the hosts of the Oberförster as destructive and dangerous. In his analogy Jünger seems to be implying that the Nazis’ own adoption of elements of the barbarian discourse (including the take-over of *Germanien* as part of their objective to control that discourse) are having – and will have (for the political prophet continues his prophetic writing with *Auf den Marmorklippen*) – terrible repercussions.

### IX.1.5. Conclusion

Howard utilizes the barbarian discourse in the context of his time to posit the barbarian as the working class. In Servius' ruminations about the instability of Conan's identity – he could be either King of Aquilonia or a Cimmerian barbarian at any moment – and in the fact that Conan travels throughout the Hyborian Age, fighting for some nations as a mercenary, becoming a leader of peoples as diverse as the Kozaki of Hyrkania (a metaphor for the Cossacks of Russia) and the Black Corsairs, Conan represents the same state-transcendence that Jünger's *Arbeiter Gestalt* does. Conan is able to draw more accurate maps of the Hyborian Age in "The Phoenix on the Sword" because of his experience; he is able to delineate borders between peoples as Ditomasso points out, but, like the *Arbeiter Gestalt*, is able to transcend them by becoming part of these peoples. The major difference between Howard and Jünger is that Howard is not willing to give up on individualism, and so his Conan has more defined contours than the more amorphous – as Wunsch charges – *Arbeiter Gestalt*.

This reference to defined contours shows the relationship of this barbarian/worker dynamic to the *kalte persona*. Indeed, Conan represents all the qualities of the *kalte persona* then dominating the social landscape on both sides of the Atlantic: he is ever wakeful, always in motion, suppresses emotion, is able to withstand incredible pain, and essentially goes about armoured, whether actually wearing armour or not. This armour is a central facet of male identity at this time (Theweleit 435) and is the symbol of the *kalte persona*.

While both Conan and the *Arbeiter Gestalt* are multi-state figures, both display revealing national characteristics. To understand just how the political unconscious of the Conan tales reveals Howard's geopolitical shorthand of the major nations of his real-world context, it is necessary to consult an essay that Howard wrote about the Hyborian Age throughout his work on the Conan stories and which found final form shortly before his death in 1936. This essay went through numerous drafts as its main function was to help Howard to flesh out his sub-creation and to provide a guide for Conan's adventures. He did, around the time of *The Hour of the Dragon* publish it in a fanzine, and an analysis of one sentence of it can help further clarify the political unconscious of the Conan tales.

In conclusion, the romance *mythos* is the paradigmatic framework

for the United States, particularly after World War I, and it will be even more so in World War II – as Robert E. Howard’s *The Hour of the Dragon* metaphorically prophesies. As Grabes reminds us, the aesthetic experience that a novel offers – in this case through a unique blending of the barbarian discourse, the romance *mythos*, the *Neophantastik*, the Fantasy genre, the *kalte persona*, the freeing of the slaves and Cimmeria motifs – is „eine imaginative Erfahrung des Besonderen als physischer Erscheinung und / oder inneren Konkretheit anstelle abstrakter Begrifflichkeit“ (Grabes 2004: 136). The great narrative movements of nations and peoples, and the shaping of cultures, societies and history through the discourses shared throughout the world and encoded in the various texts of the cultural archive – whose deciphering is the aim of a political unconscious analysis – is made physical through the sensual reactions that reading the novel brings forth and gives an inner feeling of the concreteness of these large, impersonal and almost literally meta-physical forces. The intense physical and emotional experience of stories like Howard’s Conan tales and Jünger’s *Auf den Marmorklippen* leaves it to the reader to decide if and how to apply the specifics of the content to their individual and social lives. A reader of Howard’s Conan tales might decide that Conan’s *kalte persona* aspects, like permanent readiness for physical conflict and the willingness to risk death and pain, are positive values, and thus, for example, can translate into patriotic support for the American war-effort. Or, a reader can focus on the populist sentiments Conan expresses during his quest to regain his throne and vote for political candidates expressing such sentiments. In the case of Jünger’s *Auf den Marmorklippen*, a reader interpreting the Köppelsbleek sequence as an indictment of the suspected Holocaust might decide that inner emigration and exhibiting no overt enthusiasm for the Nazi regime are the least that should be done. As Grabes notes, the active participation of writer and reader in re-shaping a culture’s value hierarchy must be acknowledged.

## IX.2. “The Hyborian Age” (1932-1936)

### IX.2.1. The Cimmeria Motif

By the time Howard puts the history of his fantasy sub-creation in the form that he publishes in a fanzine in 1936 as “The Hyborian Age”,

he had been working the sub-creation out for many years. He states in his preamble to the printed text, that “When I began writing the Conan stories a few years ago, I prepared this history of his age and peoples of that age, in order to lend him and his sagas a greater aspect of realness” (Howard 2002: 379). Louinet adds “Howard, probably sensing that this new series had potential, began writing [*i.e. in 1932*] what would become *The Hyborian Age*. The essay required four successive versions before he was satisfied with the result. Starting out as a brief two-page outline, it soon developed into an 8,000 word essay, enriched with each successive version” (Louinet A11-A12). The purpose of this *Neophantastik* fantasy sub-creation was to provide a secondary world for the character – divorced from the real world of the reader – but its political unconscious meaning is contained in its function as a metaphor for Howard’s real world. This metaphor derives from the fact that the map of the Hyborian Age, as we have seen, is based on the map of Europe. The peoples inhabiting areas of the Hyborian Age correspond in culture, customs and symbolism to peoples inhabiting the corresponding areas of the map of 1930s Europe.

The Hyborian Age sub-creation as a metaphoric representation of the nations of Howard’s time is particularly revelatory of the political unconscious of Howard’s work when we consider the role of Cimmeria in the sub-creation. Louinet argues that Howard’s description of Cimmeria is taken from Bulfinch (Louinet A7), and Bulfinch’s popularizations of Greek myth point back to Homer as the source for Howard’s description of Cimmeria as a land of mist, cloud and darkness. This is evident in his poem “Cimmeria” which he noted to a correspondent in 1934 was “Written in Mission, Texas, February, 1932; suggested by the memory of the hill-country above Fredericksburg seen in a mist of winter rain” (Howard 2002: 1). Louinet speculates that the character Conan the Cimmerian was conceived of by Howard a matter of days after the writing of the poem (Louinet A2). Howard, who displayed aspects of the *kalte persona* in his life, chose Cimmeria as the homeland for a character embodying the principles of the *kalte persona*, and evoked it thusly:

Oh, soul of mine, born out of shadowed hills,  
To clouds and winds and ghosts that shun the sun,  
How many deaths shall serve to break at last  
This heritage which wraps me in the grey  
Apparel of ghosts? I search my heart and find



Cimmeria, land of Darkness and the Night. (Howard 2002: 3)

As the compositional context of his poem suggests, he ponders upon Cimmeria, and its role as gateway to the land of the dead, when recalling Fredericksburg, a town in Texas noted for its German heritage. Moreover, since Herodotus connects the Cimbri to the Cimmerians (Louinet A7), and since Howard notes in a letter to Lovecraft, “Most authorities consider the Cimbri were Germans, of course, and they probably were, but there’s a possibility that they were Celtic, or of mixed Celtic and German blood, and it gratifies my fancy to protract [*sic*] them as Celts, anyway” (in Louinet A8), both the sub-created land of Cimmeria, and the character Conan the Cimmerian, point toward a certain consideration of Germany.

Add this to the fact that the map of the Hyborian Age is modelled on Europe and thus a metaphoric comment on Europe, and to the fact of the centrality of the conflict between Aquilonia (i.e. the Allies) and Nemedra (i.e. Germany) in the Conan stories, and to Howard’s stated concern with fascism in his letters to Lovecraft, then we must conclude that Germany and its geo-political role at the time Howard is composing the Conan stories – 1932 to 1936 – is, metaphorically, a central meditation of the series.

The Conan character, in terms of Cimmeria, is a descendant of a survivor of an Hyborian Age Cimmerian civil war and he, like the historical Cimmerians described by Herodotus, sets out into the world (of the Hyborian Age) and fights his way across it. Furthermore, like the Cimmerians themselves, Conan never returns to Cimmeria – at least not in a tale penned by Howard.<sup>79</sup> Howard does, however, state in a letter of March 10, 1936 to Miller that, “Shortly after this [*i.e. the events of ‘Rogues in the House’*] he returned for a brief period to Cimmeria, and there were other returns to his native land from time to time” (Howard, de Camp, Carter: 19). And yet, Howard never wrote such a story, and it is likely that Howard never planned to write such a story as the above quoted letter to Miller was written at a time when his mother, Hester, was gravely ill; Howard’s father wrote later that he knew Howard was planning to kill himself when she died (Roehm 2008:14). The Conan the Cimmerian stories adopt the main themes of the grim trajectory of the historical Cimmerians: survival and the desperate choice between fighting

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<sup>79</sup> Since Howard only wrote 17 Conan stories, many authors took up the popular character after Howard’s death, most notably L. Sprague de Camp and Lin Carter.

or fleeing, with the final decision being to keep on fighting forever. This trajectory is what is inextricably linked to the term ‘Cimmeria’, and it is this plot dynamic that is the motif of the stories featuring Conan the Cimmerian.

That Howard used this Cimmerian motif as a social criticism device in a manner similar to Voltaire’s is suggested by that same letter to Miller of March 10, 1936; here Howard makes the following statement about Conan’s birth and family history:

He was born on a battlefield, during a fight between his tribe and a horde of raiding Vanir. The country claimed by and roved over by his clan lay in the northwest of Cimmerian [sic], but Conan was of mixed blood, although a pure-bred Cimmerian. His grandfather was a member of a southern tribe who had fled from his own people because of a blood-feud and after long wanderings, eventually taken refuge with the people of the north. He had taken part in many raids into the Hyborian nations in his youth, before his flight, and perhaps it was the tales he told of those softer countries which roused in Conan, as a child, a desire to see them. (Howard, de Camp, Carter: 17-18)

True to the historical Cimmerians, Howard’s Cimmeria is a divided society with internecine warfare, and this suggests a conscious use of the Cimmeria motif – i.e. with knowledge of the fratricidal Cimmerian history (Herodotus 295) – and, later in that same letter Howard introduces the main issue that his Cimmeria is measured against, when he goes on to discuss Conan’s “first sight of civilized people. It might have been at Vanarium, or he might have made a peaceable visit to some frontier town before that” (Howard, de Camp, Carter: 18). The encounter with civilization is how Howard intertwines the Cimmeria motif with the barbarian discourse. The identification with Cimmeria in the poem that launched the series of Conan stories suggests that Howard sees his position in the barbarian discourse – the framework for his criticism of civilization in general, and 1930s America in particular – as ultimately unlikely to win the day, as he states in one of the above-cited letters to Lovecraft, but that he will, Cimmerian-like, continue to fight for that position. The fact that Howard, in this letter to Miller, displays uncertainty as to whether Conan’s first contact with civilization was a peaceful one dominated by curiosity, or a violent one, is overshadowed by the fact that Vanarium, in the Hyborian Age history, is an event in

which the barbarian Cimmerians decisively throw back the incursion of “civilization” in the guise of the Aquilonian outpost of Vanarium by sacking it.

The extent to which Howard indeed identified with his barbarian Cimmerian hero is suggested by his correspondent and fellow *Weird Tales* author, Lovecraft, when he writes of Howard:

He was almost unique in his ability to *understand* and *mentally inhabit* past ages – including many without any resemblances to our own. He had the imagination to go beyond mere names and dates and get at the actual *texture of life* in the bygone periods which he studied. He could visualize all the details of every-day existence in these periods, and subjectively enter into the feelings of their inhabitants. As a result, the past was as alive for him as the present. (Lovecraft in Van Hise 2001: 34)

And Howard himself related the following recurring dream:

Always I am the barbarian, the skin-clad, tousle-haired, light-eyed wildman, armed with a rude axe or sword, fighting the elements and wild beasts, or grappling with armored hosts marching with the tread of civilized discipline from the fallow fruitful lands and walled cities. (Howard in Henderson 2001: 4-5)

Howard maintains this identification with the barbarian even with his suicide on June 11, 1936, after being informed that his mother would not awaken from her coma: his brief suicide note evokes a self-identification as a fallen barbarian warrior: “All fled – all is done, so lift me on the pyre: / The feast is over and the lamps expire” (Howard in Gramlich 2001: 17). Howard thus does write a Cimmerian motif conclusion to Conan’s Dionysian life-story with his own death and two-line suicide note. Yet, both the character and the author will live on in popular culture fame, and this meta-narrative dynamic that links author and character through the Cimmeria motif is given credence by Foucault, who wrote:

Das Schreiben ist heute an das Opfer gebunden, sogar an das Opfer des Lebens, an das freiwillige Auslöschen, das in den Büchern nicht dargestellt werden soll, da es sich im Leben des Schriftstellers selbst vollzieht. Das Werk, das die Aufgabe hatte, unsterblich zu machen, hat das Recht erhalten, zu töten, seinen Autor umzubringen. Denken Sie an Flaubert, Proust, Kafka. (Foucault 1008-1009)

In this sense, Howard's suicide, which is commonly referred to as "tragic" by contemporaries and later admirers of his work, does conclude in the mythic narrative of tragedy that the Cimmerian motif ultimately demands. Indeed, his life does demonstrate aspects of a tragic patterning (Trout 2007: 4) and was strongly marked by his investment in the barbarian discourse and the tragic Cimmerian motif which dominated his work in the last years of his life. Not only do later reader reception and the fame of the Conan the Cimmerian character point to the significance of this Cimmerian phase of his writing, but the reader reception in his own day demonstrated that his romance texts that were utterances in the barbarian discourse had already hit a cultural nerve. Contemporary reader Walter W. Miller of Wisconsin wrote in 1933, "[...] the Conan stories by Howard – I sure get a kick out of that swashbuckling soldier of fortune. The fearless way he does things grips one right up to the end of the story" (in McHaney 2001: 9); the cultural resonance throughout the Anglo-Saxon world is demonstrated by contemporary reader Pryke of England – "Do I desire tales of years gone by, of battle and majestic kingliness, I turn to Howard" (in McHaney 2001: 7) – and Hockley of New Zealand – "Howard has that rare quality of transporting the reader completely away from this mundane old earth and opening up imaginative vistas utterly strange and alien" (in McHaney 2001: 10). Such positive opinions were not limited to male readers, as Mrs. Murphy of Virginia shows when she wrote, "I don't believe I ever anywhere read anything of any sort that you could call definitely better than that. He has caught the atmosphere of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse" (in McHaney 2001: 12) and Ms. Rogers of Pennsylvania in 1934: "I am crazy about Howard's Conan tales" (in McHaney 2002a: 4). That this romance *mythos* barbarian discourse *Weltanschauung* could not be sustained, as Howard suggested to Lovecraft, and gave way to tragedy in the metanarrative shift from text to author's life, is symptomatic of the time and prefigures Jünger's own realization of the dangerous consequences of the barbarian discourse in *Auf den Marmorklippen*.

#### IX.2.2. The Civilization vs. Barbarism Theme: Hyperborea vs. Cimmeria

The Hyborian Age Fantasy genre sub-creation acts as a stage to play out the civilization versus barbarism theme in the sense of fantasy

being a conceptual space where ideas can be tested (Branham 330). Howard's previously-cited letter to Miller of March 10, 1936 discusses Conan's, "first sight of civilized people" (Howard, de Camp, Carter:18) and suggests that Conan's adventures are a barbarian's explorations of civilization. The fact that Conan becomes King of civilized Aquilonia – while never losing his barbarian vitality, as is pointed out in *The Hour of the Dragon* – suggests this sense of exploration and of weighing the options. In the end, however, Novalyne Price is certain that Howard's suicide was a definitive rejection of his time when she says, "he didn't want to live in what he felt was a decaying, rotten civilization" (in *Romeo*: 3).

Howard differentiates the debate between barbarism and civilization by contrasting an ideal of civilization with actual civilization. This comes to the surface in another quotation from the letter to Miller, one that highlights another significant geographical entity of the Hyborian Age, Hyperborea:

There was the space of about a year between Vanarium and his entrance into the thief-city of Zamora. During this time he returned to the northern territories of his tribe, and made his first journey beyond the boundaries of Cimmeria. This, strange to say, was north instead of south. Why or how, I am not certain, but he spent some months among a tribe of the Æsir, fighting with the Vanir and Hyperboreans, and developing a hate for the latter which lasted all his life.... Captured by them, he escaped southward and came into Zamora in time to make his debut in print. (Howard, de Camp, Carter: 18)

Howard here clearly borrows from Germanic myth and has Conan join a barbarian tribe who take their name from the Æsir, the Germanic war gods. Of symbolic significance is that they make war on the Vanir, the matriarchal Germanic fertility deities, and the Hyperboreans, a legendary people of peace and happiness living beyond the rainbow, taken from Greek mythology. Marking the Vanir as romance antagonists suggests a criticism of the role of the mother in the creation of the *kalte persona* militaristic man that Theweleit explains. More importantly, however, is this stated enduring romance antagonism against Hyperborea, for Howard imbues this antagonism with his position in the barbarian discourse and invests in it the barbarian versus civilization theme. That Hyperborea was to take the position of civilization was part of Howard's intention from the beginning. In the first draft of "The Phoenix on the

Sword” Conan explains the Hyborian Age map by saying: “Asgard lies to the north, and Vanaheim to the northwest of Cimmeria, and there is continual war along the borders. The western part of Vanaheim lies along the shores of the western sea, and east of Asgard is the country of the Hyperboreans who are civilized and dwell in cities” (Howard 2002: 359-360).

The symbolic meaning of this romance antagonism stems from the source of the term Hyperborea. In Greek myth, Hyperborea arises when the debauched old satyr Silenus, the teacher of Dionysus, straggles from the marauding Dionysian army and falls asleep in Midas’ garden. He is captured, and tells Midas:

[...] wonderful tales of an immense continent lying beyond the Oceans (sic) stream – altogether separate from the conjoined mass of Europe, Asia or Africa – where splendid cities abound, peopled by gigantic, happy, and long-lived inhabitants, and enjoying a remarkable legal system. A great expedition – at least ten million strong – once set out thence across the Ocean in ships to visit the Hyperboreans; but on learning that theirs was the best land that the old world had to offer, retired in disgust. (Graves: 281)

The Hyperboreans described by Silenus represent civilized social perfection, and the implicit critique of such a state is contained in the fact that these tales were conjured up by a drunken satyr to save his neck. Howard’s familiarity with Greek myth suggests that Howard adopted this suspicion of civilized utopias inherent in the term Hyperborea and transposed it to his Hyborian Age sub-creation. A yearning for utopias and a parallel suspicion of ostensible real-world Hyperboreas were part of the discourse of Howard’s time:

Kaum erwacht aus dem Alptraum des Weltkriegs, suchten die europäischen Massen ihr Heil in der amerikanischen Traummaschine. Fast möchte man von einer Aufsaugung der durch Krieg und Zusammenbruch frei gewordenen moralischen und hedonistischen Energien durch die Erlösungsformel »Amerika« sprechen. Was übrigblieb, wurde von der Utopie »Rußland« absorbiert. (Schivelbusch 303)

The self-touted Hyperborea of the 20s and 30s, the U.S.S.R., was clearly becoming a sham under Stalin, and the American version of Hyperborea – the *Traummaschine* – had been crassly commercialized in the 20s and then proved a chimera during the Depression. The rags-to-riches class

fantasy of the American Dream, which holds out the hope that a member of the proletariat or petty bourgeoisie can make the leap into the bourgeoisie, is also implicated in this unceasing textual hatred of Hyperborea. Howard could see that although he had secured his economic niche in the petty bourgeoisie with his prolific writing, he could not make the leap to a more serious, more bourgeois writing career where he could spend more time on quality and less time worrying about quantity: “In a time of financial difficulties, it soon became easy enough for Howard to make of Conan his meal ticket. Most of the more routine Conan stories – systematically featuring semi-naked ladies, which had been entirely absent from the series until then – were indeed composed between November 1932 and March 1933, at a time when Howard was in dire need of money” (Louinet xi). Howard’s *Cimmeria* – ironically compromised as the above cited quotation reveals – is intended to convey a pure and vital barbarian reality that stands against corrupt civilization and its utopic pretensions, whether on the left or the right.

Conan’s textual kingship of Aquilonia suggests a middle-course between “pure” barbarism and utopic civilization, a synthesis of this dialectical opposition: a civilization informed by and driven by the vitality of the barbarian. That precisely this was the formula in the minds of some members of the Nazi party, particularly the SS who took over the magazine *Germanien*, shows how closely Howard’s texts skirt the edges of fascism.

### IX.2.3. The Geo-Political Prophecy of One Sentence

It is instructive, then, to look at Howard’s essay “The Hyborian Age”, particularly the historical events he relates occurring 500 years after the death of his Conan character, referred to in the sub-created chronicle as Conan the Great. If the Hyborian Age sub-creation is a metaphor for Europe within the Conan stories, Conan’s removal from the metaphor gives Howard the ability to concern himself purely with the “large picture” as opposed to story details. In relating such large-scale events, the metaphor – and its prophetic nature – becomes clearer. In fact, one can focus on a single sentence of the grand historical narrative that the essay presents and interpret this sentence’s position in the narrative and its resulting metaphoric, symbolic and prophetic content.

The most important thing to keep in mind about the Hyborian

Age as a setting – or as what Tolkien calls a *sub-creation* – is the map of it that Howard created. Whether consciously, sub-consciously or unconsciously, the Hyborian Age represents Howard’s political opinions about the geopolitics of his world, and the following sentence can be focussed on to decode the political metaphor that is the Hyborian Age: “Nemedias, unconquerable by Hyborians, reeled between the riders of the East and the swordsmen of the West, when a tribe of Æsir, wandering down from their snowy lands, came into the kingdom and were engaged as mercenaries; they proved such able warriors that they not only beat off the Hyrkanians but halted the eastward advance of the Picts” (Howard 1983: 185).

This sentence presents a pivotal moment in the history of the Hyborian Age 500 years after Conan’s rule of Aquilonia. In fact, it represents the end of the Hyborian nations, and their eclipsing by peoples from the distant east and distant west. Given this, this sentence from “The Hyborian Age” constitutes a political prophecy for the time after Howard’s rapidly approaching death in 1936. In this sentence the major players of the Hyborian Age – and thus, metaphorically also of Howard’s real geopolitical reality – are plotted into a narrative movement.

Firstly we have the Hyborians themselves. Elsewhere they are identified as the ancestors of the Aquilonians and Nemedians, and thus, since the Hyborian Age map is also centred on Europe, we can conclude that the term “Hyborian” can roughly be equated with “European”. As the Nemedians are separated out of this collective term in this sentence, we can read the term “Hyborian” here in the same sense of the usage of “European” in the World Wars to mean European Allies against Germany: Hyborian here, in this sense, is essentially equated with Aquilonia, for Aquilonia occupies, as we have seen, roughly the space of France, Belgium and the southern British Isles<sup>80</sup>, and functions thus as a metaphor for the Western Allies of World War I.

Secondly, we have Nemedias. Nemedias is the focus of this sentence and this entire section of “The Hyborian Age”. In fact, the centrality of Nemedias to the Hyborian Age is attested to by the fact that

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<sup>80</sup> Aquilonia is the only Hyborian nation described as multi-national in great detail, where the Gundermen, are, by the map, a metaphor for Middle England; where the Bossonians are a metaphor for the Irish of the British Isles; where the men of Tauran are the metaphor for the Welsh and Cornish; and where the bulk of Aquilonia is France and a bit of Belgium.



the Conan tales are ostensibly a narration or a chapter of “The Nemedian Chronicles”. The fact that Nemedia occupies on the Hyborian map almost exactly the territory of Germany makes it Germany’s Hyborian Age metaphor. The fact that the name “Nemedian” is taken from a villainous people of Irish legend gives us the certainty that Howard intended Nemedia to be the romance antagonists of his Hyborian Age. The Roman trappings and nomenclature applied to Nemedia in the stories themselves are not only reflective of the fact that the terms Germany and the *Reich* (the Empire) were synonymous in Howard’s day and thus suggested, particularly through the title of *Kaiser* (derived from the Latin “Caesar”) a Roman association, but are also reflective of the neo-Roman pageantry of fascism as manifested by Hitler’s Nazi Party (itself inspired by neo-Imperial Roman Italian fascism). The fact that Howard singles out Nemedia to be a major threat to Conan’s rule of Aquilonia, and portrays it in this sentence as a nation at war with all the major nations of the Hyborian Age is both a metaphoric reference to Germany’s Herculean effort to fight off the world in World War I and a prophetic foreshadowing that Germany would be in this position again.

The Æsir are conspicuous in this sentence because their name immediately evokes mythic and divine associations. We immediately think of the Nordic war gods Thor and Odin and of the last stronghold of Germanic paganism, Scandinavia. The Æsir are presented as the only allies of Nemedia – but it is significant (and all the more so from a prophetic perspective) that they are bought: that they are not an intrinsic part of Nemedia. In this sentence, while Nemedia is able to keep the Hyborians at bay by itself, it requires the superhuman intervention implied by the term Æsir to defend itself from its even more powerful opponents, the far-western Picts and the far-eastern Hyrkanians.

The Hyrkanians are the Hyborian Age metaphor for the Russians. Hyrkania does occupy the sprawling position of Russia on the Hyborian Age map, and the fact that they are identified in this sentence as the riders of the east is testament to the horse imagery associated with the Russian steppe. The role of the Hyrkanians here in this line has Howard speaking in the prophetic mode, for although Russia had not proven to be a fearsome force in World War I, she took on a greater and more menacing aura with the daring adoption of revolutionary communism that threatened – and intended – to sweep the world.

The Picts, as Howard's enduring childhood favourites<sup>81</sup>, naturally become the metaphor for the United States. Not only do they represent the most westerly people of the Hyborian Age, a story like "Beyond the Black River", with its clear referencing of the American frontier, shows the process whereby the Picts become the metaphor for the United States. The same process whereby, historically, brutal white settlers wiped out indigenous peoples only to name their settlements and local geography after them is at work here, for Howard's lifelong partiality for the Picts allows him to take these stand-ins for Indians in "Beyond the Black River" and make them a metaphor for the United States in general.

While this featured sentence to some extent replays, in the metaphor of the history of the Hyborian Age, World War I (Germany not being conquered by the Allies), the spiritual addition of the Æsir and the newly over-arching power of the swordsmen of the West, the Picts – as opposed to the Hyborians – and the impressive might of the riders of the East, the Hyrkanians, suggests something that was absent in World War I. The Russians in World War I were never on the advance against Germany's eastern border (except at the very beginning until Tannenberg), and the Americans, although decisive in World War I, did not overshadow England and France the way the United States did in World War II. More significantly, the pivotal role of the Æsir in the Hyborian Age metaphor points to the role of Nordic-Germanic mythology in powering Nazi Germany to its military successes (as we have seen to some extent in previous chapters and which we shall see even more in the coming chapters). In the prophetic Hyborian Age metaphor, Howard sets up the end game showdown of World War II as it is popularly understood: the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. vs. Nazi Germany. However, he wrongly forecasts the conclusion of the contest, for in the Hyborian Age previously unconquered Nemedea uses the Æsir to successfully resist the newly dominant power of the western Picts (metaphoric Americans) and the eastern Hyrkanians (metaphoric Russians). The reason for this prophetic disparity in what is otherwise an

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<sup>81</sup> Howard developed a fascination with the mysterious Picts at a young age and they play a prominent part in his romance stories. One of his first romance heroes, Bran Mak Morn, is a Pictish barbarian king fighting to stave off the encroachment of Roman civilization. In the Conan stories the Picts are identified as the farthest western people, and Conan encounters them in "Beyond the Black River". In this part of the Hyborian Age, the Picts receive their textual apotheosis from Howard as he elevates them to a major geo-political player that conquers all the Hyborian nations – except Nemedea.

impressive foreshadowing of the decade to come rests with the inability of the barbarian Germanic myth to take hold within German society to the extent that it would have the decisive effect of the Æsir mercenaries in Howard's Hyborian Age metaphor. This is not to imply that the re-introduction of pagan Germanic spirituality in Nazi Germany was not a major factor in helping to create the fearsome fanatical power of the Nazi regime – particularly the SS – but it could not achieve what its proponents thought it could, and what Howard metaphorically prophesied it could, because even Howard could not have suspected that this Nazi Germany could have horrific, Xaltotun-like plans.

The ability to see the future is an ancient human desire, and all cultures exhibit the existence of prophecy, whether it be ancient Israel with prophets like Isaiah, or the ancient Greeks with the Sibyl at Delphi. The recurring prophet character of ancient Greek drama, Tiresias, reveals to us both the supernatural and ordinary mortal intuitive nature of the prophet, particularly in *Antigone*. As Tiresias explains to Kreon, he looks for signs in nature and interprets them; in the case of Kreon's crime of leaving the slain Argives to rot outside the gates of Thebes, putrid bird guts point to the catastrophe to ensue from Kreon's crime. The idea that prophecies are linked to mysterious signs/signifiers that constitute a secret language is extant in the still current practice in various Christian denominations of speaking in tongues, and is, in fact, at the basis of writing itself.

That writing is a form of magic – which the English verb “to spell” strongly suggests – is most famously demonstrated in Germanic mythology/spirituality. The chief Germanic god, known, depending on the specific dialects of the various Germanic tribes, as Wotan, Wodan, Woden or Odin, sacrificed himself on Yggdrasill, the World Tree, for nine days and nine nights to gain the magical secret of writing: the runes. This connection between writing, magic, prophecy and its divine origin is still extant today in the German world for “letter”: “Buchstabe”. This word literally means “beech stave”, for runes were originally inscribed on beech sticks which Germanic shamans/prophets would cast for their oracles. All cultures founded by Germanic tribes have this connection between writing and prophecy at their core, and this dissertation's object is, in fact, to help explain the continued power of the written world to “spell” the world.

In the century or so leading up to Howard' prophetic utterances in “The Hyborian Age”, written prophecies about the future had great

power over the entire world. Marx and Engels' prophecy of a working class revolution that would sweep away the last vestiges of feudalism and the capitalism that was rising to replace it literally changed the world. Rosa Luxemburg's prediction of the credit meltdowns that would destroy capitalism are still highly relevant, and there are many textual predictions of both World War I and World War II, including this prophecy from Upton Sinclair's 1927 novel, *Oil* where he speaks of "Tearing Germans away from their own land and giving them to Frenchmen, giving Austrians to Italians, Russians to Poles – so on through a long list of blunders; condemning millions of people to live under governments which they feared and despised, and thus making certain they would revolt, and throw Europe into uproar again!" (in Trout 2010: 5) After Germany's World War I collapse, both Ernst Jünger and Adolf Hitler predicted – and agitated for – Germany's nationalistic revival. While Hitler made his position abundantly clear on who the internal enemies of Germany were in *Mein Kampf* – Jews, Marxists and the bourgeoisie – he also denounced in that book a major threat to his leadership of the German national revival: scholars of Germanic mythology and culture.

The fact that Hitler, alongside his predictable and ignorant rantings against Jews, Communists and bourgeois citizens, takes specific aim at the promoters of a return to the values and traditions of Germany's barbarian ancestors reveals the key-function of this "Æsir principle" and the need to seize it, possess it, and direct it. We can see this process played out in and around the magazine *Germanien*. This gathering place for those scholars and lay people in Germany after World War I who looked to the barbarian past for the source of national renewal was of such importance, as we have noted, that the SS branch *Abnenerbe* took control of it.

Howard's own European heritage had both Celtic and Germanic (English and Danish) strains, and he, like everyone else in the Germanic diaspora, had inherited over a thousand years of Christian heritage. This spiritual conflict comes to a textual head for Howard in "Marchers of Valhalla", where Howard replays the battle between Christianized Celts and Germanic-pagan Vikings in Ireland. Howard's relating of this Christian Celtic victory is symbolic of an inner struggle to establish his identity vis-à-vis his barbarian past:

Another instinctive feeling of mine is that of kinship with the Scandinavian peoples of my English line, rather than the Anglo-Saxon stock. I suppose that any man with English

blood in him has a good deal of the Saxon in his veins, yet I have never felt any kinship with the Jutes, Angles and Saxons who made the first Teutonic invasion of Britain. My sense of personal placement in the Isles centers mainly in Ireland and Scotland; what connection I do feel with England begins with the Danish invasions. (in Burke)

That Cimmeria on the Hyborian Age map corresponds with the North Sea, central Norway, central Sweden, Scotland, parts of the Danelaw coast of Northern England and northern Denmark is reflective of this sense Howard had of his Germanic heritage, and strengthens the case for his personal identification with Cimmeria.

What ultimately makes this one sentence from “The Hyborian Age” a failed, or incomplete, prophecy is the mythic tragedy narrative so often intertwined with things Germanic. While the Germanic English capitalized (once their internal strife had been quelled) on the excellent defensive position of their island, and the Germanic Danes, Dutch, Flemish and Icelanders were able to cope with their diminishing geopolitical roles without a tragic Ragnarokian catastrophe, the national narrative of the Germanic Swedes and Germans did come to express the Ragnarok/Götterdämmerung dynamic of Germanic spirituality. The Swedes, once one of Europe’s great powers, were effectively destroyed as a major geo-political player by the Great Northern War of 1700-1721, which saw Russia rise to take its place. Germany, long-divided and nationally at the mercy of the intrigues of the various German kingdoms (which did not balk at offering ethnic German territory to foreign powers like France), came late onto the larger geopolitical scene, but ended up writing its mythic Germanic tragedy narrative with the Ragnarokian scenarios of World War I and World War II.

The geopolitical reality of 1933-1936, which Howard’s “The Hyborian Age” metaphorically addresses, is given a properly tragic and Ragnarokian impetus which is not entirely evident to the world at large at this point by the attempt to graft selected aspects and interpretations of barbarian Germanic spirituality onto German society by the NS regime, particularly the SS, in order to carry out Hitler’s racist and genocidal agenda. This Xaltotun-like plan was too monstrous for anyone to consider as actually occurring, including many within Germany, including many Jews. The attempt by the Nazis to transcend the civilization vs. barbarism debate through a Nietzschean revaluation of all values was doomed to tragic failure and to hideous consequences. This monstrous

mutation of barbarian Germanic spirituality was used by Himmler to justify a cowardly slaughter of unarmed civilians, and this was precisely what neither Howard nor anyone else could predict. Again and again one reads in the source material that people did not take Hitler's extreme anti-Semitism seriously, either before or after he came to power. The suspicion, within Nazi Germany, of the even more monstrous deeds behind the open terror of the SA and Gestapo was the subject of rumours.

Without knowledge of this, the political prophecy of the highlighted sentence from "The Hyborian Age" is one where the Nemedians are able to successfully employ the Æsir to hold off the Picts and Hyrkanians. In Germany, monstrous anti-Semitism cancelled this "Æsir effect" because the Holocaust demanded repeated violations of the very essence of barbarian Germanic spirituality, from the "Guestright" – the right of any stranger to ask for refuge in any Germanic home and, once granted, to be protected by the host's honour and life – to the legal character of any verbal utterance – epitomized by the most ancient Germanic god, Tyr/Tiw/Tue, laying his hand in the mouth of the Fenris Wolf – and to the explicit injunction in *Lokis Flyting* to banish those trying to bring strife into a community. Such transgressions are what Howard's prophecy does not – and cannot – account for.

That the appeal to barbarian Germanic heritage and spirituality did have a substantial effect in Nazi Germany is borne out by the SS's relatively successful attempt to recruit volunteers from other Germanic nations. Precisely through an appeal to a common barbarian Germanic heritage were these volunteers recruited, and the power of this appeal was such that the most effective unit fighting inside Berlin in April of 1945 was the Charlemagne Battalion, a group of French SS volunteers who could prove their Germanic lineage. The Charlemagne Battalion was a unit of the SS Nordland Division, which was an SS division composed mainly of volunteers from Scandinavia, Holland, Belgium and France. That this pan-Germanic appeal, this "Æsir effect", was not as decisively successful in real life as it was in Howard's prophecy can be traced to its perversion through the monstrous racist ideology of the Nazi regime – something that Howard could not have suspected when he committed suicide in 1936.



## **X. Romance Dreams and Illusions (1936-1938)**

### **X.1. “A Elkins Never Surrenders” (1936)**

#### X.1.1. The Laughability of Romance

Around the time that the Conan tales were at the height of their popularity, Howard was also writing satiric Texan tall tales. This is not a well-known aspect of his current fame as a popular culture writer, but the fact that Howard aspired to be a satiric writer is suggested not only by his successes in this *mythos* toward the end of his career, but by the satiric tone of his earliest writings, and by his favourable comments about the work of his fellow *Weird Tales* pulp-fiction writer, Clark Ashton Smith: “Smith’s sweep of imagination and fantasy is enthralling, but what captivates me most is the subtle, satiric humor that threads its delicate way through so much of his work – a sly humor that equals the more subtle touches of Rabelais and Petronius” (Howard 2006b: 114). This comment suggests Howard’s admiration for the great writers of irony and satire, and another correspondent told Howard of his satiric work, “This is great stuff. You’ll make the big slicks or the quality mags; this is real, the rest is just routine money making” (Price 146).

There are several factors to consider in analyzing these stories where Howard departs from using the romance *mythos* as his narrative first layer of form and plunges instead into the *mythos* of satire/irony. Firstly, one factor that must be considered is the one arising from the discussion of *The Hour of the Dragon*, namely the political implications of the strong-man populist leader, which Howard’s South was seeing in Huey Long of Louisiana, and Europe was experiencing in Hitler and Mussolini. The Elkins tall tales, particularly this one, can be read as unconscious attempts to counter-act the disturbing fascist political dynamic of the Conan tales and, simultaneously, as an acknowledgement of criticisms like Bloch’s. These criticisms are related to those social „[...] Situationen [,] in denen der Auftritt *mit* Rüstung unfreiwillig komisch wirkt, in denen ungerüstet zu sein angemessener wäre und die soldatische Montur zum Indiz des heroischen Unsinnns wird, weil sie die Ambition aufrechterhält, sinnvoll zu sein“ (Lethen 91). In other words, not everyone in the Post World War I world moved away from the initial



ironic assessment of the war and warriors and of Versailles, nor did everyone adopt the *Schamkultur Verhaltenslehren* and the *kalte persona* as Lethen points out when he notes how: „die übertriebene Bejahung der Kultur der Äußerlichkeit das übermächtige Fortdauern der »Schuldkultur« nicht auszublenden vermag“ (Lethen 32). Artists like Brecht could look at expressions of the popular romance paradigm being sold to the masses in both the United States and Germany – one the one hand by capitalists and their *Kulturindustrie* feeding off the proletariat, and on the other by a capitalist society similarly motivated but with the added *Kultur der Niederlage* accent on the nationalist revival – and find them, and the seriousness with which they are presented, laughable. Howard, as we shall see, essentially admits the laughable aspects of his *kalte persona* heroes with his Texan tall tales.

While most of Howard's works can be interpreted according to Frye's ideas of mythic narrative patterns of the romance *mythos*, Howard's tall-tales are exemplars of the irony/satire *mythos*. When considering Howard's tall tales it must be noted that they represent a substantial body of his work, and they constituted the greatest writing success in his lifetime as they were his only writings to appear collected as a book during his life, 1936's *A Gent from Bear Creek*.

### X.1.2. Adopting the *Mythos* of Satire

“A Elkins Never Surrenders” first saw print in an edited form in the September 1936 issue of *Cowboy Stories* (Gentzel 2006: i). The tale thus dates to the latter part of Howard's career and represents a later development in Howard's art, particularly the yearning Howard revealed in his letters to become a more ‘serious’ artist: one who, it was conjectured as part of the reaction to his suicide in June of 1936, may well have developed into an important regional Texas author.

Frye's very first paragraph in his section on “The *Mythos* of Winter: Irony and Satire” provides support for the idea that “A Elkins Never Surrenders” is structured according to this *mythos*. Howard, a practiced master of the romance in his Kull, Conan, Bran Mak Morn, and Solomon Kane tales (among many others), introduces his hero Breckinridge Elkins with all the trappings of romance, including the central ingredient of romance, the quest. Breck's pap (father) lays the quest on him in no uncertain terms:

“The Garfields is havin' trouble with another family, and while

they ain't ast for assistance, I ain't one to stand by and let my kinfolks be imposed on. Uncle Joel was always too blame peaceable for his own good. You go and take charge, and don't listen to no talk about treaties or compromises. With a Elkins,' says pap, h'isting his jug, 'it's war to the bloody end! Git goin'.' (Howard 2006b: 1)

Howard is also not remiss in quickly supplying the ostensible romance hero's requisite special qualities that elevate him above the common run of men when Breck proves his manly drinking prowess while waiting for the stage coach. And yet these two elements of the romance are simultaneously undermined by Howard and the parody of the romance form is established as the quest is initiated by a swearing drunkard and the hero distinguishes himself by his ability to drink alcohol. Howard further undermines the romance *mythos* by denying the reader the ability to identify with the hero who is supposed to carry the reader's values. The subverting of this convention occurs when Breck essentially threatens to shoot the innocent stage coach driver for not agreeing with Breck's uninformed opinion that the judge who decided against his Arizona relatives was corrupt.

"A Elkins Never Surrenders" begins as a parody of romance and exhibits elements that fit Frye's definition of satire. This text is satiric, by Frye's criteria, because we don't have complete realism of content in this tall tale, as Breck's picking up of the horse trough demonstrates (Howard 2006b: 4) as do other feats of superhuman strength throughout the story. Breck's unnatural strength fulfills the satirical criteria of at least token fantasy<sup>82</sup>, and Frye's further defining criterium that satire exhibit elements of the grotesque is present in the tale as well, for Breck's ironic pursuit of family honour ends up terrorizing two innocent families and the entire town of Sawtooth, Arizona. There is also the requisite humour in this satiric text – absurd humour of the slapstick variety. Most importantly, the satirist's object of attack is textually present, and the attack aimed at this object by Howard's satire is prompted by clear moral standards that represent a challenge to the extant hierarchy of values.

One of the central themes of "A Elkins Never Surrenders" is the American frontier phenomenon of feuding, and more specifically it is the culture of violent family feuding that is the object of Howard's attack.

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<sup>82</sup> The term 'fantasy' is to be understood here in its every day definition, not its definition as a literary genre.

This issue is addressed directly by the main character, Breck, at the climax of the story. At this point Breck has wreaked havoc among the innocent people of Sawtooth – “...I gathered as many as I could in my arms and squeeze them till their ribs caved in, and swept the canyon floor with their carcasses and tromped on the fallen” (Howard 2006b: 10) – and has seemingly caused the deaths of Joseph Guarfeel’s sons. Breck excuses himself with the thought, “But feuds is like that” (Howard 2006b: 10). This comment is offensive to the reader, for the reader in this parody of romance does not feel that its ostensible hero, Breck, carries her or his values, and the reader early on begins to identify with the beleaguered Guarfeel family, particularly Joseph. This transference, as Fluck would describe it, underlines that it is feuding itself that both writer and audience agree on as being reprehensible, and when Guarfeel angrily insists to Breck that he was willing to let the case against the Clantons drop and accept the decision of the court, Breck’s subsequent outburst gives us a sense of the totality of Howard’s satirical target: “I’m here to uphold the family honor, and I upholds it in spite of you! We fights this feud to the finish, and you stays right here and helps me, by golly!” (Howard 2006b: 11) In choosing this traditional aspect of the frontier mentality to criticize, Howard, as a Texan, Southern, and Southwestern writer, is further demonstrating his willingness to set himself off from the mainstream and textually propose an alternate hierarchy of values. In a time and place where lynchings of blacks was still commonplace, this satiric attack on vigilante justice is a significant statement. That this issue struck a nerve in Howard’s world – even as late as 1968 – is suggested by the 1968 serialization of the tale in *The Summit County Journal* (Gentzel 2006: i).

### X.1.3. Aspects of the First Phase of Satire

Frye identifies the first phase of the *mythos* of irony/satire as “Satire of the Low Norm” (Frye 226), and Howard’s satiric text can be read in terms of Frye’s definition of this phase. To recall Frye’s injunction that this first phase of satire recommend conventional life and “an avoidance of all illusion and compulsive behaviour, a reliance on observation and timing rather than aggressiveness” (Frye 226), one can read Howard’s tall tale as an overt message to the reader to do precisely those things. All of Breck’s errors result from his illusion that he is

defending his family honour, and he sets every blunder in motion through his overly aggressive, compulsive behaviour. If he had relied instead on observation, he would have realized early on that he had mistaken Joseph Guarfeel for his uncle Joel Garfield; at the very least, if he had a sense of timing he would have observed that his ostensible relatives were actually trying to counter every escalation in the feud that he set in motion. The Guarfeels have accepted the wisdom of the satire *mythos*: the world has its injustices and follies and it is undisplaceable. Mrs. Guarfeel displays this early on: “‘But I thought that trouble was settled,’ said the old lady. ‘They won the case – ’” (Howard 2006b: 4). Joseph Guarfeel reaffirms this later: “‘I didn’t wanta fight the Clantons!’ he shrieked. ‘I was willin’ to let things drop!’” (Howard 2006b: 4) That this acceptance is the case is also apparent to the reader early on, and the Guarfeels’ struggle, to have Breck accept things as they are, acts as a counsel of prudence to the reader. The Guarfeels accept, as Breck does not, that it will upset the social order to feud over the issue and that, in order to keep their balance in Sawtooth, and indeed to keep all of Sawtooth on an even keel, they will keep their mouths shut about the issue.

Of particular significance in any satire, including this one, is the Greek term for a character type, *iron*, which Frye defines in several passages of his book. In a satire where there is a clear object of attack, Frye reminds us that “we have an inconspicuous, unobtrusive *iron* standard contrasted with the *alazons* or blocking humours who are in charge of society” (Frye 227). This *iron* standard is embodied by the Guarfeels’ acceptance of their lot in the dispute with the Clantons, and thus the authority of the court. Since the satire puts the reader on the side of the retreating, self-deprecating *irons* that the Guarfeels are beside Breck’s *alazon* position, this is the prudence that Howard is counselling the reader to adopt. Breck’s superhuman strength and ability to dominate any situation with his violence makes him the *alazon* in charge of society as soon as he arrives in Sawtooth, something he makes explicit after defying Sawtooth’s highest authority – the sheriff – and sweeping the street with him, “‘I’m hereby announcin’ that Breckinridge Elkins is takin’ charge of the Garfield forces!’ I roared between shots. ‘The war now begins in earnest! Step out and declare yoreselves! Them which ain’t for me is agains’t me!’” (Howard 2006b: 3). Thus, he does indeed represent a humour (i.e. the arrogant, self-deceived impostor) who blocks the *iron*’s standard from establishing itself.

The position of *alazon* – who, as Frye notes, is often the *iron*'s victim (!) – is a central tension in the text. Frye identifies the *alazon* with an imposter. In “A Elkins Never Surrenders” the entire humour of the tale is based on the fact that we have, in a sense, two imposters. To Joseph Guarfeel, Breckinridge Elkins is an imposter claiming to be his nephew; to Breck, Joseph Guarfeel is an imposter claiming to be his uncle, as he makes clear at the conclusion: “So you takes advantage of my ignorance!” I raved. ‘You inviegles me into fightin’ yore battles! You grey-whiskered old sarpent, hang yore head in shame! I oughta shoot you for imposin’ on a innocent stranger!” (Howard 2006b: 12). This, however, is further evidence of Breck being the *alazon* blocking humour, for here he does not even understand that he mistook Guarfeel for his relative and would not hear otherwise. Joseph Guarfeel is forced into the role of self-deprecating *iron* by Breck’s folly, super-natural strength and violence, and much of the humour, and the pleasure, in reading “A Elkins Never Surrenders” comes at the expense of Joseph Guarfeel. The *alazon* Breck, who goes home having failed to uphold family honour – at least as he sees it – believes he has been victimized by the *iron* Guarfeel.

Breck’s identification as an *alazon* character is strengthened by the definition of *pathos* that Frye gives in terms of the *alazon* (Frye 39). Breck is, in fact, excluded from the social group of the Guarfeel family because of their attempts to subvert his feuding no matter how hard Breck tries to belong. They know that he is an imposter and they refuse to allow him to enter their social group which is Breck’s satiric *pathos*.

Breck’s *alazon* character type can, to some extent, be identified as a *miles gloriosus* type. While Breck certainly exhibits the braggart side of this character type when he defies the U.S. army – “I’m Breckinridge Elkins, the fightin’est critter that ever come down from the Humbolt Mountains! I can rassel a grizzly b’ar, swing a mountain lion by the tail, and out-bite a rattlesnake!” (Howard 2006b: 12) – and he certainly puts on a good show throughout the tale, there is a lot of substance to his bragging, and thus he is not completely the *miles gloriosus* for he is not “a man of words rather than deeds” (Frye 172). Although he is finally exposed as an impostor and “swindled” of his feud by the Guarfeels and the people of Sawtooth, he is not beaten or ridiculed as the *miles gloriosus* often is.

To return to the idea of satire as a parody of romance, Frye notes that the *iron* vs. *alazon* conflict can be characterized as a David vs. Goliath conflict (Frye 227-228). Certainly Breck is a Goliath to the people of

Sawtooth when he carries off – and returns – their cannon, and also to the Guarfeel family (“...the young folks looked at me like the sight of a man six and a half foot tall was something onusual” (Howard 2006b: 4)). The ironic theme of giant-killing is evident in this tale in that the ostensible hero, Breck, is the giant that must somehow be disposed of if the Guarfeel family and Sawtooth itself are to survive. The David and Goliath satiric scheme that Frye presents is not played out exactly in the way Frye describes. True, the gnat-like people of Sawtooth, including the Guarfeel family, try to somehow stop the Goliath from terrorizing them, but every failed attempt to stop the feud enrages Breck further, and he is never “polished off at leisure” – as Frye states occurs in this phase of satire. In this deviation from this satiric formula, Howard demonstrates his lingering identification with the *kalte persona* type of hero that Breck represents, for Breck is not thoroughly beaten and humiliated as a satiric Goliath *alazon* would be.

#### X.1.4. Aspects of the Second and Third Phases of Satire

One can also read “A Elkins Never Surrenders” from the perspective of the second phase of the *mythos* of irony/satire, the ‘Quixotic Phase of Satire’, for Howard’s tale exhibits aspects of more than one phase of this particular *mythos*. Frye’s description of the transition from the first phase to the second – “the logic of satire itself drives it on from its first phase of conventional satire on the unconventional to a second phase in which the sources and values of the conventions themselves are objects of ridicule” (Frye: 229) – suggests that Howard’s object of attack is not complete in the satirist counselling the reader to observe existing social conventions, such as respecting the rule of law, by satirizing the by-1936-unconventional vigilante-style family feuding. Howard’s position as satirist suggests that the origin of those social conventions that he seems to be counselling the reader to respect are themselves open to criticism.

If one takes Sawtooth, Arizona as the world of the tale, it seems clear from the general opposition of the citizens – Guarfeels and Clantons included – to Breck’s insistence on feuding, that the convention in Sawtooth is respect for the rule of law, and that the unconventional is feuding. Breck’s obsessive and irrational sense of family honour, which justifies the feuding to him, is the source of the absurd humour of the satire, and the reader is led to identify with the harried people of

Sawtooth through this humour.

However, if we take Breck's home in the Humbolt Mountains as the world of the story – for the tale begins there and, seemingly, ends there – then we have a different constellation of conventional and unconventional. It is made quite clear that where Breck is from, the convention is to feud. Following this logic, according to Frye's statement, the unconventional that is being satirized – according to this perspective – is the self-deprecation and the downplaying of family honour that goes along with bowing to the rule of law. The idea that there may be a double satirical target in "A Elkins Never Surrenders" seems to find support in the *Deus ex machina* climax of the story, when Breck gets a letter from his real uncle Joel Garfield in Rifle River, Arizona. His uncle supports the convention of feuding when he writes, "We have done run the family we was feudin with clean out of the country" (Howard 2006b:12). The idea that there are two worlds with opposing conventions is strengthened when Breck escapes Sawtooth and heads to Rifle River.

The second phase of satire's correspondence with the second phase of comedy and its escape to a more congenial society without transforming the main society of the tale applies here, as Breck escapes Sawtooth and its unacceptable conventions and heads to Rifle River and – presumably – eventually back home: i.e. to societies whose conventions he can accept. Focussing more clearly on the satiric counterpart of this comedy phase, we can see Breck as a successful rogue in that he brings the terror of the feud to Sawtooth despite the town's opposition, defies everyone, including the U.S. army, and escapes. He does make the conventional Sawtoothers look foolish in the process.

The ambiguity that arises from this observation and the possibility that there are two objects of attack, both sides of the coin, is consistent with the second phase of satire. It is also consistent with Howard's emotional investment in the barbarian discourse, which has led, in his romance texts, to his valorization of the barbarian perceived as a *Schamkultur*, *kalte persona* type. Howard's textual refusal to fully repudiate Breck with Breck's refusal to fulfill the ultimate fate of the *alazon*, and with a textual maintenance of two societies with diametrically-opposed conventions, are signs that his critiques of civilization deriving from his perspective on the barbarian discourse are not dismissed. The text does, in this, demonstrate Howard's ability to himself embody the self-deprecating *éiron*. Instead of taking a position

on feuding based on a *near*-irrational sense of family honour versus prudently accepting the rule of law, Howard pokes fun at both sides: through the victimized *eiron* Guarfeel, who is driven to madness by the end – “At this he become hysterical and started laughing in a most frightful manner” (Howard 2006b: 12) – and through the deluded and self-obsessed *alazon* Goliath figure, Breckinridge Elkins.

Significantly, Frye suggests that the *eiron* character of a satire may, in fact, be the author himself. That Howard may be taking an *eiron* role by, on the one hand, poking fun at his romance *mythos kalte persona* characters and, on the other, by not totally repudiating them, needs to be considered in light of a manifestation of the third phase of satire, the “tall talk” of the folklore boaster (Frye: 236). The key ambiguity that Howard expresses about Breck’s *alazon* status and fate finds expression in the fact that the ostensible *eiron*, Howard the author, *narrates the story as if he were Breckinridge Elkins!* In doing this, he expressly links the roles of *eiron* and *alazon*, reflecting the tension he feels between the laughability of his super-heroic *kalte persona* heroes and how seriously he takes them elsewhere as manifestations of his perspective on the barbarian discourse.

### X.1.5. Conclusion

While this close-reading has focussed on establishing the mythic first layer of form as a first and second phase satire, the story’s two other layers of form are also significant to determine the text’s political unconscious meaning. What links Howard’s Breckenridge Elkins satires to his Conan the Cimmerian romances is the use of the *Neophantastik Schreibweise*. Breck’s superhuman strength is never textually questioned – it simply is, and there is no *Unschlüssigkeit* about it. It is this *Neophantastik* element that is reminiscent of Howard’s most thorough and successful use of this *Schreibweise*, and suggests a commentary on those stories. The third layer of form that Howard uses here is the popularly recognized Western genre. This story has all the elements traditionally associated with the genre. While the mythic patterning of the Western is more commonly that of romance, Howard’s use of the genre in a satiric vein allows him to textually propose an altered hierarchy of values.

The ambiguity arising from both a first and second phase reading of the text, and the existence of two societies with differing conventions also points to the ideological tension Kitses identifies at the heart of the



Western genre and how this tension is expressed through a series of antinomies headed by the opposing terms “The Wilderness” and “Civilization” (Kitses 65). The story’s dynamic, and its satiric double target, can thus be read as an expression of the Western genre which, according to Kitses, equates the individual with the wilderness and gives the individual the qualities of freedom, honour, self-knowledge and integrity. Opposed to this, the community is equated with civilization and qualities such as restriction, institutions, illusion and compromise (Kitses 65). The Western also acknowledges the opposite wherein the individual is associated with self-interest and solipsism, while civilization and culture are associated with democracy, knowledge, legalism, idealism, refinement and humanity (Kitses 66). These opposing visions are at the heart of Howard’s satire, and explain why both *viron* and *alazon* consider each other imposters at the end.

The conflict and tension in this satire is also linked to Howard’s Southern *Kultur der Niederlage* heritage, which is suggested when Breckenridge Elkins insists on defying the authority of the U.S. army called out to rein him in. The narrator-who-is-Breckenridge Elkins connects the issue of respect for social conventions and the rule of law vs. feuding based on family honour to the Civil War: “I’ll muss up them blue uniforms wuss’n my pap did at Bull Run!” (Howard 2006b: 12) This statement suggests that the dynamic centred on his laughed-at (by the reader), but ultimately undefeated, *alazon* position is reflective of Howard’s continuing self-identification as a Southerner and an inheritor of the Southern culture of defeat, yet one whose variance from the Southern mainstream is evident in issues like slavery and the championing of the barbarian.

“A Elkins Never Surrenders” is not a denigration of the romance narrative paradigm that imbues the American national narrative, and that the South identifies with since Wilson’s declaration of war on Germany. One could argue that the story represents this New South mentality by helping to break up stereotypes and fossilized beliefs – or at least to admit them. The satire can be read on the one hand as a warning of the danger of an exaggerated sense of the collective, and on the other the danger of the strong man leader attempting to push the collective into a self-destructive aggression, which thus requires, paradoxically, a sense of the collective to resist the strong man. The resulting double target of this satire shows Howard to his fans as they came to expect him – a proponent of the romance hero whose personal sense of honour helps

him overcome overwhelming odds. Yet, the ultimate key in determining the meaning of the story is the *deus ex machina* ending where, in the tense stand-off between Breck and the U.S. army, it is a federal employee, the postmaster of Sawtooth, who asserts an authority that transcends the conflict. The postmaster represents the conventional reality of Sawtooth – and a post-Civil War unified United States – and the letter he delivers provides both an escape for Breck and an end to the carnage for the people of Sawtooth.

These satirical Westerns, begun in early to mid-1933, would prove to be Howard's most commercially successful stories (Louinet A21). Their three layers of form suggest that Howard acknowledged the criticisms and disturbing implications of his barbarian Conan character by having Breck embody those criticisms of a dangerous romantic fascism, and be thwarted by the collective from driving those negative impulses to their most destructive ends. The success of these stories at precisely this time in history shows just how necessary and timely this narrative balancing act between satire and romance, and between fascism and socialism, was.

## **X.2. “Vultures’ Sanctuary” (1936)**

In fact, a non-satiric Western that Howard published around this time reveals, more directly, this political balancing act. The ideological content of this narrative is such that one can read the story as a direct response to the Great Depression. While Howard had secured his petty-bourgeois economic niche by making a living writing stories of action and adventure, the great mass of the people of the United States (and Canada and Europe) were struggling, and often failing, to survive, living through the classic economic fall-out from capitalism's cyclical failures, where members of the petty bourgeoisie fell into the proletariat, and where much of the proletariat fell into the lumpenproletariat, sometimes taking their new, ex-petty bourgeois, comrades with them. And yet, in the midst of this climate of misery and privation (and sometimes starvation) there existed people who possessed fabulous wealth.

This is the social contradiction that Howard's western, “Vultures’ Sanctuary”, published in *Argosy* in 1936, attempts to symbolically resolve. As the analysis will show, the unambiguous nature of the text's symbolism and message shows a concern for the disadvantaged in the 1936 United States. It is significant that Howard chose the Western as

this story's third layer of form, for, as a Texan, the Western can be considered as the 'home genre' and its usage by Howard suggests a particular personal identification, as also suggested by "A Elkins Never Surrenders".

While Howard never directly identified himself as a socialist (Trout 2010: 5), his socialist sympathies come out in his correspondence with Lovecraft. This story, when read from the perspective of Jameson's second horizon of reading, presents us with the socialism ideologeme through characters that are given overt class markers in a process that Jameson describes as the ideologeme manifesting as a protonarrative, "a kind of ultimate class fantasy about the 'collective characters' which are the classes in opposition" (Jameson 1994: 87). Judith – before she becomes the romance *mythos*' damsel in distress – and her father are heading for the promised land, California, sometime in the 1860s or 1870s. Judith and her father represent the precarious petty bourgeoisie, faced with losing their economic niche and sliding into the proletariat or even the lumpenproletariat. They have enough capital – horses, a wagon and 100 dollars – to be able to relocate to California and hope for a petty bourgeois existence there. They are forced by necessity to come through Capitan, a desperate, crime-ridden town. It is in Capitan where Judith, through her naiveté, brings ruin down upon her family. Believing that she knew how to distinguish between oppressed and oppressor, she invites the Checotah Kid to share their petty bourgeois middle class niche, i.e. their wagon. The Kid, who is identified as an outlaw and who has just tried to swindle, kidnap and murder the text's romance protagonist, Big Mac, is a classic representative of that most reprehensible class in the eyes of Marx and Engels, the lumpenproletariat. As the lumpenproletariat are wont to do – sell themselves to the bourgeoisie – the Kid repays Judith's kindness by attempting to murder her father, steal or destroy their worldly possessions, and kidnap Judith with the object of selling her to the character representing the bourgeoisie, El Bravo. Through the agency of the Kid, Judith and her father are cast down into lumpenproletariat themselves. Like so many in the Depression, who lost everything and yet clung hopelessly to the faith that everything would be alright, Judith and her father are destitute. Her father lies dying on the side of the road like a beggar, and Judith goes from a position where she had some room to maneuver, both economically and socially, to one where she becomes a possession, literally, of speculators. The Kid, his economic fortunes now

on the rise, speculates that she will be his ticket into the safety of El Bravo's Fort Knox-like hideout. The Kid, however, is just a small fish among speculators, and he will lose everything, including his life.

Just as many of the wealthier capitalists did during the Depression, El Bravo, a.k.a. Garth Bissett, simply scoops up the Kid's capital – Judith – at no cost to himself (except for the bullets to kill the Kid). During the Depression, the wealthiest people in North America became even wealthier as smaller entrepreneurs failed and their property was swallowed up by the big bourgeoisie.

While Judith is literally experiencing the commodity reification that is central to social relations in the capitalist mode of production, proletarian/petty bourgeois cowboy Bill McClanahan, Big Mac, rejects petty criminal, and lumpenproletariat representative, Slip Ratner's invitation to join the cut-throat speculators and seize Judith for himself. Instead, Big Mac departs on a harrowing adventure to rescue Judith and save her father. In an irruption of the race discourse into the story that Howard clearly does not see as diminishing the romance protagonist, Big Mac bullies a Mexican peasant into caring for Judith's wounded father, offering a financial reward at the end of the process. This sequence demonstrates Mac's desire to help re-instate Judith and her father in their precarious middle-class niche, while at the same time reinforcing the Mexican's status as subservient to these white folks, although the peasant (i.e. the lower class) does stand to benefit from helping to literally nurse the petty bourgeois representative back to health.

In the most telling sequence of the entire story, Mac invades El Bravo's Fort Knox-like hideout. This is a symbolic enactment of the petty bourgeois dream to penetrate the walls of bourgeois privilege and get into all that cash. But Mac, whose hard work as a proletarian has enabled him to acquire enough capital to briefly occupy a petty bourgeois niche, is not there to help himself. He is there to rescue an impoverished representative of the petty bourgeoisie who is being held helpless in the midst of this wealth and power, Judith.

Mac is able to wreak vengeance on El Bravo and his henchmen, to strike a blow against the evil hoarders of wealth, as it were. But, he is unable to locate the money that El Bravo has hidden away. So, at the end of the day, he has rescued Judith and her father from the clutches of big money, but they are still condemned to join the lower classes in poverty. Mac then performs his most heroic deed, and the one in which the reader clearly apprehends the value hierarchy the text manifests: Mac

gives Judith and her father *his own* money, allowing them to think he is simply restoring to them what was taken from them. He has rescued a fellow member of the precarious middle class and has condemned himself to return to his gruelling proletarian job as a cowhand, denying himself his dream to become, at least temporarily, a member of a more leisured class with a vacation in San Francisco.

The message then, to a proletarian or petty bourgeois reader of the pulp fiction magazine *Argosy* in 1936, is one of class solidarity and a call to those who have money, however little it might be, to help those who do not, and to fight the corrupt bourgeoisie to ensure economic justice. In this tale, whose political consciousness is such that one need not even speak of a political unconscious analysis, one apprehends Grabes' concept of the *Veränderungspotential* of a text. Precisely such border-crossings, such explorations of wishes and fears, is what "Vultures' Sanctuary" does.

### **X.3. *Germanien* (1937)**

#### X.3.1. SS Control of *Deutsches Abnenerbe*

We can trace the tragic consequences of the uses and abuses of the barbarian discourse when we consider the importance the Nazis – and Himmler and the SS specifically – ascribed to controlling the barbarian discourse, particularly the mythic uses to which it could be put. This is demonstrated in the *Gleichschaltung* of the magazine *Germanien* and the related establishment of an institution dedicated to researching the Germanic past, *Deutsches Abnenerbe*.

SS Hauptsturmführer Dr. Plaßmann of the *Abnenerbe*, in his January 27<sup>th</sup>, 1937 letter to SS Hauptsturmführer Bruno Galke, demonstrated this process of *Gleichschaltung* when he related how he and SS Standartenführer Erwin Metzner („Siegelbewahrer des Reichsbauernrates“), had agreed to sideline a prominent *Abnenerbe* member, the academic Germanic professor Dr. Wirth, because of the positions and attitudes of Wirth and his “family” of long-haired students: „Es ist aber nicht möglich, daß ein solcher, auf rein subjektiven Empfindungen aufgebauter Familienkreis als Glied einer SS-mäßigen Organisation auftritt und arbeitet“ (Plaßmann 1937a: 2). After relating to Galke how Wirth would now be marginalized as „Ehrenvorsitzender“,

Platzmann noted of Metzner, apparently without realizing the irony in his phrasing, „Ihm leuchte ein, daß nur bei einem vertrauensvollen Zusammenarbeiten ohne irgendwelche Parteifronten das Ahnenerbe arbeiten und die Erwartungen des Reichsführers erfüllen könne“ (Platzmann 1937a: 4). The sidelining of Wirth is anything but an example of co-operation based on trust without factionalism.

The full extent of the SS's control of the *Ahnenerbe* is revealed in the constitution of „Das Ahnenerbe e.V.“ agreed upon on the 11th of March, 1937 in Berlin. Article 7 lists the organs of the *Ahnenerbe*: „Kuratorium“ (which oversees the *Ahnenerbe*), „Präsident“, „Reichsgeschäftsführer“, and Assembly of Members („Mitgliederversammlung“). Article 12 specifies that „Der Vorsitzende des Kuratoriums ist der Reichsführer SS“ and article 8 lists the powers of the „Vorsitzende“ of the „Kuratoriums“ (i.e. Himmler), including appointing and dismissing the president, his representatives, and the „Reichsgeschäftsführer“; appointing and dismissing members of the „Kuratorium“; the right to change the articles of the constitution; and the right to control the assets of the *Ahnenerbe* should it be disbanded (*Ahnenerbe* 2).

### X.3.2. “Hugin” and “Munin” Ask: „Widersagst Du dem Wodan?“

*Germanien*, by 1937 the official organ of the *Ahnenerbe*, is a relevant text source from the cultural archive as it constitutes a series of utterances in the barbarian discourse in the years before and during the war. A year after Howard's death and the publication of Jünger's *Afrikanische Spiele* (wherein Jünger replays the biographical significance of the Africa as the land of primal freedom motif by documenting the movement from romance to irony in a fictionalized account of his 16 year-old attempt to escape his petty bourgeois existence), a writer signing himself as „Hugin und Munin“ – “Thought and Memory”, the names of Odin's ravens (and likely a pseudonym for the newly installed SS editor of *Germanien*, Platzmann) – writes an article entitled „Widersagst Du dem Wodan?“.

This article is a rebuttal to *Midgards Untergang* by Bernhard Kummer, wherein that scholar attempts to diminish the role of the problematic figure of Wodan in Germanic spirituality by dismissing Wodan as an insignificant god associated with drunks and thieves. Hugin and Munin defend Wodan's Dionysian attributes:

Dabei hat Kummer vorher selbst gesagt, daß das Trinken religiösen Sinn hat, und daß die Ekstase im Trunk als religiöse Erhebung gilt. Zu solchen Urteilen kommt man aber, wenn man nach Art der Theologen Mythisches vernünftelnd mißt und moralische Werturteile daraus zurechtschneidert. Natürlich ist Wodan, ebenso wie bezeichnenderweise der griechische Dionysos, der Schöpfer des Rauschtrankes, weil er im ursprünglichen Bauern*mythos* ein Erntegott ist, der den *Mythos* des Kornes mit seinem Sterben und Wiedererstehen verkörpert. Das Sterben des Kornes aber und sein Wiedererstehen (im heiligen Brot und im Rauschtrank) ist ein uralter indogermanischer Mythos, und darum ist Wodan der Herr über die hingemähten Halme, wie über die hingemähten Krieger." (Hugin und Munin 164)

The fear of anti-Apollonian deities like Wodan and Dionysus stems from their unsettling penchant to reveal that the structures of everyday life, that everyday people cling to so desperately, can be easily swept away and are mere illusion. Plaßmann's utterance here in the barbarian discourse is to associate Wodan with Nietzsche's positive Dionysian type who embodies the restorative life power inherent in the ability to bridge life and death, particularly Dionysus himself who was known as the "twice born" (Graves 56) and the one who returns from death (Graves 104). In attempting to rescue Wodan/Wotan for the SS's re-introduction of Germanic spirituality, Plaßmann/Hugin und Munin argues, „Wenn man vollends Wodan als den Teufel erklärt, so führt man erst damit einen orientalischen Popanz in den germanischen Denkbereich ein, der nie darin vorhanden war, – bis die Kirche selbst in der zu Anfang erwähnten Formel diese Einschaltung vornahm“ (Hugin und Munin 165). The argument here is that the attempt to label Wodan and the Dionysian impulse he represents as "bad" (i.e. of the devil) – as the early Church did by demanding that Germanic converts answer the question that is the article's title in the affirmative – misses the point and brings an 'oriental' perspective on Germanic spirituality that is not applicable.

This, in effect, is a Nietzschean defense of a barbarian *Weltanschauung* that has a different hierarchy of values than that of Christianity. The argument is that Wodan transcends Christian concepts of good and evil, as did Dionysus. This basic position, however, is deflected by the meta-textual intrusion of the racism discourse and the ideology of National Socialism, and this reveals the catastrophic danger

of this line of argumentation: „Wenn man den Führer des Wilden Heeres (das doch zweifellos eine ur-indogermanische Vorstellung ist) zum „leibhaftigen Satan“ macht, so verfälscht man damit nicht nur eine gewaltige heroische Überlieferung im Kerne durch Einführung eines jüdisch-orientalischen Begriffes, man wertet damit unsere gesamte volkhafte Überlieferung herab – den der „leibhaftige Satan“ erscheint heute noch in unserem Julgebäck als Schimmelreiter – und das alles aus einer Grundeinstellung heraus, die man nicht anders als bürgerlich-pazifistisch nennen kann“ (Hugin und Munin 166). In re-claiming Wodan as a mythic romance hero – beyond good and evil precisely in Nietzsche’s sense – for National Socialist Germany, this quotation manages to cast almost all the facets of the NS internal enemy as the romance villain: Jews, the bourgeois, and pacifists.

Propelled by the aggression in such a line of argumentation, the writer downplays his own point that the barbarian Germanic Cimbri („Kimbern“) were only „landsuchende Bauern“ and argues, „In Wirklichkeit handelt es sich hierbei natürlich um ein hervorragendes Merkmal der nordischen Rasse, das durchaus mit einer seelischen Eigenschaft in Verbindung steht: der Fähigkeit zur kämpferischen Ekstase“ (Hugin und Munin 167). That the writer does this is because:

Es ist ein gefährlicher Irrweg, wenn man diese Seite des Germanen willkürlich von der anderen trennt und ihr sogar feindselig entgegengesetzt; wenn man den kämpferischen, den „ekstatischen“ Grundzug im Germanen ablehnt und statt dessen ein Ideal der „edlen Einfalt und stillen Größe“ aufzustellen sucht, das wir für das nordische Griechentum glücklich überwinden haben. Ein ebenso gefährlicher Irrtum aber ist es, zu behaupten, das Germanentum und sein Glaube sei an seinem eigenen inneren Defekt gestorben, und wenn man als Sinnbild dieses Defektes den zum Verfallstyp gestempelten Wodan herausstellt. Dann kommt man nämlich zu diesem historischen Schema: Wodan ist ein deutscher Gott, und mit ihm hat sich von Deutschland aus der innere Verfall zu den übrigen Germanen verbreitet. (Hugin und Munin 168)

Here we see the political unconscious motivation behind this line of argumentation, namely the German *Kultur der Niederlage* syndrome that needs to argue that the German collapse of 1918 – the implicit point of departure, not only for the drive to control the barbarian discourse, but for the whole romance *mythos* national renewal project of the NS state –



is not a result of inner weakness, but of ‘outside’ forces (particularly the “Jewish back-stabbers”). Here, Wodan and the Germanic barbarians with their *kämpferischen Ekstase* are metaphoric stand-ins for the German people and the German army of 1918.

The Nazi project to re-introduce Germanic spirituality into German society is inflected with this historical dynamic from the start. The writer of the article makes the *Kultur der Niederlage* motivation behind this process clearly apparent when he defends his writing of these lines by noting that „Sie sollen dazu beitragen, eine gefährliche und verderbliche falsche Frontstellung zu berichtigen; eine Frontstellung, die letzten Endes Deutschland, das ewige Schicksalsland des Germanentums und die Verkörperung des germanischen Reichsgedankens, als Herd des germanischen Verfalls hinstellt. Und dazu kann man nicht schweigen, wenn man der Erkenntnis deutschen Wesens dienen will“ (Hugin und Munin 168). If Germanic spirituality is to help power NS Germany to the *anagnorisis* of a new mythic German romance, one that will endeavour to bring in Europe’s other Germanic peoples, then the core of that spirituality, particularly the one that expounds the militarily useful states of being beyond good and evil and martial ecstasy – i.e. Wodan – must be defended.

This (albeit tainted) pro-Germanic-spirituality, June 1937, issue of *Germanien* appeared when resistance to the official push toward Germanic paganism such as Cardinal Faulhaber’s became too dangerous for the Nazis to ignore. The fact of the matter was that the German Christian heritage, however arguably originally alien to the Germanic spirit, and however brutally rammed down the throats of some of the tribes, had a one thousand year tradition in Germany. This new religion had, over time, become Germanic in the guise of the crusading knights, particularly the Teutonic Knights, and had effectively found a parallel reality in that the divine was also worshipped in the form of a god affixed to the wood to fulfill a mystic pact for knowledge and redemption. This cultural counter-weight to the attempt to forcibly expand pagan Germanic spirituality in Germany became evident on May 20th, 1937, when an SS Sturmbannführer (whose signature is illegible) responsible for Nordland-Verlag G.m.b.h. („Im Nordland-Verlag erscheint die halbmonatschrift »Nordland« Das Kampfblatt für Gottgläubiges Deutschtum“) writes to the same SS Sturmbannführer that Plaßmann corresponded with four months earlier, Bruno Galke: „Ich bestätige den Eingang des Eil- und Geheimschreibens und nahm davon Kenntnis, daß Reichsführer

angeordnet hat, künftig keinerlei Angriffe auf die Person des Jesus Christus vorzunehmen“ (Nordland-Verlag 1). This realization that the fundamental Christian resistance to Germanic spirituality, particularly in its racist NS/SS expression, was jeopardizing the entire regime was re-affirmed when, on June 28th, 1937 Himmler himself had to re-iterate the policy Nordland Verlag had acknowledged a month earlier in a letter to *Schulungsleiter* of *Weltanschauliche Schulung* and „alle SS-Führer bis zum Standartenführer abwärts“. Himmler commanded, „Bei der weltanschaulichen Schulung verbiete ich jeden Angriff gegen Christus als Person, da solche Angriffe oder die Beschimpfung von Christus als Juden unserer unwürdig und geschichtlich bestimmt unwahr sind“. He went on: „Ich wünsche, dass die SS-Männer durch Kenntnis der eigenen Geschichte unseres Vokes, der Vorgeschichte unseres Vokes, der Größe und Kultur unserer Ahnen, von dem Wert unseres eigenen Blutes und unserer Vergangenheit überzeugt sind, sodaß sie ganz von selbst in diesen Werten der Vergangenheit, Gegenwart und Zukunft wurzeln“ (Himmler 1937a: 1).

The July 1937 issue of *Germanien* begins with a brief article signed “Pl.” (Plaßmann, most likely) where he presents an 1862 eye-witness account of an encounter with Wodan’s *Wilde Jagd*. The man who claimed to have encountered Wodan’s Wild Hunt was known as a respected *Hochofendirektor* who never drank. The anecdote makes use of the *Unschlüssigkeit* moment of tension of the *Phantastik Schreibweise* as the people of the town refuse to believe what the *Hochofendirektor* relates to them. When the man goes to Baron von Bodelschwingh to explain himself, the unbelieving baron calls his huntsman to clear up the issue. The huntsman, however, confirms the man’s account with his own experience. This anecdote thus moves from the *Phantastik’s Unschlüssigkeit* to the *Neophantastik’s* presentation of the supernatural as fact. Pl. concludes the brief item in this *Neophantastik* sense with the line, „Wir wollen diese einwandfreie Überlieferung hiermit lediglich als Tatbestand bekanntgeben“ (Plaßmann 1937b: 192).

Such attempts to see Wodan/Wotan as an actual force in Germany and in the souls of the German people were taken seriously by Carl Jung that same year in his pamphlet *Wotan*. Jung describes Wotan in language reminiscent of Jünger’s presentation of the *Arbeiter Gestalt*: Wotan represents an archetypal figure of central importance to Germanic people. Connors, in citing Jung’s description of Wotan, adds an italicized emphasis that reveals the centrality of the barbarian discourse on both

sides of the Atlantic: Jung describes Wotan “as ‘a fundamental attribute of the German psyche, an irrational psychic factor which acts on the high pressure of civilisation like a cyclone and blows it away. *The Wotan-worshippers seem to have judged things more correctly than the worshippers of reason*” (Connors 107). The Anti-Appollonian, Dionysian Wotan-worshippers Jung writes of here are, arguably, the SS themselves, particularly *Abnenerbe* men like Plaßmann. Jung implies here that this desire to revive Wotan and recognize the god of the Wild Hunt as an active force – an archetype or Gestalt – in the modern world is an aspect of the civilization vs. barbarism discourse. The barbarian discourse is being used here to transcend the mythic narrative imposed on Germany by Versailles, namely as the romance villain to the Allies’ romance hero. The pressure of this narrative on Germany is extreme enough to provoke symptoms like the Germanic spiritual revival, the worship of Wodan and the belief in his actual existence and effect. The proof of Wodan’s existence would be the *Kampfeskstase* itself, for it can be ascribed to the god. This dynamic then requires war; another war – World War II – would provide literal proof of not only Wodan’s existence, but of Germanic spirituality and heritage as a whole.

### X.3.3. Justification for War Through the Barbarian Discourse and the Ragnarok Motif

The lead article in that July 1937 issue is entitled „Ein Bild der gesamtgermanischen Kultur“ which is essentially a positive critique by Otto Höfler of *Kultur und Religion der Germanen*, a newly published German edition by the Danish authority on Germanic culture, Wilhelm Grönbech. The article continues the attack on Bernhard Kummer’s *Midgards Untergang*, which Hugin and Munin critiqued for its attempt to portray the Wodan cult of the Germanic barbarians as a degenerative aspect of Germanic spirituality by contrasting it to the more popular Donar/Thor cult. Höfler praises Grönbech’s approach of treating all the Germanic tribes and nations as a cultural continuity, and sets this against other tendencies in Germanic studies in Scandinavia:

In Skandinavien gibt es zahlreiche und laute Stimmen, die den Norden und Deutschland dadurch als Gegensätze hinzustellen streben, daß sie Skandinavien (und England) als Länder des „reinen“ Germanentums hinstellen, Deutschland aber

entsprechend eben weniger „rein“, weil südlicher. Es wäre leicht, hier einige Beispiele derartiger Agitationen gegen Deutschland anzuführen. Gerade in den letzten Jahren ist dieses Nord-Süd-Schema aus leicht erkennbaren Gründen besonders aktuell geworden. Wer die skandinavische politische Tagesliteratur verfolgt, in der sich besonders in den letztvergangenen Jahren viele energisch bemühen, Skandinavertum und Deutschtum als Gegensätze, ja als Wertgegensätze, hinzustellen – der wird diesem Nord-Süd-Schema immer wieder begegnen. Es ist als eine der wirksamsten politischen Waffen gegen Deutschland verwendet [...]. (Höfler 195)

The logical consequences of the Nazi attempt to control the barbarian discourse, at the same time as forcing a racist discourse upon the culture as a whole, obliges the regime-loyal members of the *Abnenerbe* and contributors to *Germanien* to energetically dispute these utterances in the barbarian discourse in Scandinavia that label Germany as “impure”. If the barbarian discourse is thus undermined – and if Nazi Germany’s value hierarchy can be tainted by this charge of Germany being an impure expression of the Germanic – the barbarian discourse can no longer serve as a conceptual pillar of the NS regime. The *Abnenerbe*’s *raison d’être* would thus disappear, and the SS would be robbed of its mythic content.

The *Abnenerbe*’s interpretation of the barbarian discourse about the Germanic cultural heritage must be defended if it is to serve a useful function for the Nazi regime, particularly as a justification for war. In order for the SS, through *Germanien*, to achieve this *Gleichschaltung* within this discourse in Germany – and abroad – they must control the meaning of key terms. Terms that both Grönbech and Kummer use are the locus of this struggle:

Gerade Grönbechs Begriffe und seine Ausdrücke wie „Midgard“, „Utgard“, „Friedensgemeinschaft“ usw. sind in schädlicher Weise misbraucht worden. Da das dänische Originalwerk der deutschen Öffentlichkeit aus sprachlichen Gründen nicht zugänglich war, haben sich Grönbechs Gedanken in verzerrter Form ausgebreitet. Vor allem das Wort „Midgard“ – als religionsgeschichtlicher Begriff von Grönbech geprägt – ist durch das Buch von Bernhard Kummer, „Midgards Untergang“ (Leipzig 1927, 2. Aufl.

1935), übernommen und weitergeführt worden, ebenso der Gegenbegriff „Utgard“. Aber während bei Grönbech der Gegensatz Midgard-Utgard den ewigen Widerstreit zwischen den Mächten der menschlichen Gemeinschaftswelt und den Gewalten des Chaos bedeutet, hat Kummer aus dem ewigen und mythischen Gegensatz einen *historischen* gemacht: Für ihn bedeutet „Midgard“ eine Art Idealzustand, den er auf Island verwirklicht glaubt – ein staatenloses Nebeneinander von einzelnen Familien, die friedlich für sich gelebt hätten und deren höchste Ideale Ruhe, Geborgenheit und reiche Ernten gewesen seien. (Höfler 196)

Here we see how control of the barbarian discourse is necessary in order to promote the war-like aspects of Germanic culture, for Höfler disputes the pacifistic interpretation that Kummer gives to the term Midgard and the historical proof that he offers for it. Midgard, the Germanic term for the world of (Germanic) men, cannot be allowed by a follower of Hitler to be associated with one of Germany's internal enemies, pacifism. If this association is allowed to stand, the cultural justification for going to war – particularly aggressive invasions – is weakened. Better to agree with what Grönbech had argued those terms represented, namely „das harte, Schicksalhafte und Tragische am germanischen Altertum“ and „die mythischen Gewalten des Untergangs (man denke an Fenriswolf, Midgardschlange, Loki und die anderen Weltverderber des nodischen *Mythos*)“ (Höfler 199), than a pacifistic idyll. The implications of this mythic tragic narrative can be more easily brought in line with the Nazi national romance – as Hinck will demonstrate in the November 1937 issue – than the anti-war irony implicit in pacifism. Therefore, the control of the terms of the barbarian discourse, particularly, the implications of “Midgard” and “Utgard” being disputed in the above quotation, is an important matter. It is so important that the SS, having succeeded in maintaining control of these terms, will use them for propaganda and morale reasons in SS publications during the war.

The SS's confidence in its hegemonic control of the Germanic heritage of Germany was symbolized on July 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> of 1937, where „ein kleiner Personenkreis“ participated in a ceremony in Quedlinburg to re-enter the remains of Heinrich the First, the first German king. Besides Himmler and a few other high-ranking Nazis and SS men, „Das »Ahnenerbe« war auf Einladung des Reichsführers SS vertreten durch den Präsidenten SS-Hauptsturmführer Professor Dr. Walter Wüst und

den Reichsgeschäftsführer SS-Obersturmführer Sievers“ (Anonymous 1937: 251). This symbolic act to demonstrate control of the Germanic heritage was predicated on SS control of the *Abnenerbe*.

The extent to which Himmler watched over the *Abnenerbe* to make sure its utterances in the barbarian discourse maintained the party line is demonstrated in his letter of the 25<sup>th</sup> of October, 1937, to the above-mentioned President of the *Abnenerbe*, Wüst. Himmler opens the letter with, „Ihre Stellungnahme zu dem Buch ‘Fenno-Aegyptischer Kulturursprung der Alten Welt’ habe ich erhalten und gehe an sich mit Ihrer Ansicht völlig einig“ (Himmler 1937b: 1). Despite the fact that Himmler is in agreement with Wüst, it is clear that Wüst is being monitored. Of further interest in this letter is how the barbarian discourse demonstrates similar facets in Germany and the U.S. Just as Howard was influenced by Theosophical concepts about the origin of the Earth and its races, Himmler reveals a similar influence when he writes, „Ich glaube, dass es bei dem grössten Teil der Sprachen incl. mindestens eines Teiles der chinesischen [sic] und japanischen Sprache so sein wird, dass diese Völker einmal Kolonialvölker eines zentralen Staates und Volkes – wie ich annehme – Atalantis gewesen sind, also aus Völkern bestanden haben, die Jahrhunderte oder Jahrtausende eine, nennen wir es einmal, atalantinische Herrenschaft gehabt haben“ (Himmler 1937b:1).

The October 1937 issue of *Germanien* builds on the justification-for-war theme which the Germanic barbarian discourse is being used for by the SS. Justus Hashagen writes in „Frühgermanische Wehrhaftigkeit“ that Germanic war-readiness was to a large degree a product of Irrationalism:<sup>83</sup> „Es [*die Wehrhaftigkeit*, i.e. war-readiness] handelt sich bei ihr nicht nur um Training, d.h. um eine direkte oder indirekte rationelle Vorbereitung auf den Krieg, sondern auch um die planmäßige Anwendung von besonders wirksamen und für diesen erhabenen Zweck geheiligten Reizmitteln, Stimulantien, die der germanischen Erziehung zur Wehrhaftigkeit erst das charakteristische Gepräge geben da sie dem Bereiche des Irrationalismus entstammen“ (Hashagen 302). After

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<sup>83</sup> Ed Waterman writes in *The Barbaric Triumph* that “Robert E. Howard was an *irrationalist*” (Waterman 39), and defined irrationalism (with reference to Vico, Pascal, Kierkegaard, Schopenhauer and Nietzsche) as a philosophical stance whereby “there is more to being human, more to discerning truth, more in the universe than reason alone. And that reason is not the sole and supreme guiding principle of the cosmos and the human condition” (Waterman 39).

expressing a major value that the Nazis were attempting to anchor as highly as possible in the German hierarchy of values – „Der Tod in der Schlacht galt als etwas herrliches. Erst einer späteren Kultur blieb es vorbehalten, das Leben des einzelnen höher, vielleicht zu hoch zu bewerten“ (Hashagen 303) – Hashagen states plainly that the Germanic barbarians were raised for war: „Schon mit dem allen griff die Erziehung zum Kriege tief in das Leben des germanischen Jünglings ein“ (Hashagen 303). The connection to irrationalism allows the phrase *der Tod in der Schlacht galt als etwas herrliches* to be read without irony and to be imbued with romance heroism. The clear call to war, and to young men to welcome it, is implicitly connected to the Dionysian Wodan who offers the yearned for *Kampfekestase*, and who further promises, in the overall narrative of Germanic myth, a seat for the brave in Valhalla.

The lead feature in the November 1937 issue counters lingering doubts about the desirability of a spirituality centred on a Dionysian Wodan. Martin Hinck writes about Wodan's son, Balder. This god of light offers another perspective on Germanic spirituality and Hinck notes that Balder does represent the hope of resurrection (Hinck 323). However, Hinck underlines that Balder primarily represents sacrifice (Hinck 324), and the message for human action to be inferred from this is the one that the Nazi regime *needs* to go to war: „Vom Menschen aus gesprochen, ist es der Krieg, der den blutigen Ausgleich bringt, der als Opferdienst daher von den Germanen aufgefaßt wurde“ (Hinck 324-325). While Frye makes the linkage between sacrifice and the tragedy *mythos*, Hinck, like Jünger, sees this sacrifice in terms of victory in tragedy. This victory-in-tragedy sacrifice is shaped by the Ragnarok motif as he writes, in language reminiscent of Jünger, „Das alte muß untergehen, damit Neues werde: für alle Wesen gilt dies Gesetz, selbst die Götter nicht ausgenommen“ (Hinck 324). As victory-in-tragedy is a central narrative of the *Kultur der Niederlage*, Hinck's stressing of this victory-in-tragedy perspective is directed by the need of the NS regime to justify going to war to achieve the *revanche*. This article is itself an indicator of how the narrative trajectory of the entire Nazi project fuels itself through the barbarian discourse and Germany's Germanic heritage. It points first to a tragic catastrophe on the scale of – or that will literally or metaphorically be – Ragnarok. But the Ragnarok myth does not end with destruction, and Balder plays – as in Frye's total quest *mythos* that unifies all the *mythoi* – the over-arching romance hero embodying the symbolism of light, youth and life who returns to establish a thoroughly

Nietzschean romance conclusion to the cycle of narrative: „An Balder knüpft sich schließlich die große Wiederkunft. Nicht er allein wird das goldene Zeitalter bringen, aber unter den ersten wird er in der neuen Walhall wohnen, nicht ein Hochgericht wird er dort abhalten zur endgültigen Scheidung der Bösen und Guten, zur völligen Aufspaltung der Gegensätze: sein bloßes Erscheinen mit Höder<sup>84</sup> zusammen ist die Bürgschaft der Versöhnung allen Widerstreits“ (Hinck 326). The message here, for those for whom Wodan's promise of *Kampfeskstase* and Valhalla are not enough, is that the great sacrifice is part of the cycle of war and peace and that there will be an eventual golden age where there will be no judgement, no ascribing of good and bad, and all conflict will be reconciled. This is symbolized by the presence in the new age of both Balder (peace) and Höder (war).

#### **X.4. *Deutsche Kämpfer in der grünen Hölle Kameruns* (1938)**

1938 is a critical year for Germany and the world. It is a year when the Nazi national romance narrative gives way to a tragedy narrative and foreshadows the ultimate failure of the Nazi hierarchy of values to claim a lasting hold on Germany. Ex-HJ member Alfons Heck has stated that, after 1938's Kristallnacht, no German could claim not to know what was in store for the Jews (Heck). Gisevius argues that 1938, and the Munich Conference, was a breaking point for the German Resistance. He describes the moment by moment tension of how the army was ready to overthrow the Nazi regime in 1938, how all was in readiness, how they were just awaiting the expected rejection by England and France of Hitler's demands and how „die Spannung nicht mehr zu überbieten war, und wie dann, ja, wie dann eine Sensationsmeldung zu uns herüberschwirrte, wie das Unwahrscheinliche Ereignis ward: wie Chamberlain und Daladier nach München flogen. Aus“ (Gisevius 75). It was „Aus“ because Hitler had maintained the narrative dynamic of the romance, as Witzleben made clear to a Gisevius unwilling to accept the implications of this narrative paradigm: „Soll ich noch beschreiben, wie ich Narr mir ein paar Stunden weiter einbildete, man könnte putschen,

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<sup>84</sup> Höder is the god who killed Balder with the mistletoe, and whose name, as Hinck argues, means war. War and peace are symbolized by Höder and Balder because „Krieg und Frieden sind die wechselnden Phasen des Völkerlebens. Nur wer im Frieden dem Kriege fest ins Auge sieht, überwindet das Ende und gewinnt mit Balder das höhere Leben endlich versöhnter (nicht im Gericht auseinander klaffender) Pole“ (Hinck 325).



aber durch Witzleben eine ebenso verdient wie derbe Abfuhr erhielt, was der Truppe gegenüber einem Triumphator zumutbar wäre“ (Gisevius 76). The Resistance’s best chance to get rid of Hitler and avoid the war was lost because “Hitler emerged once again as a conquering hero. Berlin went wild with joy, a joy compounded of relief at the news of peace, and pride in a bloodless victory over the Allies” (Read & Fisher 33). And yet the decision to capitalize on the popular feeling after Munich by staging the *Kristallnacht*<sup>85</sup> proved a misreading of the romance implications of this popular feeling. By cheering the return of the Sudetenland, the German people were cheering the partial undoing of the wrongs of Versailles, and saw the event in the context of a purely national romance narrative. That Hitler interpreted this as, or hoped to use it to drum up support for, his racist agenda was an error. Although the crimes of the Nazis were uncountably numerous already by 1938, what makes *Kristallnacht* the act provoking revenge in the sense of the *mythos* of tragedy was that it was a public and international demonstration that the Nazis had committed an act, with the de facto beginning of genocide, that violated the laws of nature and also violated the true nature of the German people.

That the tragic narrative trajectory for Germany was gaining momentum and the Nazi hierarchy of values – based to a large degree on the barbarian discourse – was being rejected is a reality that is demonstrated in reactions to 1938’s *Kristallnacht*: “Most people [of Berlin], however, like the inhabitants of all the other towns and cities throughout the Reich, simply looked away in horror and shame” (Read & Fisher 34); „Zu Ehren der Bevölkerung sei gesagt, sie hatte in ihrer überwiegenden Mehrheit mit diesem Auflauf nichts gemein. Mit Abscheu, mit verstörten Blicken, mit einer Niedergeschlagenheit, die von bösen Vorahnungen getragen war, verfolgte sie die widerlichen Szenen“ (Gisevius 84); or, as eyewitness Reisler says of the *Kristallnacht* events in Berlin-Mitte, „Die Bevölkerung ging vorbei – in der Mehrheit mit blutendem Herzen! Denn soweit ich in der Arbeiterschaft Überblick besaß, lehnte man die Übergriffe ab, äußerte sich aber nur vorsichtig und nur da, wo man es sich erlauben konnte, auf der Straße, im Betrieb oder

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<sup>85</sup> „Erstmals wurden die Judenexzesse nicht von übereifrigen örtlichen Parteiführern mit oder ohne Polizeibefugnissen gefördert. Ganz von oben waren die Befehle und Durchführungsbestimmungen gekommen. Die Zerstörungswut wurde parteiamtlich inszeniert und staatlich überwacht“ (Gisevius 84).

in der Kneipe“ (Sandvoß 304).

These social contradictions of Nazi Germany are displayed in a particularly relevant work from the cultural archive, a work of pulp fiction that reached a mass audience: the 1938 story by Bruno Schwietzke, *Deutsche Kämpfer in der grünen Hölle Kameruns*, appearing in issue 42 of *Spannende Geschichten*. This story's significance is underlined by its mass distribution: in 1938 the total circulation of the German pulp magazine *Spannende Geschichten* reached 1 558 000 copies (the series was to reach its height in 1940 with 6 786 000 copies) (Simons 2007). The story is not only an utterance in the barbarian and race discourses, but is a document demonstrating a hierarchy of values differing from that of the Nazi regime and demonstrating the failure of the Nazi romance to become the mythic narrative of popular consciousness and popular narrative. The cultural existence of a tragic paradigm even in the face of the official Nazi romance narrative is evident particularly in the aesthetic elements of this story, particularly the motif of Africa as the land of primal freedom.

In fact, this artifact of popular culture challenges the value hierarchies of Nazi Germany through Schwietzke's textual re-ordering of them with his use of the motif of Africa as the land of primal freedom. In keeping with the widespread anti-Versailles attitude in Germany, *Deutsche Kämpfer in der grünen Hölle Kameruns* expresses bitterness at Germany's thwarted colonial ambitions and reinforces a sentiment that Jünger expresses in *In Stahlgewittern*, namely that World War I was a war for the future of the world. As the the current rapid spread of the hegemony of the English language and Anglo-American culture over the native languages and cultures of Africa shows, this sentiment was not without foundation. This fact, that the discourse of German popular fiction aimed at boys and young men – represented here by the popular *Spannende Geschichten* – was dominated by a revanchistic post-WW I attitude, would suggest that this popular medium would be true to the Nazi romance narrative and the Nazi hierarchy of values.

The story proves this not to be the case. The archetypal narrative *mythos* that Schwietzke uses as this story's first layer of form is tragedy, as the opening lines that establish the setting in time and space make clear: „Und nun, in diesen Dezembertagen, wo man überall in der deutschen fernen Heimat sich anschickt, die zweite Kriegswihnacht zu feiern, wird sich langsam, aber unerbittlich das Schicksal der kühnen Kämpfer in der grünen Hölle Südkameruns erfüllen“ (Schwietzke 4). In taking this

mythic approach Schwietzke is not only bowing to the actual outcome of the historical events he is basing his story on (the outcome of the fighting in the German colonies during World War I and the outcome of WW I in general), but is reflecting the dynamic of the *Kultur der Niederlage*, for the specific phase of the tragedy *mythos* that the story can be read in is the third phase, the ‘victory-in-tragedy’ phase. Although Schwietzke’s text, like Jünger’s early texts, strives for a mythic romance trajectory, it bows to the aforementioned historical reality of its setting and the cultural dynamic of 1938 Nazi Germany.

Schwietzke’s text – read as a tragedy – reveals a political unconscious and a *Veränderungspotential* that raises it above negative prejudices against *Trivialliteratur*. In fact, it gains its *Veränderungspotential* precisely from its wide distribution, and we can see the reading of Schwietzke’s text by a million young males in 1938 Nazi Germany in the ritualistic context that Frye places the tragedy *mythos* in. If the tragedy *mythos* is a mimesis of sacrifice, as Frye argues, then the sacrifice of the tragic hero of this story, Private Ananda of the Kamerun Schutztruppe, son of the proud Yaounde Grandchief, is a mimetic ritual that the readers of this story vicariously experience. Here is where the transfer of „Vorstellungen, Gefühle und Stimmungen“, that the aesthetic experience offers the reader (Fluck 40), leads to cultural change. „Immer wieder wird [...] der Freiraum der Fiktion genutzt, um kulturelle Normen herauszufordern und einen Prozess einzuleiten, an dessen Ende schließlich die kulturelle Akzeptanz steht“ (Fluck 46). Not only is the reader of this text invited to vicariously re-live the sacrifice of Private Ananda and thus thoroughly identify with him, the title, cover illustration and story as a whole express the fact that the black soldiers of the Schutztruppe are implicitly included in the term „Deutsche Kämpfer“. This is certainly not a sentiment in keeping with the Nazi hierarchy of values and thus demonstrates the dynamic Fluck and Grabes point to.

The identification of the Cameroonians soldiers with the Germans is made explicit by the narration early on, particularly when Ananda swims out into the river to observe the “hated enemy”, the French:

Er schwamm soeben in tollkühnen Wagnis in den Strom hinaus, um den verhassten Feind auszuspähen. Der wird auch Ananda und seinen stolzen Vater mit dem kriegerischen Volke der Jaunde knechten, wenn - - Aber so weit ist es noch lange nicht, noch kämpfen ja viele Tausende seiner Stammesgenossen freiwillig unter der deutschen Fahne.

(Schwietzke 5)

Even as the young readers admire him and begin to identify with him, they pity him and the other German fighters in the ‘green hell’ of Cameroon because the readers know that the hero must fall, because Germany – in historical fact – lost that war in Cameroon. Thus is the mythic tragic narrative textually present from the outset.

The tragic hero, according to Frye, must stand “on top of the wheel of fortune” (Frye 207) at the beginning of the tragedy. Ananda fits this description in that he is the son of a Grandchief, a soldier of the Kaiserliche Schutztruppe (membership within which is what the text valorizes), and a physically powerful and heroic warrior:

Eine riesige nackte Gestalt taucht leise schnaufend aus dem gurgelnden Flußwasser, zieht sich pudelnaß auf den umgestürzten Stamm eines Gummibaumes und späht noch einmal scharf über die dunkle Wasserfläche zum Feinde hinüber. Höchstens zweihundertfünfzig Meter mag es bis drüben sein; aber die Strömung ist tückisch, und gefährlich war die Patrouille Anandas. Er ist der jüngste Sohn des deutschfreundlichen Oberhäuptlings Atangana, zur Zeit Freiwilliger und Gefreiter der kaiserlichen Schutztruppe. (Schwietzke 5)

Frye gives several reasons as to why a tragedy comes to happen, one of which fits the situation of this story: “the hero inherits a situation of enmity” (Frye 208). In this case Ananda, and his Yaounde tribe, are thrown into war because their friendliness to the Germans exposes them to the hostility of the French and English. This voluntary alliance with the Germans<sup>86</sup> agrees with Frye’s statement that, “The hero’s act has thrown a switch in a larger machine than his own life, or even his own society” (Frye 211). Ananda’s decision to fight on the side of the Germans is *proairesis*, “a use of freedom to lose freedom” (Frye 212), for not only has Ananda given himself over to German military discipline and command structure, but this decision will lead to the ultimate exile of the Yaounde fighters along with their German comrades in the neutral Spanish colony of Rio Muni.

Wie ein scharfer Schlag durchzuckt es die Eingeborenen.  
Jaunde, ihr Land, ihr Häuptling, – ihre Frauen und Kinder –

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<sup>86</sup> In the text it is given as entirely voluntary – whether or not the historical Yaounde took up the German cause without coercion is a matter for research beyond the scope of this dissertation (but an interesting one!).

Irgendwo trocknes Schluchzen im Glied – Sklaven jetzt der verruchten Eindringlinge? Fronarbeiten leisten, beschimpft werden, harte Kopfsteuer zahlen? – Nie, nie, wild begehren sie auf. Nur eine Viertelstunde hat die Beratung gedauert. Ananda, als Sohn Atanganas, der sein Reich mit seinem Volke lieber verläßt, als Sklave wird, hat zu seinen Stammesbrüdern gesprochen. Im Namen aller Jaundefreiwilligen und altgedienten Chargen baut sich der riesige Mann vor dem Deutschen auf. Für das wenige, das er zu sagen hat, stehen zweihundertneunzig kampfgestählte Krieger grade. „Wir haben mit euch gekämpft. Wir werden euch jetzt, wo es euch schlecht geht, nicht verlassen. Wir gehen mit euch nach Muni zu den Spaniern.“ Dankend legt Oberleutnant Hoppe die Hand an den Helm und gibt mit festem Druck dem Gefreiten die Hand. (Schwietzke 24)

And for Ananda himself, this will mean the final loss of his freedom through death:

Die letzte Kugel des Unteroffiziers Ikas gilt dem französischen Hauptmann Carleuf. Wie ein gefällter Baum schlägt er vornüber. Gleich darauf bricht neben seiner Leiche Ananda mit einem schweren Lungenschuß zusammen. Blutiger Schaum tritt ihm vor die erblassenden Lippen; in den Ohren braust noch immer das deutsche Angriffssignal: „Vorwärts, rasch vorwärts!“ Dann nimmt ihn leises Klingen, Sang seiner Heimat hinüber ins Reich der Schatten. Ikas aber hat den sterbenden Riesen mit eigenen Armen aus dem Gefecht getragen – Treue um Treue. (Schwietzke 32)

The social resonance of Schwietzke's novella in 1938 (and how it reveals an alternate hierarchy of values than that of the official NS hierarchy of values) is such that it shows – through the portrayal of Ananda, and through Unteroffizier Ikas' act of carrying the dying African warrior out of the battle in his own arms – Germans as able to accept, and respect, people of other skin colours and cultures. One cannot make too little of Schwietzke's re-ordering of the hierarchy of values through his use of the Africa as the land of primal freedom motif, particularly when one considers how Africa and Africanness were usually portrayed in the discourse of right wing German popular fiction even before the Nazis came to power: „Gegenüber dem »Negervieh«, den »Menschenaffen mit blitzenden Zähnen, losgelassen von Weißen auf

Weißer«, ist folglich nur tierhafte Brutalität die angemessene Replik. Und so wird sie praktiziert, als Massenmord im völkischen Auftrag, als Notwehr der weißen Rasse, als eiskalte Vernichtung »minderwertigen Materials« mit dem guten Gewissen des rassistischen Sendungsbewußtseins“ (Prümm 150).

The significance of Schwietzke's text appearing in 1938 Nazi Germany is underlined by Grabes' observations of a text's hierarchy of values and its *Veränderungspotential*, and Frye's point about tragedy that "As a mimesis of ritual the tragic hero is not really killed or eaten, but the corresponding thing in art still takes place, a vision of death which draws the survivors into a new unity" (Frye 215). Here the literary and social function of tragedy and its relationship to the hierarchy of values is such that Ananda's death represents a mimetic ritual whereby the survivors – not only the German soldiers who survived the Cameroon fighting and not only the German frontsoldiers of World War I in general, but mainly the symbolic survivors of the First World War: the sons for whose sake World War I was, arguably, fought (and who constitute the actual audience of the story), i.e. German male youth of 1938 – are bound together in a new unity. This unity is, of course, patriotic and based on German warrior values, which Prümm summarizes: „[...] für die jugendlichen Rezipienten der Kriegsliteratur die dort propagierten Werte wie »Treue, Mut, Kameradschaftlichkeit, Stolz und ritterliches Ehrgefühl«“ (Prümm 141); all of these are qualities which Ananda demonstrates, a fact which Ikas confirms when the text values his carrying of the dying Ananda out of the battle in his own arms with the ringing comment, „Treue um Treue“. Significantly, for 1938, the young male readers are NOT bound together in a new unity based on racism. The story's hierarchy of values is thus not congruent with that of the NS regime, and this divergence of values, evident in this one mass-distributed story but arguably representative of mainstream German opinion, was certainly a factor in the ultimate failure of the Third Reich.

The material reality of Germany's loss of World War I, and the new resulting dominant mythic narrative propagated throughout German culture by the resulting *Kultur der Niederlage*, the tragedy *mythos* (more specifically the victory in tragedy phase of tragedy), is expressed when Schwietzke concludes his story.

95 Offiziere, 450 europäische Dienstgrade und 5000 farbige Soldaten, ein halbes Hundert sonstiger Weißer und vierzigtausend Eingeborene waren nach Spanisch-Muni

übergetreten. Am 7. Februar 1916 lieferten die letzten Kämpfer ihre Gewehre an die Spanier ab. Munition dazu hatten sie keine mehr mitgebracht. Sie hatten sich buchstäblich gewehrt bis zur letzten Patrone. (Schwietzke 32)

Further research must determine if the Yaounde warriors who accompanied the German troops in their fighting retreat to Rio Muni made their decision to do so as the text presents it, or if it was done through force. Even if the text falsifies the historical reality, the resulting fact that Schwietzke was trying to re-write history to show the Germans having more respect for the native Africans than they actually did would be a strong indicator of the effect of the Africa as the land of primal freedom motif on the text's structure and hierarchy of values. If, on the other hand, the text is generally correct as to the historical events it portrays, Schwietzke's choice to bring this to the attention of the young males ostensibly being raised to be National Socialist warriors out to defend the 'pure Aryan bloodline' is just as significant. Either way, the political and social ramifications of the text's presentation of the history of German Cameroon spring from the fact that the text does not support the genocidal and enslaving attitude of the Nazi hierarchy vis-à-vis other races.

The close-reading of this text has focussed on the first layer of form because the archetypal mythic narrative that Schwietzke employs to tell a World War I war story set in the Imperial German colony of Cameroon is telling of the national mythic narrative paradigm at a time when the Nazis believe that Hitler's success at Munich has firmly established the Nazi romance in the German consciousness. Their miscalculation about this was manifested in *Kristallnacht*; the general rejection of this brutality against Jews highlights the fact that the national narrative pendulum – already strongly drawn to tragedy by the continuing cultural effect of the *Kultur der Niederlage* dynamic – will now swing irresistibly toward tragedy on the national level.

Schwietzke does not make use of either the *Phantastik* or *Neophantastik Schreibweise* in terms of the second layer of form. One could argue that its mode of writing, to use Frye's definitions, is somewhere between the high and low mimetic mode (Frye 34). In terms of the development this disseration is tracking in the usage of the *Phantastik* and *Neophantastik*, this text does not represent movement in these directions.

In terms of the third layer of form, the text is clearly of the genre of *Kriegsliteratur* for the young, which was popular, as Prümm points out,

between the wars. In terms of genre and the other layers of form, the story is quite conventional and conservative, fitting unobtrusively into the type of story that German pulps published during the Nazi regime. Its *Veränderungspotential* comes from its insistence on tragedy and the hierarchy of values it attaches to its tragic hero.

The story gains its power through tragedy's connection to ritual and to the national reverence for the sacrifice of the *Frontsoldat* of World War I. Ernst Jünger had aimed at this kind of national ritual when he propagated the Gestalt of the Front Soldier and helped to give this Gestalt a central position in post-war German society. Jünger had hoped that the *Frontsoldat* Gestalt could become politically decisive, and a political weapon: „Das Projekt einer ideologischen Durchbildung des Kollektivsymbols ‚Frontsoldat‘ zu einem politischen Kampfbegriff wollte Jünger im übrigen ausdrücklich als eine „Transformierung“ von Spenglers „Grundideen in tätige Energie“ verstanden wissen, wie der diesem bei der Übersendung von F.G. Jüngers *Aufmarsch des Nationalismus* schrieb“ (Fröschle 128). Jünger, and his circle of right wing nationalists, were successful in this project; however, it was the Nazi party that was able to make the most political use of this Gestalt and use it as a weapon to seize power and drive German society on the romance trajectory that it wanted. However, this story by Schwietzke shows that the *Frontsoldat* Gestalt was not fully under Nazi control and Schwietzke is able to make this treasured national symbol – also a symbol of racial superiority in Nazi hands – a black man.

This fact is significant in the sense of the Nazi dictatorship promoting World War I novels for youth in the hope that the youths reading those works would ritualistically “share” the text-bodies of these German fighters of the lost world war, and thus experience a communion with these textually-represented soldiers. In experiencing this communion with Ananda, the readers are aware that through this communion with a heroically portrayed black man, they, in spirit, offend the racial laws and racist blood-ideology of the Nazi dictatorship. They thus come to suspect, through this story, that NS ideology does not conform with the truth – that it distorts the facts and the memories of the First World War. In this light the sacrificial ritual of the reading of *Spannende Geschichten* 42 becomes what Frye calls a “propitiation” vis-à-vis the powers (gods, destiny, necessity) that truly govern not only this text-body, but the memory of the First World War and this communion itself.



## X.5. *Landdienst* Letter from Himmler and von Schirach

In the same year that Schwietzke's text appeared and indicated the hold of the tragic on Germany, and thus on its collective narrative trajectory, SS chief Himmler and the head of the Hitler Youth, Baldur von Schirach, wrote a letter on the 17<sup>th</sup> of December which attempted to inculcate the Nazi national romance narrative by suggesting an *anagnorisis* for Germany as a romance hero based in the barbarian discourse: the acquisition of land. Himmler and von Schirach stated that the *Landdienst* of the HJ was an effort in common by the SS and HJ „der Landflucht zu steuern, neues Bauertum zu bilden, den besten Teil unseres Volkes wieder in ein enges Verhältnis zur Heimaterde zu bringen“ (Himmler/von Schirach 1). This letter demonstrates the significance to the SS of controlling the barbarian discourse about the Germanic heritage: so that they could emphasize the war-like character of the Germanic barbarian – even as a farmer – with the goal to supply youth, raised and trained in this fashion by the *Landdienst*, to the SS. Article 3 of the letter states, „Dem Landdienst sollen vor allem die Jungen zugeführt werden, die den festen Willen haben, Bauer auf eigener Scholle (Wehrbauer) zu werden. Dieser Wehrbauerngedanke wird im Landdienst der HJ und SS besonders gepflegt“ (Himmler/von Schirach 1). The reason that this idea, derived from the NS/SS control of the barbarian discourse, is being emphasized is made clear in article 1 of the letter: „Der Landdienst der HJ ist nach Erziehungsarbeit und Zielsetzung ganz besonders als Nachwuchsorganisation für die Schutzstaffel (Allgemeine SS und ihre unter den Waffen stehenden Teile: SS-Verfügungstruppen und SS-Totenkopfstandarten) geeignet“ (Himmler/von Schirach 1). The use of this youth as colonists for an aggressive expansion is underlined by article 4: „Die in den bewaffneten Teilen der Schutzstaffel dienenden Landdienstangehörigen werden nach Ableistung ihrer Dienstzeit durch den Reichsführer-SS, in Zusammenarbeit mit den hierfür in Frage kommenden Dienststellen des Reichsbauernführers, auf Neubauernstellen angesetzt“ (Himmler/von Schirach 1). The letter concludes by stating that everyone serving in the *Landdienst* who meets SS requirements will automatically be taken up into the SS, ensuring a large cadre of aggressive, expansionistic *Wehrbauern* inspired by the NS/SS interpretation of the Germanic barbarian heritage.

## XI. Tragedy Confirmed (1939-1945)

### XI.1. *Auf den Marmorklippen* (1939)

#### XI.1.1. Composition of the Text

The most intensive close-reading of a text presented by this dissertation is that of Ernst Jünger's 1939 work *Auf den Marmorklippen*. It merits this position for it represents the culmination of aspects of the barbarian discourse, of the mythic narrative patterning of texts, and the transition from the *Phantastik Schreibweise* to a newly emergent *Neophantastik Schreibweise* that we have been tracking in the cultural archive and in the works of Howard and Jünger. This work is also key in this discussion because of when it was written, in what context it was published and because of who wrote it. The remarkable nature of this text was immediately noted within Germany by various non-Nazi elements (in the safety of *innere Emigration*) and internationally even *during* World War II, as Schwilk points out in his afterword to the 1998 edition:

In Dezember 1942 rühmte der englische Kritiker F.A. Voigt den humanen Widerstandsgeist des Buches, das auch in Deutschland als Ermutigung verstanden wurde: »Es war wie ein Signal, das plötzlich aus der Düsternis aufschießt und die Gegend erhellt. Es bot Stärkung und wirkte als ein Mittel der Verständigung unter denen, die gegen Bedrohung oder Versuchung der Tyrannei sich festigten. Niemand unter den Lesern, die ich kannte, hat daran gezweifelt, daß in den Visionen dieser Erzählung die Erkenntnis unserer eigenen gegenwärtigen Lage ausgesprochen war. In Chiffren war unseren elenden Beherrschern das Urteil gesprochen. Man rieb sich die Augen, fast unglaublich, daß dergleichen möglich war.«

Wie Dolf Sternberger lasen viele »Auf den Marmorklippen« als Schlüsselroman, brachten Flurnamen wie »Köppelsbleek«

mit Goebbels, den Söldnerführer Biedenhorn mit SA-Führer Röhm oder den »Oberförster« mit Hitler in Verbindung.  
(Schwilk 149)

A text seen as a sign of hope within Nazi Germany (Segeberg 1995: 112), and as an acknowledgement of the internal resistance to the NS regime outside of Germany, is remarkable enough, but its formal elements and its utterances in the barbarian discourse make it more remarkable yet. Here is a text whose hierarchy of values challenges that of the Nazi government and suggests a *Veränderungspotential* not conducive with waging the expansionistic and genocidal war that the NS regime had embarked on.

Of significance in this novel published within weeks of the invasion of Poland that began World War II, is its composition during 1938 and 1939. Having conceived of *Auf den Marmorlippen* in the fall of '38, Jünger wrote it during the spring and summer of '39. After being called up for military service, which Jünger recorded in his diary (Jünger 1942: 58), he finished editing the novel in the army during late summer of '39 (Jünger 1998: 139-140). Jünger indicated that a meeting he had had with individuals close to the resistance in the fall of '38 formed part of the inspiration for the book (Jünger 1998: 139), and the time-frame of the book's conception and early composition encompasses the time between the Munich conference and the *Reichskristallwoche* – September to November, 1938. The feeling that a turning point had been reached after the culmination of events that began with resistance member Ludwig Beck's resignation as the head of the Army General Staff in August, was followed in September by Hitler meeting with Chamberlain in Germany, which set up the Munich Conference in late September where Hitler achieved the return of the Sudetenland in exchange for a German/U.K. non-aggression treaty and a German/French statement recognizing the current borders (Kinder & Hilgemann 197), and concluded with *Kristallnacht*, was remarked by Jünger when he recalled, „es herrschte ein seltsamer Consensus, wortlose Übereinstimmung“ (Jünger 1998: 139).

In March of '39 German troops marched into Czechoslovakia, Germany made its territorial demands on Poland, and completed the return of the Memelland from Lithuania. With these ominous events as a renewed spur, Jünger begins writing *Auf den Marmorlippen*. It must therefore be kept in mind that *Auf den Marmorlippen* is informed by the events of that spring and summer, including Germany's Stahlpakt alliance with Italy and a series of non-aggression treaties with Estonia, Latvia and

Denmark (Kinder & Hilgemann 197). These were all preparations for war, as was Jünger's being called up for military service; in this context, the text's significance is even greater, for it could well have been the last work Jünger wrote: as a soldier acquainted with the sudden death of warfare, it is significant that he himself was cognizant of this being perhaps his last major textual statement.

#### X1.1.2. Layers of Form and Meaning

When World War II was declared, Ernst Jünger was finishing a text written in the genre of Fantasy. He made use of both the *Phantastik* and *Neophantastik* modes of writing as he composed what many considered – at the time and now – an allegorical novel about Nazi rule in Germany. The barbarian discourse – and its importance in re-forming Germany to suit the ideology of Germany's new masters – is central to these choices of form that Jünger made and to the Nazi regime's decision to go to war. While the outbreak of the war occasioned, for example, the HJ in Berlin to re-organize itself as youth leaders were called up to active service (Meissner 1), and saw the Ahnenerbe publish *Vom Ursprung der Runen* – an attempt to prove that petroglyphs left by the barbarian Cimbri in their wanderings through the Alps can be linked to Wodan (Altheim and Trautmann 73) – Jünger left us, in his diaries, an invaluable account of the feeling in Germany on the eve of the war. This feeling was in an emotional register at a far remove from the mass romance euphoria of the outbreak of World War I:

Am Morgen beim Frühstück fragte mich der Kellner mit bedeutsamem Gesicht, ob ich die Tagesnachrichten gehört hätte. Danach sind wir in Polen einmarschiert. Tagsüber nahm ich im Hin und Her der Geschäfte die weiteren Neuigkeiten auf, die den Ausbruch des Krieges, auch mit Frankreich und England, im einzelnen bestätigten. Am Abend knappe Meldungen, Verfügungen, Verdunkelung der Stadt. (Jünger 1950: 59)

This subtle foreshadowing of the national tragedy narrative, that will outstrip the Nazi romance narrative once World War II is underway, is mirrored in the book Jünger had just completed, in which it became clear to him that the barbarian discourse had taken on a distorted form under the Nazis. *Auf den Marmorlippen* is an undermining of the hierarchy of values promoted by the Nazis, for Jünger allegorically turns against Nazi

rule in the book. This turn to allegory – whose essential passivity is likely a reason for Jünger’s post-war repudiation of the book as an act of resistance – also reflects the value hierarchies of a majority of Germans who, although not pro-Nazi, like the main character, are unable, or believe themselves to be unable, to stop what is happening. The charge of passivity, however, misses the mark if one understands that the novel offers

[...] ‚*aisthetikos*‘, d.h. von sinnlich Wahrnehmbarem: Was er anbietet und motiviert, ist eine imaginative Erfahrung des Besonderen als physischer Erscheinung und / oder inneren Konkretheit anstelle abstrakter Begrifflichkeit. Dies erlaubt uns nicht nur ein kognitives und / oder emotionales Sympathisieren mit oder Distanzieren von einem anderen. Vor allem läßt es uns weitgehende Freiheit hinsichtlich der Entscheidung, inwieweit und wie wir das Besondere auf uns beziehen, ob wir es für typisch oder sogar allgemeine gültig ansehen oder für lediglich individuell und idiosynkratisch. (Grabes 2004: 136).

This novel, as does all literature, as Grabes argues, allows one to experience through the senses the concrete as opposed to the abstract. The significance in this case is that the concrete experience Jünger’s text offers is that of the tragic tyranny that is the NS regime. This alone, despite the use of the second and third layers of form to cloak the experience, makes the work remarkable, as contemporaries within Germany, and without, remarked. This aesthetic experience, and the transfer involved from text to reader, is how writer and reader combine to use a text’s value hierarchy to help re-shape a culture’s value hierarchy; this Fantasy genre novel can be argued to have helped accomplish this in Germany.

### X1.1.3. Critical Agreement on the Novel’s Significance

Many critics focus on the significance of this novel. In Fischer’s discussion of Jünger’s aesthetic strategies and goals as an artist, she focusses on *Auf den Marmorklippen* as a work in which the basic metaphor of life that Jünger had cultivated to that point, life as battle, changes (Fischer 87). In terms of the *kalte persona* and the *Verhaltenslehre der Kälte*, in which life is intrinsically seen in the aggressive and combative terms

that Krauss argued made life in Germany in the 20, 30s, and 40s analogous to that of 17<sup>th</sup> century Spain with the „Kampfcharakter des Daseins“ (Lethen 66), this shift is indeed a significant one for Jünger. It is not only significant because Jünger had been one of the proponents of the *kalte persona*, as both Theweleit and Lethen argue, but because it represents a significant caesura in his drive to order narratives according to the romance *mythos*. The repeated intrusion of irony on Jünger's life and writing led him to gradually alter his archetypal romance focus and to search instead for the romance *pathos* moment in his solitary adventurous heart, in secret brotherhoods, dreams, studies, art and the subtle hunt for the essence of being (Fischer 90). Fischer, focussing on a literary figure important to Jünger, Don Quixote, characterizes Jünger as a fighter with sword and cross who seeks to smash the illusions of the world (Fischer 97), but that this process can only succeed in zones not controlled by conventional morality (Fischer 98). This Nietzschean movement beyond good and evil, required by the dynamic of the German *Kultur der Niederlage* that tries to transcend the romance villain judgement of Versailles, deflects Jünger's basic romance perspective and, like Don Quixote mistakenly freeing the criminals, delivers Jünger up to the irony he tries to deny. This undercurrent of irony pulls the author from his early comic mythic writing in *In Stablgewittern*, undermines his abortive attempts at re-establishing romance with such projects as the Gestalt of the *Arbeiter* (which enter the gravitational pull of the victory in tragedy phase of tragedy), and finally textually washes him ashore within the tragedy *mythos* in 1939's *Auf den Marmorklippen*.

Mottel also sees the novel as one of the most significant works of Jünger's oeuvre when he suggests that the text represents a culmination of Jünger's role as political prophet (Mottel 291). In fact, this text demonstrates a shift in Jünger's second layer of form, from the prophetic *Schreibweise* that he had used, to the *Neophantastik*. This shift is indicative of a textual realization evident in the novel that the prophet's message was misused or hijacked by the wrong saviour, and thus a new aesthetic strategy is necessary to successfully reach the disillusioned public now living under a reign of terror. This aesthetic strategy does not represent merely a change in Jünger's second layer of form, but also a change in the third, where he utilizes the emerging Fantasy genre to manifest the mythic tragedy narrative, that the text both depicts and implies, on the meta-narrative national level. Jünger, realizing that the post-1918 attempts of nationalists to revive a romance narrative for Germany ended

in the catastrophe of Nazi dictatorship, thus expressly adopts the *mythos* of tragedy for *Auf den Marmorlippen*. This act, to recall Mottel, foresees the impending tragedy of the new war; after the war, Jünger will write *Heliopolis*, which confirms the tragedy that had just occurred.

Harro Segeberg, whose three levels of reading *Auf den Marmorlippen* Mottel draws on in his analysis, touches on many of these issues when he analyzes Jünger's use of utopia in his work. Segeberg identifies three stages of the utopic in Jünger's development (Segeberg 2004: 403), before defining the basic architecture of Jünger's century-long work: there is no evolution without catastrophe, the more complete the catastrophe the more radical the new form that follows it, and in these new forms there is a dialectical relationship between the downfall of the masses and the epiphany of an elite (Segeberg 2004: 405). While Segeberg speaks of this in terms of the discourse of utopia, and in the process identifies utopia as a literary genre, Jünger's early works employ this structure as a way to attain his romance agenda, where the catastrophe is textually presented as the *pathos* moment, or even as the comic *cognitio* as in *In Stahlgewittern*. By the time of *Auf den Marmorlippen*, both the textual and meta-textual catastrophes are taking on properly tragic *mythos* dimensions. This, as we have seen, was a central feature of the barbarian discourse, particularly of the variant of the barbarian discourse being directed by the SS and shaped by the Germanic motif of Ragnarok. Segeberg's use of the term "heroic-tragic" points precisely to the romance/tragedy oscillation that Jünger's texts demonstrate, and this oscillation finds expression in the victory in tragedy phase of tragedy so central to a *Kultur der Niederlage*. This oscillation is a symptom of Jünger's attempt to re-instate the romance for Germany within the dynamic that Schivelbusch outlines for cultures of defeat. What is different about *Auf den Marmorlippen* is that the textual accent of the victory in tragedy phase of the archetypal tragedy – that the text employs as a first layer of form – is not on the victory, or on the romance drive, but rather on the tragedy itself.

The text, as suggested above, can be read as Jünger's *Abrechnung* with the world. Through his characters he metaphorically suggests, or admits, that the real legacy of World War I was not the desire of harder new men to fight the next war, but, in the end, a desire for peace. This suggestion of pacifism – for an author whose works were popularly associated with the glorification of war (*In Stahlgewittern*, „Der Kampf als inneres Erlebnis“, *Das Abenteuerliche Herz*) – comes from surprising

sentiments in the novel, such as the anti-violence suggested by the scene where „Als wir in unserer Vaterheimat hoch im Norden die Waffen wieder in die Rüstkammer eingeschlossen hatten, erfaßte uns der Sinn nach einem Leben, das von Gewalt gereinigt war“ (Jünger 1998: 54). This pacifistic feeling also emerges from an account within the novel that one can read as an allegory of the experience of the euphoria of the National Socialist movement of the 1920s and early '30s, and to the sobering that followed it:

Ich hörte später Bruder Otho über unsere Mauretanierzeiten sagen, daß ein Irrtum erst dann zum Fehler würde, wenn man in ihm beharrt. Das Wort erschien mir um so wahrer, wenn ich an die Lage dachte, in der wir uns befanden, als dieser Orden uns an sich zog. Es gibt Epochen des Niederganges, in denen sich die Form verwischt, die innerst dem Leben vorgezeichnet ist. Wenn wir in sie geraten, taumeln wir als Wesen, die des Gleichgewichts ermangeln, hin und her. Wir sinken aus dumpfen Freuden in den dumpfen Schmerz, auch spiegelt ein Bewußtsein des Verlustes, das uns stets belebt, uns Zukunft und Vergangenheit verlockender. Wir weben in abgeschiedenen Zeiten oder in fernen Utopien, indes der Augenblick verfließt.

Sobald wir dieses Mangels innewurden, strebten wir aus ihm hinaus. Wir spürten Sehnsucht nach Präsenz, nach Wirklichkeit und wären in das Eis, das Feuer und den Äther eingedrungen, um uns der Langeweile zu entziehen. Wie immer, wo der Zweifel sich mit Fülle paart, bekehrten wir uns zur Gewalt – und ist nicht sie das ewige Pendel, das die Zeiger vorwärtstreibt, sei es bei Tage, sei es in der Nacht? Also begannen wir, von Macht und Übermacht zu träumen und von den Formen, die sich kühn geordnet im tödlichen Gefecht des Lebens aufeinander zubewegen, sei es zum Untergange, sei es zum Triumph. Und wir studierten sie mit Lust, wie man Ätzungen betrachtet, die eine Säure auf den dunklen Spiegeln geschliffener Metalle niederschlägt. Bei solcher Neigung war es unvermeidlich, daß Mautetanier sich uns näherten. Wir wurden durch den Capitano, der den großen Aufstand in den Iberischen Provinzen erledigt hatte, eingeführt. (Jünger 26-27)

In this quotation the sobering effect is evoked in the first line, where the



dynamic that is an allegory for the emotional turbulence that preceded the Nazi rise to power, and is textually presented as the brothers' attraction to the Mauretania, is declared an error. What permits a relatively unproblematic association of Jünger's text as a whole, and this passage in particular, with an allegorical *Darstellung* of Nazi Germany comes from the way in which Jünger utilizes a *phantastische* – or, rather, *neophantastische* – *Schreibweise* to create a Fantasy genre narrative. What is key, in this respect, in Schwilk's statement – „Ernst Jünger hat das Geschehen überdies in eine jener »Traumlandschaften« verlegt, die uns auch in anderen Erzählungen wie »Heliopolis« oder »Eumeswil« begegnen. Die eigentümliche Zeit- und Ortlosigkeit – der Küstenstrich der »Großen Marina« ist eine Komposition aus mediterranen und alemannischen Landschaftsformen – ist dabei nicht nur ein Stilmittel des verhüllten, der Zensur ausweichenden Erzählens, sondern auch Ausdruck von Jüngers ahistorischer Geschichtsauffassung“ (Schwilk 145) – is that Jünger is consciously applying a central aspect of the Fantasy genre, sub-creation, to achieve his dual purpose of „Zensur ausweichenden Erzählens“ and „ahistorischer Geschichtsauffassung“. As Jünger wrote of the book in 1972, „Wenngleich die politische Lage mit ihrem Alldruck diesen Angriff aus dem Traumreich heraus entfaltete und das sogleich in diesem Sinn erfaßt wurde, ging die Begegnung doch zeitlich wie räumlich über den Rahmen des Aktuellen und Episodischen hinaus“ (Jünger 1998: 141). Jünger is here accenting the text's aesthetic dimension as opposed to its position within the historical discourses where it functions as utterances in those discourses; Jünger is thus displaying the dismaying position that Segeberg comments on when he notes: „daß der Autor, gerade in Zeiten, wo ihm die gegenteilige Auffassung sehr genützt hätte, immer abgestritten hat, daß er mit den *Marmor-Klippen* eine anti-nationalsozialistische „Tendenzschrift“ habe schreiben wollen“ (Segeberg 1995: 112). Jünger's later denial of the specific political allegory of the text in favour of a general commentary on tyranny (Segeberg 1995: 113) can be related to the fact that he did survive to write other texts, to the fact of his life-long revision of his texts to express his changing perception of events and of his role in them, and to his conviction that there was a deeper order to things, as we shall see.

Despite Jünger's later denials to the contrary, allegory is arguably a conscious purpose of *Auf den Marmorlippen* and this allegorical nature is revealed by the text's incomplete use of the two essential elements of

the Fantasy genre, sub-creation and the supernatural. While the sub-creations of Tolkien and Howard are completely realized worlds (in Tolkien's case, exhaustively so), Jünger's sub-creation is left deliberately vague, and it repeatedly suggests geographical connections to the primary world. While the city of Große Marina seems to be a sub-created city, one we have never stepped into, and the *Purpurreitern* an army we have never seen and Alta Plana a country we have never been to, the narrator's mentioning of „Iberische Provinzen“, „Römersteine“ and „Mauretanier“ re-connects us to the geography of the primary world.

Jünger also does not go into exhaustive detail about the supernatural in his sub-creation, and even his one conspicuous 'magic item', „den Spiegel Nigromontans“, could almost be interpreted as a powerful magnifying glass and not supernatural at all – if not for its supposed mystical effect:

Er stammte aus dem Nachlaß meines alten Lehrers, und seine Eigenschaft war die, daß sich die Sonnenstrahlen durch ihn zu einem Feuer von hoher Kraft verdichteten. Die Dinge, die man an solcher Glut entzündete, gingen ins Unvergängliche auf eine Weise, von der Nigromontanus meinte, daß sie am besten dem reinen Distillat vergleichbar sei. Er hatte diese Kunst in Klöstern des Fernen Orients erlernt, wo man den Toten ihre Schätze zu ewigem Geleit verbrennt. Ganz ähnlich meinte er, daß alles, was man mit Hilfe dieses Spiegels entflammen würde, im Unsichtbaren weit sicherer als hinter Panzertüren aufgehoben sei. Es würde durch eine Flamme, die weder Rauch noch niedere Röte zeige, in Reiche, die jenseits der Zerstörung liegen, überführt. (Jünger 1998: 72)

Although *Auf den Marmorklippen* does then, in terms of sub-creation and the supernatural, fulfill Tolkien's criteria for fantasy (despite the incompletenesses noted), it does in one major way deviate from the majority of works in the Fantasy genre, namely it does not use the romance *mythos* as its first layer of form, as do the works of Howard and Tolkien, for instance. Rather, *Auf den Marmorklippen* follows instead the pattern of the tragedy *mythos* and, as a political allegory of Nazi Germany, prophesies and reveals that the tragedy *mythos* is the actual meta-narrative framework of National Socialist Germany.

#### XI.1.4. Confluence of the First and Third Layers of Form: Tragedy *Mythos* and Fantasy Genre

*Auf den Marmorklippen* follows the “victory in tragedy” pattern of the third phase of tragedy as its first layer of form. Jünger begins *Auf den Marmorklippen* with essential elements of the tragedy *mythos* in place – with one exception: the narrator of the tale is the hero, and it is apparent from the fact that he is narrating that he does not suffer the typical fate of a tragic hero, death. In fact, as in *Heliopolis*, Jünger’s portrayal of exile as the outcome of tragedy is logical for a man who had witnessed – and caused – so much death that it lost its terror. For a man whose writings between the wars revealed that he wanted so much to be an integral part of a reborn Germany, it was much more tragic to find oneself exiled from the nation one loved or to be consigned to its margins. That the narrator, at the beginning of the tragedy he narrates, found himself at the top of the wheel of fortune as befits a tragic hero he makes abundantly clear:

Und süßer noch wird die Erinnerung an unsere Mond- und Sonnenjahre, wenn jäher Schrecken sie beendete. Dann erst begreifen wir, wie sehr es schon ein Glücksfall für uns Menschen ist, wenn wir in unseren kleinen Gemeinschaften dahinleben, unter friedlichem Dach, bei guten Gesprächen und mit liebevollen Gruß am Morgen und zur Nacht. Ach, stets zu spät erkennen wir, daß damit schon das Füllhorn reich für uns geöffnet war.

So denke ich auch an die Zeiten, in denen wir an der Großen Marina lebten, zurück – erst die Erinnerung treibt ihren Zauber hervor. (Jünger 1998: 5)

Not only does this sentiment indicate the shift in Jünger’s thinking indicated above, but the narrator and his brother, Otho, although not much greater than the other people around them in an objective sense, are symbolically “half-way between human society on the ground” and “something greater in the sky” by their physical positioning in the story; they are literally the highest points in the human landscape: „Sonst aber lebten wir in unserer Rautenklause tagaus, tagein in großer Eingezogenheit. Die Klause stand am Rand der Marmorklippen, inmitten einer der Felseninseln, wie man sie hier und dort das Rebenland durchbrechen sieht“ (Jünger 1998: 11). In other words, they live above the Große Marina where the main action of the story occurs, on the

marble cliffs that overlook the city.

#### XI.1.4.1. The Tragic Hero Provokes *Nemesis*

What must happen in a tragedy is that the hero must provoke enmity. According to Frye, he must commit some act that will provoke revenge, and thus he (or she) provokes *nemesis*, and this occurs in *Marmorklippen* with: „Wie kam es, daß wir die Arbeit nicht im Stiche ließen, als der Oberförster in unserem Gebiet an Macht gewann und als der Schrecken sich verbreitete?“ (Jünger 1998: 25). As for Germany as a whole – as subsequent events would show – this would prove to be the act, a collective act, that would provoke *nemesis*. While one could argue that *Kristallnacht* represents a specific symbolic event that can be considered the act that provokes revenge, this unbalancing in nature – both the nature of the German people and human nature through the abomination of genocide – was a long process that occurred throughout Germany during the post-World War I *Kultur der Niederlage*, for example also in *Großostheim*: „Staatsbürgerliche Passivität und willige Blindheit mögen zwei Facetten gewesen sein, die zum Aufstieg des Nationalsozialismus führten. Doch war es auch die Wirtschaftskrise, die Bindungslosigkeit im politischen System und die Erinnerung an die noch taufrische militärische Schmach des verlorenen 1. Weltkrieges, die die Massen in die Arme Adolf Hitlers trieb“ (Hepp 12). The attempt at justification in the preceding quote actually confirms Frye’s point that the provocation of *nemesis* is often not the result of a clear-cut immoral decision. In *Auf den Marmorklippen* the narrator’s statement in the above-cited quotation that, „Wir sanken aus dumpfen Freuden in den dumpfen Schmerz, auch spiegelt ein Bewußtsein des Verlustes, das uns stets belebt, uns Zukunft und Vergangenheit verlockender“ (Jünger 1998: 27), can be read as a reference to the inability of many Germans of the Weimar Republic to forget Wilhelmine Germany and the lost First World War, and who thus yearned for both the utopian future of what an undefeated Germany *could have been* and a nostalgia for Wilhelmine Germany itself. This state of melancholic yearning, in the book, leads the narrator to the realization that one could not exist in a state of yearning for the past or the utopian future: this spurred their desire to act, to be present in the present, and led to, as the narrator notes, violence. This „Sehnsucht nach Präsenz“ is in itself not open to moral judgement, although the movement toward „Gewalt“, and the indifference as to

whether this would lead „zum Untergang“ or „zum Triumph“, do throw up moral questions. For the population of Weimar Germany, this ready turn to violence was due to the cancelling of civilized inhibitions, that Freud noted that the armies of World War I needed in order to kill, and the imperfect control over these violent tendencies exhibited by the returning soldiers. This was exacerbated, in Germany, by the *Schamkultur Verhaltenslehre der Kälte* that came to characterize a post-War society branded as romance villain. If nemesis can be argued to have symbolically been called onto the German meta-narrative stage near the very beginning of the post-War *Kultur der Niederlage* by Hitler's early speech, the dynamic of nemesis then gathers strength throughout the Weimar period, is decisively propelled by the *Machtergreifung* until it is revealed to all, nationally and internationally, at *Kristallnacht*.

In the text, one can sense the gathering of the forces of nemesis, such as at the celebration in Große Marina in which the orator „kehrte sich zu niederen Haß- und Rachejamben“, of which the narrator says, „Bei diesen Tönen ergriff uns Trauer, und mit uns manchen, den wir fühlten, daß nun aus der Marina der gute Ahnengeist gewichen war“ (Jünger 1998: 45). The narrator reflects Jünger's experience with the nationalist right wing, that was absorbed or subsumed by the Nazis and which is allegorically represented in the text by the „Mauretanier Orden“, and in the process suggests the mixture of moral and amoral forces at work in *nemesis*:

Wir kamen bei den Mauretaniern um ehrenvollen Abschied ein und wurden mit dem schwarz-rot-schwarzen Bande in die Feierzunft versetzt. In diesem Orden hoch emporzusteigen, hätte es uns wohl nicht an Mut und Urteilskraft gefehlt; doch war die Gabe uns versagt geblieben, auf das Leiden der Schwachen und Namenlosen herabzusehen, wie man vom Senatorensitze in die Arena blickt. Wie aber, wenn die Schwachen das Gesetz verkennen und in der Verblendung mit eigener Hand die Riegel öffnen, die zu ihrem Schutze geschlossen sind? Wir konnten auch die Mauretanier nicht durchaus tadeln, denn tief war Recht mit Unrecht nun vermischt; die Festen wankten, und die Zeit war für die Fürchterlichen reif. Die Menschenordnung gleicht dem Kosmos darin, daß sie von Zeit zu Zeiten, um sich von neuem zu gebären, in Feuer tauchen muß. (Jünger 1998: 54-55).

On the one hand, the narrator makes a moral decision in refusing to remain with the organization and rise within it, for that would necessitate countenancing and looking down upon the suffering of the weak. This reflects Jünger's decision to reject the seat offered to him by the Nazis in the Reichstag and to refuse the appointment to the Nazi Deutsche Akademie der Dichtung (Wulf 35). But in the very next statement, this moral highground is undermined by the narrator when he blames the victims for opening metaphoric seals that were closed in order to protect them. The narrator absolves the Mauretanier of guilt in this regard because „Recht [war] mit Unrecht nun vermischt“: this statement can be read as an allegorical reference to the post-war German moral compass being defective because of the injustices of the internationally narrative-paradigm-setting function of Versailles. In order to reconcile this state, where the Mauretanier can not be judged for causing the weak to suffer and that the victims can be blamed for initiating the openings for their misery, the narrator immediately invokes the victory in tragedy Ragnarok motif brought to prominence in the culture by the barbarian discourse. In this „apokalyptischen Verknüpfung von totaler Katastrophe und Urbeginn“ (Segeberg 1995: 122) that Segeberg argues that the text proposes, the Ragnarok motif is a clear indicator that the victory in tragedy phase of the *mythos* of tragedy is the textual pattern of the text's first layer of form. By justifying violence through the invocation of the barbarian Germanic concept of the total catastrophe and primal beginning that has come to be generally known in its Norse form of Ragnarok, Jünger is, by implication, pointing to the chief Germanic war god, the Dionysian Gestalt of Wotan.

This implied turning to and invoking of the war god is not the decisive instance in the provocation of *nemesis* and there is another factor at play, a factor that the text's third level of form allegorically suggests. The narrator suggests just such a factor as the momentum toward *nemesis* and ultimate tragedy in Große Marina becomes more and more evident:

Das war der Stand der Dinge im siebten Jahre nach Alta Plana, und auf diesen Feldzug führten wir die Übel, die das Land verdüsterten, zurück. Zwar hatten auch wir beide daran teilgenommen und das Gemetzel vor den Pässen bei den Purpurreitern mitgemacht – doch nur, um unsere Lehenspflicht zu leisten, und in deisem Stande lag es uns ob zu schlagen, nicht aber nachzugrübeln, wo Recht und Unrecht war. Wie man indessen dem Arme leichter als dem Herzen

gebieten kann, so lebte unser Sinn bei jenen Völkern, die ihre angestammte Freiheit gegen jede Übermacht verteidigt hatten, und wir erblickten in ihrem Siege mehr als Waffenglück. (Jünger 1998: 54)

*Alta Plana*, although textually a sub-created place in Jünger's Fantasy genre text, points to the fighting on the Western Front in World War I. The *Purpurreitern*, textually a Fantasy genre force of mounted knights inhabiting the sub-creation, suggest the German forces as a whole. The *Völkern* the narrator speaks of that defended their freedom against superiority in numbers suggests the Belgians, for the friendship with these people that the narrator of the novel goes on to evoke is very reminiscent of the friendships with Belgian civilians that the young Jünger describes in *In Stahlgewittern*. The implication here is a far fuller about-face in Jünger's *Weltanschauung* than has here-to-fore been argued, for it implies a guilt-admission about Germany's role in World War I. Even Hans-Harald Müller's essay – „Im Grunde erlebt jeder seinen eigenen Krieg“. Zur Bedeutung des Kriegserlebnisses im Frühwerk Ernst Jüngers” – does not suggest a moral reckoning of this kind in Jünger's textual re-playing of his war experience. If, as Fischer and others argue, that Jünger's main project in his career to this point is to make sense of the lost war, an admission of guilt is quite a development from the beyond good and evil transcending of this question he suggests in the necessary creation of the new man in *Der Kampf als inneres Erlebnis*, or the war itself as precondition for the rising of the *Arbeiter* Gestalt.

#### XI.1.4.2. The Role of the Fantasy genre Convention of Sub-Creation in Establishing the Tragedy *Mythos*

The fact that such a turning point in Jünger's *Weltanschauung* comes through the agency of a major structural element of the text's third layer of form, the Fantasy genre, indicates the importance of this genre choice for the text and for Jünger's discursive development. Like Howard, Jünger creates a fantasy world ostensibly divorced from reality but that is also a metaphor for Europe. In Jünger's case, as a writer new to the genre – indeed, as a writer possibly not even aware that such a genre was becoming established in the English-speaking world – his sub-creation breaks down here and there with geographical references to the real Europe (and Africa) that make his metaphor dangerously transparent at times. This was likely not entirely unintentional, as the semi-obvious

nature of the text's function as political allegory was also used by Jünger's publisher as a weapon against the Nazi censorship authorities. The publisher correctly reasoned that if the Nazis were to call Jünger on the book's allegorical nature they would, de facto, be giving credence to the picture painted of the NS regime: in other words, they feared being portrayed in this light to the public (Schwilk 145), which would logically lead to the conclusion that there was truth in what one of the heroes of the nationalist right, Jünger, was saying. Jünger himself played down this „Angriff aus dem Traumreich“; in the context of the Third Reich, given the monstrous crimes and the daring sacrifice of resistance fighters like Julius Leber and the White Rose, this book was not much, and in the end amounted to what Jünger realistically saw it as: evidence of his personal contrast with the powers of the time (Jünger 1998: 141). The book does not now, and did not then, signify a revolution, but merely an act of self-affirmation. Yet even this was dangerous in 1939 Germany.

In terms of these formal choices that Jünger makes, he has a long German *Phantastik* tradition behind him, particularly romantic works such as those by Novalis, Tieck and, later, Hoffmann. Those romantic tales were largely written in the *Phantastik Schreibweise* described by Lachmann, and would variously be ascribed, today, to genres like Horror, Gothic and, arguably, even Science Fiction when one thinks of Hoffmann's *Der Sandmann*. In the case of this latter example, we cannot speak of the *Neophantastik*, which is the *Schreibweise* necessary for works to be properly considered Science Fiction or Fantasy: while the reader seems to have proof that Olympia is indeed a robot, the reader gets no definitive textual confirmation and is still subject to the *Phantastik's* *Unschlüssigkeit* effect through Nathanael's madness and suicide (Hoffmann 40). The Fantasy genre, founded on a *Neophantastik Schreibweise*, as is the work of William Morris and Lord Dunsany, for example, does not exist as such in Germany at Jünger's time. It is Jünger's specific situation that leads him to essentially re-create the modern Fantasy genre in Germany with *Auf den Marmorlippen*, by pursuing a *Neophantastik Schreibweise* in which there is no real world that is confronted by a textual irruption of the unreal, as Lachmann requires for the *Phantastik*. Avoiding the real world and its potentially lethal political consequences as much as possible, Jünger adopts a *Neophantastik Schreibweise* to create a sub-creation with the “inner consistency of reality” (Tolkien 45).

Jünger's sub-creation is focussed around a body of water and has – in contrast with Howard's sub-creation – a north-south axis. Along the



northern shore of this sea are the cities of the Marina (Jünger 1998: 125), chief among them, and central to the story, Große Marina. Marble cliffs separate the cities along the north shore of the sea from the Campagna, which are grasslands populated by herdsmen. The Campagna is bounded on the north by swamps and forest, and these are the forests of the Oberförster. A noteworthy aspect of the transition from grasslands to forest are two scythe-blade-like protrusions of forest into the Campagna, and these are called the Fillerhörner; just beyond these, to the north, in a clearing in the forest, is Köppelsbleek. The sub-creation becomes vaguer beyond this focal area of the story: it is mentioned that beyond the Oberförster's forests are mountains, beyond which live „Barbarendvölker“. The narrator himself mentions that his homeland is far in the north (Jünger 1998: 54) and it is unclear whether this is a region beyond those of the barbarians, or if the narrator himself comes from these barbarian peoples. To the southeast, on the other side of the small sea, lie mountains beyond which is the land of Alta Plana (Jünger 1998: 12)<sup>87</sup> – the narrator can see the mountains and the glaciers and the passes when he stands on the terrace of his hermitage, the Rautenklause, which is just below the marble cliffs. There is no mention at all of what lies due east (at least in terms of the actual sub-creation or the narrative of the story), and we are told that Burgund lies to the west (Jünger 1998: 30). It is implied during the visit of Lord Sunmyra that the whole region of the story – from the Marina to the Oberförster's forests and into the narrator's homeland – belong to Neuburgund, or, alternatively, to the Reich (Jünger 1998: 35).

While it is not unusual for fantasy authors to use actual place names from history (whether ancient, obscure or otherwise) to name parts of their sub-creation<sup>88</sup>, Jünger's sub-creation breaks down and repeatedly loses its 'inner consistency of reality'. While Lovecraft did criticize Howard for taking place names from history that were too obvious and that threatened to shake the reader's faith in Howard's sub-created Hyborian Age, Jünger takes geographical terms and means them to denote what the reader expects them to denote. The novel is marked by this oscillation: the central area of the events conforms to a great degree to the fantasy convention of the sub-creation, but the peripheral areas become blurred and merge back into our primary reality. This

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<sup>87</sup> N.B.: Sunrise over Alta Plana (8).

<sup>88</sup> A contemporary example of this sub-creative practice can be found in the work of Katherine Kurtz.

suggests that Jünger could not entirely divorce himself from the *Phantastik* German tradition that he was drawing on, despite the fact that his political situation demanded a *Neophantastik* approach. Alternatively, and this is what gives the novel its allegorical power as an act of resistance, it needs to be considered that Jünger only availed himself of the *Neophantastik Schreibweise* as far as necessary, and the blurring between the two *Schreibweisen*, and the resulting incomplete adoption of conventions of the Fantasy genre, is intentional to bring about a hint of the *Unschlüssigkeit* effect that makes the reader wonder: Is Jünger referencing Nazi Germany or not? Jünger needed the answer to this question to be “not” if the regime asked the question, and thus the *Neophantastik Schreibweise* is foregrounded in such a way that Jünger, or Jünger’s publisher, could have argued, as Segeberg does when he connects Jünger’s aesthetic practice to this dangerous *Schreibweise* game: „Wie von Jünger in seiner ‚Tiefe‘ und ‚Oberfläche‘ zusammenschaltenden Ästhetik der dritßiger Jahre gefordert, empfanden seine Leser nach der Lektüre des Romans „das Phantastische [als] wirklich“ und ihre „Wirklichkeit [als] phantastisch““ (Segeberg 1995: 112). These readers are essentially describing the resulting novelty – for German literature – of the *Neophantastik* and its aesthetic effect, and, parenthetically, its usefulness in shielding Jünger from political consequences.

In creating this oscillating/faltering sub-creation, Jünger does follow the fantasy convention that the setting be marked by economic, technological and cultural aspects of the European Middle Ages. The feudal mode of production is the template for such a setting, and Jünger does present this medieval tone, such as when he refers to knights like Deodat (Jünger 1998: 70), when he describes the Marina in medieval terms (Jünger 1998: 33), when he describes the weaponry used in the climactic battle, such as Belovar’s battle axe (Jünger 1998: 106), and when he describes the culture of the region as a feudal mode based on wine growing, which produces such events as the spring-time bird masquerade described at the outset (Jünger 1998: 9-11).

#### XI.1.4.3. The Role of the Fantasy genre Convention of the Supernatural in Establishing the Tragedy *Mythos*

Not only does there seem to be a medieval setting and an apparent sub-created world centred on Große Marina, Jünger seems to be true to the fantasy convention that there be the uncontested presence

of the supernatural as an integral part of the fantasy setting (not subject to rational dispelling as in the traditional *Phantastik*). Jünger presents the supernatural at the very beginning of his book, and it is this which immediately gives the novel its fantasy flavour and genre identification:

Und dann geschah es, daß sie sich näherten, grau und schattenhaft, die uransässigen Geister des Landes, längst hier beheimatet, bevor die Glocken der Klosterkirche erklangen und bevor ein Pflug die Scholle brach. Sie näherten sich uns zögernd, mit groben, hölzernen Gesichtern, deren Miene in unergründlicher Übereinstimmung heiter und furchtbar war; und wir erblickten sie, zugleich erschrockenen und tief gerührten Herzens, im Weinbergländ. Zuweilen schien es uns, als ob sie sprechen wollten, doch bald entschwandten sie wie Rauch. (Jünger 1998: 8)

Not only can one interpret this as an utterance in the barbarian discourse, where the pre-Christian spirits (gods) attempt to communicate with the narrator, but the narrator insists that this encounter was no ‚Trug‘, thus establishing its *Neophantastik* nature. Yet, elsewhere in the text, there is a slight qualification about this major structural element of the Fantasy genre in that the narrator invokes magic where it is not necessarily actually present, or is a state of mind, such as when he links memories with magic (Jünger 1998: 5), or when he discusses magic weapons.

Magic weapons and other magical items are a staple of the Fantasy genre, as are maps (Jünger 1998: 30), gods and goddesses (Jünger 1998: 59, 64), witches and wizards (Jünger 1998: 50), and magical animals like the Lanzenottern and the „Ungeheuer“ in Sunmyra’s past. All these are textually present in the novel, although there is in every case some ambiguity. This ambiguity is most pronounced in terms of the classic device of the magic sword: „wir erkannten im Wort die Zauberklinge vor deren Strahle die Tyrannenmacht erblaßt“ (Jünger 1998: 67). Here the magic sword is metaphoric, and even in this apparent retreat from an actual textual magic weapon, the idea of words having this power does have a magical, runic connotation both textually and meta-textually. This textual ambiguity about magic items and magic weapons is both reinforced and suspended when the narrator notes that „In jedger guten Waffe liegt Zauberkraft“ (Jünger 1998: 73).

There are also actual magic items in the novel, including the previously mentioned Mirror of Nigromontan. This mirror is able to produce a blue flame that ‘distills’ objects by sending them into the

„Unvergängliche“ (Jünger 1998: 72). In a fantasy context, this does seem like a magic mirror, and yet, perhaps in a postmodern anticipation of the boundaries of science, and an echo of the science fiction dictum that advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic, the described effect seems very much like that of a laser beam with a metaphysical aspect brought in to account for the very scientific – and yet equally mysterious and spiritual – fact that matter is energy and energy cannot be destroyed. This is a manifestation, in fact, of the function that Jünger’s work at this time has, as Segeberg argues: namely that Jünger attempts to reconcile the implications of 1930s technology and media with metaphysics (Segeberg 1995: 107-108). That this kind of scientific speculation is bound up with the Mirror of Nigromontan – which is, along with its blue flame, a central aspect of the novel’s climax (as is the blue flame that strikes down Xaltotun at the climax of *The Hour of the Dragon*) – is an indicator of Jünger’s pursuit of this line of thought toward the adoption science fiction proper in 1949’s *Heliopolis*. At any rate, the mirror is described very much like a fantasy magical item: a sheet of mountain crystal framed by electrum carved with a sun-rune motto, which, in effect, is the swastika. Jünger’s insistence on using this symbol on an object of metaphysical significance, in the context of an allegorical critique of the NS regime, is worthy of comment. Instead of a distancing from the major symbol of the Nazis, the text refuses to concede this symbol, and thus its signified, the Germanic barbarian heritage. Jünger attempts to re-appropriate part of the barbarian discourse by insisting on this symbol in its Germanic runic form associated with Donar, Wotan’s son. Just as the SS is bent on interpreting the Germanic barbarian heritage as cultural justification for the NS regime, the text uses this symbol to evoke the purifying power of the sun as an elemental force whose metaphysical import transcends the political uses that Nazis have put it to.

There is a second major magic item in this fantasy text, and this is a lamp carven with a symbol of Vesta, and which can produce fire when it is dark and one is in a hurry. This lamp is also made of mountain crystal and was used to light a fire at Olympia, where Peregrinus Proteus jumped into the flames „um sich dem Äther zu vereinigen“ (Jünger 1998: 73). Thus both of these magic items carry the text’s metaphysical message of a transcending of a negative earthly situation.

Both supernatural items are thus significant to the story, and the mirror, especially, is significant to the narrator and his brother: „sein

Blitzen weissagte uns, daß wir nicht gänzlich untergehen würden, ja daß das Beste in uns den niederen Gewalten unzugänglich war“ (Jünger 1998: 73). This perspective is indeed central to the mythic narrative of the novel, for it expresses a victory in tragedy sentiment akin to the resurrection concept at the core of Christianity. It is, however, significant that a character that the brothers both revere, Pater Lampros, criticizes the mirror. Lampros is a noteworthy character, for his role as a Christian priest is a violation of the sub-creation dictum of fantasy that the sub-created secondary world *not* be textually connected to the real world. The Pater's criticism of the resurrection, or apotheosis, nature of the Mirror of Nigromontan thus doubly stands out to the reader: in the first instance because his explicitly Christian character makes a connection between the sub-created world and the Nazi Germany reality, and in the second instance because Pater Lampros' statement that the mirror represents a sarcophagus for the mind and soul is a reversal, for the reader does not expect this criticism of a magical item prized by the heroes. Lampros' insistence that „Die Stunde der Vernichtung aber müsse die Stunde des Lebens sein“ (Jünger 1998: 73) is just as surprising because this is a barbarian sentiment: that one's dying should be emblematic of how one lived one's life. Such a sentiment is found in “barbarian” cultures as diverse as the Lakota of North America – ‘Today is a good day to die’ – and the Germanic barbarians of the time of *Beowulf*, in which the sentiment is expressed that the deeds of a man are what are important and will be remembered.

The textual presence of the supernatural as an integral part of the sub-creation of the novel also includes the classic fantasy conventions of gods, witches and wizards, magic animals and monsters. As noted, the text violates the sub-creation rule with the textual presence of Christianity, represented by Pater Lampros, who is a „Christenmönch“ at the pilgrim's church of „Maria Lunaris“ which has a horn of plenty as its weathervane/cross. The horn of plenty and the explicit connection of Mary with the Moon – the moon being an ancient association with the Mother Goddess across ancient religions – shows that the sub-creation features a version of Christianity explicitly linked to its pagan roots through this highlighting of the lunar aspect of Maria (Jünger 1998: 59). The text's sub-creation, on the one hand, is further violated by the text's indication that both the Olympian Graeco-Roman gods and the Germanic gods exist in the world of the text, but, on the other hand, the sub-creation regains a measure of structural stability by the text's

insistence that these faiths co-exist with Christianity. In fact, Lampros is respected by people of all faiths in the sub-creation: „Doch liebten ihn auch solche, die an den Zwölf Göttern hingen oder die aus dem Norden stammten, wo man die Asen in weiten Hallen und umzäunten Hainen ehrt“ (Jünger 1998: 64). There are also references to the existence of Judaism in the sub-creation through the Judenkirsche and Rabbi Nilufar (Jünger 1998: 51), and to the existence of Hinduism (Jünger 1998: 73). While the gods of a Fantasy genre text do not necessarily need to intervene in the plot, or even be implicated in it – and this state of non-intervention is usually the case in Howard’s fantasy texts, for example – their existence is never textually questioned, nor is the legitimacy of their worshippers. This *Neophantastik* textual reality is the case in this novel. Witches, wizards and magic or occult personages are also explicitly present in Jünger’s sub-creation, as is conventional for a Fantasy genre text. And – as is the case for the deities of the sub-creation – their magical reality is also not textually questioned. There is, however, a certain ambiguity in their presentation as with other aspects of the supernatural; for we are told they live in the forests of the Oberförster – „Hier schlugen die Magier und die Hexenmeister die den Scheiterhaufen entronnen waren, ihre Zauberküchen auf; und bei den Eingeweihten, Venedigern und Alchimisten zählten diese unbekanntes Dörfer zu den Horten der Schwarzen Kunst“ (Jünger 1998: 50) – and yet they do not seem to participate in the Oberförster’s attack on the Marina for there is no evidence of magic use in the battle, as there is, for example, in the climax of *The Hour of the Dragon*.

Finally, magic animals and monsters are a staple of the supernatural convention of the Fantasy genre, and they are present in the novel. Again, there is a certain amount of ambiguity in their presentation. As with the magic sword, there is a metaphoric aspect to the „Lemuren“ and „Feuerwürmer“ that make up part of the Oberförster’s forces. At times it seems that these are merely monstrous epithets for the „Gesindel“ that are the Oberförster’s Campagna herdsmen and forest dwellers (the cruder and more disreputable among them, as opposed to Belovar, who sides with the brothers); however, particularly in relation to the „Feuerwürmer“, their reality or metaphoric function is never spelled out and the reader, in this instance, remains caught in a *Phantastik Unschlüssigkeit* effect as to whether these are men or not. Jünger’s oscillation between the *Phantastik* and *Neophantastik* in this text – reminiscent of the oscillation between these *Schreibweisen* in

Howard's early Conan stories before he relied exclusively on the *Neophantastik Schreibweise* for his second layer of form – is the result of the text's allegorical function. Just as the violations of the sub-creation highlight those violations before they can safely blend back into the Fantasy genre background, this *Schreibweise* oscillation highlights such a thing as the „Feuerwürmer“ and the reader gets images of rampaging torch-bearing Nazis before the Fantasy genre convention of monsters safely re-appropriates or blurs those images.

Another animal of great significance in the story are the „Lanzenottern“ that live around the hermitage. These are snakes of great intelligence that can be called by both Lampusa, the brothers' cook, and Erio, the narrator's son and the grandson of Lampusa. What makes these snakes the magical animals of fantasy is that they, as a magical collective, form specific patterns with their bodies when they are called: they form „das Zeichen des geflammten Feuerkreises“ (Jünger 1998: 13) and glittering wickerwork (Jünger 1998: 22) when Lampusa calls them, and they form a sun ray pattern when Erio calls them (Jünger 1998: 22). At the end, these strange adders save the brothers from the forces of the Oberförster as Erio calls them: „Dann stellten sie, am Boden einen goldenen Kreis beschreibend“ (Jünger 1998: 128). Again, there is ambiguity as to whether these snakes are magical or rather incredibly intelligent or well-trained, but the very fact that the snakes exist and seem to be able to distinguish friend from foe suggests that they are true to the convention of magical animals and monsters. Furthermore, monsters are explicitly said to have existed in the past of the sub-creation when the narrator points out that Sunmyra's ancestors gained their noble rank through the slaying of „Ungeheuer“ (Jünger 1998: 119), when the narrator relates the existence of an Eburnum sung for the slaying of monsters (Jünger 1998: 43), and when he explicitly refers to the existence of „Greifen“ (Jünger 1998: 58).

#### XI.1.4.4. The Role of the Fantasy genre Convention of Maps in Establishing the Tragedy *Mythos*

Maps are a convention of fantasy intimately connected with the sub-creation convention; maps are, in fact, such a central feature of the genre that a map of a particular fantasy text's sub-creation invariably serves as a frontispiece for that Fantasy genre book. Maps themselves are also prominent plot devices and are routinely textually present in the

Fantasy genre, as we saw with Howard's "Phoenix on the Sword" and *The Hour of the Dragon*. The fantasy convention of maps is textually present in *Auf den Marmorklippen* as the narrator is in possession of Fortunio's map, which can lead one into the heart of the Oberförster's domain (Jünger 1998: 30). However, the map of Jünger's sub-creation – which is not provided as a graphic, and thus exists in the reader's mind as the text explores the sub-creation – breaks down due to direct references to aspects of the real world of the reader. As noted previously, the convention of the sub-creation as a world with the inner consistency of reality with no textual connection to our own holds only for the central region of the story. While a fantasy author like Howard can get away with appropriating a certain amount of geographical names from the history of the real world and incorporating them into his sub-creation, Jünger mentions all of the following real world geographical terms: Iberischen Provinzen (Jünger 1998: 26); Teutoburger Wald (Jünger 1998: 30); Huns, Tatars, Gypsies, Albigensians, Niederrhein and Venice (Jünger 1998: 50); Upsala (Jünger 1998: 59); Saracens (Jünger 1998: 71); India (indirectly) (Jünger 1998: 73); Arabs (Jünger 1998: 104); Cuba (Jünger 1998: 112); and Flanders (Jünger 1998: 116). It is noteworthy that the very first term that challenges the fantasy sub-creation that Jünger builds through the opening pages is the reference to a wine grape called the „Judenkirsche“, which immediately takes the contemporary reader, with the memory of *Kristallnacht* only a year old, out of the fantasy-land of the Marina and, seemingly innocently, references the reality of Nazi Germany (Jünger 1998: 11). Nevertheless, these geographical references to places in every conceivable direction – Segeberg writes of „diese ineinander verschachtelten historischen Landschaften“ (Segeberg 1995: 113) – frame the sub-creation in such a way that it becomes difficult not to see the sub-creation as a metaphor for, or disguise for, an actual region, in this case Jünger's home near Lake Constance in south-western Germany.

Jünger continues this oscillation between fantasy sub-creation and veiled reference to the primary world by giving the Große Marina a Roman history (Jünger 1998: 34, 105) (as his actual region of southwestern Germany has), followed by a Carolingian period (Jünger 1998: 30). The fantasy convention of a medieval setting is further challenged by references to machines (Jünger 1998: 29), to magnates and commissioners (Jünger 1998: 36), and to a non-feudal social order through Braquemart's desire to *re-establish* a world of lords and servants (Jünger 1998: 90). References to firearms (Jünger 1998: 100) follow an



already decisive shattering of the medieval setting of fantasy in the scene where Sunmyra and Braquemart visit the brothers. The description of this scene –

Indem ich so die Lilien beschaute, blitzte unten am Weinbergwege ein feiner blauer Lichtstrahl auf und schob sich tastend am Rebenhügel vor. Dann hörte ich, wie vor der Rautenklausenpforte ein Wagen hielt. Obgleich wir Gäste nicht erwarteten, eilte ich doch der Lanzenottern wegen zum Tor hinab und sah dort einen starken Wagen stehen, der leise summte wie ein Insekt, das fast unhörbar schwirrt. (Jünger 1998: 88-89)

– challenges the inner consistency of a medievaesque fantasy setting, for one can imagine the „Wagen“ as nothing but a car whose headlights shine up the hill as it approaches. As Jünger notes, this scene was based on a real-life event that brought Jünger to the brink of the resistance movement in Germany (Segeberg 1995: 116), and the fact that he allows *precisely this scene* to break the fantasy illusion, so blatantly, draws attention to it, and suggests that, while he took pains to create the illusion of a fantasy sub-creation with a land sporting names like Große Marina, Campagna, Alta Plana, his dropping of actual place names – when he could just as easily have thrown out some more invented fantasy-sounding ones as in the central area of the story – suggests that he wanted to alert the reader to the metaphorical nature of the sub-creation and that it was indeed meant to fully reference the real world of 1939 Nazi Germany. In fact, another aspect of the novel, the narration by the unnamed narrator, suggests this attempt to address the actual reader of 1939 Germany directly, for he repeatedly speaks of „wir“.

Despite these – likely deliberate – lapses in the structural conventions of the Fantasy genre, *Auf den Marmorlippen* is an exemplar of the Fantasy genre as Tolkien and later writers have defined it, for it is true to the conventions of the genre more often than it violates those conventions. Although Jünger was inexperienced with the Fantasy genre, and was, in fact, independently re-creating the genre out of his own needs, these lapses in the sub-creation and supernatural conventions do not point to laziness or incompetence, but point to an intention to address the audience of the day about the concerns of the day once the protective function of the sub-creation had been textually established to the extent that Jünger and his publisher could hide behind it and protest innocence if necessary. Using fantasy to express the ineffable (Branham

1983: 75) is one of the wellsprings of the genre, and of all forms of writing ultimately emerging from the *Phantastik* and *Neophantastik Schreibweisen*. In fact, it is most effective in expressing sentiments that are so contradictory to the accepted order that overt insistence on these sentiments (such as Howard's belief in barbarism and Tolkien's medievalism bordering on Luddite-ism) could result in dire social consequences, whether outright dismissal (including dismissal from employment and other social positions), the threat of the madhouse, or, in Jünger's case, a concentration camp and/or execution.

### XI.1.5. The Layers of Form and Political Allegory

Such were the motives and reasons behind Jünger's choice for this novel's third layer of form, but how do the three layers of form combine to deliver the political allegory the novel is famous for? Essentially, the second and third layers of form have two functions in this regard. The oscillations between the *Neophantastik* and *Phantastik Schreibweisen*, and the use of the the Fantasy genre, help to conceal the allegory and give the story plot detail and direction. Frye notes that the initiative that prompts a writer to sit down and compose a piece is a "complex of factors" (Frye 246) and that "the genre is determined by the conditions established between the poet and his public" (Frye 247). In the case of *Auf den Marmorclippen*, Jünger's social and political context, particularly his role in helping to shape this context (Ansel 16), was part of this initiative as was von Solz zu Trott's visit. The use of the Fantasy genre allowed Jünger the possibility of communicating with his audience, which, arguably, no other genre could have done in 1939. Ultimately, however, it is the actual mythic narrative structure of the first layer of form that gives the story its power. There is an apparent tragic chain of events that includes the killing of the narrator's friends, the destruction of his city and his home and his life's work, and his final exile, and yet these events are consistently relativized by the narrator who attempts to express a transcendent romance perspective. While this interesting contradiction is present, the work is, in fact, structured as a tragedy. That said, it is important to note what Frye calls the "radical of presentation" (Frye 247), which in this case is that of the the Epos: "*Epos* thus takes in all literature, in verse or prose, which makes some attempt to preserve the convention of recitation and a listening audience" (Frye 248). Jünger

very consciously adopts this convention by making the novel's first words a direct call to his 1939 audience: „Ihr alle“ (Jünger 1998: 5). The tone of these first words and opening paragraphs reveals a sense of loss, and thus the mythic structure of the narrative is set into motion. Furthermore, and more importantly, this meta-narrative tradition points to the novel's ultimate indication of being more about the reader's world than the world within the story.

The narrator, in fact, textually confirms the presence of tragedy's requirement that the tragic hero be on top of the wheel of fortune *by* this beginning narration that blurs the line between the narrator as tragic hero and the audience he addresses – thus suggesting a challenge to what Frye calls “a commonplace of criticism” that “tragedy is more concentrated on a single individual” (Frye 207). Indeed, the narrator suggests that he is narrating not an individual tragedy, but a collective tragedy: „Ach stets zu spät erkennen wir, daß damit schon das Füllhorn reich für uns geöffnet war“ (Jünger 1998: 5). The narrator includes himself *along with* the audience in this highly fortunate state where the horn of plenty is opened for them. This symbol is connected explicitly with the Roman goddess Fortuna and the narrator suggests that the simple life of peace that he and – by implication through this direct address – the listening audience had, prior to the events of the novel, was above the “all too human” and had an aspect of the divine and the supernatural to it: „So denke ich auch an die Zeiten, in denen wir an der Großen Marina lebten, zurück – erst die Erinnerung treibt ihren Zauber hervor“ (Jünger 1998: 5). This state of being at the top of the wheel of fortune without knowing it is an indication of the tragedy to come, and the narrator wants to make clear just how fortunate they were at the top of the wheel of fortune by textually evoking the magic of that time through accounts of the fall and spring festivals of the Große Marina. After this establishment of a collective tragic hero – just as the Nazis posited an aggressive and re-armed Germany as a collective romance hero – the narrator returns the focus to an individual one by pointing out, as already noted, that he and his brother, Otho, lived in an hermitage on the marble cliffs overlooking the city and the sea, thus symbolically occupying a position “half-way between human society on the ground and something greater in the sky” (Frye 207). The significance of this physical, and simultaneously metaphysical, positioning is underlined by the title of the novel. Perhaps more significantly, “Tragic heroes are so much the highest points in their human landscape that they seem the inevitable conductors of the power

about them” (Frye 207) – which seems the case in *Auf den Marmorklippen* as the brothers receive energy from Pater Lampros, discover Köppelsbleek, and draw Braquemart and Sunmyra to them; it is after a visit with the brothers that Braquemart and Sunmyra confront the Oberförster and it is the brothers’ ability to call on Belovar’s forces that seems to ignite the catastrophic violence that ends with the burning of the cities of the Marina. On the surface, there is nothing so great about the narrator, although it is noteworthy that he and his brother are at the centre of events, know powerful and important figures, and not only survive the catastrophe, but are given an armed escort and a ship to flee it with. The greatness of the tragic hero comes from metatextual aspects connected to the collective tragic dimension.

As noted by Segeberg, the novel represents, in its extratextual reality, an extraordinary act in Nazi Germany (Segeberg 1995: 111) and, as Ansel points out, Jünger is able to do such things because of who he is and the political capital he has amassed. The analogy with the Germany of his day that is the foundation of the fantasy sub-creation – including its repeated intentional breakdowns – makes not only the events, situations, thoughts and personages of the story translatable to the audience’s real world, but the unnamed narrator is translatable to the real world of the reader as well. One suspects that the narrator and tragic hero is equatable with Jünger himself, a man who parlayed Germany’s highest military honour, the *Pour le mérite*, into a position of power and influence, as did Göring, another recipient of the *Pour le mérite*. Since the autobiographical component of the narrator has been remarked upon by several critics, the title also points to Jünger himself as a tragic hero, for his name appears on the cover under (or over) that title. The symbolic nature of this juxtaposition of an author’s name and the title of the work on the cover of a book, in terms of this novel, cannot be dismissed, for Jünger’s own interest in the significance and power of words would argue against such a dismissal. The hero of World War I and the right wing political prophet realizing that he was, as his textual alter-ego is, on the marble cliffs and at the top of the wheel of fortune without knowing it, is a telling symbol for this work. In a sense, Jünger writes this book precisely to fulfill the function of the tragic hero to be the mediator with God, fate, fortune, necessity and circumstance for the 1939 German reader; precisely these things are the themes of the narrator’s narration throughout the novel. The narrator/tragic hero/Jünger himself and the German collective are, as is the convention

in tragedy, small against these forces, but the narrator is able to navigate, mitigate and mediate these powers.

#### XI.1.6. The Narrative Structured by the Allegorical Need to Establish the Basis of the Tragedy *Mythos*: The Act Provoking Enmity

The centrality of this mediation with the above-mentioned forces is reflected in, and embodied by, a major structural feature of the novel which, in turn, is connected to the feature that makes a text a tragedy: “The hero provokes enmity, or inherits a situation of enmity, and the return of the avenger constitutes the catastrophe” (Frye 208-209). The major structural feature of the novel being referred to here is the fact that, for the first 75 pages of the novel, there is no real ‘scene’. Instead of using scenes of action to draw the reader in, the narrator provides a series of flashbacks, or, rather, general summations of events and situations in the Große Marina that preceded the day when the brothers accidentally stumble onto Köppelsbleek on one of their botanical outings. This kind of approach flies in the face of both current and turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century advice on how to get a reader’s attention and keep it. But for Jünger and his audience, what is of paramount interest is not the suspenseful unfolding of a well-crafted tragic plot, what is important in light of the tragic hero’s mediation of fate and necessity<sup>89</sup> is the answer to the question: ‘How did the hero provoke enmity or inherit a situation of enmity?’ – or, more directly, how did this tragic state of affairs in 1939 Germany come to be? This overriding concern is why it takes Jünger more than half the novel to commence the actual action of the story. In the process, he is using his own artistic and philosophical development in the 1930s to establish both the tragic convention of the provoking or inheriting of enmity, and the actual phase of tragedy that the novel can be read as.

In the 1930s, Jünger aimed at a written language that matched his desire for a perception where the physical and the metaphysical are identical (Segeberg 1995: 108). Further, he wanted a perception where the crystalline structure of things is visible and allows a vision of the purposes and movements of things (Segeberg 1995: 115). The proper response to a universe where „das Spiel zu fein und zu folgerichtig ist,

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<sup>89</sup> Another such mediation is Carl Orff’s 1936 *Carmina Burana*, with its repeated calls to ‘O Fortuna’.

um von Menschen erdacht worden zu sein“ (Segeberg 1995: 104) was transcendence, and the point was „den ‘Gang lautloser Uhren in kosmischen Kurven’ nicht nur wahrnehmen, sondern in den ‘Worten und Bildern einer Sprache vernehmlich zu machen“ (Segeberg 1995: 106). It is this belief and this search that the narrator shares, in the first half of the novel, with the audience through applications of this sentiment to the metaphoric world of the sub-creation and the events that transpire in and around Große Marina. This perspective itself, as we shall see, is part of the tragic hero’s provocation of enmity.

While the narrator makes clear immediately that there is a threat or a conflict – „vor allem waren wir vor dem Oberförster auf der Hut“ (Jünger 1998: 5) – he spends a good portion of the opening twenty pages with these general flashbacks that establish the characters and the setting, and provide glimpses of the transcendent ethos the narrator represents. The sub-creation, to this point, is being faithfully maintained – in the fantasy sense – before giving us the first real indication of the act provoking enmity, which will start what Frye calls the counter-balancing movement (Frye 208). The narrator does hint, in the opening pages, that both he and the audience are at fault for not recognizing that they had been fortunate – indeed at the top of the wheel of fortune – and this negligence, the reader senses, will be a factor in the tragedy that the tone presages.

The narrator finally asks the question that the audience has been waiting for throughout the opening exposition, and since the first mention of the Oberförster (which, in a metaphoric fashion, the German audience of 1939 has also been waiting for): „Wie kam es, daß wir die Arbeit nicht im Stiche ließen, als der Oberförster in unserem Gebiet an Macht gewann und als der Schrecken sich verbreitete?“ (Jünger 1998: 25) Here we learn that the narrator/tragic hero has inherited this situation of enmity with the Oberförster and yet the question itself suggests that the scale of this enmity, the degree of danger, was heightened by the fact that the narrator and his brother – and, by implication through the opening evocation of a collective protagonist, the audience – did not leave their „Arbeit im Stiche“ to deal with this threat. The narrator, in terms of the sub-creation, and Jünger, in terms of his 1939 German audience, attempts to justify this turning away by saying „Wir hatten eine Ahnung der Heiterkeit gewonnen, vor deren Glanze die Truggestalten sich verflüchtigen“ (Jünger 1998: 25). This, as we have seen in Jünger’s earlier work, is an expression of his *Drang* to romance and his metaphysics of

the 1930s; it is, in a romantic sense, a daring prophecy in the context of 1939: that the forces that the Oberförster represents, i.e. the Nazis, are *Truggestalten* and that they will pass. Yet, on the other hand, this transcendent attitude is an example of the hybris that Frye says tragic heroes exhibit. The narrator is self-deluded in believing that this transcendent attitude, based on the brothers' feeling that they are like kings and magicians for ordering nature with their words (Jünger 1998: 24), is proof against tragedy or puts them above the events that will unfold. This attitude will, in fact, heighten the Oberförster's power and accelerate the coming catastrophe.

A further aspect of the act – or acts – provoking enmity is the brothers' involvement with the secret Order of Mauretania. They do, of course, leave this Order (whose metaphoric associations will be discussed below), but not before they get a clear view of things:

Bei den Mauretaniern aber herrschte unberührte Stille wie im Zentrum des Zyklons. Wenn man in den Abgrund stürzt, soll man die Dinge in dem letzten Grad der Klarheit wie durch überschärfte Gläser sehen. Diesen Bick, doch ohne Furcht, gewann man in der Luft der Mauretainia, die von Grund auf böse war. (Jünger 1998: 28)

That the brothers were part of the same organization as the Oberförster, one which encouraged „Schrecken“ and „Katastrophen“ (Jünger 1998: 28), is a factor in the tragic counter-balancing movement that takes them from the top of the wheel of fortune, where the *Füllborn* was opened for them.

This attitude as a factor in the coming fall is underlined by the narrator's reminiscences of another member of the Mauretania Orden, El Capitano. It seems that he was involved in fighting on behalf of the Mauretania (crushing a revolt in the „Ibirischen Provinzen“ – a sub-creation breakdown clearly suggesting the Spanish Civil War) and the narrator remembers thinking, „Lieber noch mit diesem stürzen, als mit jenen leben, die die Furcht im Staub zu kriechen zwingt“ (Jünger 1998: 29). As in Jünger's case, who had „anfängliche Sympathien für Adolf Hitler“ (Ansel 9) and who wrote „im Dienst des Neuen Nationalismus“ (Ansel 10) that the Frontsoldiers of WW I should lead an authoritarian state (Ansel 10) and exhibit „erbitterte Gegnerschaft gegen die Weimarer Republik“ (Ansel 16), the narrator, in his Mauretania time, is ready to rise – and fall, if necessary – with the tyrants, rather than be one of the oppressed. The narrator, like Jünger – who demonstrated „Distanz zur

NSDAP nach 1933“ (Ansel 16) – abandons this attitude and leaves the Mauretania – as we learn allegorically in the extensive flashback exposition of the first half of the novel. However, in terms of tragedy, the damage was done, and in contributing to the rise of the Mauretania and its leading figure, the Oberförster, the narrator and his brother (and the implied metatextual German collective) have sown the seeds of their own tragedy.

This implication within the threat to the idyllic state, that the narrator reminds the audience they actually inhabited before the events of the novel, is compounded by the narrator’s statement that,

Nach Alta Plana aber gewann, was sonst zum Lauf der Dinge zählte, unheilvollen Sinn. Oft dringt in den erschöpften Körper das Verderben durch Wunden, die der Gesunde kaum bemerkt. Die ersten Zeichen wurden nicht erkannt. (Jünger 1998: 37)

Significant here is that Alta Plana – the sub-creation’s metaphoric reference to the trench fighting of WW I – is specifically mentioned as the beginning of the problem. The *erschöpften Körper* in the singular is a metaphor for the collective. In the text, it is the society centred on Große Marina; and meta-textually this is a reference to a collective Gestalt, logically, the *Frontsoldat*. In other words, the people of the Marina/the Reich/Neuburgund (Jünger 1998: 3) who fought at Alta Plana (against the sub-creation’s metaphor for the Western Allies) received wounds that a healthy person would not even notice, but they were infected through those wounds because of their exhaustion. This infection was the first sign of the coming tragedy, but it was not noticed. Even in this little anecdotal sketch, Jünger is replaying the *Kultur der Niederlage* dynamic, whereby the fighting of World War I is not repudiated, but what came after – Versailles – is being likened to an infection that the exhausted body could not cope with. This metaphoric metatextual sense is reinforced by the *Waffenstillstandskommission* documents of November 1918 where the signers know that its provisions will cause chaos for Germany but feel helpless to stop the process. Jünger’s text, and this metaphoric and allegorical association that the text’s Fantasy genre sub-creation makes, suggests that the romance villain role stamped onto Germany like the mark of Cain<sup>90</sup> by Versailles infected the German collective and that elements of this collective, represented in

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<sup>90</sup> Hesse’s 1919 post-war novel *Demian* is interesting in precisely this light.



the text by the Mauretanier Orden, became fully sickened by this infection and were „von Grund auf böse“.

The narrator tries to explain how such early signs of the coming tragedy were not apprehended as such in saying that signs of the „Niedergang“ alternated with days where everything seemed like before (Jünger 1998: 45). This “human all too human” sort of reaction (to recall one pole of the polarization Frye establishes for the tragic hero (Frye 217)) – even after the narrator had realized that „aus der Marina der gute Ahnengeist gewichen war“ (Jünger 1998: 45) – further fuels the enmity as the Oberförster is thereby able to continue to masterfully increase his power by applying fear in small doses; the objective of this fear strategy was „Lähmung des Widerstandes“ (Jünger 1998: 45). The effectiveness of such fear tactics in paralyzing active resistance we see both in the sub-creation and in the reality it metaphorically rewrites, as Sandvoß notes of Berlin during the rise of the NS: „Aber Mangel an Widerstand belegt trotzdem nicht daß die große Mehrheit der Berliner überzeugt nazistisch eingestellt gewesen wäre; wohl aber daß Angst weit verbreitet war“ (Sandvoß 10).

The convoluted and agonized nature of the process leading to the tragedy, the need to explain it in order to justify it, and the skirting of the realization that all these justifications further provoke enmity and bring about tragedy’s final catastrophe for the sub-creation, and – prophetically – for the Germany it metaphorically stands for, is reflected in a similarly convoluted structural aspect of the narrative. The extended flashback-exposition has an internal flashback sequence within it, namely a twenty page interlude from the first mention of Fortunio, a character who functions as a textual representative of an extra-textual reality: „Nur eine kleine Minderheit wagte sich vor“ (Sandvoß 10). Fortunio is mentioned by the narrator as daring to penetrate the Oberförster’s domain and going missing in the process (Jünger 1998: 29). The narrator begins to relate how he, too, entered the Oberförster’s domain to search for Fortunio (Jünger 1998: 30), but then goes on an extensive expository flashback. This flashback is a sub-creation-detailing digression, and the digression finally returns to Fortunio without demonstrating in a scene what the narrator discovered on his search. Instead, the narrator cites Fortunio as his initial source for the knowledge of the Oberförster’s realm (Jünger 1998: 50), which he then relates in a general sketch (Jünger 1998: 50-53). This convoluted back-story/exposition demonstrates just how complex, confused and vital the act provoking enmity is for the

narrator and his audience. At the end of this long digression, the text underlines the fact that Fortunio's name is symbolic of the missed opportunity to overcome the Oberförster at the outset, and his map will later serve to guide the next ones who dare to confront the Oberförster directly, Braquemart and Sunmyra.

From a purely mythic structural viewpoint, it is irrelevant if the tragic hero provokes enmity or inherits a situation of enmity – both variants set the counterbalancing movement of tragedy in motion and lead to the catastrophe. It is, however, in terms of meaning, critical which of these variants actually applies. Attitudes and acts of the narrator suggest that the forces that will lead to the tragic hero's downfall have been augmented and provoked by the tragic hero himself. The narrator, in recounting how he and Otho left the Mauretanium, accents the moral dimension of their decision, as we have noted: „In diesem Orden hoch emporzusteigen, hätte es uns wohl nicht an Mut und Urteilskraft gefehlt; doch war die Gabe uns versagt geblieben, auf das Leiden der Schwachen und Namenlosen herabzusehen, wie man vom Senatorensitze in die Arena blickt“ (Jünger 1998: 55). While such a sentiment and the resulting decision suggest the possibility of turning the wheel of fortune upwards again, the continuing hubris and self-delusion of the tragic hero are suggested by the next words which are also worth quoting again: „Wie aber, wenn die Schwachen das Gesetz verkennen und in der Verblendung mit eigener Hand die Riegel öffnen, die zu ihrem Schutze geschlossen sind? Wir konnten auch die Mauretanium nicht durchaus tadeln, denn tief war Recht mit Unrecht nun vermischt; die Festen wankten, und die Zeit war für die Fürchterlichen reif“ (Jünger 1998: 55). Such attitudes further provoke the coming catastrophe, but the narrator's insistence that „Tief war Recht mit Unrecht nun vermischt“ argues that enmity, that the coming catastrophe, was inherited by the tragic hero and was inevitable, regardless of the hero's action.

#### XI.1.6.1. The Role of the Ragnarok Motif in Establishing the Act Provoking Enmity

This mixture of *Recht* and *Unrecht* can be traced back – not exclusively, but significantly – to the Treaty of Versailles, which, as Weber, among many others, points out (Weber 894, 897), held clauses that were widely perceived in Germany (and elsewhere) as unjust, thus, from the outset of the Weimar period, it put Nazis and non-Nazis alike

into agreement (e.g. Scheidemann (Weber 923)). With this entangled start position it became difficult to draw clear lines, especially with the ensuing economic crises, which resulted in a situation where “the foundations of life seemed to give way beneath the feet of millions who lost their jobs, their savings, and their self-respect, coming to feel that anything was better than the present” (Weber 891), and where “Contractual obligations collapsed. So, in their wake, did social conduct and the sense of moral obligation which is no more than a habit learned by experience and just as easily unlearned by same” (Weber 924). And yet this sentiment, that the enmity was inherited rather than provoked, may also be part of the tragic hero’s hybris and self-delusion, for the acts and attitudes of the narrator reveal no concerted attempt to avert the catastrophe, and this reflected the experience of the 1939 German audience where „Der Widerstand in seiner politischen Breite und sozialen Vielfalt war – mit Ausnahme des 20. Juli 1944 – zersplittert und weitgehend isoliert“ (Sandvoß 9). And yet, there had been attempts to avert the catastrophe; attempts which may well have prevented a Nazi rise to power, like the previously cited „öffentliche Kundgebung“ of Monday, 18 July 1932 in Berlin. This call for the KPD und SPD to work together to prevent a Nazi takeover (in Sandvoß 13), just like the narrator’s meeting with Braquemart and Sunmyra, and Jünger’s real life meeting with von Solz zu Trott, ended in disagreements that prevented concerted effort. While hindsight can imagine these differences of opinion being overcome for the sake of sparing Germany and the world WW II, at the time, these differences seemed so fundamental that they simply could not be overcome, and thus the unfolding of tragic events was inevitable. This viewpoint in the novel is underlined by the narrator’s next words, „Die Menschenordnung gleicht dem Kosmos darin, daß sie von Zeit zu Zeiten, um sich von neuem zu gebären, ins Feuer tauchen muß“ (Jünger 1998: 54), and is, as noted, in keeping both with the metaphysical apocalyptic vision Jünger developed in the 1930s (Segeberg 1995: 104) and with the Ragnarok motif shaping the barbarian discourse within the NS regime, particularly within the SS. Unable – or unwilling – to avert the catastrophe, the narrator will continually justify accepting it. Segeberg argues that Jünger, with the „tiefensymbolischen Darstellungsstil seines Romans – wie später auch im Kriegstagebuch *Strahlungen* – nicht allein auf die Rechtfertigung, sondern auf die Erhöhung des spirituellen Widerstands über den praktisch-politischen Widerstand hinauswill“ (Segeberg 1995: 116). In fact, two years after the

novel, Jünger will write of the purifying power of such a catastrophe where „kein Winkel bleibt, der nicht durch Feuer gereinigt worden ist“ (in Segeberg 119). This Ragnarokian vision is yet another example of the tragic hero's hybris in that the suffering and death of millions is blithely accepted so that this metaphysical “purification” can occur.

This *Be-jabung* of the apocalyptic and the welcoming of the catastrophe is part of the provocation of enmity as it functions as an excuse for tragic inaction, even when the narrator admits that the brothers were forced to begin to gather information as the scope and scale of the threat became too great to ignore. They speak of needing to assess „der Art und Größe der Bedrohung” (Jünger 1998: 55); this may, however, not be an indication that the brothers only come to accept the catastrophe when it becomes apparent that it is indeed too late to stop it, or that it will be too dangerous to try to stop it: it may merely be part of their scientific transcendence, a transcendence arrived at through a belief that Jünger developed during the war years, that catastrophe was part of the geological cycles of the history of the Earth (Segeberg 2004: 412) – a concept also adopted by Howard, who used his interest in Theosophic ideas of such cycles of catastrophe and renewal in human pre-history and history to develop the sub-creations for his Kull and Conan fantasy stories (Shanks 2010a: 3). It is Frye who warns us against seeing purely moral and ethical factors at work in tragedy; “the narrative trajectory of tragedy conforms to natural law”, he argues, and the tragic hero – whether provoking or inheriting the situation of enmity – has disturbed the balance of nature, an invisible order, that must right itself (Frye 209), and “the logic of events (...) happens impersonally, unaffected [...] by the moral quality of human motivation involved” (Frye 209). Interestingly, Roland points out how the Belgian reviewer de Man, in German-occupied Belgium in 1942, insisted that, „Die *Marmorklippen* sei das Werk eines Dichters, nicht eines Ethikers oder eines directeur de conscience“ (Roland 380); such a stance is, of course, in keeping with wanting to avoid trouble with Nazi authorities – both for Jünger and de Man – but, as Segeberg points out, even after the war, when it would have helped Jünger repudiate allegations of his culpability in the Nazi period, Jünger insisted on precisely such an interpretation of his novel as opposed to an ethical one (Segeberg 1995: 112-113). In adopting this stance, Jünger is revealing a cultural debt to Nietzsche, who criticized later Greek drama where the catastrophe was tied to moral issues and there was an earthly resolution of the tragic conflict. Jünger follows

Nietzsche in arguing that there is a metaphysical comfort in a righting of the invisible order of nature which is beyond human moral or ethical motivations (Nietzsche 1995: 63).

#### XI.1.6.2. The Moral Dimension of the Act Provoking Enmity: Failure, Transcendence or the Beyond Good and Evil Nature of the Tragedy *Mythos* Itself

And yet the reader – being, of course “all too human” – cannot suppress moral and ethical reactions to such things as the brothers being able to HEAR the plundering and murdering committed by the Oberförster’s forces while being safe with Belovar in the Campagna (Jünger 1998: 58). This moral discomfort on the part of the reader, noted by Clute when he writes of the novel’s “broodingly passive austerity regarding political action” (Clute 1979: 325), is heightened by the brothers being more worried about the safety of their papers (Jünger 1998: 71) than those people being plundered and murdered, and by their statement that they did not like how Belovar hungered to take on the Oberförster: „Wir taten daher wohl, die Abenteuer zu vermeiden, nach denen der alte Belovar begierig war“ (Jünger 1998: 77). Cold-heartedness and cowardice come to the reader’s mind, particularly in light of Germany’s history, and how, in retrospect, the reader imagines, both for the novel and for its time, that concerted effort at this point in both the narrative and meta-narrative might have altered the outcome. The reason the narrator and his brother give for not fighting and continuing to dedicate their days to finding and cataloguing plants is that they did not see the „Waldgelichter“ as enemies: „Wir billigten dem Lemurenvölke nicht willensfreiheit zu“ (Jünger 1998: 75); in other words, it was beneath them to fight the Oberförster’s minions, which the narrator makes explicit when he says, „Nie dürfen solche Mächte uns in einem Maße das Gesetz vorschreiben, daß uns die Wahrheit aus den Augen kommt“ (Jünger 1998: 75). This „Wahrheit“ is the transcendent apocalyptic vision that Krah argues Jünger develops even further in 1949’s *Heliopolis*, and which here allows the brothers to feel that they transcend the immediate political situation, and that, rather than act, they see the necessity of the coming catastrophe. The narrator’s faith in this interpretation, however, is qualified by an admission that is both a textual and metatextual nod in the morally-outraged reader’s direction when the narrator prefaces his reasons for not fighting by recalling them with „eine

Art von Scham“ (Jünger 1998: 75). This admission of an ethical or moral dimension echoes Frye’s criticism of two reductive formulas often applied to tragedy, one of which being “all tragedy exhibits the omnipotence of external fate” (Frye 209). Frye corrects this – and in so doing acknowledges the kind of moral reaction the reader of *Auf den Marmorlippen* experiences – by point out that fate “becomes external to the hero only after the tragic process has been set going” (Frye 210). This suggests that the hero’s act – in this case not only that of the narrator, but of the author and audience he represents – can provoke enmity through a moral failing like not acting to prevent the catastrophe, like feeling one’s hands are tied through a situation where right and wrong seem inextricably entangled<sup>91</sup>, or like adopting a fatalistic transcendent attitude justified by metaphysical musings about the cosmic cycles of destruction and rebirth implicit in the Ragnarok motif.

The reader gets possibly the most intense feeling of the moral failing of the narrator and his brother Otho when the brothers discover Köppelsbleek after leaving Belovar’s Hof. They do return to the scene of terror – feeling shame for having fled it – but only to record the rare flower they had been out seeking (Jünger 1998: 85)! And then, when they encounter Belovar shortly afterward they purposely DO NOT TELL HIM OF THE EXISTENCE OF SUCH A PLACE SO CLOSE TO HIS HOME (Jünger 1998: 87)! Had the brothers revealed to everyone in the Campagna and Marina what was happening at Köppelsbleek – more importantly, on the metatextual level that the novel is a metaphor for, had the goings-on in the camps in Germany been made more public through some daring method – perhaps the catastrophe could have been averted. And yet, Frye warns of the second reductive theory about tragedy in which “the act which sets the tragic process going must be primarily a violation of moral law, whether human or divine; in short, that Aristotle’s hamartia or ‘flaw’ must have an essential connection with sin or wrongdoing” (Frye 210). This keeping of morality at arm’s length by the tragedy *mythos* is part of the tension at the heart of the novel and a great part of its power at the time and today.

While the tragic hero insists on a transcendence of the moral dimension, the novel is ironic on a meta-narrative level, for Jünger’s book has been praised by Bluhm (Bluhm 150) for doing (albeit six years into Nazi rule) precisely what a moral reader would require of someone living

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<sup>91</sup> This may explain Jünger’s later attraction to, and writing of, *Der Gordische Knoten*.

in Germany at that time: revealing the truth of the Nazi regime *in some way* after six years of terror.

Das sind die Keller, darauf die stolzen Schlösser der Tyrannis sich erheben und über denen man die Wohlgerüche ihrer Feste sich kräuseln sieht: Stankhöhlen grauenhafter Sorte, darinnen auf alle Ewigkeit verworfenes Gelichter sich an der Schändung der Menschenwürde und Menschenfreiheit schauerlich ergötzt. Dann schweigen die Musen, und die Wahrheit beginnt zu flackern wie eine Leuchte in böser Wetterluft. Da sieht man die Schwachen schon weichen, wenn kaum die ersten Nebel brauen, doch selbst die Kriegerkaste beginnt zu zagen, wenn sie das Larvengelichter aus den Niederungen auf die Bastionen emporgestiegen sieht. So kommt es, daß Kriegsmut auf dieser Welt im zweiten Treffen steht; und nur die Höchsten, die mit uns leben, dringen bis in den Sitz des Schreckens ein. Sie wissen, daß alle diese Bilder ja nur in unserem Herzen leben, und schreiten als durch vorgestellte Spiegelungen durch sie in stolze Siegestore ein. Dann werden sie durch die Larven gar herrlich in ihrer Wirklichkeit erhöht. (Jünger 1998: 84-85).

In writing such things in 1939 Jünger is doing more than his narrator, and is, in the process, not claiming to be among those highest that he speaks of; in fact, because he knows he speaks under the protection of his metaphor, his sub-creation and the political capital he has amassed, he acknowledges himself as another of the fearful. In the process he not only foreshadows the later events of his novel but, because he has repeatedly put himself in the prophetic role in his career, his transcendent metaphysical stance allows him to take on the role of Tiresias and to prophesy later metatextual events as well. The narrator evokes the torture cells and death camps, and the silencing of the artists; he evokes how Nazis, particularly SS, usurp the role and function of the army, and how the highest of the society succeed in entering the heart of the terror to then transcend it by being martyred by the „Larven“. The fact that Sunmyra's and Braquemart's status, motivations, attempt and fate mirror that of Stauffenberg's circle offers credence to the prevalence and inexorable trajectory of mythic narrative patterns in life as well as in the art that accompanies it. The failure of the plotters in both the text and meta-text reflects Frye's own archetypally-informed conclusion that "Tragedy, in short, seems to elude the antithesis of moral responsibility

and arbitrary fate, just as it eludes the antithesis of good and evil” (Frye 211).

Such a conclusion is, of course, morally and emotionally unsatisfying, but Frye does assure us that “the hero’s act has thrown a switch in a larger machine than his own life, or even his own society” (Frye 211). In terms of *Auf den Marmorlippen* and what the novel metaphorically represents, this act is the series of small acts (usually inactions), attitudes and perspectives that the narrator takes such pains over 70 pages to spell out. This strategy represents a narrative gamble on Jünger’s part, for over half the novel is exposition before we get to the first real scene. Again, this structural reality highlights, in metaphoric form, the urgency to understand, trace and track just how this terrible situation of impending catastrophe came to be. It is part of the novel’s design that all this expository tracking and explaining precedes the scene of the discovery of Köppelsbleek which is, in terms of the novel and the 1939 Germany it points to, the heart of the matter and the core of the tragedy. In this respect it is also meaningful that the FIRST line of dialogue in the novel is brother Otho whispering, “Ja, das ist Köppelsbleek” (Jünger 1998: 83). This KZ reality is the result, if one follows the logic of Frye’s contention of tragedy’s eluding-of-antitheses, of moral failings and historical parameters equally.

It should be noted at this point that commentators after 1945, like Fest and Trevor-Roper, insisted that the “story” of WW II Germany, of Nazi Germany, is NOT a tragedy (Fest 195, Trevor-Roper 229). One could argue, as the popular interpretation of World War II outside Germany demonstrates, that the narrative of Nazi Germany and World War II is a romance narrative, with Germany taking the part of romance villain. Yet, the lesson of the twentieth century’s 30 Years War is that a national meta-narrative cannot be imposed from without. Both Fest and Trevor-Roper, among others, highlight the ironic and satiric aspects of the narrative of Hitler and World War II, but the cultural archive of the 20s, 30s, and 40s reveals the tragic mythic pattern ordering the narratives that lead to, and arise from, these events. Events unfold due to specific mythic motivations in individuals and groups initiating – or in a position to determine the meaning, or write the narrative trajectory of – events. Hitler and the NS regime sold the German people a romance narrative of conflict, triumph, and reward, and used this mythic romance vision to mount to the top of the wheel of fortune where hybris led to a series of decisions that set massive events into motion, which resulted, from the



German perspective, in a catastrophe.

Such a perspective lends the disunity demonstrated between the brothers and Braquemart and Sunmyra a deeper dimension. The reader can certainly fault the brothers for, even at this stage, refusing to join with Sunmyra's attempt to stand against the Oberförster (Jünger 1998: 93), but the reader also senses the fateful barrier of the differing parameters, and differing narrative motivations, within which these characters have come to this meeting. These find an echo in the metatextual Germany, where differing resistance groups remained isolated from each other because of the narrative parameters within which they existed. For example, the text *Gelebter Glaube* chronicles resistance within the Catholic Church during the Nazi regime, but often the acts of resistance were motivated by the need to reaffirm their own Christian romance narrative. This side-by-side existence of different narrative perspectives leads Sandvoß, for example, to remark upon one such barrier crossing in Berlin-Mitte by a resistance member attempting to act as a go-between between the underground SPD and KPD (Sandvoß 40). This reality of differing narrative perspectives – and the resultant isolation of resistance groups from one another during the NS regime – explains the enduring fame of the poem that ironically thematizes this isolation of resistance groups emerging from the resistance circles in Germany, that of Dietrich Bonhoeffer. And yet, as in the novel, this fatal/fateful disunity – despite its ironic aspects – accelerates the tragic trajectory, further provoking enmity because it strengthens the Oberförster's position. This disunity is, in fact, the catalyst that unleashes the catastrophe, for Braquemart and Sunmyra invade the Oberförster's domain immediately after the meeting – without the support of the brothers – whereupon the Oberförster counter-attacks the Marina (Jünger 1998: 108).

Even in the midst of the catastrophe, as the Oberförster's men are overrunning the entire area, brother Otho takes the time to use the Mirror of Nigromontan, not as a weapon against the Oberförster, but to burn the brothers' botanical and zoological work and send it to the safety promised by the Mirror's supernatural properties: this is a perpetuation of the attitude of transcendence that set the tragedy in motion. Although there is a tone of apology at the beginning of the novel when the narrator looks back upon the events, during the tragedy itself the brothers remain unapologetic about putting their work before political or social action (Jünger 1998: 127). Another such moment suggesting the persistence of

an act provoking enmity, and one again allowing the reader to question the character of the narrator, is when the brothers abandon the house on the marble cliffs to the flames. The narrator briefly mentions that Lampusa, the narrator's mother-in-law, and Erio, the narrator's son and the one who just saved his life, disappear into a „Felsentor“. We are not told definitively that the woman and the boy have escaped to safety, and then the brothers flee – without them! Additionally, the narrator never expresses any concern about them or their fate for the remainder of the novel. Even though Frye insists that moral flaws, or hamartia, are not the core of the tragic movement, the reader cannot help but link such actions to the fate of the narrator and those he associated with.

#### XI.1.6.3. The Christian Impulse Behind the Act Provoking Enmity: Victory-in-Tragedy as an Episode in the “Total Quest-Myth”

The insistence on this morally troubling transcendent perspective is an expression of the narrator's – and Jünger's – belief in the rightness of such a perspective. Upon considering a perfectly symmetrical plant, the narrator notes, „Da faßte uns ein Schauer an; wir fühlten, wie die Lust zu leben und die Lust zu sterben in uns einten“ (Jünger 1998: 64). This is an expression of the metaphysics that Figal argues Jünger develops throughout the 1930s and the war years, to find explicit expression in his essay, „Über die Linie“ in 1950. Figal characterizes Jünger's belief at one point as „Es ist ein Vertrauen in die unerschöpfliche Fülle des Seins, im Hinblick auf die sich Vernichtung und Untergang in Herausbildung und Aufgang verwandeln; ein Vertrauen in den unerschöpflichen Grund alles Wirklichem, der immer wieder neue Formen aus sich entläßt und damit bewirkt, was sich in der Zeit als Vergehen und Werden darstellt“ (Figal 191). Jünger's cyclical metaphysical conception parallels Frye's perspective on tragedy, of which Frye notes “that romance, tragedy, irony and comedy are all episodes in a total quest-myth” (Frye 215). For this cyclical, holistic narrative unity Frye provides a metaphysical example: “Christianity, too, sees tragedy as an episode in the divine comedy, the larger scheme of redemption and resurrection” (Frye 215). This indicates, specifically, the third phase of tragedy, one characterized by “the paradox of victory within tragedy” and which includes “all tragedies in which the hero is in any way related to or a prototype of Christ” (Frye 220). Christianity is conspicuous in the novel by its textual defiance of the fantasy sub-creation convention, and

its significance is strengthened, or underlined, by the central position that Pater Lampros occupies in the lives of the brothers. It is his example that they follow when he does not allow the machinations of the Oberförster to disturb his cloistered life (Jünger 1998: 65), and his increased liveliness at the presence of danger suggests his being as a manifestation of this transcendent, cyclical perspective (Jünger 1998: 65).

The brothers have not yet achieved this Christ-like/Christian state where they fully understand death as part of eternal life, but are on that path. *Their* explicit structuring of the narrative of the events of the novel moves steadily toward the third phase of tragedy. This victory in tragedy is foreshadowed by the fact that the narrator – in being able to narrate the story – survived the tragedy, and it is also symbolized by the Mirror of Nigromontan. The brothers use its blue, laser-like flame to transfer objects into „Reiche, die jenseits der Zerstörung liegen“ (Jünger 1998: 72). This symbolizes the transcendent, cyclical metaphysics that the narrator propounds, for the apparent destruction of the object is a way of preserving it eternally. In this is hidden a kernel of irony that the narrator does not acknowledge: is the object not simply burnt to ashes? This irony is, however, implicitly acknowledged when Pater Lampros criticizes the brothers for needing the mirror as a metaphysical crutch (Jünger 1998: 73): someone with a true understanding of how life and death are united would not need the Mirror. However, even at the end of the novel, brother Otho still feels the need to use the mirror to “secure in nothingness” the work that they dedicated their lives to. While the mirror shows them, or teaches them, that the best in them can’t be destroyed (Jünger 1998: 73), they have not yet achieved a Christ-like/Christian perspective. In Lampros’ example they sense the victory in the tragedy, and the brothers will finally come to recognize and promote Sunmyra’s Christ-like sacrifice. In this the narrator identifies the community of the tragic hero: the narrator, his brother and the textual audience that is part of the sub-created world of Große Marina, *and* the meta-textual German audience of 1939 that the narrator is addressing through this allegory and which he points to with the lapses in the fantasy sub-creation. Sunmyra, through his head, is the truly Christ-like hero that the community of the tragic hero is related to. Mottel argues that Jünger uses „archaische Erzählstrategien und christliche Bildtraditionen, um sich auch poetologisch vor einer Vereinnahmung [*i.e. by the Nazis*] zu schützen“ and therefore, in so doing, „steht damit allen jenen Autoren und Autorinnen aus dem rechten politischen Spektrum

der Weimarer Republik nahe, die sich nach dem Ende des zweiten Weltkriegs durch eine christlich-abendländische Wende oder Kehre als Intellektuelle moralisch zu retten versuchten“ (Mottel 318).<sup>92</sup> Stated thus, Jünger’s Christian leanings in the novel seem strategically opportunistic, but Figal outlines the development of Jünger’s thought in this Christian victory-in-tragedy direction, as does Krahl (Krahl 235), suggesting a national mythic narrative impulse rather than a cheap opportunism. That a broad, politically unconscious attempt to re-claim the national narrative from the Nazi catastrophe would fashion a Christian-inspired victory-in-tragedy narrative is not only a logical development for the renewed *Kultur der Niederlage* that Germany becomes after World War II, but is a direct response to the SS-NS barbarian discourse that aimed to resurrect barbarian Germanic spirituality in order to justify wars of aggression. The major obstacle to that Nazi attempt to re-engineer German culture was the 1000 year Christian tradition within Germany; thus, the tragic mythic narrative trajectory, both within the novel and in the metatext of the real world situation which the novel is a metaphor for, is almost inevitably driven, in the logic of a *Kultur der Niederlage*, to the Christian victory in tragedy perspective.

The danger of a word like “inevitable” becomes the crux of the discussion when again considering the meeting that, according to Jünger, was the sub-creation’s analogue to his actual meeting with von Solz zu Trott. As noted, the disunity of the Nazis’ opponents is deplorable in hindsight, in fact, morally offensive, given that there were attempts to overcome these divisions. However, the historical contexts of these groups, and the parameters within which they came to oppose the Nazis, did not seem to offer any real common ground between them, which the narrator suggests when he symbolically throws up his hands during the meeting with Sunmyra and states, „Doch was sind Menschenrat und – wille, wenn in den Sternen schon der Untergang beschlossen liegt“ (Jünger 1998: 96). This acceptance of a tragic fate can only NOT be interpreted as cowardice or resignation within the third phase of tragedy where there is a paradoxical victory to be gained from the tragic trajectory. That this is the case is symbolized by the transformation in the manners of Braquemart and Sunmyra when they leave the next day for their meeting with destiny: the cold Mauretianer, Braquemart, smiles humanly, and the bent-over youth Sunmyra walks straight and tall

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<sup>92</sup> Heinrich Böll satirizes this war-time and immediate post-war Christianization of the German intelligentsia in his „Doktor Mürke’s gesammelte Schweigen“.

(Jünger 1998: 97).

This scene is followed by a moment suggesting, like the narrator's convoluted effort to explain and justify the tragedy with his lengthy opening exposition, a lingering objection to this whole transcendent perspective: Lampros apparently writes a note asking the brothers not to allow Sunmyra to leave on his martyr-mission, and it is accidentally delivered too late (Jünger 1998: 98). That it is precisely Lampros – whose final scene seems to epitomize the concept of victory in tragedy and is interpreted by the narrator as such – who attempts to re-direct events so that Sunmyra and Braquemart may either be spared their tragic fate or succeed in their endeavour suggests two perspectives on this tragedy, or an oscillation between two phases of tragedy, the third and the fourth. Frye states, "The fourth phase is the typical fall of the hero through hybris and hamartia that we have already discussed" (Frye 221). The narrator, his brother, the we of the sub-creation, and the we of 1939 Germany are following the trajectory of the fourth phase, falling because of their flaws and their hybris in believing that troubling events could be ignored because they were morally too complex, or could be transcended, but – like Jünger's life-long drive toward the romance – they all long to cloak their flawed, hybris-laden fall with the romance of a transcendent and ultimate victory.

This dual perspective on the tragic action comes to the fore in the scene where the narrator becomes separated from the fighting and walks through a hail of projectiles (an occurrence reminiscent of some of Jünger's WW I experiences chronicled in *In Stahlgewittern*) to take Sunmyra's head off a pole in Köppelsbleek. Echoing a sentiment that Jünger had in his own life, one that Baron investigates, the narrator states, „Es schien mir seltsam, daß ich während des Gemetzels mich bei den Toten befanden hatte, und ich faßte es als ein Sinnbild auf. Noch immer stand ich im Banne der Träumerei“ (Jünger 1998: 122). The reason the narrator seizes upon this occurrence as symbolic is because it allows him to reinterpret the fourth phase of tragedy fact that he has been on the losing side in a battle against the forces of the Oberförster, and that he essentially abandoned his allies in the fighting so that Belovar dies alone (Jünger 1998: 122)<sup>93</sup>. Instead of having to face these fourth phase facts, he can feel justified by the principle of „unverdiente Hilfe“

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<sup>93</sup> In death Belovar is described very much like a Fantasy genre character like Conan, his battleaxe and dagger still in his hands, his loyal dog beside him, and his body ringed by the corpses of his foes.

(Baron 41) which allows him to come into possession of the head of Sunmyra. With the narrator's seizing of Sunmyra's head, the text oscillates back toward the third phase of tragedy, the victory in tragedy, for Sunmyra represents the Christ-like hero, the martyr with whom the community of the tragic hero can identify, just as modern Germany will come to identify itself with the Christ-like figure that Jünger's Sunmyra is a prophecy of, Stauffenberg.<sup>94</sup> The head of Sunmyra is the symbolic bridge from the fourth phase of tragedy to the third, and this permits the narrator, for example, not to mourn Belovar's death or to berate himself for leaving his loyal friend's side during the fighting, but to move even these occurrences into a transcendent sphere by invoking the metaphysical feminine principle that has been present in the novel through the figure of Maria Lunaris: „Die Große Mutter, deren wilde, blutfrohe Feste er gefeiert hatte, ist solcher Söhne stolz“ (Jünger 1998: 122). By invoking this supernatural figure that unifies Christian and pagan elements, the narrator attempts to unify the impulses coming from a positive valuing of the barbarian, which contributes to the catastrophe, and the transcendent Christian perspective, which highlights the victory in the tragedy. The narrator chooses against an interpretation based on the Wotan Gestalt (brought to prominence by the barbarian discourse), and links a mother goddess figure to slaughter and death. The narrator does this by evoking the figure of a goddess of sexuality and fertility, the many-breasted Artemis of Ephesus that is expressly referred to by the narrator. This points both to the continuing dominance of the *kalte persona* who equated Eros with war and to an attempt to transcend, or re-direct, the tragic trajectory from a focus on the Ragnarokian catastrophe itself to a Christian promise of eternal life and victory.<sup>95</sup>

Another moment in the narrative that shows this oscillation between the third and fourth phases of tragedy is when brother Otho takes the time – in the midst of the destruction of Große Marina and the imminent over-running of the brothers' hermitage by the forces of the Oberförster – to burn up, or to transport to regions beyond destruction,

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<sup>94</sup> That Stauffenberg has this status in Germany is borne out by his role in school curricula and the various honours given to his name in modern Germany. The Hollywood apotheosis of Stauffenberg in the Tom Cruise film *Valkyrie* is evidence of a critical mass being reached that allowed his transference as this German Christ-like symbol to the international popular culture mainstream.

<sup>95</sup> Balder's return from the dead after Ragnarok to found a new world is the Germanic version of this Christian perspective.

their life's work with the Mirror of Nigromontan (Jünger 1998: 127). For Otho and the narrator this is a re-affirmation of the transcendent importance of their work, and the use of the mirror implies a belief in an actual transcendent region. This is their attempt, literally in *essence*, to claim a victory for their work: even though it is 'lost' to the flames (and would likely be destroyed by the forces of the Oberförster if the brothers did not do it themselves), it still exists in some safe region transcending the catastrophe. It cannot be forgotten that Lampros criticized their belief in the Mirror; while Lampros can conceive of, and embody the victory in tragedy without such aids, the brothers, as in the case of Sunmyra's head, require a symbolic bridge from the fourth phase of tragedy to the third phase. In fact, this is the transference of a human resignation and acceptance of tragedy, which the narrator expresses when he notes, „Doch dürfen wir auf dieser Erde nicht auf Vollendung rechnen, und glücklich ist der zu preisen dessen Wille nicht allzu schmerzhaft in seinem Streben lebt“ (Jünger 1998: 131).

The final pages of the novel are replete with images that reinforce the perception of victory in tragedy. Pater Lampros' death, is one such. The narrator shows Lampros, who stands by a window in his burning church, the purple head of Sunmyra from afar; it seems to the narrator that Lampros gives him a sign of blessing which, at the same time, seems to be the signal for the church to collapse upon him (Jünger 1998: 132-133). The suggestion of this image is that it is analogous to Christ's sentiment on the cross, „Es ist vollbracht“: the winning of Sunmyra's head, the symbol of the Christ-like hero that promises a transcendent victory and a new beginning, is enough and Lampros can feel that his work is done. This is represented in the burning city as „wir sahen aus den Ruinen der Tempel bereits den Rauch von Opfern steigen, und aus den Trümmern der Kirchen hörten wir Gesang“ (Jünger 1998: 135). This victory-in-tragedy perspective is underlined again by the only lines of verse in the novel, a typical memento mori piece of poetry that suggests that Jünger's move to the metaphysical, and an identifiably Christian stance, has already occurred and is not some last-minute maneuvering for post-war respectability.

It needs to be noted at this point that the victory-in-tragedy tone and imagery are so strong that they seem to have persuaded some, like the writer of the novel abstract, „Das Buch“, that prefaces the 1998 edition of *Auf den Marmorklippen* – presumably Schwilk – that „in der entscheidenden Schlacht werden die feindlichen Horden vernichtet“

(Schwilk 2). However, the narrator makes it clear that Biedenhorn, who has been doing nothing to check the Oberförster's advance – and, as noted earlier, has even helped the Oberförster gain in power – is the „Bock [...] den man zum Gärtner macht“ and now hangs a few of the Oberförster's men to keep up appearances, even as the rest continue to plunder the city while the Oberförster's standard, the red boar's head, flutters from the tower of the Zwinger (Jünger 1998: 134). The fact that many of the citizens of Große Marina are fleeing and attempting to flee – including the brothers who are able to get an armed escort from Biedenhorn down to the harbour (in recognition of their saving his life during the fighting in Alta Plana) – makes it clear that the „feindlichen Horden“ are certainly not „vernichtet“ and that there has been no victory for Große Marina (Jünger 1998: 136).

The real victory is foreshadowed when the narrator mentions that the head of Sunmyra will eventually become the foundation stone of the newly-rebuilt Cathedral in Große Marina. It is fitting that the Christ-like hero be, literally, the foundation of a major Christian church – but this highly public symbolic gesture will only be possible when the Oberförster's flag is no longer flying over the city: i.e. when the Oberförster has been defeated. For now, in the last pages of the novel, the Oberförster has not been defeated and the brothers must conceal Sunmyra's head and flee the city by boat.

The final summation of the victory in tragedy is one reminiscent of the way Frye describes *Oedipus at Colonus* “where we find the usual binary form of a tragedy conditioned by a previous tragic act, ending this time not in a second disaster, but in a full rich serenity that goes far beyond a mere resignation to Fate” (Frye 221). While the aforementioned oscillation between the fourth and third phases of tragedy does not permit the conclusion of the novel to be quite as radiant an apotheosis as *Oedipus at Colonus*, it does come close, and this similarity is prefigured by the symbolic handshake between the brothers and Ansgar of Bodanalp, Alta Plana. It has already been established that the passes of Alta Plana are the sub-creation's metaphoric reference to the trenches of World War I. This metaphoric referencing of World War I is a metatextual metaphor for the previous tragic act (from the German perspective) that conditions the present tragedy of *Auf den Marmorlippen*/metatextual Germany of 1939; that the brothers shake hands with a representative of one of the enemy nations at the site of the previous fighting (Jünger 1998: 137) is significant, for it is the key to the



victory in tragedy reminiscent of *Oedipus at Colonus*: „Da schritten wir durch die weit offenen Tore wie in den Frieden des Vaterhauses ein“ (Jünger 1998: 138). Although their home has burned, their friends have died, and their life's work has been destroyed, they have transcended all this and have come into a region of peace outside their native land. The prophetic import of this conclusion – that the source of peace is outside the nation – will be considered below.

#### XI.1.6.4. The Role of *Nemesis* in the Narrative's Oscillation Between the Third and Fourth Phases of Tragedy

A final factor to consider in the mythic structure of the novel is the tragic concept of *nemesis*. In the novel it is the character of the Oberförster who answers to the criteria that Frye lays out. There is in the novel a definite sense of the inexorable movement of time toward catastrophe, and the narrator makes sure to set this tone on the very first page of the story and to explicitly link this with the Oberförster: „Damals freilich schien manche Sorge, mancher Kummer uns die Tage zu verdunkeln, und vor allem waren wir vor dem Oberförster auf der Hut“ (Jünger 1998: 5). The growing threat of the Oberförster and his final assault on the Marina is also replete with an impersonal quality, and its inexorable trajectory is almost divorced from the narrator as it rises all around him while he attempts to transcend it; indeed, the Oberförster does not seem to be aware of the narrator at any point in the novel. The reader gets the sense, despite the narrator's evocation of the Oberförster's skill in sowing terror, that the catastrophe would still occur even with another agent to represent it. This sense of a logic of events playing itself out, or of fate or accident, is a telling reference to the metatextual reality that the novel metaphorically represents: a Germany heading inexorably toward catastrophe.

This sense, however, begs the question, what balance in nature has the tragic hero (the narrator and/or the communal tragic hero) upset, and what balance in the “order stretching over the two kingdoms of the visible and the invisible” must right itself? It must be remembered in this respect, as Fischer and Kraus have argued, that Jünger himself believed, or was in the process of coming to believe, that such an order did, in fact, exist (Fischer 92, Kraus 239). This question has been considered above in terms of the act provoking enmity, or in the inheritance of a situation of enmity, and the centrality of the attitude of transcendence has been

demonstrated to have played a key role. It needs to be considered whether that attitude is an escape from the complex mixture of *Recht und Unrecht* that must be unravelled, and that this escape thus constitutes an upsetting of the balance, or whether this transcendence is indeed the proper response in the face of the invisible kingdom that Jünger refers to as a higher order, and which Frye links to Christian theology. Critical in this consideration is the concept of *proairesis*, the use of freedom to lose freedom.

*Nemesis* as fate, or the logic of events, is present when the narrator speaks of his time with the Mauretianer before the events of the novel unfold. „Wenn man in den Abgrund stürzt,“ he narrates – implying the fall is unavoidable – one gains in „der Luft der Mauretania“ the „letzten Grad der Klarheit“, „die Kühle der Gedanken“, and „die geistige Entfernung“ (Jünger 1998: 28); in other words, one was able to observe the movement of time, the inexorable movement of time that is *nemesis* with *eiros*-like detachment. The atmosphere of the Mauretianer that allowed for this perspective was „von Grund auf böse“ (Jünger 1998: 28), suggesting that the crystal clarity, the coolness of the *kalte persona*, and the emotional distance that Jünger and others of his generation strove for, was morally wrong, particularly as it could lead to perspectives and reactions like those of the Mauretianer: „Bei den Katastrophen herrschte gute Laune, und man pflegte über sie zu scherzen wie die Pächter einer Spielbank über die Verluste ihrer Klientel“ (Jünger 1998: 28). This simile of the owners of a casino reinforces the idea of *nemesis* as either fate or accident; Jünger here is echoing, three years later, the same perspective that Carl Orff came to with *Carmina Burana*, particularly with ‘O Fortuna’: a surrender to chance, which will be followed by the logic of the events this surrender has set in motion...thus becoming fate.

The idea of *nemesis* as an unavoidable movement of time is revisited when the brothers „erahnten: wenn wir in jenen Zellen lebten, die unzerstörbar sind, dann würden wir aus jeder Phase der Vernichtung wie durch offene Tore aus einem Festgemach in immer strahlendere gehen“ (Jünger 1998: 68). This passage not only reaffirms the transcendent attitude as victory in tragedy, but is a foreshadowing of the final line of the novel where the brothers walk through those „weit offenen Tore“ (Jünger 1998: 138). Instead of coming to some metaphysical or meditative state, these doors are to their new home in exile among their erstwhile foreign enemies – a foreshadowing of West

Germany's (and later re-unified Germany's) persistence in finding a home among the western Allies and in a Europe organized under this constellation.

The idea that "time is the devourer of life" (Frye 213), and the idea that, regardless of the course of action one takes, transcendence is the only real option, are both demonstrated in the novel when the brothers, as noted, run into Belovar after discovering Köppelsbleek but do not tell him about it. Here the reader gets a real sense of time being out of joint: the fact that the brothers do not speak about the horrors they have seen strengthens the feeling that „der Untergang beschlossen liegt“ (Jünger 1998: 96). The Oberförster, in true *iron* fashion, stands above this movement of time, and rides upon it – which is likely why the narrator likens events to the *Wilde Jagd* of Wotan. This inexorable movement is further cemented by the device of Lampros' note arriving too late and Braquemart and Sunmyra using the same map that Fortunio had in his possession when he perished at the hands of the Oberförster.

The identification of the Oberförster with *nemesis*, and the sense of devouring time that it implies, is made clear when the narrator, fleeing the fighting in the forest (which is what he is doing, despite his dream-like feeling and his possession of Sunmyra's head), comes upon scenes of the Oberförster's triumph in the Campagna (Jünger 1998: 123). This is part of the trajectory of tragedy, that he must see these scenes, which he reacts to „mit Schrecken“. *Nemesis* pursues him with steady ruin and defeat, and these poignant scenes threaten to break through his bubble of transcendence. The narrator's "victory in tragedy" perspective takes another hit when he sees Belovar's house destroyed: it is another ticking of the clock of *nemesis*. The whole transcendence perspective is thrown into question for the reader here, as the narrator does not even consider for a moment whether his refusal to warn Belovar of Köppelsbleek, his refusal to participate in the forays against the Oberförster's forces when Belovar wanted to, and his wandering away from Belovar's side during the battle that just killed Belovar, actually *caused* the destruction he is now viewing. The reader is getting angered by the narrator's uninvolved distance, and the conviction returns to the reader that this distance constitutes the *hybris* that provoked the enmity of *nemesis*. The narrator is suffering the same fate of all tragic heroes, including watching friends and neighbours die, and having to endure spectacles like this one: „Feuerwürmer tanzten heulend um die Glut“ (Jünger 1998: 123). And yet, there immediately comes symbolic re-affirmation that the

transcendent perspective is genuine, for the narrator miraculously strides through the midst of his enemies unharmed (Jünger 1998: 124). The tragic trajectory is still present as he sees the fires on the edge of the marble cliffs and he hears how the Oberförster's dogs are after him: thus is the oscillation between the third and fourth phases of tragedy active even in the last pages of the novel.

This brings us to a passage, commented on by many investigating Jünger's medial perception, where the narrator looks upon the burning cities of the Marina. This is a further moment of *nemesis*, an additional heightening of the tragedy as the narrator must see his beloved Marina burn (Jünger 1998: 125). The narrator made it clear to us throughout the extensive exposition that opened the novel that he loved the Marina and was concerned about the signs of its coming destruction. Now he sees that destruction. Many critics have commented on the dispassionate nature of the description of this destruction, descriptions reminiscent of those Jünger will use when in Paris during the war (Weilnböck 431), including the narrator's suggestion that the whole process of *Untergang* is analogous to a fine wine (Jünger 1998: 33). The narrator speaks of the „fürchterliche Stille“ of the destruction, but also of the „Schrecken der Vernichtung“ (Jünger 1998: 125). This silence metaphorically represents the transcendent attitude that the narrator has doggedly maintained since the moment in the narrative that Frye calls the crucial *Augenblick*. This is the point of the mythic tragic narrative where the audience can see the roads to what might have been and to what will be, simultaneously. In the case of this novel, this occurs during the extensive exposition that opens the narrative. The very reason for the exhaustive extensiveness of this exposition is the difficulty – both for the sub-created world of the Große Marina and the Germany it is a metaphor for – of pinning down *precisely* when this crucial *Augenblick* was. It was sometime after „das Füllhorn reich für uns geöffnet war“ and before Köpplersbleek, which is the novel's first real scene. Nevertheless, the narrator's transcendent attitude and detachment has its most serious test when the tragedy reaches its most poignant moment. He observes the terrors of destruction in the Große Marina: „Auch hörte ich nicht den Schrei, der meinem Mund entstieg“ (Jünger 1998: 125). The narrator is in denial about how much the tragedy is affecting him; the scream symbolizes the fourth phase of tragedy and the Aristotelean concept of hamartia, of the fatal flaw. The fatalistic transcendent perspective is an attempt to be innocent, to declare innocence in the face of the tragic events – „wenn

die Dinge aus sich selbst ins Wanken kamen“ (Jünger 1998: 31) – and the narrator’s scream at the sight of Große Marina burning symbolizes – finally – his crossing of the line to experience, his recognition (and the recognition of the communal tragic hero he represents) of the fully horrific nature of the tragedy. And yet – and at no other point of the novel is the oscillation between third and fourth phases more intense – his inability, or refusal, to hear his own scream re-invokes silence, the metaphor for his transcendent attitude.

The narrator symbolically fights his way back across that dividing line of experience, determined to occupy a third phase tragic perspective. After witnessing more images of destruction, he notes, „ich fühlte wie mir der Schrei im Munde blieb“ (Jünger 1998: 126). This time the scream that symbolizes experience does not leave his mouth – he will be able to swallow it back down. In fact, the brothers will be able to interpret the destruction of their life’s work fully in terms of a victory in tragedy, and the death of their great friend and mentor Lampros evokes no emotion or reaction, but is left to linger with the reader as an heroic tableau of tragic acceptance.

## XI.1.7. The Text as Political Prophecy

### XI.1.7.1. First Horizon Analysis

The first layer of form is decisive in terms of the prophetic nature of this work. While the text’s *Schreibweise* is *Neophantastik* to a great degree, Jünger has not abandoned the prophetic mode that marked his texts throughout the 20s and 30s. Jünger’s work is prophetic precisely because his „innerweltlich begründetes und poetisch vollständig transfiguriertes poeta vates-Modell, das seinen eigenen poetologischen Anspruch radikal ernst nimmt und damit zu luziden prognostischen Ergebnissen gelangt“ (Mottel 319) is informed by his elemental thinking. His interest in the *Ur*, the archetypal, the mythical, and mythic patterns allow him to employ the tragedy *mythos* to convey his prediction of catastrophe. From the perspective of the first horizon of political unconscious analysis, characterized by Jameson as one “of political history, in the narrow sense of punctual event and a chroniclelike sequence of happenings in time” (Jameson 1994: 75), the text functions

not only as a symbol of “the diachronic agitation of the year-to-year, the chroniclelike annals of the rise and fall of political regimes and social fashions” (Jameson 1994: 77), but as a symbolic act (Jameson 1994: 76) within this “series of punctual events and crises in time” (Jameson 1994: 76-77). In the context of the cultural archive, which is produced by these rising and falling cultural phenomena, *Auf den Marmorlippen* is both a symbolic statement on these discursive currents and, given its unique position at the nexus of many of these currents, a prophecy of the consequences of these currents.

If we take Jameson’s statement that “art constitutes a symbolic act, whereby real social contradictions, insurmountable in their own terms, find a purely formal resolution in the aesthetic realm” (Jameson 1994: 79) as the leitmotif of a first horizon political unconscious analysis, one must establish what the ‘real social contradictions’ are that *Auf den Marmorlippen* is a formal resolution of. This, as the preceding analysis of the text’s three layers of form has suggested, is the fact that the German renewal, that right wing nationalists like Jünger had advocated, had turned into Nazi tyranny. This social contradiction is compounded and made more poignant by the fact that many, like Jünger, had helped the Nazi tyranny become established. Jünger’s early complicity in this is symbolized by the fact that he had presented Hitler with autographed copies of his work. What was supposed to have been a romance-inspired, noble, high-spirited, knightly quest to re-establish Germany as the ideal nation, had been turned into a perverted, murderous and self-delusional regime forged by bullying low-lives and criminals.<sup>96</sup> The text strongly suggests Hitler’s brownshirts, the S.A., are intended when the narrator refers to the Oberförster’s forces as „Gesindel“, „Gelichter“ and „Lemuren“. It is in this way that Jünger’s “aesthetic act is itself ideological”: Jünger opposes the official Nazi cant that the German people are a higher, master race by metaphorically pointing out that many among them, particularly within the S.A. which brought Hitler to power, were in fact the scum of humanity. The distaste with which the reader perceives the sub-creation’s metaphor for these men comes from their depredations, including their acts as the „Feuerwürmer“, and their skinning alive of the beautiful Lanzenottern.

As a symbolic act, the novel is significant for defying the Nazi world view. As noted, Jünger has to adopt both the *Neophantastik*

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<sup>96</sup> Brecht depicts the S.A. in precisely this way in 1934’s “In Search of Justice”.

*Schreibweise* and the conventions of the Fantasy genre to disguise his defiance. His threadbare applications of the sub-creation convention of fantasy show just how close to open defiance he was willing to come, with many, as Schwilk points out, apprehending the novel in precisely this way. What makes this a politically un-conscious act, in Jameson's sense, is linked to Jünger's insistence that the novel was NOT designed as an act of resistance at its conception and that the text functions as an expression of a German political *pensée sauvage* (Jameson 1994: 80) that the tragic hero represents: we made a mistake, but I don't want to die for it because we couldn't figure out how to untangle the *Recht und Unrecht*. The novel symbolically enacts this sentiment, and by tapping into this political *pensée sauvage*, it also becomes prophetic – not only in conjecturing that elements of the nobility and warrior class would attempt a failed overthrow, but also in the fact that widespread destruction for the homeland would be a consequence of this *pensée sauvage*.

The narrator and his brother echo aspects of this incorporation of the real into the sub-created world of the text. The narrator reveals, „Nach seinem [i.e. Linnaeus'] Vorbild trieb auch uns die Ahnung, daß in den Elementen Ordnung walte, denn tief fühlt ja der Mensch den Trieb, die Schöpfung mit seinem schwachen Geiste nachzubilden, so wie der Vogel den Trieb zum Nesterbauen hegt. Was unsere Mühen dann überreich belohnte, das war die Einsicht, daß Maß und Regel in den Zufall und in die Wirren dieser Erde unvergänglich eingebettet sind“ (Jünger 1998: 24). While the brothers believe they have discovered that there is an underlying order to the coincidences and confusions that seem to make up events, Jameson insists that history “is not a text, for it is fundamentally non-narrative and nonrepresentational” (Jameson 1994: 82). What the brothers do, in fact, agrees with Jameson's “proviso that history is inaccessible to us except in textual form, or in other words, that it can be approached only by way of a prior (re)textualization” (Jameson 1994: 82). The historical ‘context’ that the novel allegorically, symbolically and metaphorically suggests is something that Jünger created by giving his sub-creation an elemental, mythic order. Jünger's insistence that the text was not a deliberate reaction to his historical context is in keeping with the illusion that Jameson argues a text generates, namely that this context did not exist before the text. And yet, as the analysis of the three layers of form suggests, these formal choices were responses to, contributions to, or anticipations of, discursive currents and political and

social events and crises: in short, ideological. What makes the text a symbolic act, recognized by contemporary readers as such, is the fact that the 1939 reader is invited into this order the brothers speak of and to partake of the symbolic sacrifice of Sunmyra and Braquemart and of the prophecies of destruction.

#### XI.1.7.2. Second Horizon Analysis

The most important aspect of a second horizon analysis is that the text be rewritten in terms of social class. *Auf den Marmorlippen* is replete with class references and class attitudes; it is coded according to class and can be apprehended as a meditation on class. Moreover, the text is also coded in terms of the modes of production, and while this is actually the analytical horizon of the third horizon of analysis, this needs to be pointed out before embarking on a class analysis, for the class analysis occurs in relation to the feudal mode of production, the capitalist mode of production, the gens mode of production and the slave-holding mode of production. What Jünger is doing with this novel is in keeping with his generic project: not only is he coming to the Fantasy genre out of a specific contextual and ideological necessity, essentially re-inventing the genre for his own purposes, but in doing so he mirrors the process that William Morris went through in England as he founded the modern Fantasy genre in the 1890s. Morris, a committed socialist, was hemmed in by circumstances not as mortally threatening as Jünger's, but his position as a respected capitalist in a highly reactionary society made it necessary for him to play out the same feudalism vs. capitalism scenario in his genre-founding fantasy works since overt political action was as impossible for him as for Jünger. Although the consequences for Morris were a kind of official toleration for his "eccentricity" (e.g. his arrest and speedy release during socialist demonstrations), for Jünger they would have been more severe, although his discharge from the military in the wake of July 1944 was arguably a similar kind of "toleration", given that both Jünger and Morris had accumulated enough social capital (and economic capital in Morris' case) through their officially-lauded accomplishments.

Several scholars comment on Jünger's class-belonging through the phases of his life. Baron points out, as previously noted, that Jünger was born an „Apothekersohn“ (Baron 36), which means in classic Marxist terms that he was born into the "lower middle class", i.e. the



petty bourgeoisie. As noted earlier, this shopkeeper's son became a soldier, the common ranks of which are often tallied up as members of the working class, which represented a dip into the proletariat for Jünger. By the end of the war, as noted, Jünger had risen to the rank of lieutenant, essentially a class parallel within the army to the petty bourgeoisie, and after the war Jünger maintained this position as a „bei der Reichswehr dienender Leutnant“ (Fröschle 106). Given the Versailles-imposed limitations on the Army and the conditions within Weimar Germany, this intensified the unstable position of the petty bourgeois and it is no surprise – from a Marxist perspective – that Jünger approached a contact he had made in these circles, Schauwecker, and asked „ob man denn in dieser Zeit noch geldlich als ‘freier Schriftsteller’ leben könne“ (Fröschle 106). While the writer, the scribe, traditionally emerges from among the artisans and is thus also a niche within the petty bourgeoisie, the intellectuality associated with this skill opens the possibility of finally escaping the instability of the petty bourgeoisie and rising to the ranks of the bourgeoisie as an “ideologist” (Marx & Engels 44) or as “philosophers, would-be philosophers, and beaux esprits” (Marx & Engels 56). As Ansel notes, Jünger did indeed accomplish the first step of this class movement (from one unstable petty bourgeois niche to a more stable one with the potential for further upward movement on the social ladder) in the 1920s and 1930s as the „als freier Schriftsteller lebende Jünger hingegen recht gut von der schriftstellerische Produktion leben konnte“ (Ansel 19). Jünger's successful move into the realm of literature – and the possibilities such a move opened up – is underlined when Fröschle cites Goebbels' similar conclusion about Jünger (Fröschle 143).

Around the time of the completion of *Auf den Marmorclippen*, Jünger was re-inducted into the army, and became „Offizier im Stab des Militärbefehlshabers in Paris“ (Bluhm 128), a continuation of his petty bourgeois social positioning, but one, like his writing, approaching bourgeois conditions. Jünger did display such bourgeois leanings throughout the 1930s and 1940s, particularly when one considers comments made by his contemporary Kuby. Kuby cited Jünger's „hypersensiblen Genußfähigkeit, die sich von zitierten Weinsorten und Delikatessen bis zu sehr hohen, in Deutschland sonst nicht erreichten Ebenen des Ästhetischen“ (in Bluhm 132). This is a classic petty bourgeois trait, this aspiration to the taste traditionally associated with the upper classes: originally the nobility and, later, the bourgeoisie. Further,

the famous entry in Jünger's diary as he is watching a bombing run over Paris while holding „ein Glas Burgunder, in dem Erdbeeren schwammen“ (in Bluhm 142) reinforces the identification of Jünger with „den Typus des Dandys“ (Bluhm 143), the dandy being either a bourgeois with time and money on his hands, or a petty bourgeois affectation of such upper class mannerisms and pursuits.

Scholars have traced Jünger's class attitudes or ambitions and his attempts at positioning himself in terms of class. Jünger's experience of proletarianism as a front soldier during WW I, as noted, marked him profoundly, particularly as this experience was imbedded in, and led to, the revolutionary context Lethen describes. His rising in the ranks by war's end to the petty bourgeois equivalent rank of lieutenant leads him to attempt to unify the two classes during the 1920s. Fröschle notes how, in Jünger's pro-Hitler 1925 writings, he accents the fact that „in seinen [*i.e.* Hitler's] Reihen stehn Arbeiter und Offiziere Schulter an Schulter“ (Fröschle 131). This praise for such a class fusion, of the proletariat and of officers equivalent to the petty bourgeoisie, is entirely in keeping with Marx's comment that “they desert their own standpoint to place themselves at that of the proletariat” (Marx & Engels 44). At the time, with the nigh-apocalyptic economic consequences of the war – Versailles and the Hyper-inflation – which led to the profound social dislocation and loss of moral equilibrium Weber cites, it looked indeed as if the petty bourgeoisie and even the upper middle classes of the professionals and possibly the lowest fringe of the bourgeoisie faced an “impending transfer into the proletariat” (Marx & Engels 44). In order to solidify the identification with the apparently victory-bound revolutionary proletarian class – given Lenin's 1917 success and the gathering strength of the workers' movement world-wide – Jünger joined in the revolutionary chorus and expressed a „kompromisslose Polemik gegen die vermeintlich in der Auflösung begriffene bürgerlich-kapitalistische Welt“ (Ansel 11). His experience as a *Frontsoldat* allowed him to identify with the workers to the point that he suggests that a *Gemeinschaft* of *Frontsoldaten* operates as social democracy does, wherein only the „klassenbewussten Arbeiter“ (Fröschle 131) is accepted as a member. The political and social process Jünger promotes here suggests the contradictory logic inherent in the term “National Socialism”: in the case of this *Gemeinschaft* of *Frontsoldaten*, they should be a core of men, a selection from the great army where, within each one „sich der schärfste nationale Aktivismus konzentriert“ (Fröschle 131).

Jünger's focus on nationalism is, from a socialist perspective, conservative and reactionary, but he, like the Nazis, attempts to fuse this conservative impulse with the revolutionary class impulse emanating from the proletariat in the dawning era of the *Arbeiter* Gestalt. In effect, Jünger attempts to identify with the proletariat through the *Frontsoldat*, seeing nationalism as a class-levelling force that would allow a fusion of class interests, but not seeing how nationalism would permit residual class hierarchy demands to resurface. In the 1920s and 1930s, Jünger is the prophet who issues „die Verkündung einer kommenden Zeit, in der der Frontsoldat in ‘Gestalt’ des ‘Arbeiters’ das Ruder der Geschichte übernimmt“ (Martus 259). While this seems to bear out Marx and Engels' point that the petty bourgeois will completely abandon his own standpoint for that of the proletariat during a time of crisis, the class contradictions within the concept of the *Frontsoldat* will allow Jünger to maintain a right wing, anti-Marxist interpretation of this process. Furthermore, at this time, „sucht Jünger seinen Leserkreis in der technisch ausgebildeten, städtischen Facharbeiter- und Angestelltenschicht, nicht im Bildungsbürgertum“ (Werneburg 52): in other words, his own class strategy and interests are mirrored in the audience he seeks, namely the upper level of the proletariat that is moving toward, or indeed exists on, the periphery of the petty bourgeoisie.

Jünger's success as a writer in appealing to this audience allowed Jünger, after the summer of 1926, to distance himself from currents leading toward an insider status in the coming NS regime – „Er löste sich also weiter von institutionellen Bindungen“ (Fröschle 134) – yet also allowed him to continue to play the petty bourgeois role of siding with the proletariat against the bourgeoisie. As late as three years before *Auf den Marmorlippen*, Jünger's „*Afrikanische Spiele* (1936) stellen den Untergang der bürgerlichen Welt und ihrer romantischen Illusionen nach“ (Martus 263), and yet, as early as 1926, Jünger can be seen in terms of „jakobinische Tradition“ when Schauwecker pointed out Jünger's debt to the bourgeois French Revolution (Fröschle 138). In other words, Jünger's proletarian posturing is more strategy than conviction when one considers „dem hier behaupteten jakobinischen Charakter von Jünger“ (Fröschle 139). While one may be tempted to think of this characterization of Jünger in terms of the extremism and violence connected to the historical Jacobins, one must also consider the national and democratic character of the Jacobins (Brinton, Christopher

and Wolff 504). This Jacobin element in Jünger is indicative of the bourgeois leanings Fröschle sees in Jünger. In other words, Jünger displays bourgeois sentiments or aspirations in his attitudes<sup>97</sup>, and yet textually plays the proletarian sympathizer – until *Auf den Marmorlippen*.

Before we can fully present the class tableau that Jünger paints in 1939 in *Auf den Marmorlippen*, our third horizon of analysis, which guides this entire close-reading, must be overtly addressed as the text also presents us also with a tableau of the modes of production. The gens mode of production is represented by the barbarian tribes that the narrator tells us exist in the mountains (Jünger 1998: 35) and that „die freien Söhne der Barbarenstämme, waren edle Männer, die ihr Brust fürs Vaterland dem Eisen boten“ (Jünger 1998: 101). A more negative representation of the gens mode are the herdsmen of the Campagna, whose feuding highlights the centrality of kin-relations for this mode; yet we also have a positive manifestation of the Campagna herdsmen in Belovar. The slave-holding mode is indicated by the symbolic role played by the Oberförster's lead dog, Chiffon Rouge, who is identified as a „Kubadogge“ – dogs, as the narrator explains, that were instrumental in putting down a slave-revolt in a sub-creation-violating reference to the Caribbean (Jünger 1998: 112). The feudal mode, as is conventional in the Fantasy genre, is the dominant mode of the story, and the narrator repeatedly refers to his service with the *Purpurreitern*, evoking not only the clash of mounted knights (Jünger 1998: 101), but also specifically labelling this service as „Lehenspflicht“ (Jünger 1998: 54). Finally, the capitalist mode of production is represented by the Oberförster, who is specifically referred to in typical American-inspired capitalist language as the „große Boss“ (Jünger 1998: 51). Most of the time, however, except when the sub-creation breaks down, the Oberförster is given feudal trappings. *Auf den Marmorlippen* is thus also a meditation on the modes of production and, as Morris did in his early fantasy works, it foregrounds the conflict between them and the implications of each for humanity.

In terms of interpreting the work along the lines of Marxist class analysis, as a second horizon analysis demands, it is assumed that this work, like Morris' work, and, indeed, any literary work regardless of the apparent or surface distance from the real world of the author, is indeed a meditation – metaphoric or otherwise – on the author's own time; this

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<sup>97</sup> See Marx to Annenkov (Marx & Engels 668).

novel presents a class tableau based on the capitalist mode of production extant during Jünger's time. This class tableau has the characters representing the ideologeme of their respective economic niches. Given this, we see representatives of all the classes that Marx identified: the lumpenproletariat, the proletariat, the petty bourgeoisie, the bourgeoisie, and the remnant nobility that existed in Germany from Marx's time to 1944 – if one wants to interpret Stauffenberg's assassination attempt as the last attempt of the nobility to regain control of Germany. (This interpretation is one that *Auf den Marmorlippen* anticipates and lends credence to.) On the whole, Jünger presents us with a societal picture very much in keeping with classic Marxist conceptions of class and class struggle.

The "I" narrator situates himself in the class hierarchy when he notes that Lampusa is his cook/servant (Jünger 1998: 13) and that the Oberförster is rich (Jünger 1998: 26), implying his own position is between the working class and the bourgeoisie, i.e. the petty bourgeoisie. Besides these three classes, we also have the lumpenproletariat: alongside the astrologers, gypsies, witches, warlocks and associated types already mentioned, it is the Campagna herdsmen (except Belovar, who is characterized as a type of Campagna nobility) who take on this reactionary role and who are given the requisite destitute and desperate description.

Vor allem aber war das Volk der Hirten wild und ungezähmt. Ihr Stand vererbte sich seit Anbeginn vom Vater auf den Sohn, und wenn sie in zerlumptem Kreis um ihrer Feuer saßen, mit Waffen in der Faust, wie die Natur sie wachsen läßt, dann sah man wohl, daß sie sich von dem Volke unterschieden, das an den Hängen die Rebe baut. Sie lebten wie in Zeiten, die weder Haus noch Pflug noch Webstuhl kannten und in denen das flüchtige Obdach aufgeschlagen wurde, wie der Zug der Herden es gebot. (Jünger 1998: 36)

Here Jünger uses the term „lumpen“ to help describe the text's representatives of the lumpenproletariat, but the similarity to descriptions of barbarians current in the barbarian discourse cannot be overlooked. This intermingling of the concepts of the barbarian and the lumpenproletariat is a symbol of Jünger's movement in the barbarian discourse toward the traditional poles. This movement is not completed with this novel, for the narrator also evokes aspects of the positive valuing of the barbarian in their description:

Im Umgang mit dem rauhen Volke lernte man auch das Gute kennen, das ihm eigen war. Dazu gehörte vor allem die Gastfreiheit, die jeden, der sich an seine Feuer setzte, einbezog. Nicht selten konnte man im Kreise der Hirten auch städtische Gesichter sehen, denn allen, die aus der Marina weichen mußten, bot die Campagna eine erste Zuflucht dar. Hier traf man vom Arrest bedrohte Schuldner und Scholaren, denen bei einer Zecherei ein allzu guter Stoß gelungen war, in der Gesellschaft von entsprungenen Mönchen und fahrendem Gelichter an. (Jünger 1998: 37)

For the most part, however, the Campagna herdsmen are not presented as noble barbarians, but as leading a debased existence, and this is, significantly, reflected in their use of language and in their connection to the *Feuermwürmer*. „Auf alle Fälle hörte man von ihnen das Niederste und Unterste, des Menschen fähig sind“ (Jünger 1998: 38-39). The servile and dishonourable nature of the lumpenproletariat is particularly reinforced when they display the classic reactionary role of that class – allowing themselves to be bought by the bourgeoisie – which is symbolized when the Campagna herdsmen and the Oberförster’s whores kiss the hem of his hunting robe.

A textual fact symbolic of Jünger’s surrendering or transcending his role as speaking for the proletariat, or abandoning his petty bourgeois strategy of siding with the proletariat, is that there is little textual representation of the worker in Jünger’s text. The most conspicuous representative of the working class in the text is the narrator’s cook, Lampusa. As a representative of what Marx called the foundation of society’s wealth, Lampusa keeps the brothers’ hermitage going and even raises the narrator’s son, Erio. Her mysterious disappearance with Erio during the tale’s catastrophe allows the narrator to pursue his own transcendental course without concern for those who made his existence possible, this last being underlined by Erio’s saving of the brothers by calling the Lanzenottern. This textual dependence on – and then dismissing of – this representative of the working class when it is convenient is symbolic of Jünger’s own petty bourgeois class movement. Instead of looking to the proletariat as the source of his social existence, he now looks to the bourgeoisie. The only other representatives of the working class are Biedenhorn’s troops. In the text, Biedenhorn’s men are differentiated from the reactionary lumpenproletarians “bought” by the Oberförster. The Oberförster’s men are called *Gesinde*, and they are the

*Feuermürmer* who burn down farms and plunder them. Comparisons to “worms” and “lemures” reinforce this negative view of the lumpenproletariat, whereas Biedenhorn’s men are likened to wage earners, are not given denigrating epithets, and, as professionals, move against the plundering lumpenproletariat at the tale’s end (Jünger 1998: 127) – this last as part of a cynical and capitalist arrangement between Biedenhorn and the Oberförster.

Not surprisingly, there is a great emphasis on the petty bourgeoisie in the text. The narrator and his brother identify themselves as petty bourgeois (with bourgeois aspirations) in their roles as scribes, scholars and scientists. There is a suggestion of higher class about them, but their careers as lower military officers reinforce their petty bourgeois origins. Their military reminiscences put them beneath Biedenhorn in rank, yet above the ordinary working class soldier. The narrator’s concern with officers on half-pay (Jünger 1998: 40) which forces them to keep company with the lumpenproletariat (Jünger 1998: 40) reveals this concern for the structurally precarious petty bourgeois class. The narrator’s stated affinity with bourgeois democratic values (Jünger 1998: 20) shows Jünger’s Jacobin tendencies, pointed out by Schauwecker, and also shows the petty bourgeois tendency in this direction in general; there is also a simultaneous reactionary sympathy for the nobility (Jünger 1998: 115). The brothers’ inability to decisively support either Belovar (a sort of barbarian noble), Braquemart (bourgeois) or Sunmyra (nobility), or to decide to move against the Oberförster, along with their apparent overlooking of the working class as represented by Lampusa, suggests a hesitant petty bourgeois position in the midst of all these classes.

The rise of the Mauretianer – a union of petty bourgeois (the brothers and other officers) and the bourgeois (Braquemart, the Oberförster) – suggests that the hesitancy is based not on the question of whether the petty bourgeoisie will rise, but on the question of which bourgeois boss will win the power struggle. The representatives of the bourgeoisie – the Oberförster, Biedenhorn and Braquemart – are all morally suspect. Rather than rise and look down upon the wretched lower classes, the textual representatives of the petty bourgeoisie declare their neutrality through transcendence, in essence believing that unfolding events will decide the issue for them. This is reinforced by the narrator’s mentioning of *Recht* being interwoven with *Unrecht*: the morally confusing choice seems to require moral compromise, and so it is easiest to avoid making a choice.

Given the conflict between bourgeois values, that Marx acknowledges as being progressive and revolutionary (at least initially), and the naked self-interest that drives capitalism as a mode of production, it would seem that all the characters representing the bourgeoisie have fallen away from the democratic bourgeois values espoused by the narrator (Jünger 1998: 20) and have given in wholly to self-interest. The Oberförster, who is referred to as the big boss (Jünger 1998: 5), is fabulously wealthy and uses that wealth to buy people, in his case the women he uses to lure the Mauretancier into his service (Jünger 1998: 53), and the Campagna herdsmen who spread his campaign of terror and lead his successful take-over of society (symbolized by his standard flying over Große Marina at the tale's end (Jünger 1998: 134)). Biedenhorn, the mercenary boss, uses his troops as a form of capital, speculating on them while he considers how best to use the situation in Große Marina to his advantage, until he finally invests them in the Oberförster's take-over at the end. He acknowledges, and pays, a debt to the brothers in the process but, as a capitalist ally to the Oberförster, he essentially acts as a shell corporation for the Oberförster's hostile take-over of Große Marina. Braquemart represents a different sort of self-interest, one concerned with the realization of private ideals. In fact, Braquemart represents a Jacobin sort of bourgeois. He is attractive enough to the brothers to allow for an evening of negotiation, but in the end the prospects of Braquemart failing in the bourgeois power struggle seem to tip the scales against an alliance with him and Sunmyra. Braquemart's insistence on Mauretancier attitudes and his unwillingness to subordinate himself to the Oberförster in the power scheme of the text's bourgeoisie, as Biedenhorn is willing to do, gives him the doomed air the brothers note.

Finally, there is the remnant nobility that Marx writes of and whose seemingly final passing in 1919 Lethen points to as a critical caesura in the psychology of Central Europeans (Lethen 18). The nobility is represented in the text by Sunmyra and also by Belovar. The brothers' reactionary and ambivalent attitude to the nobility is represented both by an acknowledgement of the decadence of the nobility (Jünger 1998: 91) and, in Belovar, as a strength. The petty bourgeois vacillation that does not allow the brothers to decisively throw their support behind the nobility – stemming from their earlier *Lebenspflicht* which led to an apparently inconclusive war against otherwise sympathetic foes – leads to the deaths of both Belovar and Sunmyra. By



this point of the text, the Oberförster's conquest of power, and thus the resolution of the power struggle, allows the brothers to make an icon of the nobility, finally succumbing to that reactionary petty bourgeois trait. It is, however, a purely symbolic act, and their true hope lies in exile with a foreign power.

According to Jameson, it should be possible, once we've rewritten the text in terms of social class, as we have just done, to apprehend the class values the text portrays or betrays. The text's refusal to portray the proletariat, its antipathy toward the lumpenproletariat and the refusal of the brothers to decisively align with any of the representatives of the bourgeoisie and nobility leads to the destruction of most of the players in the text. That the worst elements of the bourgeoisie triumph in the end is balanced by the escape and continued existence of the petty bourgeoisie's primary textual representatives. If one accepts the argument thus far, we would expect the text to reveal the values of the petty bourgeoisie. Given that this is a precarious class given to opportunism to maintain its social niche, we would expect this reality to be mirrored in the text. Indeed, the petty bourgeoisie does exhibit bourgeois values and reactionary aspects such as respect for church and nobility. The fear of being forced to descend to the level of the proletariat is dealt with by the relative absence of this class from the text. Indeed, it is a characteristic of the petty bourgeoisie to exist in the tension of such contradictory positions and the conclusion suggests an acceptance of that state.

#### XI.1.7.2.1. The Master Code of the Antagonistic Class Discourse of the 1920s and 1930s in Germany: The *Führer*-principle

To apprehend *Auf den Marmorklippen* as an utterance in the antagonistic class discourse of the late 1930s in Germany, it is necessary to recall Bakhtin's maxim of the dialogical nature of literary texts. The text is therefore to be apprehended as one utterance in an antagonistic exchange framed and formed by the master code of the society into which the text goes, and from which the text comes. The question arises, then, what was the master code of 1939 Germany? Nationalism, militarism and related *isms* suggest themselves, as does the near-sacred term *Das Volk*, while Fröschle makes an argument for the ideologemes of internationalism, peace and pacifism as being at the core of Jünger's

1920s work (Fröschle 122). While some of these, including the concept of the Master Race can be argued as being the master code of the NS regime, the master code of the *Führer*-principle is what truly dominates German society at the time. In fact, Fröschle argues: „Bewußt operieren Jüngers Texte, auch hier Spengler folgend, mit einer Leerstelle, die man als ‘Führer-Variable’ kennzeichnen kann“ (Fröschle 129). This master code does not refer exclusively to Hitler, but permeates the NS state, from ranks like *Führer des Bannes* in the Hitler Jugend and *Gebietsjungvolkführer* in the Jungvolk organization and the prevalence of ranks with the suffix *führer* throughout the SS hierarchy. The assumption behind this *Führer*-principle was that leader types who could do their part in leading the people to the promised collective NS romance *anagnorisis* could be developed and would step forward. The hierarchical nature of the NS state and the gradations of *führer* rankings proclaimed the abolition of traditional class structures and a new social hierarchy. And yet this *Führer*-principle (*Verpflichtung der Jugend* 7) was riven with a contradiction from the beginning as it explicitly posited the NS *Kameradschaft* idea side by side with the traditional class structure as „wenn der Arbeiterjunge mit dem Jungen des Fabrikbesitzers im gleichen Zelt schläft“ (*Verpflichtung der Jugend* 17); „Und es steht wieder neben dem Bauern der Arbeiter, neben dem Beamten der Handlanger vom Bau – alle wirken sie an ihren Aufgaben in der Gemeinschaft, alle sehen sie auf den Führer, um den sie sich in unverbrüchlicher Treue geschart haben, und jeder sieht im andern zu allererst eines – und das ist das Herrlichste in diesem Reich –, den Deutschen, den Kameraden“ (*Verpflichtung der Jugend* 20). *Auf den Marmorklippen* broaches the class discourse organized according to this master code through the character of the Oberförster, whose name/title has the ring of SS, HJ and JV ranks.

The contradiction that Jünger’s characterization of the Oberförster draws to the surface is the one just noted between the undiminished power of traditional class structure and the new NS class structure based on merit. In fact, Jünger’s use of the Fantasy genre has its most poignant intellectual effect in this regard as it permits him to present the political and social dynamic of NS Germany stripped of its NS rhetoric and new hierarchical nomenclature to point out the irreconcilable demands and positions of the classes involved. The traditionally powerful classes of the bourgeoisie and the nobility will not willingly submit to a new social hierarchy, based on a supposed NS meritocracy, where those individuals displaying “Führer” characteristics

will rise to positions of power regardless of their traditional class structure social origins. Just as Hitler came to realize at the end, Göring, notably, was unwilling to give up the role of the bourgeois, and represented the irreconcilability of the NS-Führer ideals and traditional power structures. Göring's bourgeois position gave the Nazis early respectability among mainstream Germans, and his subsequent key role in Nazi Germany is reflected in the fact that many interpreters of the text identify the Oberförster with Göring. In fact, it was his bourgeois identification and resultant social respectability that was the cause of the fact that „viele Kreise des Bürgertums und des Offizierkorps [waren] in Göring vernarrt“ (Gisevius 53) and made many in the resistance hope that he could be swayed. Göring, in fact, never abandoned his bourgeois class position for the new NS society. We are never told in the book just what it is that sweeps the Campagna herdsmen and the disaffected along into the Oberförster's reign of terror: but it seems clear that the promise of participating in traditional bourgeois power, of getting some of its spoils, is enough to cement the Oberförster's authority and power. While Hitler and Goebbels might have stumbled onto this contradiction at the end, in the bunker, neither realized that they had undermined their own supposed unshakeable belief in the *Führer*-principle by sharing in the bourgeois spoils of villas, cars, chauffeurs, willing movie starlets, planes, pilots and mountain retreats (not to mention bunkers). Stripped of the pretence – as *Auf den Marmorklippen* does – traditional class existence is the only reality, and the brothers act true to class type and proclaim the neutrality of the petty bourgeois until the crisis is over, assured that descent into the proletariat is not a concern in this case. The belated participation of the brothers with Belovar, who represents a form of primal (feudal) nobility, suggests the inherent conservative nature of the petty bourgeois. Rather than accept a tyrannical bourgeois regime, the brothers make a lateral move, preserving their petty bourgeois nature. In essence, they perform the textual emigration that Jünger cannot physically do, and the book is arguably Jünger's announcement of his *Innere Emigration* on the eve of his re-induction into the army.

One of the reasons for the long-windedness of the argument to date is the presence of a factor that Jameson insists on in a political unconscious analysis, namely that interpretation of the text must be prolonged until the contradiction in question emerges and takes on a dialogical form that contains the irreconcilable demands and positions of opposing classes. In this case, it is opposing visions of class structure

that are irreconcilable: that of the idealized class structure arising from the espoused NS meritocracy versus the embedded class structure of the capitalist mode of production which the NS state did not uproot. This fact was made apparent when the Nazis decided to suppress their own feudalistic artisan guild wing and to hinder the dissemination of such things as August Hinrichs Thingspiel *Die Stedinger* („Das RMVP hielt im Gegensatz zur völkischen Bewegung die Kombination von Thingspiel und Thingspielstätte für unvereinbar mit dem Konzept einer ‚modernen‘ nationalsozialistischen Kultur“ (Warner 197)). Although the NS state continued to espouse its meritocracy based on the *Führer*-principle at all levels, particularly in the Jungvolk and HJ – „Meint ihr nicht auch, daß es besser ist, wenn dem Vater berichtet wird, daß sein Sohn ihn im Hause zu ersetzen sucht, daß er anpackt, wo Not am Mann ist, daß er ein rechter Kerl geworden ist, der würdig ist, einmal den grauen Rock zu tragen, den jetzt sein Vater in Ehren trägt! (*Verpflichtung der Jugend* 27) – it undermined its own attempt to establish this new class structure by allowing the old class structure to continue to exist.

#### XI.1.8. Conclusion of Third Horizon Close Reading of the Text

This extensive close-reading of *Auf den Marmorklippen* has been guided by Jameson's third horizon of reading. The text reveals the cultural revolution of its time through its formal elements. These formal elements have been influenced by the barbarian discourse, for the text represents Jünger's turning away from a positive valuing of the barbarian which he previously espoused in his attempts to re-write the slaughter of World War I as necessary to bring forth the resultant cold persona of the men who fought in it, and who thus represented the Dionysian re-birth of a new, more vital, more barbarian man. The results of this barbarian discourse, particularly its hijacking by the NS regime, is allegorically presented in the plot of the novel. While the transcendental attitude of the narrator and the insistence on a Ragnarokian perspective of the tragic catastrophe hints at a reluctance to fully relinquish this interpretation of the barbarian discourse, the lengthy exposition and its insistence on discovering the root of the tragedy that destroys the beloved city of Große Marina displays an acknowledgement of the negative consequences of the barbarian discourse for both the fantasy sub-creation and the Germany it is an allegory for.

The first layer of form is thus most revealing of the cultural

revolution of 1939. The tragedy *mythos*, coupled with the survival of the tragic hero in exile from his beloved city, demonstrates Jünger's prophetic power: the course of events is such that destruction will come, but there will be a renewal and a rebuilding once the tragic hero – himself a symbol of the German collectivity – returns from exile. A final poignant observation about the tragic *mythos* will help to orient that analysis. We must, unavoidably, quote Frye again:

Anyone accustomed to think archetypally of literature will recognize in tragedy a mimesis of sacrifice. Tragedy is a paradoxical combination of a fearful sense of rightness (the hero must fall) and a pitying sense of wrongness (it is too bad that he falls). There is a similar paradox in the two elements of sacrifice. One of these is communion, the dividing of a heroic or divine body among a group which brings them into unity with, and as, that body. The other is propitiation, the sense that in spite of the communion the body really belongs to another, a greater, and a potentially wrathful power. (Frye 214).

In this novel a sense of sacrifice is unavoidable when one considers the role of Sunmyra and Braquemart. The narrator (and the textual and meta-textual collective he represents) in effect attempts to abdicate his role as tragic hero by insisting on a transcendence of the tragedy, and by allowing Sunmyra (an eerie prophecy of Stauffenberg) to take on that role. The importance of Sunmyra's head is what makes this a phase three tragedy, a victory in tragedy: the narrator can smuggle out a sense of victory from the tragic death and destruction all around him by retrieving, carrying away, and one day returning with, Sunmyra's head. The head literally indicates the sacrifice at the conceptual heart of the tragedy. The fearful sense of rightness about Sunmyra's fall comes about through the description of the frail young lord: the reader is strongly given the sense that Sunmyra cannot succeed, and this also seems to justify the brothers' refusal to join him. The pitying sense of wrongness comes upon the reader when it is clear that Sunmyra and Braquemart are going off to their deaths and the narrator describes how transformed their demeanour is. As the narrator comes to realize, Sunmyra does fulfill his noble ancestry and role, and it is too bad that he must fall. And yet Sunmyra and Braquemart only gain this tragic-heroic aspect because the ritual sacrifice has been set in motion, which Lampros' late letter only confirms. There is, both for the community of the Große Marina sub-

creation, and for the Germany for which it is a metaphor, a communion which brings them into unity with Sunmyra's body, for his head becomes the focus for the novel's victory in tragedy conclusion. The head becomes the cornerstone of a rebuilt cathedral in Große Marina. Thus the ostensible tragic hero, who was able to avoid a tragic fate and to sacrifice Sunmyra instead, can now be united with him in communion in a situation of re-birth/renewal that the transcendent attitude promised from the beginning. This is prophetic of modern Germany which identifies with Stauffenberg, as history textbooks from German high schools and his prominence in official institutions of memory like the *Gedenkstätte deutscher Widerstand* suggest.

The victory in tragedy conclusion, represented by Sunmyra's head and the narrator's flight with it, reflects Frye's note that the third phase of tragedy "is often a sequel to a previous tragic or heroic action, and comes at the end of a heroic life" (Frye 221). It is, in fact, after the fighting at Alta Plana, the sub-creation's metaphor for the Western Front of WW I, that the brothers realized that there are weapons stronger than those that cut and stab. We know the narrator and Otho fought honourably enough to gain the friendship of a citizen of Alta Plana, Ansgar. The victory in tragedy conclusion where the narrator enters Ansgar's house in Alta Plana as into his own father's house suggests the purpose of the ritual sacrifice was to pave the way for a reconciliation with the enemies of World War I and the new war: the Western Allies, who are metaphorically indicated by the fighting in Alta Plana that precedes the events of the novel. The second and third layers of form – the transition from the *Phantastik Schreibweise* to a newly emergent *Neophantastik Schreibweise*, and the use of the Fantasy genre just then being established in the Anglo-Saxon world<sup>98</sup> – are decisive in bringing this text and its prophecy, derived from tragedy's ritual sacrifice, to its intended audience.

Finally, the text demonstrates turnings away of significance. One is from the working class, the proletariat, as the hope of the future. Another, significant for an author whose works were popularly associated with the glorification of war, is *Auf den Marmorlippen's* surprising sentiment expressed in this statement: „Als wir in unserer Vaterheimat hoch im Norden die Waffen wieder in die Rüstkammer eingeschlossen hatten, erfaßte uns der Sinn nach einem Leben, das von

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<sup>98</sup> Influenced by Howard and other forerunners, Tolkien begins composing his genre-defining work, *The Lord of the Rings*, during the war.

Gewalt gereinigt war“ (Jünger 1998: 54).

## XI.2. NS Documents 1941-1945: The Tragic March to Ragnarok

### XI.2.1. *SS Germanische Leithefte* (1941): Mobilizing the Barbarian Discourse

While *Auf den Marmorlippen* represents a decisive turning-away by Jünger from utterances within the barbarian discourse that helped establish the NS state, the hijacking of the barbarian discourse was vital to the SS and continued into the war years. The military successes of the first years of the war over Poland, Norway, France and Greece had the effect of silencing opposition within Germany, as Gisevius notes, but also strengthened the association between the victorious German troops led by the Nazis and the war-like barbarian Germanic heritage. The failure to invade England, and then the invasion of the Soviet Union, made it necessary to expand this association, and this is particularly apparent in an internal SS organ, *SS Germanische Leithefte*, which was first published in 1941 and featured „Der europäische Befreiungskrieg“ as its first lead article. The SS here explicitly calls upon a pan-Germanic ideal being propagated through the barbarian discourse. The ultimate political purpose of this strategy, for an NS regime driven by the revanchistic posture proceeding from the German *Kultur der Niederlage*, was as a justification for war.

Es ist erfreulich daß in den volksgermanischen Ländern diese Ansicht [*i.e. the pan-Germanic ideal*] in immer weitern Kreisen des Volkes schon jetzt während des Krieges an Boden gewinnt. Und wir sind stolz, daß die Entscheidung der vielen einzelnen jungen Männer sich nicht mit Worten begnügt, sondern daß sie aus freiem Entschluß ihr Leben für die europäische Sache zur Ehre ihrer Länder einsetzen.

Immer zahlreicher werden die Freiwilligen-Meldungen zur Waffen-SS, zu der Garde des Führers aller Germanen. Zu dieser Truppe, die auch den Dänen, Finnen, Flamen, Niederländern, Norwegern, Schweden und Schweizern die Möglichkeit gibt, ihre männliche Haltung durch die Tat zu beweisen. (*SS Germanische Leithefte* 1.1: 6)

Not only is the article illustrated by a picture of the Hermannsdenkmal –

that incorporation of the barbarian discourse, as early articles in pre- and post-SS take-over of *Germanien* show – but it explicitly links Hitler, and the *Führer*-principle, to this barbarian Germanic heritage. It says of Hitler, while the picture of Hermann der Cherusker raising his sword to the sky is in the reader's eyes, „Er fühlte, daß diese Werte im deutschen Blute und in seiner germanischen Art lagen. In jahrelangen schwersten persönlichen Kämpfen legt Adolf Hitler diese von den überstaatlichen Mächten, insbesondere dem Judentum und der Freimaurerei in den Schmutz gezogenen Werte des Blutes und der Rasse wieder frei“ (*SS Germanische Leithefte* 1.1: 8). The article emphasizes how Hitler's connection to the Germanic barbarian heritage and its supposed central values of blood and race – a connection which both Fischer-Fabian (Fischer-Fabian 221-222) and Wolfram (Wolfram 19) deny is the case – helped him to do the following: „Er besiegte den Klassenkampf. Wie ein Spuk verschwand damit der Hader im eigenen Volke“ (*SS Germanische Leithefte* 1.1: 8), which, as we have seen, was only obfuscated by the alleged implementation of the NS *Führer*-principle meritocracy concept. Beyond this, in an article seething with anti-semitism and hatred for Freemasonry, the article attempts to paint the whole war as an English conspiracy with the Jews, a conspiracy all the more contemptible because the English were denying their Germanic barbarian heritage: „Die angelsächsischen Plutokratien haben heute in wurzelloser Abtrünnigkeit von ihrer europäischen und germanischen Herkunft dem für Europa kämpfenden Deutschen Reich die Todfeindschaft angesagt“ (*SS Germanische Leithefte* 1.1: 11-12). The Germanic barbarian heritage is thus emphasized as the central reason for the war:

Das deutsche Volk dagegen ist zum Kampf für ein neues Europa angetreten. Ihm geht es nicht um einen machtpolitischen Imperialismus. Deutschland erfüllt lediglich das Gesetz, unter dem es zum Kampf für Europas Wiedergeburt angetreten ist: Den *Mythos* des Blutes.

Damit hat es sich in den Dienst eines göttlichen Naturgesetzes gestellt, das das Grundgesetz Europas ist.

**Das deutsche Volk hat also als einziges Ziel, Europa als die Urheimat der weißen und damit nordischen Rasse zu verteidigen und in seiner starken Ursprünglichkeit wieder aufzurichten.** (*SS Germanische Leithefte* 1.1: 10)

Again and again the Germanic barbarian heritage is brought out to justify the war: „Erst als die Germanen handelnd in die Geschichte eintraten,



wurde gesamteuropäisches Schicksal geschaffen“; „**Ohne die Germanen gibt es kein Europa! Nur durch die Germanen wurde Europa zum Herzland der Welt!**“ (*SS Germanische Leithefte* 1.1: 11).

This attempt by the SS to paint what was clearly an imperialistic war as a defense of Europe, and so in some way to try to claim that romance *mythos* imperative – the moral highground that the American Civil War, the Franco-Prussian War and World War I revealed was a decisive factor – is based entirely upon the appropriation of the barbarian discourse and the turning of the barbarian Germanic heritage into a foundation for this supposed common defence of Europe. The central position of Hermann der Cherusker in this argument – „Daß es dem auf der Höhe seiner Macht stehenden römischen Imperium nicht gelang, Ost- und Nordsee, das ‚Germanische Mittelmeer‘, zu durchdringen, ist ein Verdienst der Taten des Cheruskerfürsten **Hermann**“ (*SS Germanische Leithefte* 1.1: 11) – contradicts Wolfram’s contention that Hermann/Armin/Arminius „für Heinrich Himmlers Vorstellungen eines dynamischen Germanentums wenig brauchbar schien. Schließlich hatte Arminius als Befehlshaber germanischer Hilfstruppen den Römern seinen ‚Fahneid‘ gebrochen; ein wenig erbauliches Beispiel für den SS-Staat, der bei der Unterwerfung Europas keinen Anführer von ‚Hiwis‘, von ‚Hilfswilligen Völkern‘, benötigte, der als zweiter Arminius erfolgreich gegen die deutsche Militärmaschine rebellierte hätte“ (Wolfram 34). Wolfram underestimates the extent to which the barbarian discourse was being used to posit a common Germanic European identity, an identity that „bei aller Anerkennung der Leistungen des römischen Weltreiches“ (*SS Germanische Leithefte* 1.1: 11) supersedes and replaces the traditional identification of Europe with Rome and Greece. In such an identity, Hermann can only be portrayed as a common Germanic hero.

The article concludes with „In seiner Proklamation vom 22. Juni 1941 stellt Adolf Hitler darum nur das fest, was jedem artbewußten Europäer nun endlich klargeworden ist, daß die Aufgabe der vom Eismeer bis zum Schwarzen Meer sich erstreckenden Front **,daher nicht mehr der Schutz einzelner Länder, sondern die Sicherung Europas und damit die Rettung aller‘** ist“ (*SS Germanische Leithefte* 1.1: 12). Precisely such an attempt to portray Germany’s war as a pan-European defence motivated by a common Germanic heritage was countered by Otto Strasser from his Canadian exile a few months earlier in the magazine *Liberty*. In his article, “What Hitler told me about peace”, Strasser quotes Hitler as saying the following in a personal meeting:

We don't need peace in Europe; what we need is German domination over Europe. That is the true road to peace! There must be only one armed nation, and we are that nation. Then the other peoples can go about their business under the protection of the German sword. If you compel a people for fifty years to stick at humble tasks and remove every possibility and every memory of self-defense and the use of arms, then it acquires the habits and the way of thought of a slave. Germans are the warrior caste of Europe; the other peoples are Europe's worker caste. (in Strasser: 4-5)

Whether or not this meeting occurred and these precise words were spoken, this is the perception of the war that found deeper resonance around the world than the SS's attempt to conjure up a pan-Germanic European defense. (In fact, the prevalence, and post-war affirmation, of this perception accounts for Wolfram's misreading of the SS's use of the Germanic heritage.)

The fact that the SS's launching of *SS Germanische Leithefte* in 1941 coincides with the opening of the war with the U.S.S.R. is an indication of the monumental significance of that aggressive act. Not only does Hitler contradict his own condemnation of Wilhelmine Germany for conducting a two-front war, which he argued in *Mein Kampf*, but this clearly self-defeating decision ushers in the tragic Ragnarokian *Weltanschauung* associated with the barbarian Germanic heritage. The SS calls precisely upon this aspect of Germanic heritage in the second issue of *SS Germanische Leithefte*:

Als unsere Armeen und mit ihnen die Wikinger der SS in das Gebiet des Dnjepr vordrangen, da betraten sie nämlich altes Wikingerland. Dieser alte Besitz konnte damals jedoch nicht gehalten werden, und die letzten nordischen Blutsreste aus der Zeit dieser ersten wikingischen Inbesitznahme fielen den verheerenden Mongolenstürmen des 13. Jahrhunderts zum Opfer. Das hat seine Gründe in dem langsamen Zerfall alter Gesetze und Sitten gehabt, die eine strenge Scheidung des germanischen Blutes von fremdvölkischem Blut anbefahlen. (*SS Germanische Leithefte* 1.2: 38)

This tragic viewpoint is insisted upon even though no evidence is presented to prove that old laws or customs forbidding Germanic barbarians from intermarrying with foreign peoples ever existed. That the Germanic peoples were seemingly prepared to intermarry with Slavs,

Celts, Romans, Greeks, or North Africans is not taken as historical proof that no such laws or traditions existed, but rather as proof of a tragic Germanic destiny if pure blood is not maintained.

#### XI.2.2. *Germanien* (1941): The Barbarian Discourse as Justification for War

For example, in 1941, in the pages of *Germanien*, Plassmann<sup>99</sup> writes an article entitled „Die Ostpolitik König Heinrichs I“ in which Plassmann draws parallels between the king, that Himmler honoured as the first German king in the Quedlinburg re-interring ceremony of 1937, and Germany's current situation in Russia in order to establish such laws and customs. Plassmann opens his article thusly:

In den fünf Jahren, die seit der Jahrtausendfeier für König Heinrich vergangen sind, haben wir es erlebt, daß der völkische Lebensraum, den König Heinrich dem deutschen Volke erkämpft oder wenigstens vorgezeichnet hat, mit überraschenden, und in ihrer Bedeutung noch kaum voll begriffenen Schlägen wieder zu einer gewaltigen völkischen Einheit zusammengefügt worden ist. So sehr wir dies dem Genie eines Mannes und seiner Mitkämpfer verdanken, so sehr sind wir doch auch von dem Gefühl durchdrungen, daß dieser eine Mann die Kraft zu seinem Werke aus dem Bewußtsein geschöpft hat, der Vollstrecker eines ewigen völkischen Gesetzes zu sein; eines Testamentes, das die großen Vorkämpfer ohne Brief und Siegel den Berufenen nach ihnen hinterlassen haben. Eines Testamentes, das gültig und verpflichtend bleibt, auch wenn es Jahrhunderte hindurch unerkannt und unerfüllt blieb oder sogar verachtet und abgelehnt wurde, und nur als Mahnung in den Herzen derer lebte, deren heißes Wollen und Wünschen aus der Stimme

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<sup>99</sup> Font styles, spelling, and type face, in and of themselves, constitute a fascinating insight into the political unconscious of the time. From the NS regime's early discouraging of the use of the Fraktur script, by claiming that it was developed by Jews, to the adoption of a modern typing style reminiscent of the post-World War I poetry of Stefan George which eschewed Umläute and even capitalization of nouns, to Plassmann's dropping of the "ß" and writing his name with "ss", to the re-adoption, in the time of ultimate crisis and its urgent conjuring up of the Germanic past, of Fraktur in SS internal publications, we have a fascinating political unconscious chronicle.

ihres Blutes und ihres deutschen Herzens kommt. (Plassmann 1941: 241)

In other words, here, and elsewhere in NS and SS texts, the barbarian Germanic heritage is cited as giving contemporary Germans „ewige[n] völkische[n] Gesetze[s]“ that come „ohne Brief und Siegel“ but through the metaphysical „Stimme ihres Blutes und ihres deutschen Herzens“. The barbarian discourse is thus appropriated in order to deliver these laws, whose sole purpose is to justify the war. (Furthermore, what will also attract the notice of the observant reader of this passage is how Plassmann does not underline the pan-Germanic nature of these events, or the significance of these events for all Germanic peoples, but only for Germany in particular. This oversight, even in a member of the SS responsible for an internal SS publication<sup>100</sup>, demonstrates just how accurate Strasser’s depiction of the situation was.) Plassmann goes on in the article to give details about Heinrich’s war, against the Slavs, to regain territory surrendered by the Germanic tribes during the *Völkermwanderung*, in order to justify the current campaign against Soviet Russia.

Elsewhere in the article Plassmann extrapolates another Germanic law from King Heinrich’s career and the Germanic heritage. Plassmann argues that rivers were not perceived as borders in Germanic tradition, which explains and justifies Heinrich’s campaign to cross the Elbe and make both banks of the river Germanic (as opposed to the east bank being Slavic). Plassmann states that rivers being a core part of Germanic territory is a „germanisches Lebensgesetz“ (Plassmann 1941: 243), while admitting that the Lech is an exception to this law. Plassmann goes on to criticize Charlemagne for essentially betraying his Germanic heritage by breaking this Germanic ‘river law’ by being content with having the Elbe as his eastern border. In these arguments we see the central function of the barbarian discourse for the SS and the NS regime as a whole: as a source of “laws” to justify the actions of the regime and to control and direct the behaviour of the German people. The ‘river law’ is an implicit argument justifying the whole complex of wars leading to the current war, for it justifies the war of 1870-71 and its project of reclaiming the entirety of the Rhine, thus also Germany’s commitment to World War I, and now this second, revanchistic war.

This justification aspect is apparent in implicit parallels that

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<sup>100</sup> „Hauptschriftleiter: Dr.J.D.Plassmann, Berlin-Dahlem, Pücklerstraße 16“ (*Germanien* 13.7: 240).

Plassmann draws between King Heinrich's campaign against the Slavs and the current war with Soviet Russia (Plassmann 1941: 243). Plassmann writes that Heinrich symbolizes a „deutschen Lebensaufgabe [...] zu der wir uns heute noch bekennen [...]: Wiedergewinnung und Sicherung seines [*i.e. Germany's*] gegebenen Lebensraumes, die wir in unseren Tagen erleben konnten“ (Plassmann 1941: 248). Again and again the events of the Germanic past are interpreted to be expressions of laws and traditions that are binding on contemporary Germany. Those same examples could be used to argue that, since rivers often did function as borders in German/Germanic history, that the law is to use rivers as borders. Other events – such as the *Völkerverwanderungen* which showed the Germanic people's readiness to mix with other peoples, including the original Celtic inhabitants of Germany, the Romans, other Italic peoples, North Africans, and the Slavs in the areas conquered by Heinrich – could be interpreted as demonstrating that mixing blood-lines and thus seeking to increase the genetic pool is the Germanic law because that is what Germanic peoples seemingly strove to do throughout history.

Concurrent with the attempt to control the outcomes of the barbarian discourse, is the need to re-frame the traditional barbarism vs. civilization dichotomy. By choosing the Germanic barbarian over the 'civilizing' Roman in the barbarian discourse in the first place – symbolized by the central role of Hermann der Cherusker in the discourse – there is a strong need to re-write the traditional negative view of the barbarian. Just as in Howard's Conan stories, the barbarian's vitality and natural state of purity is now the source of positive, healthy values (as opposed to the decadence and corruption of civilization) and these need to be highlighted. We saw how a first task, upon the SS's take-over of *Germanien*, was to purify Hermann, and his signal victory over Varus' three legions, of the taint of negative barbarian associations like human sacrifice. The article following Plassmann's in this late 1941 issue of *Germanien* continues this task.

F. Cornelius' „Zur Vorgeschichte des Zweikampfes“ attempts to demonstrate the inherent honour and humanity of the Germanic barbarians. Cornelius does this by infusing his overview of the one-on-one duel with a legalistic tone. While he admits that the unsavoury

„Blutfehde“<sup>101</sup> was the „Urbrauch“ that preceded the *Zweikampf* (Cornelius 250), he argues that it was replaced by the *Zweikampf* and the legally binding oath taken upon the weapons to be used in the duel. This process is evidence of the following very positive barbarian value: „So wenig war Blutdurst der Antrieb zu den Kriegen der nordischen Völker“ (Cornelius 249). Cornelius emphasizes the legal aspects of this barbarian custom – just as Plassmann did to exonerate Hermann by explaining apparent human sacrifice as a duly legal execution for Roman sacrilege of a sacred grove – by using successively stronger legal terms. While he first speaks of the *Zweikampf* as an „Indogermanischer Brauch“ (Cornelius 249), he quickly moves to the stronger term „völkerrechtlicher Brauch“, to then move into the arena of legal discourse proper by citing the custom as a „gemeinsame Recht“ to then – after explaining the legally-binding oath taken on the weapons – present the formulation „Zweikampf als Rechtsmittel“ in the context of a Germanic „Entwicklung der Rechtsformen und Rechtsgefühls“ (Cornelius 251).

Interestingly, in this process of re-framing the barbarian discourse in order to derive laws to guide/control contemporary German conduct, Cornelius reveals the same major stumbling block to this project that Himmler was forced to concede, namely the powerful influence of one thousand years of Christian tradition and values in Germany. Cornelius makes the mistake of thinking his argument strong enough to re-write a romance narrative within the Bible that had become deeply anchored in Christian German culture. He argues that the Philistines were an Indogermanic people and that David (with his ‘depraved’ Asiatic/Semitic cultural background) violated the Germanic law of the one-on-one fight by refusing to meet Goliath with an approved weapon. Cornelius presents this attempt to re-cast this famous biblical romance narrative, with David as the villain, in the first paragraph of his article, of necessity colouring the rest of the article with a suspicion derived from one thousand years of Christian tradition in any German reader’s mind, whether on a conscious or unconscious level.

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<sup>101</sup> The blood feud was already established in an earlier issue of *Germanien* as a negative to disprove the contemporary Scandinavian argument that the northern Germanic – represented by the Icelander as the ultimate type – was superior to the southern Germanic (i.e. the German) and that the southern Germanic culture was a source of corruption (Höfler 197). SS-controlled *Germanien* goes on the offensive to demonstrate, on the contrary, that northern Germanic culture lacked the organizational stability of southern Germanic culture (which is thus superior), and the fact that the blood feuds of Iceland destroyed that society and led to a loss of sovereignty is highlighted.

In the last *Germanien* issue of 1941, O.S. Reuter writes an article entitled, „Walhall“. Reuter argues that the numbers cited in the „Grimnirlid“ in the *Edda* – the 540 doors of Valhalla, out of each of which 800 Einherjer will emerge at Ragnarok – represent a moon calendar similar to that found in ancient Iran and India. Beyond yet another attempt to emphasize a pan-(Indo-)Germanic reality, what is interesting here – at about the same time as the Wehrmacht is being stopped just short of Moscow – is the emphasis on the Ragnarok motif within Germanic culture. Reuter does not emphasize its tragic dimension (for Stalingrad has not yet occurred), but he does underline that major convention of tragedy, destiny, and he points at the victory-in-tragedy central to the concept when he concludes his article:

Die germanische Himmelsburg wird umweht vom Schicksalshauch, der die gesamte Göttermacht des Himmels und der Erde zum ewigen Kampfe treibt, der den toten irdischen Streiter, den doch gottgeborenen, in das Eine große Heer des Gottes emporträgt – diese germanische Himmelsburg ist das Spiegelbild der ewigen Ordnung über dem Chaos, der Urgedanke des dauernden, nie aufhörenden Kampfes der aufbauenden, schöpferischen Mächte gegen die ringsandrohenden Kräfte der Zersetzung und Zerstörung:

Im rollenden Zeichen des Lichtes und des Sieges. (Reuter:

322)

Below his own words Reuter adds a quotation from *Beowulf*: „Das Ende des Lebens ist allen gewiß, / Drum leiste jeder, so lange er kann, / tapfere Tat, daß den toten Helden / der nie verwelkende Nachruhm kröne.“

### XI.2.3. *Germanien* and *SS Germanische Leithefte* (1942): Centrality of the Ragnarok Motif

In 1942, F. Altheim and E. Trautmann, whose book *Vom Ursprung der Runen* was published by the Ahnenerbe a few years earlier, write an article in *Germanien* entitled „Die älteste Darstellung des Wodan?“ in which they continue to pursue their goal of positively identifying early depictions of Wodan/Odin, in the process citing some of the same petroglyphs that they discussed in their book. While they do admit „Daß die Felsbilder bereits Odin oder Wodan darstellen, ist nicht

nachweisbar“ they do insist „Darüber kann kein Zweifel bestehen, daß die Kimbern Wodan gekannt haben“ (Altheim and Trautmann 1942: 378) and „Auf der anderen Seite kann kein Zweifel darüber bestehen, daß der Gott des Goldhorns von Gallehus, das um 400 n. Zw. oder später entstand, Odin ist. Und dasselbe muß von der entsprechenden Gestalt des Schildzeichens gelten: sie stellt Wodan dar“ (Altheim and Trautmann 1942: 378-379). One can interpret such conclusions reached on inconclusive evidence as a desperate unconscious metaphysical attempt on behalf of these privileged Ahnenerbe insiders to reassure themselves of the existence of the god who seems to be metaphysically supporting or driving the NS regime (as Jung suggested with his 1937 pamphlet). More importantly, this need to ascertain Wodan's existence is a first step in overcoming that obstacle to the complete domination of Germany by the SS's interpretation of the Germanic heritage: Christian tradition. Altheim and Trautmann do symbolically confront this Christian obstacle by interpreting Roman military records in such a way as to gain an ally for Germanic barbarians against Christianity, namely Roman civilization itself through its metaphysical centrepiece, Jupiter: „Jupiter und Wodan vereint wären an den Ufern der Wippach gegen das christliche Heer zum Kampf angetreten“ (Altheim and Trautmann 1942: 381). The united pagan forces (if Altheim and Trautmann are correct in this assumption) were defeated in this battle, and the article's conclusion with this fact speaks to the gathering signs of the Ragnarokian tragedy in the metanarrative of current events.

Another of these signs is an article entitled, fittingly, „Ragnarok“, in the second 1942 issue of *SS Germanische Leithefte*. The author of the article, Hans S. Jacobsen, is expressly identified as a Norwegian in an attempt to give additional Germanic authenticity to the article's content. Part of Jacobsen's short text is an attempt to encourage, or demonstrate the existence of, Norwegian volunteers in the SS. This is again in order to create the illusion of a pan-Germanic effort in the war. Beyond this specific conscious political objective, the article also officially ushers Ragnarok into the consciousness and *Weltanschauung* of readers increasingly aware of the desperate fighting on the Russian Front .

Nun ist das große Ragnarok über uns, mit all seiner Gewalt. Der Nationalsozialismus, die Sammlungs-idee der germanischen Rasse gegen die überstaatlichen Mächte, gegen das Gift des Orients, für unsere Völker. Europa – ausgenommen England – gegen den Bolschewismus. Ein



Seufzer der Erleichterung ging durch die Welt des weißen Mannes, als die Fanfaren verkündeten, daß die Deutschen zu ihrem großen Zug gegen den Osten aufgebrochen seien. Der Friede wird diesmal endgültig gesichert werden, und es wird ein germanischer Friede sein. (Jacobsen 85)

The Ragnarokian dynamic of the Germanic heritage is here being admitted as being at work, but Jacobsen avoids the tragic implications that the *Edda* presents most clearly: the world destroyed by fire, all humans except two killed, Odin, Thor, Frey, Heimdall and Tyr killed along with all of the 540 000 Einherjer. In fact, this prophecy, along with the horoscope that Hitler apparently consulted throughout his regime, will prove to be ironically accurate. The article is accompanied by a drawing of Thor riding across a stormy sky in his goat chariot while, below, Germanic farmers plough the fields with horses; the drawing has the following caption: „Wehe dem Volk, das nicht stolz ist, das keine Leidenschaft kennt, wenn das Brausen des Schicksals über seinen Häuptern ist“ (Heiberg 84).

A few months later in 1942, in *SS Germanische Leithefte* 2.5, the Ragnarok theme is taken up again in an article entitled „MIDGARD gegen UTGARD“. By this time all theoretical and general references to Ragnarok have been replaced by the express correlation between the mythic Ragnarok and what is going on in the war. In fact, this article appears in the section of the magazine reserved for accounts of action on the front at the company-level: „Die Mannschaft“. Furthermore, the adoption of precisely the key terms that Höfler textually reclaimed from Kummer in 1937 – when he argued that Midgard did not represent, as Kummer claimed, some idealized individualistic Icelandic Germanic culture, and that Utgard did not represent the negative cultural wave from Germany that brought decadent ideas of the state and the metaphysical dominance of Wodan, but that the terms represented, respectively, what Grönbech had argued they represented, namely „das harte, Schicksalhafte und Tragische am germanischen Altertum“ and „die mythischen Gewalten des Untergangs (man denke an Fenriswolf, Midgardschlange, Loki und die anderen Weltverderber des nordischen Mythos)“ (Höfler 199) – is telling. This article expressly connects the term Utgard to the Russian land and people, and the term Midgard to the Germanic troops and people that will take that land and transform it (*SS Germanische Leithefte* 2.5: 231), but does not quite fully understand the „Schicksalhafte und Tragische“ in this assigning of the term Midgard.

XI.2.4. *Verpflichtung der Jugend* and *Wille und Macht* (1943): Total Identification with the Ragnarok Motif

This total identification with the Ragnarokian motif is also evident in a text published in 1943 and intended for leaders of the Jungvolk, i.e. the NS groups for boys too young for the HJ and girls too young for the Bund deutscher Mädchen (BdM). These groups were organized along the same lines as the older youth groups – for example, the smallest grouping in the HJ, the „Kameradschaft“, was called the „Jungenschaft“ in Jungvolk and had the same number of members, 15; on the girls’ side, the „Mädelschaft“ of the BdM was called the „Jungmädelschaft“ in Jungvolk, and the adult Jungvolk leaders received propaganda materials designed for this age group in order to indoctrinate them. This 1943 publication, *Verpflichtung der Jugend*, was subtitled „Sonderausgabe 1943 für das Deutsche Jungvolk“ and began with a Ragnarokian-toned quotation from Hitler: „Unsere Gegner – sie schreien es heute heraus: Deutschland soll untergehen! Aber Deutschland kann immer nur eine Antwort geben: Deutschland wird leben, und deshalb wird Deutschland siegen!“ (Hitler 1943: 2). While the SS made it a priority to control the barbarian discourse in order to derive from it laws to apply to Nazi Germany, a text like this one, designed to indoctrinate the next generation of Nazi German citizens, shows that the strategic control of the barbarian discourse was but one of many strategies employed by the Nazis in attempting the *Gleichschaltung* of all of German society. Particularly since Hitler himself was not much interested in things Germanic beyond race and blood, the SS barbarian discourse becomes an undercurrent in such a more general document, but its contribution is implicitly present, particularly in such sentiments:

Ihr habt nunmehr bewußt den Sinn des Lebens zu erfüllen:  
Wir alle haben dem Führer und dem Reich zu dienen. Unser  
Leben gehört der Gemeinschaft. Aus dem Volke kommen  
wir; sein Glück, seine Größe, seine Freiheit und Zukunft sind  
unser einziges und höchstes Lebensziel. Als einzelne sind wir  
vergänglich, in und durch Deutschland erhalten wir das ewige  
Leben. (Griesmayer 3).

The Germanic heritage and its purpose in justifying and encouraging war are never textually far apart. For example, in the first propaganda lesson of the publication, the Jungvolk leader says to the assembled youth,

Der germanische Krieger folgte seinem Herzog in Treue und

kehrte ohne ihn nicht mehr heim. In Treue folgten all die Millionen von Toten des Weltkrieges ihren Führern. In Treue sterben heute deutsche Soldaten auf den Schlachtfeldern dieses Krieges. (*Verpflichtung der Jugend* 7).

Interestingly (and here is where the mythic narrative paradigm of an entire nation comes in), while an American would famously say “Defeat is not an option”, German youth were being prepared for the tragic, the Ragnarokian, the victory-in-tragedy option – and that, at least textually in the following quotation, as the *first* option: „Nur ein paar Schritte weiter, nur ein paar tiefe, kräftige Atemzüge, und schon kommt hinter der Furcht der richtige, ruhige Mut, kommt die schöne, stolze Tapferkeit, die immer eines von den beiden bringen muß: das heldenhafte, ehrenvolle Untergehen – oder den Sieg, den hellen, strahlenden Sieg“ (Kinau 14). And there is always the connection to the Ragnarokian Germanic motif: „aus dem Osten hereinbrechende, vom Vernichtungstrieb besessene Horden unsere Heimat bedrohen“ (*Verpflichtung der Jugend* 21).

Throughout the *Heimabend* meeting where the children are indoctrinated, the words „Opfer“ and „Opferbereitschaft“ are repeated continually, emphasizing the tragic mythic narrative’s archetypal function as a sacrificial ritual. Interspersed with exhortations to sacrifice, and some positive personality-building statements (e.g. don’t be afraid to be afraid, don’t rat out misbehaving friends to superiors but deal with them yourself, etc.), are anecdotes from the war that continually bring the victory-in-tragedy phase of tragedy before the children. Not as romance narratives, but as tragic narratives is the propaganda that the children receive framed, as in the story of the seriously wounded motorcycle messenger in Poland:

Mit trockenen, blutleeren Lippen preßt er seine Meldung heraus. Dann fällt er nieder. Während man den Melder behutsam bettet, rattern sofort die Panzer los, um dem Zug aus der Klemme zu helfen. Sie kommen gerade noch um Minuten zurecht. (*Verpflichtung der Jugend* 24);

and in the story of the sapper in the Prussian-Danish war who „den Kameraden den Weg bahnte, indem er mit einem Pulversack gegen die feindlichen Befestigungen sprang und sich selbst mit in die Luft sprengte, ist dies Selbstaufopferung als beispielhafte Tat fast sprichwörtlich geworden für echten deutschen Pioniergeist“ (*Verpflichtung der Jugend* 24); and in the story of the sapper on the contemporary Russian Front:

Die Gewalt der Detonation reißt ihm die linke Hand ab und

zerfetzt den Unterarm. Im Gesicht erhält er Splitterverletzungen. Der Luftdruck schleudert ihn zu Boden. Noch einmal rafft sich der Gefreite hoch und will in Deckung. Da treffen ihn Geschosse aus sowjetischen Infanteriewaffen und verwunden ihn schwer, Kameraden ziehen den Schwerverwundeten in den Graben zurück und leisten ihm erste Hilfe. Das Ziel aber, das der Gefreite mit seinem opfermütigen Einsatz erreichen wollte und mit seine Verletzungen schwer bezahlt hat, ist erreicht. Der bolschewistische Panzer steht in Flammen und brennt völlig aus. Die Gefahr für die deutsche Stellung ist beseitigt. Der tapfere Gefreite wird noch am gleichen Tage zum Unteroffizier befördert. Ebenfalls am gleichen Tage verleiht der Divisionskommandeur ihm das Eiserne Kreuz 1. Klasse. (Gehrke 25)

The SS-directed barbarian discourse and the militaristic tradition inherited from Wilhelmine Germany combine with the *kalte persona* to help to provide the personal characteristics, *Verhaltenslehren* and laws that make such denial of one's own physical security possible. The victory-in-tragedy narrative paradigm arising out of the *Kultur der Niederlage* directs this denial of physical security into a Ragnarokian war that promises the complete destruction foretold in the *Edda* and which will be the purification that Jünger wrote of throughout the 1920s and which *Auf den Marmorlippen* still evokes.

Another 1943 publication, this one aimed at older youth, *Wille und Macht*, attempts to reinforce the NS *Weltanschauung* during the now-evident, downward tragic trajectory of the war. Möller admits the Ragnarokian character of the war in „Die geistige Entscheidung des Krieges“ when he writes, „Der gegenwärtige Krieg wird gegen die bürgerlich-kapitalistische Gesinnung geführt. Da diese Gesinnung die ganze Welt erfaßt hatte, so ist es ein Krieg gegen die ganze Welt“ (Möller 7), but he attempts to claim the moral highground of a defensive war – the same claim that Kaiser Wilhelm's government eschewed and which was used to brand Germany as the romance villain at Versailles; the same claim that Hitler claimed was unnecessary in *Mein Kampf* and a sign of the decadent influence of pacifism: „So erleben wir denn das merkwürdig paradoxe Schauspiel, daß die alte Welt sich dadurch am besten zu verteidigen glaubt, daß sie uns angreift, während wir, die wir als die jüngsten doch die revolutionärsten und aggressivsten sein müßten,

eigentlich nur in der Verteidigung sind“ (Möller 7). Möller, building on the rehabilitation of the barbarian in the SS-directed barbarian discourse to be the shining type of a new, pure civilization, now casts the negative role of barbarian on the *bürgerlich-kapitalistische Welt* by claiming that it is „rohester Barbarei“ (Möller 8). Further, he reaffirms the tragic mythic narrative of contemporary Germany:

Aus dem Umsturz bei uns folgte der Weltumsturz, und wir erleben, daß sich im großen und allgemeinen an Not, Opfer, Kampf, Sterben und Auferstehung wiederholt, was sich im kleinen und besonderen bei uns abgespielt hat. Dieser ungeheuerliche Prozeß ist das Erlebnis unserer Generation. Es ist ein tragisches in dem hohen letzten Sinn des Wortes. Wir finden unser ganzes Volk einig in diesem Erlebnis, ergriffen von ihm und bereit, es als Verpflichtung und Aufgabe anzunehmen. (Möller 8)

Möller concludes by underlining that it will be this *geistige* attitude that will win the war for Germany against the barbaric Russians, the cultureless Americans and the materialistically cynical English.

This desperate insistence on the metaphysical in the face of the mounting material obstacles to a German victory is echoed by the next article, Hymmen's „Weh dem, der nicht glaubt“. Hymmen discounts rational conclusions based on the real facts of the situation – and ascribes such attempts to petty bourgeois class motivations – by insisting, „Diese kleinbürgerlichen Rationalisten, die dem Geschehen und dem Wesen dieser Welt das Wunder nehmen wollen, sind die armseligsten Tröpfe unter uns, denn sie haben die Welt entgöttert und haben all Türme abgerissen, von denen aus sie über ihren kleinen Dachfirst hinweg ins Weite spähen konnten“ (Hymmen 11).

Ehmer's „Der deutsche Mensch der Zukunft“ recapitulates the NS Weltanschauung for the reader. „Der liberalen Lehre schließlich von der Gleichheit aller Menschen, die dann auch ihre unterschiedlose Mischung zuließ, setzte der Nationalsozialismus die Urgesetze von Rassenreinheit und Blutveredelung entgegen“ (Ehmer 23); „Indem der Feind unseren lebensnotwendigen Entwicklungsdrang unterbinden wollte, erzwang er den Krieg“ (Ehmer 23). Ehmer concludes his recapitulation by stressing the *Herrentum* that the victorious German will demonstrate in „die Neuordnung Europas unter deutscher Führung“ (Ehmer 24). He concludes that every German will grip his sword „bereit zum nächsten Waffengang“ (Ehmer 25). This readiness for war, as we

have seen, comes from such an interpretation of the Germanic barbarian heritage, and it is again re-inforced by the article, „Die germanische Frau – die Hüterin der Sitte“.

This attempt to underline the superiority of the Germanic heritage supports the message of an article from the next issue of *Wille und Macht*, „Der russische Mensch“ by Dwinger. On the one hand Dwinger supports the central assertion of the NS race discourse that Germanic/Aryans are racially superior to the inferior Russian, and on the other hand supports the NS assertion that bolshevism is a decadent, corrupting influence. He does this by claiming,

Ich hatte unwillkürlich das Empfinden, in einen Haufen denkfähiger Termiten geraten zu sein, die ihre Tätigkeit wie diese ohne Gehirn ausführten, nur mehr aus einem dunkel unbewußten Trieb heraus handelten ... Es gab also tatsächlich keinen Zweifel mehr, diesen Menschen hatte man durch eine Propaganda, die in ihrer ungeahnten Totalität schlechthin alles umfaßte, unmerklich das ursprüngliche Gehirn operativ herausgeredet, sie konnten warscheinlich überhaupt nicht mehr selbstständig denken, sondern das millionenmal Gehörte nur noch triebhaft tun. (Dwinger 8).

And yet, for a text written at this stage of the war, a stage where deserters from the Red Army and old White Army sympathizers were supporting the German troops, a more differentiated view is also present:

Ist nicht mit mir auch jeder Frontsoldat zu der Erkenntnis gekommen, daß in Rußland überhaupt keine Einzelerfahrung Allgemeingültigkeit hat, daß man in diesem Lande auch das Häufigste nicht verallgemeinern kann? Hat nicht jeder dort bestialische Taten gesehen, haben aber nicht auch ungezählte Soldaten berichtet, daß die gleichen Menschen sie bei Verwundungen rührend pflegten, bei Nachschubschwierigkeiten sogar das letzte Stück Brot mit ihnen teilten? So ist auch die russische Seele in ihrem Kern nicht verwandelt, sie ist in ihrer Tiefe viel zu erbfest, um ihre Struktur in zwanzig Jahren wesenhaft verändern zu können. Wohl ist sie bei den intelligenteren Typen oberflächlich revolutioniert, aber das ist zweifellos ebenso schnell wieder wegzuwischen, wie man es diesem lerngerigen Volk pseudo-wissenschaftlich aufgepfropft hat. (Dwinger 10)

Dwinger concludes, „Das Ganze nochmals zusammenfassend, besteht

die sicherste Gewähr, den Entscheidungskampf dieser Welten dadurch zu bestehen, daß wir den Russen von innen her gewinnen, zumindest den der besetzten Gebiete zum Europäer machen“ (Dwinger 16). Here we see how the necessity for *Realpolitik* forces itself upon the NS regime's Ragnarokian narrative. Not only has the NS romance *mythos* narrative been de facto supplanted by a tragedy narrative requiring the endless ritual sacrifice of European soldiers and civilians, but its mythic associations derived from the barbarian discourse, Utgard and Midgard, are called into question. The easy association of Utgard with Russia cannot stand, as Dwinger suggests, and this association is further weakened by the need for allies in the fight against Soviet Russia.

In the same issue, Hans Heinrich Schaeder's article „Europa in der Abwehr des Ostens“ – „Nach einem Vortrag gehalten zur Eröffnung der Arbeitswoche „Der Osten und die deutsche Geschichte“ in der Akademie für Jugendführung, Braunschweig, am 15. März 1943“ (Schaeder 16) – combines two aspects of the barbarian discourse: the SS's pan-Germanic Europe concept and the Midgard vs. Utgard tragic dynamic. Throughout his article Schaeder cites repeated historical events illustrating the constant threat to Europe from the chaotic and degenerate East. For example, he argues, „Aber es ist unerläßlich, den Bolschewismus und die imperialistische Politik, die er betreibt, als den Abschluß und die höchste Steigerung einer Reihe von Angriffen des asiatischen Ostens gegen Europa zu sehen, deren endgültige Abwehr die Voraussetzung für das Leben und Gedeihen eines neuen Europa ist“ (Schaeder 17). Such a statement receives its Ragnarokian tragic dimension in its very context, i.e. mid-1943 when the Russian front is moving steadily westward and the likelihood of defeat is becoming manifest.

The desperation of this battle and the too late realization that Germany needed allies within Russia leads to a necessary differentiation in the racist discourse against Russians when General Wlassoff (Vlassov) joins the German forces. In an open letter printed in *Wille und Macht* Wlassoff attempts to explain why now some Russians should be positively perceived. The geopolitical realities of the war, that require this change in discursive tone, are cited in an introduction to the letter: „General Wlassoff hat erkannt, daß Rußland als natürlichster Partner Deutschlands diesen Kampf so schnell wie möglich beenden muß, damit nicht durch Ausblutung die Segnungen aus der Niederringung des Bolschewismus den kapitalistischen Mächten zugute kommen. Die von

den Engländern und Amerikanern unbeachtet gelassenen Forderung der Sowjets nach einer zweiten Front hat vielen russischen Gefangenen die Augen darüber geöffnet, daß die kapitalischen Mächte das blutige Ringen im Osten in der Waage zu halten wünschen, um nachher desto besser die ausgebluteten Völker ausbeuten zu können“ (Michael 29). Wlassoff writes in his letter of his military career and how he fought for his country against Germany but slowly came to the realization, „Der Bolschewismus trennte das russische Volk durch eine unübersteigbare Mauer von den Völkern Europas. Er wollte unsere Heimat von den führenden europäischen Völkern abschließen. Im Name utopischer und dem russischen Volk fremder Ideen bereitete er sich zum Krieg vor und stellte sich gegen die europäische Völkergemeinschaft“ (Wlassoff 32). The publication of this statement in a leading Nazi publication for youth is evidence that both the romance narrative that the Nazis strove for, and the mythic associations for the romance hero and romance villain, are being superseded. It also calls into question the extrapolation of “Germanic laws” from Germanic history, for this article shows that such laws quickly become irrelevant in the face of necessary strategic decisions.

The printing of a 1749 poem by Klopstock in *Wille und Macht*, „Kriegslied“, can be read as an unconscious acknowledgement by the NS regime that the Ragnarokian tragedy is no longer to be stopped and that the true goal all along had not been a romance triumph, but rather a victory-in-tragedy apotheosis on the personal and national level. Two stanzas in particular underline this for the reader:

Willkommen Tod fürs Vaterland!  
Wenn unser sinkend Haupt  
Schön Blut bedeckt, dann sterben wir  
Mit Ruhm fürs Vaterland  
[...]  
Uns folgt ein Ruhm, der ewig bleibt,  
Wenn wir gestorben sind,  
Gestorben für das Vaterland  
Den ehrenvollen Tod! (Klopstock 26)

The article following this poem determinedly reinstates for the young reader, in the face of – and superseding – all the factors that are impinging on the situation, the central race discourse and the central romance villain for Hitler and the Nazis.

Schickert’s article, „Kriegsschauplatz: Israel“, explains to the



young readers of *Wille und Macht* who grew up under Nazi rule and who might think, „Der Jude, ist das nicht ein Museumsstück mit Neugier und etwas Verlegenheit anzuschauen, ein fossiles Wundertier mit dem gelben Stern an der Brust, das von vergangenen Zeiten zeugt, aber nicht zur Gegenwart gehört?“ (Schickert 27), that the Jew is still a very real danger. Schickert sums up the Nazi “discovery” of Jewish plans of world domination through Rosenberg and the “heroic” Nazi “confrontation” with Jews on the streets despite ridicule and criticism, and concludes „Das war erlebter Kampf, und deswegen ist der Jude für den alten Nazi ein fester Begriff geworden und geblieben; es besteht kein Zweifel über die Gefahr, die der Jude darstellt, und deshalb auch kein Zweifel, was mit ihm anzufangen sei“ (Schickert 27). Schickert insists on the existence of the NS regime’s romance villain and goes on to acknowledge that the NS regime did not necessarily have the support of the German people in its treatment of this “villain” and that even many Nazis themselves did not know why they were doing what they did, but he insists on the rightness of this course nevertheless.

Nicht jeder hat in den seit 1933 vergangenen zehn Jahren alles gebilligt, was zur Lösung der Judenfrage geschah. Unser uns nun einmal angeborenen Zug, anderen Völkern und Rassen dasselbe zuzubilligen, was **uns** eigen ist, nämlich das Recht vor die Macht zu setzen, der Menschlichkeit den Vorrang zu geben und dort Gefühle walten zu lassen, wo des Lebens ewige Gesetze grausam sind wie der Daseinskampf in der Natur, hat die Stimmung und Meinung großer Teil des deutschen Volkes beeinflußt. Von wesentlicher Bedeutung wäre diese vom Nationalsozialismus oft angeprangerte Gefühlsduselei nur gewesen, wenn sie Einfluß auf die Judenpolitik des Dritten Reiches gehabt hätte. Das war aber nicht der Fall; Reich und Partei gingen, angefangen mit dem Boykott jüdischer Geschäfte am 1. April 1933 (einer Abwehrmaßnahme!), eisern den Weg, den sie für richtig hielten. So kam es, daß das deutsche Volk, soweit es nicht in der Partei und ihren Gliederungen mitkämpfte, mit seinem Verständnis für die Vorgänge hinter der Wirklichkeit einherhinkte. Es **verstand** häufig nicht, wozu das gut sein sollte. Dahinter braucht durchaus kein schlechter Wille gesucht zu werden, man würde sonst nur das Kind mit dem Bade ausschütten. Denn auch die aktiven Mitkämpfer, die

sich verantwortlich sahen für die Weiterführung und Vollendung der Judenpolitik im Sinne des Parteiprogramms, haben selten eine verstandesmäßige Begründung zu geben gewußt, jedenfalls keine, die sich über ein paar Schlagworte erhoben hätte; es war das **Gefühl**, das ihnen den richtigen Weg wies. (Schickert 28)

Schickert goes on to argue that all Germans are eternally grateful to the Nazis for “opening their eyes” to the Jewish threat. Yet Schickert essentially admits that the NS romance *mythos* narrative was never properly grounded, and its essential immorality destabilized this national narrative from the beginning. He does this by noting that, in spring 1941, when Rosenberg opened the

Frankfurter Institutes der NSDAP, zur Erforschung der Judenfrage [...] erinnerte er daran, daß wir vor dem Urteil der Nachwelt zu bestehen hätten und daß es nicht gleichgültig sei, ob spätere Jahrhunderte uns zum Guten oder zum Schlechten beurteilen würden. Daß man uns und unser Handeln recht verstehe, ist nicht die letzte unserer Sorgen. Es steht als Mahnspruch vor unserer Arbeit. (Schickert 30).

Schickert’s article obeys Rosenberg’s imperative to insist on this assigning of the roles of romance hero and villain, but in the process is an admission that this assigning has not been successful. This is in part due to the barbarian discourse itself. Despite the SS’s efforts to control and define the discourse and its terms, barbarian Germanic ideas of honour and its staining – like „Die Ehre ist daher stets von der Unehre bedroht, die eine üble Tat, „Neidingstat“, bewirkt“ (Wolfram 21) – serve to undermine the NS romance myth and suggest that such a staining, an ‘act provoking revenge’ (in this case, against the Jews), has already occurred, and thus the concept of *Nemesis* is clearly at work in 1943 Germany. Schickert concludes by saying that it must not be forgotten that Germany does not fight only against England, the United States and the Soviet Union, but against *Weltjudentum* which hides behind these military powers, and that the war against the Jews must be fought *in the mind*. This insistence on the *Gleichschaltung* of the young who have very little personal memory of the Jews is a late attempt to re-assert the Nazi romance narrative, and thus, due to the hybris inherent in this, maintains the actual archetypal narrative course toward Ragnarokian tragedy.

XI.2.5. Hitler's *Verfügung 44/44*, *Wille und Macht*, and Plaßmann's Marriage (1944): Desperation for Romance

The necessity of insisting on this control of the young at this late stage of the war is underlined by „Verfügung 44/44“ issued by Hitler from the „Führerhauptquartier, den 20.2.1944“ (Hitler 1944: 1). In this statement of 4 points (including 3 sub-points), Hitler insists on strengthening his personal control of the HJ. In point 1a he orders, „Beförderungen in der Hitler-Jugend zum Oberbannführer und zu den weiteren Diensträngen des höheren HJ.-Führer-Korps werden nur von mir ausgesprochen“ (Hitler 1944:1). Hitler addresses other organizational points, including the fact that HJ leaders who are promoted into other branches of the party can only be released from the HJ by Hitler himself: „Angehörige des höheren HJ.-Führer-Korps werden von mir aus ihrem HJ.-Dienstrang entlassen“ (Hitler 1944: 1). This late attempt by Hitler to take the reins of the HJ more securely is testament to the fact that the young are just about the only ones that can still be convinced that they are living a romance *mythos* narrative in 1944 Germany where the signs of the effect of *Nemesis* are making the national tragedy narrative impossible to deny.

Thus, in the May/June 1944 issue of *Wille und Macht*, Colin Ross finds it necessary to write a lead article entitled, „Um was geht der Kampf“. Since the contradictions in the various discourses extant in Nazi Germany, and evident in *Wille und Macht*, may have confused some young readers, Ross's article is intended – with D-Day already foreshadowed in the Allied advances on all fronts – to reinforce the will to fight in the young Nazis who have been raised to do precisely this.

Ross attempts, at this late stage, to more solidly reframe the war in romance terms. He gives the Jews the overall responsibility for the outbreak of the war (Ross 1), and thus labels them as the romance villain. He paints Germany as romance hero – „Deutschland kämpft, weil es muß, weil ihm der Krieg aufgezwungen wurde“ (Ross 3) – and Roosevelt as an agent of the Jews, who demonstrated his romance villain qualities whereby „Roosevelts Pressionspolitik gegenüber dem Reich der aufgehenden Sonne die Explosion von Pearl Harbour auf dem Gewissen hat und daß die Pacht- und Leih-Lieferungen an England, die Zurverfügungstellung von Kriegsmaterial und Kriegsschiffen an die Feinde Deutschlands, sein Schießbefehl, die offenen Angriffe der unter seinem Befehl stehenden amerikanischen Kriegsflotte auf deutsche

Schiffe ja längst vor Pearl Harbour offenen Kriegszustand mit Deutschland bedeuteten“ (Ross 3). In citing these issues, Ross is attempting to retroactively claim the positive moral values of the romance hero for Germany. He admits that it was likely a German weakness not to claim to be a crusader for international human rights: „Wir und erst recht das nationalsozialistische Deutschland haben nie eine andere Politik gemacht als eine deutsche für Deutschland und für Deutsche“ (Ross 4) (and in this Ross unwittingly sweeps aside the SS argument of a pan-Germanic Europe). Ross then attempts to disarm the American values of equality and human rights by first noting that the framers of the American Bill of Rights were slave-holders (Ross 4), and then by arguing:

Hat sich bis heute daran so viel geändert? Ist es nötig, auf die Lage der Neger in den Vereinigten Staaten hinzuweisen? In dem gleichen Land, das angeblich den Krieg für die Freiheit aller Menschen führt und den Vernichtungskrieg gegen Deutschland mit Deutschlands Rassenpolitik begründet, sind Rassenunruhen an der Tagesordnung, sind nicht nur Neger und Negermischlinge von gleichen Rechten ausgeschlossen, sondern Angehörige des mexikanischen Brudervolkes, wenn sie über die Grenze in das benachbarte Texas kommen. (Ross 4)

Just as Ross contradicts himself by first arguing that the Americans have no idea why they are fighting and have been dragged into it by Roosevelt, to then present them as the nation fighting for human rights while he tries to make an issue of American human rights abuses – at the same time as arguing that human rights are not an issue in the war – is certainly not going to clarify things for the young readers of *Wille und Macht*. This attempt to clarify the romance parameters for Nazi youth only serves to weaken the romance *mythos* national narrative further.

Ross and other writers of *Wille und Macht* attempted to present Germany as a romance hero by appealing – against Hitler’s own statements in *Mein Kampf* and later – to the concept of a defensive war that was enshrined in Versailles: the attacker is *a priori* the romance villain. While Wilhelmine Germany rejected this contention in favour of the traditional honourable practice of the duel (i.e. *Zweikampf*) where both parties are initially perceived as morally neutral and the victor is not punished for slaying his opponent, but rather is considered to have legally exonerated himself, Ross here, in the desperate situation arising

from a 1939 invasion of Poland, attempts to ignore this act provoking revenge and claims, instead, the internationally recognized romance implications of the defensive war. However, the by-now-deeply-engraved-in-geopolitical-events tragic mythic narrative cannot be so easily re-written. Especially when Ross continues to contravene the facts or to deflect them by veering dangerously close to them: „Schließlich darf man doch nicht vergessen, daß in amerikanischen Polizeigefängnissen die Methode des ‘Third Degree’, d.h. der Folterung von Untersuchungsgefangenen zur Erpressung von Geständnissen, längst üblich war, ehe überhaupt irgend jemand an Nationalsozialismus dachte und man seine eigenen Grausamkeitsinstinkte abreagieren konnte, indem man den Nazis Folterungen unterschob, an deren Ausmalung man seine geheime Lust fand“ (Ross 8). A narrative – as every writer who has heard the maxim ‘Literature is the expression of the truth’ knows – cannot be built on lies, contradictions and errors. A German romance narrative is not possible because the truth – that there is a monstrous crime that unbalances nature being perpetrated by Nazi Germany – is, in fact, an act provoking revenge and one that has set the wheel of fate that is *Nemesis* in motion. Without naming the Holocaust directly, Ross addresses the issue, admitting it and yet trying to re-assign the blame at the same time:

Heute ist dieser Krieg weit über den Machtbereich eines Mannes und eines Volkes hinausgewachsen. Und wenn es zu einer Gesamtentscheidung der jüdischen Frage auf der Erde kommt, liegt die Schuld bei denen, die von amerikanischem Boden aus Deutschland zu immer härteren Maßnahmen zwangen. Bei dieser Gelegenheit muß noch auf etwas anderes hingewiesen werden: auf die ungeheure Verantwortung, die jene trifft, die unter der Vorgabe, für die Freiheit des Wortes zu kämpfen, einen geradezu unvorstellbaren Feldzug der Lüge und der Verleumdung führten. (Ross 11)

Ross concludes with a prophetic acknowledgement of the victory-in-tragedy narrative reigning in Germany:

Weil wir Deutschen von dieser schicksalhaften Zwangsläufigkeit bis ins Innerste überzeugt sind, gleichzeitig aber auch wissen, daß das Schicksal uns in der kommenden Welt die Verantwortung für den europäischen Raum zugedacht hat, die wir übernehmen müssen, ob wir wollen oder nicht, können wir so starken Herzens eine Lage ertragen,

an der vielleicht jedes andere Volk bereits zerbrochen wäre.

(Ross 12)

Ross' reference to a coming world suggests acceptance of the loss of the war, and the responsibility for Europe that he refers to in this coming world seems eerily prophetic of the German role in the European Union. The burden that would break other peoples is a reference to the Ragnarokian tragedy that is now clearly rushing to the final catastrophe, and the promised transcendent victory beyond that (i.e. everything that the return of Balder symbolizes) is what allows the Germans to bear the tragedy.

A letter from the Reichsgeschäftsführer of the Ahnenerbe to „SS-Obersturmbannführer Dozent Dr. J.Otto Plassmann“ on the 5th of September, 1944 ironically – and personally – reveals the effects of the nearing tragic catastrophe. Interestingly, Plassmann has decided to marry his assistant and is congratulated for this decision. Plassmann is reminded that *Germanien* will no longer be published due to paper shortages and that Himmler, in his capacity as head of the reserve army, will not make exceptions for SS branches so that he cannot be accused of looking after his own interests. Further, „Die Einschränkungen im Universitätsleben werden Dir inzwischen ebenfalls bekannt geworden sein. Es erhebt sich da die Frage, wie lange Deine Vorlesungen in Bonn noch laufen, bzw. ob sie mit Beginn des neuen Semesters überhaupt wieder aufgenommen werden“ (Reichsgeschäftsführers Ahnenerbe: 1). The coming of *Nemesis* and the tragic catastrophe is creating anticipatory ripples throughout Nazi Germany.



## XII. The Tragedy's Final Act (1945)

Significantly, a text that *was* considered important enough to receive permission to use rationed paper in 1945 was a book published by an SS-Division. This exception is expressive of the discursive landscape, the national archetypal narrative and the hierarchy of values of late NS Germany. As the articles from *Wille und Macht* demonstrated, as the Allied armies came ever closer to Germany, the Nazi romance narrative became harder and harder to uphold, and admissions of the actual tragedy narrative being lived became more and more frequent. In fact, throughout the analysis of texts from the cultural archive, the textual expressions of the barbarian discourse, of the race discourse, of class conflict, and of the motif of Africa as the land of primal freedom reveal the differing mythic codings of the meta-narratives of the American and German cultures. The chronological approach of this dissertation receives a further justification when historical events cause these cultural, mythic meta-narratives to collide head on in the fighting on the Western Front in 1944. Just as the *Waffenstillstand* of November 1918 ended the shining promise of a national romance narrative that seemed to be beginning for Germany in the summer of 1914, the D-Day invasion of Normandy, the fighting in France and Holland, the battle in the Hürtgenwald and finally the Battle of the Bulge – that last attempt for a German romance victory – causes German resistance essentially to collapse, and the Nazi mythic *gleichgeschaltete* romance narrative finally unravels to reveal the tragic mythic narrative that was behind the romance all along. Many texts bear witness to this collision of *mythoi*, armies and cultures, and this collision has been the subject of endless repetitions in American popular culture in the decades since.

Given this, the first (and last) annual commemorative publication by the 10th SS Panzer-Division Frundsberg, *Buczacz, Caen, Nimmwegen: Der Kampf der 10. SS-Panzer-Division-Frundsberg im Jahre 1944*, is a particularly valuable text from the cultural archive. In this text we see how the SS Frundsberg authors are textually driven – by outside events stemming from the meta-narrative of the war – toward the victory in tragedy phase of the tragedy *mythos*. The victory in tragedy that Jünger proposes in *Auf den Marmorklippen* – not the self-sacrifice version favoured by Nazi propaganda, but one of exile, which contemporary readers interpreted either as a form of *innere Emigration* or actual exile in the West – is not textually supported by the Frundsberg narrators, but they do reveal it to



be an alternative to the tragically heroic sacrifice they are compelled to proclaim.

### **XII.1. *Buczacz, Caen, Nimwegen: Der Kampf der 10. SS-Panzer-Division-Frundsberg im Jahre 1944***

This book, the first annual commemorative volume of the 10<sup>th</sup> SS Panzer-Division-Frundsberg,<sup>102</sup> is marked by the tension between the *mythoi* of romance and tragedy. The division takes its name from Georg von Frundsberg, a *kaiserliche Feldhauptmann*, who lived from 1473 to 1528 and who „diente als Landsknechtführer den Kaisern Maximilian I. und Karl V. 1519 befehligt er das Fußvolk des Schwäbischen Bundes gegen Herzog Ulrich von Württemberg. Im Krieg gegen Frankreich hatte er entscheidenden Anteil an den Siegen bei Bicocca (1522) und bei Pavia (1525); als »Vater der Landsknechte« organisierte er dieser zu einer schlagkräftigen Truppe“ (“Frundsberg”). The „Landsknechte“ were:

urspr[ün]g[lich.] seit dem 15. Jh. die zu Fuß kämpfenden d[eu]t[sche.] Söldner, die die Ritterheere ablösten; erstmalig 1486 die Söldner Maximilians I. Die d[eu]t[sche.] L[andsknechte.] sind das erste geordnete Fußvolk der Neuzeit; ihre Organisation bildet die Grundlage allen späteren Heerwesens. Im Kriegsfall ernannte der Landesherr einen Feldhauptmann. Dieser wählte eine Anzahl Hauptleute als Führer der Fähnlein, die mit Musikbanden durchs Land zogen und L[andsknechte.] warben. [...] Die Waffen der L[andsknechte.] waren der lange Spieß und ein Schwert, Einzelne trugen große Schwerter (Zweihänder). [...] Im Verlauf des Dreißigjährigen Krieges änderte sich das Landsknechtstum seinen Charakter; an die Stelle des Landsknechtsheere traten die stehenden Heere. (“Landsknecht” 201-202).

Just as the historical institution of the Landsknechte is rife with contradictions – as Dieter Oliver Bongartz points out in his article „Ideal und Wirklichkeit. Die höfisch-ritterliche Kultur des Mittelalters“: „Der

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<sup>102</sup> This division was formed relatively late in the war (‘42-’43) and its ranks were filled with SS recruits who had gone through the Hitler Youth and were between 18 and 20 years old when the unit was formed. It was the first of two such Waffen-SS divisions made up of recently graduated Hitler Youth. The second such Waffen-SS division, officially named the Hitler Youth Division, was even younger.

berühmte Kaiser Maximilian (1459 bis 1519) wird bis auf den heutigen Tag als „letzter Ritter“ verklärt. Ausgerechnet er, dessen höfische Turniere und Hofhaltung als Inbegriff der Ritterlichkeit gesehen werden, war es selber gewesen, der mit dem Einsatz von Landsknechtsheeren der traditionellen Rolle der Ritter auf den Kriegsschauplätzen ein definitives Ende bereitet hatte“ (Bongartz, 13) – so is the use of this name for an SS division. That the SS would symbolically name a division after the historical mercenaries who put an end to knighthood suggests – parallel to Howard’s Hyborian Age Nemedía hiring Æsir mercenaries – an unconscious acknowledgement that the mythic romance narrative is unstable and that the young soldiers are not romance heroes fighting for an ideal, but hirelings being employed to further their employers’ ambitions. This suggestion is borne out by the fact that the central problematic of this *Erinnerungsgabe der 10. SS-Panzer Division Frundsberg* is its inability to resolve the oscillation between the *mythoi* of romance and tragedy, for the wish to frame the events of the narrative as a romance is dashed by the historical outcome of the very events it recounts. This drives the narrative toward a tragic perspective.

There are repeated attempts in the narrative to uphold an archetypal romance perspective, one that reflects the regime’s *Weltanschauung* of National Socialist Germany as a conquering hero striding toward an ultimate reward. The letter from the division’s commander, SS-Brigadeführer Harmel, that opens the book points to the ideology of romance by evoking one of the *mythos*’ primary features, the perilous journey: Harmel writes, „Buczacz – Caen – St. Lambert – Arnheim – Nijmegen und [?]“<sup>103</sup>. Das sind die großen Tage Eurer Bewährung, Marksteine am Kriegspfad des Frundsberger im Jahre 1944!“ (Gemeinschaftsarbeit 8). His term „Marksteine am Kriegspfad“ is a clear evocation of the perilous journey, with milestones set along the ‘war path’ to mark where the preliminary minor adventures occurred. But other than to write of the book as a monument to the young soldiers and to call on them to remain young and brave, Harmel offers no further reinforcement of a romance *mythos* perspective. Earlier in the war this would not have been the case, and it seems clear that Harmel could no longer whole-heartedly embrace a romance perspective.

The actual narrative of the book begins by explicitly evoking a *Gleichschaltung* of thought among the soldiers, a series of mental pictures

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<sup>103</sup> This section of the original handwritten text is indecipherable.

that the soldiers have in common and that begin with a fleeting glance at a generalized *Mädel* to then focus on the „Feuertaufe im Osten“ and Normandy. For a reader reading the text from a literary analytical perspective, the narrator<sup>104</sup> of this opening sequence cannot help but recall a statement by Frye to mind – “At its [*i.e. romance*]’s] most naïve it is an endless form in which a central character who never develops or ages goes through one adventure after another [...]” (Frye 186) – when he writes that the *gleichgeschaltete* mental images of the soldiers are like „der gerafften Bildserie eines endlosen Filmstreifens“ (Gemeinschaftsarbeit 10). In this the narrator is echoing Harmel’s inability to offer the coming of the romance *mythos*’ final climactic *pathos* (death struggle) and the concluding *anagnorisis* (the recognition of the hero) which leaves an incomplete romance which cannot get beyond the *agon* (conflict) stage.

In the sobering account of the Frundsbergers’ first experience of combat, their „Feuertaufe“ in the east near Buczacz (region of L’vov), an incident is reported that attempts to re-establish the romance *mythos* perspective by providing the narrative with Nazi Germany’s designated romance villain. In the text a scene is described in which 20 defenseless German soldiers are bound, starved, beaten and finally shot by their Jewish captors (Gemeinschaftsarbeit 19). The whole scene reads suspiciously like an inversion of documented killings of Jews by German troops, and several aspects of the account are suspect. Of course, in romance the “enemy is analogous to the demonic powers of a lower world” (Frye 187) and so the scene, in all its unlikelihood, does serve the purpose of trying to re-establish a romance *mythos* perspective.

Despite romance-like heroic highpoints, including the destruction of four Soviet T-34 tanks (Gemeinschaftsarbeit 21), this opening chapter ends with a „Verlegungsmarsch“ (i.e. redeployment march: a euphemism for ‘retreat’) which brings the Frundsbergers back to their starting point, Lemberg (i.e. L’vov). Despite the obvious geographical set-back, the romance perspective is not abandoned and the chapter ends with a statement that suggests that the *agon* continues and that the *pathos* is not yet in sight: „Ganz gleich, was kommt, die Frundsberger sind bereit. Wie sie ihre Feuertaufe bei Buczacz bestanden haben, so wollen und werden sie auch künftige Aufgaben erfüllen“ (Gemeinschaftsarbeit 29). This

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<sup>104</sup> This book has no one author and is officially credited (on page 128) as „Gemeinschaftsarbeit des SS-Kriegsberichter-Zuges der 10. SS-Panzer-Division „Frundsberg““, which included men named Dr. Röthig, Fervers, Lieb and Peters.

impression is reinforced by the illustrations that conclude the chapter, for they function as two of the many „Marksteine“ Harmel mentioned. The first is a picture of a burning Soviet plane, and the second a certificate awarded to Frundsberg by Hitler for shooting down three enemy planes.

The next chapter is the first of 3 to have a title page – „Caen: Die Höhe 112, Vor Vire und Vassy, Im Raum Ger, Die Absetzbewegung“<sup>105</sup> – and this suggests that the preceding chapter was a prologue to the real core of the narrative. Indeed, the way this chapter starts is a contrast to the introduction to the book as a whole. The introductory chapter on the fighting in Buczacz presents an incomplete romance *mythos* perspective in that it focusses – with its reference to „eines endlosen Filmstreifens“ – on an endless perilous journey with no *pathos* in sight. But the chapter „Caen“ presents a more complete view of the romance *mythos*, one that includes a reference to the quest for whose sake all the minor adventures are embarked on. This quest is announced at the opening of this chapter: „Das Generalgouvernement, Deutschland, – wieviele Bilder kann man schauen, wenn man von den zugigen Güterwagen hinabblickt, Bilder deutscher Kultur und deutscher Kunst, deutscher Arbeit und deutschen Bauernfleisses, deutscher Geschichte und deutscher Grösse. Krakau, Breslau, Leipzig, Nürnberg, Frankfurt, der Rhein, Metz und Aachen...“ (Gemeinschaftsarbeit 35). This is an attempt to give the narrative of the Frundsberger a literary form, that of romance, and the attempt hinges on the last-named city and the elipsis of suspense appended to it, for the book, and its narrative, brings us to Aachen at the end.

Competing with these tentative evocations of the romance *mythos* throughout the book are repeated manifestations of a tragedy *mythos* perspective. The tragedy *mythos* emerges in Division commander Harmel's opening letter to compete with the archetypal romance the authors are striving to present. Romance and tragedy are juxtaposed in his words: „Mit Schneid habt Ihr Eure Feuertaufe bestanden und mehr als einmal bewiesen daß Ihr auch unter den härtesten Bedingungen zum Letzten und Höchsten bereit seid!“ (Gemeinschaftsarbeit 7) While one might argue that this *Haltung* is de rigeur for a romance hero, in romance the *Letzte und Höchste* – while threatened – is rarely ever exacted from the hero, while in tragedy it almost always is: and it is, in fact, expected of NS

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<sup>105</sup> The other two chapter title pages are „Nimwegen: Der Kampf in Arnheim, An der Eingangspforte zum Reich“ (page 71) and „Großkampfraum Aachen: Geilenkirchen“ (page 95).

soldiers as the Jungvolk propaganda considered earlier makes clear. Since tragedy is, as Frye points out, a mimesis of sacrifice, Harmel's explicit evocation of this element in the *Dasein* of the Frundsberg Division calls up associations with each of the three romantic tragedy phases that Frye describes: firstly, the Division as a stag pulled down by the wolves of the Allies' numerical and material superiority; secondly, the impending fall of the Division due to its innocence and its inexperience – which Harmel evokes with his call to the Frundsbergers to remain 'young' and 'fresh';<sup>106</sup> and, thirdly, the emphasis on the success of the quest of the Frundsbergers (and Germany as a whole), where the material limitations of reality are ignored and the outcome of the quest is laid squarely on the shoulders of the soldiers. Harmel's evocation of sacrifice is not an isolated moment in the book, and this tragic perspective also comes through, for example, on the opening page of the narrative itself where the narrator refers to „[...] Wochen ununterbrochenen Kampfes, ununterbrochenen Opfer und Verzichtens“ (Gemeinschaftsarbeit 9).

A further distancing from the romance perspective – and thus a deepening of the conflict between the two mythic ideologies – occurs when the narrator accompanies the first deployment of the division with the comments that the attitude that reigned then was not „billigen Hurrahpatriotismus“, that there was a „Bewußtsein der Gefahren“ and an acknowledgement of the „Wirklichkeit des Krieges“ (Gemeinschaftsarbeit 12). Another indication that a tragic *mythos* perspective is competing to form the ideological and literary frame of the narrative comes when the Frundsberg column is strafed soon after leaving Lemberg and the first casualties lie on the road:

Nun ist es mit Versicherungen künftiger Tapferkeit, mit dem Wunsch nach grossen Taten nicht mehr getan. Nun will der Kriegsalltag bewältigt werden. Ach, und jeder von ihnen hatte es sich doch ein wenig anders vorgestellt: Romantischer vielleicht, heldischer vielleicht, anders jedenfalls. (Gemeinschaftsarbeit 15)

This passage seemingly makes any argument that there are competing mythic narrative perspectives in the text moot, for romance has clearly been negated; however, soon after this passage comes the attempt to set

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<sup>106</sup> The youth of the Frundsbergers is reinforced throughout the text, a most poignant example being when they are described as having „flaumhaarige Gesichter“ (Gemeinschaftsarbeit 48).

up the romance villain and to establish the narrative moment that will provide the romance's *pathos*.

Indeed, when the Frundsbergers are sent west to fight against the D-Day invasion, the narrative makes clear, as they sing the *Frundsberg Lied*,<sup>107</sup> that they are in good spirits. It is implied that the reason for their good spirits is that they know that the *pathos* of their quest is finally coming: „Die Soldaten ahnen, dass sie einem weltgeschichtlich bedeutsamen Kampf entgegenfahren“ (Gemeinschaftsarbeit 36). And while tragedy, too, has a similar moment of decision – Frye's crucial *Augenblick* – the narrative makes another attempt to raise the romance *mythos* as aegis over itself by evoking Yvonne, a hypothetical girl in Paris. This attempt at establishing a damsel in distress is, however, not decisive, nor even credible as both the official attitude of Frundsbergers toward women – as enshrined in stanza four of their song – and the fact that the women of occupied Paris would not all so readily play damsel to the Frundsberger's romance hero argue against this.

The narrative quickly oscillates toward tragedy again, and that in a manner reminiscent of Frye's first phase of tragedy. The comment that this is „kein Kampf mit englischen Soldaten, das ist ein Kampf gegen die Artillerie und gegen die Flieger des Engländers. Ist das noch ein Kampf?“ (Gemeinschaftsarbeit 38, 41), evokes the vision of the hero as a stag pulled down by wolves and revisits the *Kultur der Niederlage* precept that the enemy's victory is achieved through dishonourable methods. This echo of the arguments used 26 years earlier is another sign that the tragedy *mythos* is present in the text and is coming to the fore. This is symbolic of the final breaking of the Nazi romance narrative, although there are repeated attempts to relativize a tragic perspective such as when

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<sup>107</sup> The „Frundsberg-Lied“ (Gemeinschaftsarbeit 61) itself is quite dark and suggests both romance villainy and tragic *nemesis*: „Himmel, Hölle, Mord und Brand, hell blinkt unser Degen“ in the first stanza leaves unclear whether Frundsberg is perpetrating such crimes or fighting them; „unter schwarzen Fahnen“ in the third stanza is a clear evocation of the bearing of the colour classically associated with the romance villain; the fourth stanza casts women in a very un-damsel-like role, i.e. there to be used and accept being used, and finally there is the dedication to the historical Frundsberg in the last stanza, once again swerving away from an association with romance heroism.

In contrast to the „Frundsberg-Lied“, in the „Ballade der Frundsberger“, by SS Oschtz. W. Ruckmich (Gemeinschaftsarbeit 62), there are no statements smacking of romance villainy or that constitute provocations of *nemesis*. There is however a hint of the tragic in that it is clear that they are not winning their battles and that the „Schlachtengott“ has written their fate.

the narrative speaks of „die toten Deutschen“ but an „Unzahl der gefallenen Engländer“ (Gemeinschaftsarbeit 48). In such moments there is an attempt to evoke the third phase of tragedy as an unyielding romance perspective slowly bows to the inevitable tragedy. A further example of this in the text is the awarding of Ritterkreuz medals (Gemeinschaftsarbeit 51, 58): such an insistence on seeing victory in tragedy reached absurd proportions in the final days of the war in Berlin where medal ceremonies were carried out in abandoned subway cars beneath the collapsing city, a scene exploited for satirical effect in the film *Der Untergang*.

The narrative – while driven grudgingly toward a recognition of tragedy by evocations of the “victory in tragedy” phase – still resists a final tragedy *mythos* framing by attempting to foreground romance elements, for example, that of the villain. The villain for Nazi Germany reappears, after the reference to Jews torturing and killing German soldiers, in the form of a captured soldier from a Welsh Regiment (whose motto, ironically, is „ich dien“). His courageous readiness to speak German leads to his identification as a Jew and the attempt by his Frundsberg interrogators to cast him as a villain (Gemeinschaftsarbeit 53). However, rather than succeed in casting the hapless Jewish Welshman in this role, the narrative unwittingly undoes itself, for it is clear within the text that the Welsh soldier is at the mercy of the Frundsbergers and is helpless, hardly a threatening romance villain. In its backfiring, the scene suggests a major element of the tragedy *mythos*: *nemesis*.

The scene implicitly refers back to the previous attempt to establish the romance villain for the narrative, the likely fabricated scene of the Jewish captors killing their German captives near Buczacz, and both textual moments – descending as they do from the decision of the National Socialists to oppress and finally exterminate all those they labelled Jews, a decision in no way perceivable as good despite Rosenberg’s exhortation to insist on the “goodness” of these measures – are evidence that the narrative’s hero<sup>108</sup> has overstepped a decisive boundary. The order stretching over the “two kingdoms of the visible and invisible” that Frye cites does not have to be framed in religious or metaphysical terms, and the concept of “balance” that Frye evokes in

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<sup>108</sup> Whether the collective hero of the entire Frundsberg Division or, more widely conceived, Germany herself.

relation to this order suggests that there is a cause and effect mechanism in nature or reality. Literature's much-touted quest for truth suggests that what is being violated here is the truth. Both Frye and Nietzsche argued that moral transgressions were not the core of tragedy, and beyond the moral outrage over the treatment of the Jews stands the fact that "the Jew" could not be truthfully portrayed as a romance villain in the context of the Holocaust.

The very attempt to establish a romance *mythos* perspective, not only for the narrative of the Frundsberg Division, but for all of Germany, itself constitutes a transgression that irrevocably sets *nemesis* into motion. This supposition suggests that the tragedy *mythos* is not only coming into ascendance at the end of 1944 and beginning of 1945, when this account was written, but was, in fact, the ultimate narrative framework for the National Socialist experiment from the beginning.

The narrative of the Frundsberg Division acknowledges the withering away of a romance *mythos* perspective both explicitly and implicitly. In its summation of the fighting in Normandy, the writers of the *Gemeinschaftsarbeit* admit, „Als Ihr vom Osten hierher fuhret, hattet Ihr sie Euch gewiss anders vorgestellt. Vor allem wohl aber auch strahlender, sichtbarer den Erfolg in sich tragend“ (*Gemeinschaftsarbeit* 54). Here they explicitly refer to the success of the romance hero in his quest, realizing that a visible success is essential to upholding a romance *mythos* perspective and that such a visible success is not available in the narrative of the Frundsbergers. They do not wholly state that romance success is not possible, but by mentioning instead an 'invisible success' they implicitly offer, at best, the third phase of tragedy, i.e. victory in tragedy. This process is also evident in the comments following the savage, World-War-I-trench-warfare-like fighting around Höhe 112: „Als Eure Division den Kampfraum um die Höhe 112 verliess war sie unbezwungen vom Feind. Der Befehl rief Euch an einen neuen Ort, wo der Gegner einen neuen Einbruch versucht hatte, nachdem er an den Frundsbergern auf der Höhe 112 gescheitert war“ (*Gemeinschaftsarbeit* 57). While this may well be true, and Frundsberg did leave Höhe 112 *unbezwungen*, the reality is that Höhe 112 was lost and this statement represents another attempt to cling tenaciously to a romance perspective even in the face of the apparent tragedy that all the suffering and death of the young Frundsbergers on Höhe 112 was for nothing. Or, if not nothing, then, as the writers of the *Gemeinschaftsarbeit* state: „Doch da oben, über Avenay, Amayé, und Vieux steht das „Wäldchen der halben



Bäume“ als Denkmal für den Einsatz einer Division, die sich angesichts ihres zerberstenden Holzes in der Hölle feindlicher Materialüberlegenheit für alle Zeiten in die deutsche Kriegsgeschichte eingetragen hat, eingetragen mit jenem Namen, der vor Jahrhunderten schon einmal Hohes bedeutete: „FRUNDSBERG““ (Gemeinschaftsarbeit 57). Despite the dramatic capitalization of the division’s name, this attempt does not achieve its aim of maintaining a romance perspective by casting the courageous stand of the Frundsbergers as a victory, for that victory cannot help but be overshadowed by, and subsumed by, the larger tragedy implied by the very fact that – not a victory parade through the Brandenburger Tor, not a bronze statue, not a film, not even a stamp – but a lost, destroyed wood is to be the *Denkmal* to the young fighters of Frundsberg.

A similar attempt to read romance into events involving the Frundsberg Division occurs during the narration of the events at the church of St. Lambert, where Frundsberg was surrounded. A dramatic scene is set, and division commander Harmel is cast as a romance hero reminiscent of Frye’s description, including – through the setting – the attributes of divinity:

So schnell wie er gekommen, verstaubt, verdeckt, seit Tagen ohne Schlaf, so schnell stand SS-Oberführer Harmel am Altar der Kirche und sprach folgende klassische Worte: „Alles mal herhören! Alles, was von „Frundsberg“ ist und was sonst noch da ist, der kommt hierher! Wir greifen an, stossen durch! Nach dem alten Schlachtruf der Frundsberger: ‚Dran, drauf und durch!‘ (Gemeinschaftsarbeit 63).

And, as in romance, the Frundsbergers succeed – but their success is merely an escape, an escape enabling them to take part in the retreat. While escapes are part and parcel of the exciting obstacles a romance hero faces during the *agon* phase of the romance, and this event is thus not in itself a denial of a romance *mythos* perspective, the overall frame into which this narrative fits is not the upward movement of romance, but the downward movement of tragedy.

The inescapability of this movement leads the authors ever more toward tragedy, and their refusal to fully relinquish the romance *mythos* perspective leads them directly toward the “victory in tragedy” perspective of the third phase of tragedy – and to reach (surprisingly for an SS publication) for precisely the same ultimate manifestation of this perspective as Frye does: the Passion of Christ (Frye 220). In their

conclusion to the chapter on the fighting in France, the authors hearken back to the „Wäldchen der halben Bäume“ on Höhe 112 and, perhaps aware that their raising it to a *Denkmal* several pages earlier was not enough, write, „Und Erinnerung und Forderung bleibt für immer die Dornenkrone des ‚Wäldchen der halben Bäume‘“ (Gemeinschaftsarbeit 68). This explicit granting, to the collective hero of the Frundsberg Division, of the *Wäldchen* as a crown of thorns evokes the suffering of Jesus and equates it with that of the soldiers of Frundsberg. Not only does this imply that the crucifixion of Frundsberg is coming – a non-romance ending, and, to the unbelieving observer, an utter defeat – but also that some kind of resurrection will follow. Equally significant is the fact that the reference to Christ is an utterance in the barbarian discourse and represents an admission that the Christian tradition in Germany trumps the barbarian Germanic past, despite the fact that the SS built itself on laws and on *Verhaltenslehren* it claimed to have discovered in the barbarian Germanic past. Even a non-metaphysical reader of the Frundsberg account can only conclude that, in order to avoid the harsh realities governing the lives of the young Frundsberg soldiers, a vague Christian promise about the hereafter was all the authors could offer them. In other words, the conventional romance *mythos* perspective in the here-and-now is buried, the victory in tragedy is for all intents and purposes accepted, and what Frye calls the total central unifying myth of all the *mythoi* (Frye 192) is what is held out to Frundsberg as a consolation.<sup>109</sup>

One conversant with Frye's theories will notice that the terms he uses to arrange the *mythoi* into a central unifying myth are those he uses as the stages of the romance proper, and elsewhere he notes “the quest-romance is the search of the libido or desiring self for a fulfilment that will deliver it from the anxieties of reality but will still contain that reality” (Frye 193). In other words, since a conventional romance *mythos* trajectory is denied the Frundsbergers, and they are driven to accept a tragic *mythos* perspective, the explicit equating of them with Christ allows them to transcend the frame of any specific *mythos* and to share in the redemptive central unifying myth which suggests an ultimately successful romance quest, but one removed from the here and now – and one, as Frye asserts, explicitly Christian.

As the narrative of the Frundsbergers moves into the fighting in

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<sup>109</sup> The presence of this Christian turn in a Nazi text is testament to the wholesale turn to Christianity by many Germans at the end of the war and the early post-war years.

Holland, the “victory in tragedy” paradigm arises again and again, whether in the dramatic escape from the surrounded house (Gemeinschaftsarbeit 81), or in the nerves-of-steel retreat march through enemy lines (Gemeinschaftsarbeit 82-85). There are occasional attempts to re-establish the romance, for example with an evocation of romance villainy by blaming the war on the Allies with their love of their „reizenden Krieg“ but, even in this, the suggestion of *nemesis* is never far. As if in acknowledgement, the narrative turns to victory in tragedy statements even during the account of the actual victory over the 1<sup>st</sup> British Airborne Division, where one would expect an unequivocal use of the romance *mythos* perspective:

Die Frundsberger zeigten sich hier als die besseren Einzelkämpfer. Sie wurden nicht, wie in der Invasionsschlacht von der Masse des Materials erdrückt. Hier herrschte nicht das Spiel der seelenlose Materie, nicht die blinde Wut, die nach dem Scheitern von ungezählten Angriffen eine Armada von brüllenden Bombern heranholt, um die unbesiegten Männer in den Erdlöchern zu zerstampfen. (Gemeinschaftsarbeit 85)

The authors thus hearken back to the concepts at the core of a *Kultur der Niederlage*'s victory-in-tragedy perspective.

With this battle against the British airborne the *pathos* – the catastrophe in tragedy, the *encatastrophe* in romance – seems finally to be reached. Here romance and tragedy collide, allowing the *pathos* scene itself to become the decisive instance. The authors of the Gemeinschaftsarbeit evoke the revolutionary spirit of youth and claim, in full romance mode, „Ueber alle Gefährdung des eigenen Lebens hinweg trugen sie in sich das klare, unbestechliche Wissen um die Sicherheit des Sieges“ (Gemeinschaftsarbeit 90). They buttress this certainty of romance victory by quoting Ernst Jünger and by presenting pictures of British prisoners and a reproduction of a letter praising Frundsberg for its role in the defeat of the 1st British Airborne Division. But the reference to Jünger, „Und schnell würden die Männer zu Menschen, für die – nach einem Wort Ernst Jüngers – „die Waffen angesetzte Glieder und geformte Gesinnung“ sind“ (Gemeinschaftsarbeit 90), contains within it the romance-tragedy dichotomy: what might seem ideal for a romance hero, i.e. that one's weapons are extensions of one's limbs and mind, is actually tragic, for this reference evokes the image of a man become a living weapon and it contrasts with the fleeting but nonetheless

poignant references to the women that the young Frundsbergers should be loving (e.g. the *Mädel* mentioned early on, or Yvonne in Paris) and to simple pleasures like drinking coffee and eating chocolate (*Gemeinschaftsarbeit* 66). Moreover, the reference to Jünger explicitly begs the questions, *Where is he now?* and *What has he written lately?* The answers to these questions is that Jünger, the supposed role model soldier romance hero, was dishonourably discharged after the attempt on Hitler's life in July, and that his *Auf den Marmorklippen*, in 1939, was an allegorical criticism of the Nazi regime

This meta-textual irony does for this narrative as it did for Jünger's post-World War I texts, namely push them from the romance *mythos* to the tragedy *mythos*. In the narrative of the Frundsberg one can see the *iron* that is the source of tragic *nemesis* in several figures, but possibly the most interesting identification of an *iron* figure is suggested by the authors in the very last line of their narrative: „Ein Jahr ist zu Ende, doch der Krieg geht weiter.....“ (*Gemeinschaftsarbeit* 125) – in other words, the war itself is the *iron*. This is in keeping with Frye's noting of a tragic counterpart to the „benevolent withdrawing and returning figure” of comedy, namely the god who decrees the action of the tragedy (Frye 216). This god is, in fact, expressly described as writing the destiny of the Frundsberger in the *Ballade der Frundsberger*: „...dann schrieb der Schlachtgott ihr Geschick/auf weltentrückte Sterne“ (Ruckmich in *Gemeinschaftsarbeit* 62). The war god being referred to here in this implicit invocation of the barbarian Germanic past is Wotan. This reference to the *Schlachtgott* – taken together with the attempts to evoke and defend Wotan as part of the barbarian discourse in the pages of *Germanien*, and with Jung's argument that Wotan represents an archetypal psychological reality for Germans – is the organizing principle of the mythic tragic narrative that the Frundsbergers are living. As the narrator in *Auf den Marmorklippen* suggests, the willingness to turn toward *Gewalt* itself, to invite, or invoke the *Schlachtgott* is possibly the provocation of *nemesis* which begins the tragic narrative trajectory toward a Ragnarokian *Untergang*.

#### XII.1.1. The Text as Conclusion of the Cultural Archive of Texts Relevant to the Works of Howard and Jünger

This text is the last text of the cultural archive, relevant to the

texts of Howard and Jünger, to be considered in this dissertation. The extensive investigation of texts from the cultural archive has been necessary to trace the threads of the barbarian discourse in various manifestations from 1870 to 1945. The cultural archive has also been instrumental in allowing us to trace the development of archetypal and mythic national narratives, particularly in terms of demonstrating the narrative effects of a *Kultur der Niederlage*. The cultural archive has supported the close-reading of texts by Howard and Jünger by demonstrating the discursive and cultural embeddedness of those texts in a much wider historical framework. In the process, the idea that the “author” of a text is more than just the individual writer has been demonstrated.

In the end, we have seen how the barbarian discourse was given new impetus by World War I, but was decisively shaped by the psychological type of the cold persona and by national meta-narratives. Even in Howard’s writing, his utterances in the barbarian discourse wrestled with the tendency to fascism that arose in romance narrative frameworks. Jünger’s utterances in the barbarian discourse helped to fuel resentment against bourgeois civilization, but the subsequent control of that discourse by the SS pushed Germany and the world toward tragedy, which Jünger allegorically foresaw with *Auf den Marmorklippen*.

## **XIII. Conclusion: Post-War Reckonings**

### **XIII.1. Theoretical Conclusion**

#### XIII.1.1. The Function of Literature

As the lengthy introduction indicated – with its presentation of the theories being applied in this dissertation – this is a praxis-oriented dissertation whose main aim is not to interpret the work of Jünger and Howard by considering the interpretations of other scholars, but to interpret those texts with a methodological approach based on an analysis of a text's three layers of form in line with Jameson's concept of the political unconscious. The intent here is to present a repeatable method of textual analysis which demonstrates how the empirical establishment of the form of the texts in question leads to an interpretation not derived from earlier interpretations but often, as we have seen, supporting those interpretations with a formally grounded argument. The analyses are generally presented from the perspective of Jameson's third horizon of reading, where form is content, and where forms are structurally linked to earlier modes of production that co-exist with the dominant capitalist mode of production of the texts being considered. As Frye argues, the romance *mythos* is intimately connected with the feudal mode of production, and its use always hearkens back to this feudal sense of knightly loyalty. The *Neophantastik Schreibweise* is itself a product of the capitalist mode of production, wherein capitalism's goal to achieve complete hegemony both geographically and mentally is countered by the individual psychological need to posit entirely other realities ostensibly disconnected from our primary reality. The Fantasy genre itself, despite its medievalist origins, is a product of the capitalist mode of production and an implicit protest against its rationalistic and reified approach to the world and society.

As noted, this dissertation's approach is based on Jameson's observations that "'form' is apprehended as content" (Jameson 1994: 99) and that it is "possible to grasp such formal processes as sedimented content in their own right, as carrying ideological messages of their own, distinct from the ostensible or manifest contents of the works" (Jameson 1994: 99). The analysis presented throughout this dissertation has occurred primarily from a third horizon reading, with the proposal and

examination of three levels of form (*mythos*, mode of writing/*Schreibweise*, and genre). As we have seen, a consideration of these levels of form, particularly the first, has revealed political, social and ideological codings not apparent on a surface reading of the texts. Such intensive close readings, like those for *In Stablgewittern*, “Red Shadows”, *The Hour of the Dragon*, “A Elkins Never Surrenders” and *Auf den Marmorklippen* are set in their historical diachronic progression beside briefer analyses of other texts by Jünger and Howard and relevant texts from the cultural archive to highlight one or more discursive or formal elements that underline the ideological coding and cultural meaning yielded by a close reading of the central text being considered. The interrelationship of the texts from the cultural archive is thus emphasized in order to demonstrate the relevance of the texts chosen from the cultural archive to the over-all project of demonstrating how the formal aspects of texts develop in conjunction with social discourses and the on-going cultural revolution based on modes of production.

Finally, the aim of this dissertation has been to fully understand and implement the implications of the following observation: „Die mentale Kultur einer Gesellschaft mit literaturwissenschaftlichen Methoden zu erforschen heißt somit, das Gesamtsystem kulturell geprägter Werte, Normen, Weltanschauungen und Kollektivvorstellungen zu rekonstruieren, das sich in verdichteter Form in literarischen Texten, also der materialen Kultur, manifestiert“ (Nünning and Sommer 19). The project to reconstruct the cultural values, norms, world views and collective presuppositions of Germany and the United States in the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s by identifying the presence of these in their compressed state in the texts of Jünger and Howard has been an aim of this praxis-oriented dissertation in order to overcome the criticism that Gymnich notes, namely that *Literaturwissenschaft* is a *Wissenschaft* operating with theories of which no two come to the same conclusion about a text. By grounding the analysis of a text in empirically verifiable terms of form, it is hoped that this dissertation can help the discipline as a whole. The argument to support this goal is buttressed by this dissertation’s consideration of the function of literature, of the author role, of the barbarian discourse, of the three layers of form themselves, and finally through the meaning of the texts that becomes discernable with this approach.

### XIII.1.2. The Social Function of Literature

To put it most plainly, literature *does* have a social function. This function is to change society by exposing the reader to experiences beyond those that the reader personally lives. These experiences „[wirken] in mannigfaltiger Weise auf die Gesellschaft zurück[...], indem sie etwa zur Ausbildung neuer Wahrnehmungs-, Denk- und Empfindungsweisen beitragen“ (Gymnich & Nünning 2005b: 13). Vicariously experiencing the vitality and power of the barbarian Conan, or discovering Köppelsbleek with the narrator of *Auf den Marmorklippen*, lead to new perspectives on life – like questioning the value of civilization, in terms of Conan – and new ways of thinking and feeling – like daring to mentally oppose the *Gleichschaltung* of the Nazi regime. These effects are a function of the hierarchy of values that a text presents. While it is true that literary texts do not necessarily need to present value hierarchies at great variance from the dominant value hierarchies of their cultures, and thus may serve to reinforce hegemonic value hierarchies (Graves 2004b: 140), even in this they do represent a cultural change, even if the cultural change is toward thicker sedimentation of certain values. What literary texts do, whether revolutionary or reactionary, is to reveal something about the wishes and fears of a culture. These wishes and fears, and the manner in which they are revealed in a text, suggest the *Veränderungspotential* of a particular text, and thus of the culture it emerges from. The textual exploration of wishes and fears makes visible the boundaries of a culture and thus reveals the potential for change in the culture in question. This insight into the boundaries of a culture, Graves argues, is what should capture the particular attention of the cultural studies scholar (Graves 91-92). The interpretability of texts and their freedom to re-order value hierarchies and make visible the boundaries of a culture give the literary discourse, and thus literary criticism, a privileged position in our goal to understand culture as a whole. Graves underlines the legitimacy of the cultural studies paradigm in literary criticism when he writes: „Der literarische Diskurs bildet so mit seinen immer neuen Versuchen, das Imaginäre zum Ausdruck zu bringen, ein ständiges Experimentierfeld, das für die Gesellschaft von großer Bedeutung ist, weil es die vorherrschenden Realitätsvorstellungen in Frage zu stellen und so den kulturellen Wandel zu unterstützen vermag“ (Graves 2004b: 141).

This function of literature – to express the imaginary and to act as a permanent field of experimentation that yields challenges to the



reigning conceptions of reality and thus leads to cultural change – is one described by Zapf as a cultural ecological process. Zapf states: „Literatur erfüllt hier eine Aufgabe, die in dieser Weise nicht von anderen Diskursformen erfüllt werden kann, die aber von vitaler Bedeutung für die geistige Selbsterhaltung und fortbestehende Evolutionsfähigkeit der Gesamtkultur ist. Literatur hält ihre Produktivität lebendig, indem sie das kulturelle Gedächtnis in immer neuer Weise an das biophile Gedächtnis der menschlichen Gattung zurückbindet“ (Zapf 75). Literature fulfills a task that other forms of discourse cannot fulfill, and this is of vital importance to the whole culture’s ability to evolve. Literature’s function is to re-connect humanity’s cultural consciousness with our biophile consciousness: the correspondence between the human drive to unfold cognitive, technological and economic potential and the basic needs and desires that make up the principles of human life.

The ecological metaphor that Zapf thus applies to culture as a whole, and literature specifically, arises from Zapf’s argument about literature’s interdiscursive nature. Literature functions as an *Interdiskurs* through its „Zusammenführen des kulturell Getrennten“ which creates crises and turbulences that renew the cultural centre from the margins (Gymnich and Nünning 2005b: 19). This *kulturökologische Funktion* of literature manifests in its role as „Sensorium und symbolische Ausgleichsinstanz für kulturelle Fehlentwicklungen und Ungleichgewichte“ (Gymnich & Nünning 2005b: 19), a concept that leads Zapf to see literature in the light of the ecological Gaia hypothesis: „Eine weitere, wenn auch nicht von allen Ökologen in gleichem Maß geteilte Auffassung ist, dass das Gesamtsystem der belebten Natur eine inhärent *selbstregulierende Instanz* darstellt, die immer wieder eine Balance und ein Gleichgewicht zwischen den konfligierenden Energien und vielgestaltigen Formen herzustellen vermag, in denen sie sich realisiert“ (Zapf 62). Zapf’s use of the term balance in terms of literature as a whole gains support from Frye’s concept of balance. While Frye discussed this concept in terms of the tragedy *mythos* – that such a balance, an ‘invisible order’, was a natural phenomenon, and an act fundamentally disturbing this balance would provoke a counter-balancing movement – his whole cyclical theory of the narrative *mythoi* is an expression of such a balance that literature has a role in preserving.

### XIII.1.3. The Author-Role

This conception of literature functioning in such a natural, ecological manner – a part of the whole, as Nietzsche would say – flows logically into the concept of the author of a text as a transindividual subject, i.e. as a social manifestation. The problematic of the author has been an issue in literary criticism for some time when one considers, “To believe that a poem’s meaning is nothing more than an expression of the private experiences or intentions of its author is to commit a fundamental error of interpretation the New Critics call the **Intentional Fallacy**” (Bressler 41). New Historicism’s and cultural poetics’ view that “a text becomes a battleground of competing ideas among the author, society, customs, institutions, and social practices that are all eventually negotiated by the author and the reader and influenced by each contributor’s episteme” (Bressler 244), alongside Kristeva’s view of a text as a network of quotations, and Bakhtin’s polyphonic model all point to a focus on the narrator of a text rather than the writer of the text. Foucault himself insists on a more fluid, ecological approach to the author-concept when he argues: „[...] der Autor geht dem Werk nicht voraus. Es ist ein bestimmtes funktionelles Prinzip, durch das man in unserer Kultur begrenzt, ausschließt, auswählt, selegiert: kurz, das Prinzip, durch das man der freien Zirkulation, der freien Manipulation, der freien Komposition, Dekomposition und Rekomposition der Fiktion Fesseln anlegt“ (Foucault 2001: 1029-1030). An author does not precede a text; Foucault’s implication is that the text creates the author for it is the unique space where social polyphony manifests. Foucault argues that the term ‘author’ is used as limiting tool by society, restricting the free circulation and the free manipulation of a text.

### XIII.1.3.1. The Author-Role and Ernst Jünger

To apply this directly to the writers under consideration, Fröschle and Mottel’s arguments about Jünger’s political and prophetic roles strongly suggest that the author of the texts bearing Jünger’s name is really the *Frontsoldat* generation, the Modernist movement and voices and echoes in German culture going back to German Romanticism, and even farther back to the barbarian Germanic heritage. Jünger’s life and thought reflected this tension between the author-as-individual and the society-as-author. In fact, Hagestedt notes that Jünger’s life-long strategy was „in der Gesellschaft so zu handeln als ob man nicht zu ihr gehörte“

(Hagestedt 178), while Jünger expressed the contradiction by saying, „der Autor lebt im Volk, im Staat, in der Gesellschaft seiner Zeit und zugleich einsam im Walde, auf Patmos, im Sinai“ (Jünger in Hagestedt 178). Significantly, for this dialectical tension, it cannot be overlooked that the two geographical locations specified in this quote re-affirm Jünger’s claim to *poeta vates* by alluding to New Testament and Old Testament prophets. In other words, the prophet only gains recognition and significance by having a society to prophesy to, and prophecy itself explicitly denies personal creativity and insists on collective destiny.

### XIII.1.3.2. The Author-Role and Robert E. Howard

The texts bearing Howard’s name suggest, through his suicide – following the statement by Foucault that texts can kill their authors –, that they expressed a collective view, that of the cold persona. In fact, Howard is quoted as saying,

“I don’t want to live to be old. I want to die when my time comes, quickly and suddenly, in the full tide of my strength and health.” A month later, after watching his invalid mother slip into her terminal coma, Howard put a bullet through his brain. (Wagner 289)

With this act, the writer of the Conan stories follows the trajectory indicated by Theweleit wherein the armoured man, the cold persona to use Lethen’s term, has adopted his armour partially due to the physical discipline of the father, but also – and in Howard’s case in large part – due to the over-whelming smothering affection of the mother that hampered the creation of self-preserving boundaries. His insistence on health and strength, hallmarks of the cold persona, suggests that Howard’s suicide was the expression of a collective psychological state, just as the texts bearing his name are also the expression of that collective psychological state. This interpretation is strengthened by the fact that Howard wrote in a letter shortly before his death that his ability to write of Conan may well be over (Howard in Van Hise 2001: 32), and only several months later he makes his fateful decision to take his life. In other words, with the end of his ability to write of the character that epitomizes the cold persona, the writer Howard had come to the end of his usefulness in terms of expressing this collective state.

### XIII.1.4. Barbarian Discourse

The actual authoring of texts can be ascribed to the discourses – the polyphony of social voices – that converge within a text. A discourse which had a decisive role in shaping and expressing the texts of Jünger and Howard was the barbarian discourse. While the barbarian discourse exists in every culture – at least since the ancient Greeks in European culture – this dissertation does not just assume the theoretical existence of a discourse centred on the barbarian, but a very real discourse in both Germany and the United States of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Every time the figure of the barbarian is brought into any discussion, we can speak of the occurrence as an utterance in an on-going cultural discourse about the barbarian. In fact, one can argue that each reference to the barbarian is evidence of the barbarian as a *Gestalt* looming over a culture, not always acknowledged but always there. The opposite pole of this *Gestalt* in the discourse which calls him forth is that of the civilized man. This *Gestalt* of the civilized man, although always implicitly present, was brought prominently into the barbarian discourse during World War I with some questioning his very existence or suggesting that he was simply the barbarian in disguise. Jünger's *Arbeiter Gestalt* is an attempt to acknowledge this interrelationship and propose a modern synthesis of the two.

The theme of barbarism versus civilization is a recurring one in Howard's texts, as we have seen in texts like "The Phoenix on the Sword" or *The Hour of the Dragon*. As we have also seen, the barbarian, particularly his Dionysian manifestation, is a figure in Jünger's texts *Das Abenteuerliche Herz* and *In Stahlgewittern*, among others. For Howard, the barbarian remains a positive value in and of itself, while Jünger tries to incorporate the positive barbarian in the *Gestalt* of the *Arbeiter*. This is an expression of the *Kultur der Niederlage* dynamic in which the loser attempts to learn from the winner, for the *Materialschlacht* of World War I made clear that the martial Germanic barbarian virtues were not enough to overcome the numerical and material superiority of the Allies. This 1932 attempt by Jünger to sublimate the barbarian into the worker prefigured the unleashing of negative barbarian attributes – violence and cruelty – by the NS regime that led to *Auf den Marmorklippen*'s decisive turning away from the barbarian. Significantly, this attempt to merge the figures of the barbarian and the worker is also present in Howard's Conan character, for Howard expressly stated that his barbarian was an amalgam of workers that he had known.

Howard retained a personal identification with the barbarian until the end – which his suicide note substantiates – but for Jünger the barbarian was twisted by the NS regime’s control of the barbarian discourse to justify a war the likes of which the world had never seen. This use of the barbarian discourse was an aspect of the *Kultur der Niederlage* dynamic that aims at a national revanche and promises a romance *mythos* re-writing of the lost war. The culmination of this dynamic in World War II was foreshadowed the same year that Jünger wrote *Der Arbeiter* by statements brimming with archetypal romance perspectives twinned with barbarian Germanic martial values, like this one, for example, by Jonas Lesser, who styled himself a voice for German youth: „Viel Jugend bejaht den Krieg aus Grundsatz und Weltanschauung, bejaht ihn mit einer romantischen Verzückung, in hohen und höchsten Tönen, als etwas Hehres und Heiliges, fast der Religion gleich“ (in Prümm 1976: 140). *Auf den Marmorklippen* represents Jünger’s acknowledgement that this is what happened, and he goes on to present this unpredictable barbarism in *Heliopolis* as well.

In that book he suggests three solutions to the problem of the corruption of the barbarian. Firstly, through the figure of Pater Foelix, he points away from barbarian myth to established religion, in particular the Christianity that so many Germans – intellectuals and others – were returning to in the face of the catastrophe of the war and its aftermath. Secondly, he points away from the barbarian – or suggests a more thorough sublimation of this vital primal force – to the technology that he had already praised in *Der Arbeiter*, and this is symbolized by the rocket that looms large in the book. Finally, the text hearkens back to the ritual Dionysian intoxication associated with the barbarian, and suggests the inner freedom, wisdom, and relaxation that comes through drugs. This is a path that Jünger would pursue in the decades following the war.

Howard’s utterances in the barbarian discourse, while echoing statements made throughout the history of civilized cultures, were expressive of the disillusionment with civilization following World War I. Statements he made – like, “That’s why I yearn for the days of the early frontier, where men were more truly free than at any other time or place in the history of the world, since man first began to draw unto himself the self-forged chainings of civilization” (Howard in Barrett 2011: 49) – evoke the freedom of the barbarian and an unforgiving critique of civilization. One can make a strong link between the capitalist mode of

production – and its direct manifestation in the Texas of the 1920s – to such sentiments on Howard’s part: “The oil of the 1920s introduced the culture of the 1920s, which on a capitalist/business level introduced the erosion of personal and community autonomy, which Robert E. Howard despised above all else” (McCollum 2001: 9). This was, in effect, a dynamic toward the *Totale Mobilmachung* Jünger described in *Der Arbeiter*, and this new phase of the capitalist mode of production consisted of the mobilizing of national economic forces, including people. In fact, Novalyne Price, Howard’s almost-girlfriend, was certain that Howard’s suicide was his final, definitive rejection of his time when she wrote, “he didn’t want to live in what he felt was a decaying, rotten civilization” (in *Romeo*: 3). *Almuric*, a text left uncompleted by Howard’s suicide in June of 1936, but anonymously completed and published in 1939, presents some of the most unequivocal utterances in the barbarian discourse in favour of the barbarian. Here, the romance protagonist, Esau Cairn, in his romance role as representative of the values of the reader, offers an unabashed pro-barbarian view of life. The unsuitability of this ethic for the 1930s setting of the story leads Cairn to be transported to an alien planet to live out this barbarian fantasy. Cairn is yet another embodiment of the *kalte persona* in Howard’s work, and again functions as an expression of the cynicism toward civilization felt by the post-war generations on both sides of the Atlantic. In the context of Howard’s suicide, *Almuric* suggests that the barbarian ethic cannot be lived in the capitalist mode of production, and will thus tend toward the aggressive fascism that Howard took pains to distance his barbarian characters from. His repeated use of the plot device of the overthrowing of his absolutist barbarian kings – and his statement in a letter to a fan that Conan the Cimmerian, would, in the course of his career as King of Aquilonia, be “forced into wars of aggression” (Howard 1967: 19) – is an admission that the balancing act between a barbarian *Weltanschauung* and fascism is a precarious one.

After World War II, the barbarian discourse, more muted now due to the phenomena described above, was dominated by utterances presenting a more differentiated view of the barbarian in general, and of the Germanic tribes specifically. Fischer-Fabian, whose early view of the Germanic barbarian was taught to him by Nazi educators, came to a more complete picture than the one promoted by the SS:

Und was die Germanen auch nicht waren: eine Kriegerkaste.  
Sie waren keine säbelrasselnden und schwerterklirrenden

Heroen, keine Berufskrieger, die nur Beute im Sinn hatten, sie waren, und das ist nicht recht betont worden, in erster Linie Bauern, und bei den vielen Kämpfen, die sie ausgefochten haben, ging es letztlich um so »einfache« Dinge wie Äcker für ihr Korn und Weiden für ihr Vieh.

Wer ihre Geschichte oberflächlich betrachtet, hat den Eindruck, es handele sich hier um reine Kriegsgeschichte, um eine ununterbrochenen Kette von Fehden, Beutefahren, Schlachten, Kämpfen, Heerzügen, Wanderungen. Das aber wäre genauso, als wolle man eine Ebene nach gelegentlich aus ihr herausragenden Hügeln beurteilen. Diese Fehleinschätzung liegt daran, daß es für Historiker dankbarer ist, über die sogenannten großen Zeiten, und das sind kriegerische Zeiten, zu berichten als über Epochen, in denen tiefer Friede herrschte und deshalb nichts Dramatisches, nichts Berichtenswertes geschah. (Fischer-Fabian 200)

Significantly, while the barbarian discourse in Germany after World War II was fueled by the quest to correct the skewed view of “the primal German soul” by people like Fischer-Fabian and Wolfram, in the United States a resurgence of the figure of the barbarian corresponded to major wars the United States embarked on. The first major popular culture revival of Howard’s Conan character – who has risen to be the primary identification figure with the term ‘barbarian’ in popular American consciousness – was during the first Howard “boom” in the 1960s, i.e. the time of the Vietnam War. The second Howard boom, that of the early 2000s, corresponds to the Iraq/Afghanistan wars. In both cases, both positive and negative valuing of the barbarian are in play, as the 1960s counter-culture also identified with positive barbarian traits, and the troubled American public of post-9/11, seeing its freedoms disappear under legislation like the Patriot Act, identified with the unfettered freedom the barbarian represented.

### XIII.1.5. The Three Layers of Form

Such political and cultural insights are made possible by the formal approach to literature emphasized by Fredric Jameson’s political unconscious theory. This dissertation has attempted to unravel the confusion of formal terms by positing three layers of form to every text.

More significantly, this dissertation has argued that these formal “choices” are to a large degree a function of discursive elements and national meta-narratives that are greater than an individual author’s choosing. This idea is current in literary criticism when one considers Astrid Erll’s explanation of „der *poiesis* des kollektiven Gedächtnisses“, particularly her explanation of how a remembered event is reconstructed using „kulturell verfügbare Plots“ (Erll 118-119). Such culturally pre-existing patterns for narrative structure Frye describes as *mythoi*, which is the first layer of form considered in this dissertation. Frye argues that “The structural principles of literature, similarly, are to be derived from archetypal and anagogic criticism, the only kinds that assume a larger context of literature as a whole. [...] Hence the structural principles of literature are as closely related to mythology and comparative religion as those of painting are to geometry” (Frye 133-137). By citing mythology and religion, Frye is echoing the idea that narrative patterns deeply anchored within human consciousness are the base form of all narrative structures.

Frye’s archetypal theory of mythic narrative patterns is conceived by him as a spectrum, where each *mythos* is made up of six phases. The seeming resultant pigeonholing of a text into one of 24 boxes provided by Frye must be contrasted with Frye’s insistence that this spectrum of mythic patterns allows for the limitless variation of literature, since it functions precisely as the colour spectrum does, where one colour blends into another. Frye suggests that each phase can be sub-divided into ever more nuanced expressions. That there are, however, four basic mythic approaches to patterning narrative – comedy, romance, tragedy and irony/satire – is the core of Frye’s theory.

Jameson cites two major difficulties with Frye’s approach – and relates them to parallel issues in the approaches of Propp, Lévi-Strauss and Greimas. On the one hand, Jameson questions Frye’s easy equation of mythology and religion – “Frye has projected the later categories of religion – the ideology of centralized and hieratic power societies – back onto myth, which is rather the discourse of decentered, magic-oriented tribal social formations” (Jameson 1994: 113) – and on the other, Jameson raises concerns with the make-up of Frye’s narrative *mythoi*. Frye provides elements of the internal structural dynamic of each *mythos*, be it the grammatical “syntax” of its narrative – as in the sequence of *agon*, *pathos*, *sparagmos*, *anagnorisis* in romance – or, to adapt terms Greimas developed from Propp’s functions (Greimas 111), the *actors* and *actants* of



the narrative. In terms of Greimas' theory, Frye's chess piece analogy of romance character roles, for example, can be equated to the actants, where actors like the Black God and Songa in Howard's "Red Shadows" manifest as the same actant, the black king. Jameson remarks "Thus paradoxically, what has been loosely called the priority of narrative was at first staged – in narrative analysis proper, in Lévi-Strauss, in Propp and Greimas's fertile and inaugural rewriting of Propp, and then later in a host of small studies, culminating in the comprehensive and monumental *Maupassant* – as a *reduction* of a properly narrative surface (myth, fairy tale, short story) to a complex interaction of cognitive traits. Narrative is thereby triumphantly demonstrated to be a form of thinking, but at a heavy price, namely, its rewriting, reduction or transformation back into abstract thinking and its tokens or counters" (Jameson 1994: xi). This dissertation does not fully support Jameson's central criticisms of Lévi-Strauss, Greimas, Propp and Frye: "both the insufficient formalization of the model (its anthropomorphic traces) and the irreversibility it attributes to its functions are different aspects of the same basic error, namely to have rewritten the primary narratives *in terms of another narrative*, rather than in terms of a synchronic system. Paradoxically, in this Propp rejoins Frye, whose "method" also amounts to the rewriting of a body of varied texts in the form of a single master narrative" (Jameson 1994: 122). The master narrative that Jameson refers to, in terms of Frye, is that of his archetypal, cyclical, and seasonal metaphor that is linked to Christianity through an over-arching romance that unites all the *mythoi*. Jameson, however, provides the "remedy" for this re-writing of a text in terms of another narrative by providing a synchronic Marxist analytical framework: that of the three horizons of reading of the political unconscious. The resulting analyses of the texts under consideration on the one hand justify the applicability of the mythic, Christian-romance-influenced master narrative to them, as they address that master narrative explicitly, and on the other hand justify the applicability of Marxist terms of analysis as the texts are cultural products of a time permeated by the concepts of Marxism. In fact, the analyses demonstrate – by foregrounding the texts' interrelationship with political and cultural events – Marxism's untranscendable horizon of understanding: history.

Practically, the dissertation approaches the texts in question from the perspective of Jameson's third horizon of reading – that of the window on the on-going cultural revolution – by accenting the first layer of form, the mythic. This is done because it is the mythic layer that is

most strongly influenced by the big-picture cultural revolution of the modes of production. In the time frame under consideration, the state capitalism required by World War I leads to multi-national capitalism and the mythic layer of narrative is decisively affected by this transition and its differing national applications. In Germany, this transition is expressed through a tragic *Kultur der Niederlage*, while it is expressed in terms of romance in an America that became the world's leading economy because of the war. This national romance – and the economic significance of Howard's native Texas – allowed his Southern society to fully emerge from the *Kultur der Niederlage* that had dominated it since 1865. We see this direct application of social and political realities on the mythic layer of form of the texts of Jünger and Howard.

Fischer characterizes Jünger's work in terms of an archetypal romance *mythos* perspective acting against the *mythos* of irony/satire. She notes :

Karl Heinz Bohrer nennt daher sein Werk eine Art Endpunkt der spekulativen Romantik. Mit seinen romantischen Vorgängern teilt Jünger zwar die Auflehnung gegen die Verendlichung des Subjekts in der Welt der Zwecke, seine gesellschaftliche und seine Selbstentfremdung. Doch setzt er an die Leerstelle nicht deren „ironische“ Thematisierung, die indirekt zu sagen hätte, was direkt nicht zu sagen ist, sondern das Ausdrückliche, die „Tat“: In der Form des Abenteurers ist sie ein Protest gegen die „Konservierung und Sterilisierung des Seienden“, die ihrerseits die „kosmische Bestimmung des Lebens“ zwischen Zeugung und Tod zu zersetzen sucht. (Fischer 88)

Jünger seeks to respond to social phenomena and discourses that suggest an archetypally ironic reality with the act, with adventure. Against the alienating social phenomena ushered in by the capitalist mode of production, he seeks a primal, cosmic reaffirmation of life in a romance *mythos* perspective. Jünger's insistence on romance despite the ironic cultural narratives and discourses of his time has led a critic like Bullock to suggest that one should read Jünger's texts as if they were – unintentional – narratives of the ironic *mythos*: “The understanding of that distance [*i.e. of the writer Jünger from the social roles ascribed to him*] might justify our reframing or rereading the most disturbing of what appear his ideological postures as a mode of irony – not irony of tone that we hear, but one that we see as a pattern of contrasts in his observations of his

times, and of the modernity that he grapples with so provocatively” (Bullock 57). At the end of his life, Jünger underlined how he existed in a field of mythic tension between two of his favourite authors, Ariosto and Cervantes. Ariosto, whose *Orlando Furioso* is considered by many the ultimate exemplar of romance, versus the satirist who aimed directly at Ariosto, in particular, in a satirical attack on the romance, is a subtext to Jünger’s texts, and his admitted insistence as a youth on overlooking the ironic and satiric in the figure of Don Quixote to focus on the heroic and the romantic shows to what extent his inner *Drang* to romance collided with the ironic and satiric aspects of his reality, deflecting his texts to the mythic spaces between them – first to the comic, and then to the tragic. In this, his texts demonstrate the effect of the *Kultur der Niederlage* on the national psyche, and thus on the individual psyche. Schivelbusch explains the psychological process behind the mythic first layer of form of Jünger’s texts when he describes the psychological reaction to the loss of World War I:

Die frische Niederlage in Beziehung zu den »Klassikern« des Verlierens zu setzen eröffnet eine doppelte Perspektive von Sinn und Trost. Einmal die Ehre, in eine tragisch-heroische Ahnenreihe einzutreten. Und zum anderen die Lektion, daß Niederlagen auch ihre Vorteile haben. Denn natürlich werden nur solche historische Zusammenbrüche beschworen die Wendepunkte zu erneutem Aufschwung darstellten. (Schivelbusch 43)

The hope of national renewal that Schivelbusch cites here was Jünger’s early motivator, and the destroying of that hope by the NS regime leads to the tragic narrative meditations on this process in both 1939’s *Auf den Marmorklippen* and 1949’s *Heliopolis*.

As far as Howard goes, the romance narrative paradigm dominated the American pulp fiction industry. Howard’s own initial embrace of this *mythos* is explained to some extent by the South’s own *Kultur der Niederlage*, which drew heavily on Scott’s romances, a culture Howard explicitly identified with when he won a writing contest – “What the Nation Owes the South” – when still in high school (Howard 2006b: 40). The mass produced pulps themselves were given a boost by the capitalist expansion in the U.S. brought on by World War I, involvement in which was driven by the first Southern President since the Civil War – a significant factor, as argued by Schivelbusch. The pulps were reaching an audience also affected by the *Verhaltenslehre der Kälte* that permeated

Western society after WW I, and Howard fed the hunger for the romance *mythos* over and over, by serving the masses what they wanted (or were told they wanted by the *Kulturindustrie*): the *kalte persona* as hero. In this we see how national and international discursive currents are decisive in the mythic form – and the articulation of those forms – of Howard's texts.

The second layer of form, the mode of writing that further shapes and defines a text's basic mythic structure, also shows, through the texts of Howard and Jünger, the influence of major discursive currents. In the texts of both writers we see a transition from, or an oscillation between, the *Phantastik* and *Neophantastik* modes of writing. This transition in the second layer of form coincides with, or produces, the establishment of a new manifestation within the third layer of form, the sister genres of Fantasy and Science Fiction that decisively enter popular culture in the 1920s and 1930s. In fact, the *Neophantastik Schreibweise* is necessary to establish the Fantasy genre.<sup>110</sup> Jünger's *Auf den Marmorklippen* demonstrates how a politically-motivated oscillation between the *Phantastik* and the *Neophantastik Schreibweisen* privileges, if not determines, the adoption of fantasy as that text's third layer of form.

The rise of the *Neophantastik* mode is apprehendable from a third horizon, political unconscious perspective on the era's cultural revolution which was characterized by the expansion of the capitalist mode of production in the early twentieth century. Key here is what Jameson calls capitalism's hegemonic aim to colonize both the last areas of the globe outside of capitalism's reach and the human mind itself. The *Neophantastik* mode arises precisely at this time as it represents the need to escape the inescapable hegemony of capitalism by the only way possible – by positing an utterly different reality. These new realities can be shaped through memories of previous modes of production – like feudalism – or anticipations of future ones. The medievalist nostalgia for feudalism is translated into a convention of the Fantasy genre, the medieval setting of fantasy texts, while utopian and dystopian visions of modes of production beyond the capitalism of the writer's reality form the settings of the science fiction genre.

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<sup>110</sup> This dissertation's tendency to prefer the term *Schreibweise* to mode is attributable to the fact that Lachmann's conception of the *Schreibweise* is based on textual expression arising from possibilities in language itself (see her exposition on terms like fancy, conceit, imaginatio, etc.), whereas Frye's concept of mode, for example, accents the textual manifestations of character possibilities.

Not only the second layer of form is decisive in establishing these new genres, but the first layer as well. Tolkien states as much when he writes – using his superseded nomenclature for the Fantasy genre:

But the ‘consolation’ of fairy-tales has another aspect than the imaginative satisfaction of ancient desires. Far more important is the Consolation of the Happy Ending. Almost I would venture to assert that all complete fairy-stories must have it. At least I would say that Tragedy is the true form of Drama, its highest function; but the opposite is true of Fairy-story. Since we do not appear to possess a word that expresses this opposite – I will call it *Eucatastrophe*. The *eucatastrophic* tale is the true form of fairy-tale and its highest function. (Tolkien 60)

In arguing this, and by citing the difference to the outcome of tragedy, Tolkien is reflecting the fact that the majority of works in the Fantasy genre are archetypal romance *mythos* stories. The *eucatastrophe* that he writes of here is the *anagnorisis* – particularly the unequivocal *anagnorisis* of a third phase of romance narrative. Combining Tolkien’s argument with the one just made about the second layer of form suggests that a Fantasy genre narrative requires a mythic romance pattern as its first layer of form and the *Neophantastik Schreibweise*. While it is possible to write comic, satiric and tragic fantasy narratives, the genre is most archetypally successful with the romance *mythos* as its basic form. This point suggests that *Auf den Marmorklippen*, with its tragedy *mythos* structure, repeatedly violates the conventions of fantasy *because* its foundation is not stable enough without the romance underpinnings. Howard’s fantasy stories, with their faithful romance *mythos* first layers of form, and their use of the *Neophantastik*, are entirely true to the conventions of the genre.

Thus, the function of fantasy demonstrates *Veränderungspotential*. Instead of being complicit in capitalism’s hegemony in a *Vergnügtsein ist Einverständnis* sense, works like Howard’s Conan tales challenge received hierarchies of value that include the faith in the very concept of “civilization”, and negative valuations of the African, while Jünger’s *Auf den Marmorklippen* is a significant argument for the ability of fantasy to challenge tyranny. While the Fantasy genre’s cloak of the *Neophantastik* opens it up to the charge of offering a sort of hiding place rather than being a textual site of open rebellion, it needs to be considered that the firm establishment of the genre in the 1930s is part of that era’s increasing movement toward state control and a reduction in possibilities

for a true manifestation of personal freedom (if one takes the barbarian as the epitome of the free man). The desire to escape the prison of hegemonic industrial capitalism, which Tolkien argues fantasy expresses, gives an indication of the changes that fantasy can effect when its aesthetic experience has transferred such desires to the reader in the manner Fluck describes.

### **XIII.2. Coda: *Heliopolis***

Finally, the ultimate purpose of this dissertation's approach to interpreting the meaning of the texts of Howard and Jünger in a way that is grounded in their formal aspects is to shed light on the time that these texts emerge from and are embedded in. Jünger's *Heliopolis* of 1949 is an appropriate coda to this dissertation's analysis because the book itself hints that it is a sequel to *Auf den Marmorclippen* and that it therefore functions as Jünger's reckoning with past mistakes. Before we delve into the text itself, it must be noted that the text is an expression of a renewed, or continued, *Kultur der Niederlage* in Germany and also of Jünger's philosophy and practice of understanding the world.

#### XIII.2.1. Heliopolis: Introduction

Segeberg identifies a third phase of the utopic in Jünger's oeuvre beginning after World War II, and explicitly identifies it as being of the science fiction genre when he categorizes it as „die technischnaturwissenschaftliche *Science Fiction* der Zeit nach 1945“ (Segeberg 2004: 403). Berggötz observes that the *Kultur der Niederlage* dynamic of Weimar Germany continues in Germany after 1945 (Berggötz 57). It is as part of this dynamic that Jünger continues his aesthetic and philosophical – and metaphysical – approach to writing that Fischer describes as a “meeting”:

[...] die Begegnung selbst ist immer eine heftige, dem Kampf vergleichbare: „Jedes unserer Worte“ solle eine „neue Berührung der Idee“ sein. Die Sprache begleite uns dabei „auf dem Marsch“ und verlange „eine neue Entfaltung bei jedem Gefecht“. Ziel des Angriffs ist ein „Kern“, ein Inneres, das „die regenbogenfarbige haut der Welt“ jedoch nicht kampflos preisgibt. Und so ist auch die köstlichste Beute des

Jägers die am Wesen. (Fischer 87)

In quoting Jünger's martial language, Fischer argues for the essential martial romance hero perspective that Jünger brings to his art in his attempt to solve the riddle of the Higher Order of Life (Fischer 92). This approach leads him to a crystalline kind of thinking. Jünger's art is then a solution of the modern dilemma, for the crystalline thinking becomes the goal of the artistic process: the ability to see the depth in the surface. Segeberg quotes Jünger as desiring to read upon reality the "runes" of a deeper language of being. The idea that a language, a meaning, is engraved on – or in – reality is coupled with Jünger's need to look upon the Earth from – above with a cosmic vision in order to see the silent clockwork and to express it in a language that does not distort it. Segeberg specifies that Jünger attempts this through a literature marked by „eine ganz neue Art der präzisen, sachlichen Schilderung“ (Segeberg 1995: 104) which focusses on the pain associated with an *Arbeiter*-world to find, through a photographic process, proof of a metaphysical substructure which shows that the current order of the world is the basis from which a new order can evolve. This, argues Segeberg, represents Jünger's metaphysical „Kommandohöhe“ from which he can observe the transformation with an apocalyptic vision, for, „Die Logik, die Mathematik und die Kälte des Vorgangs sind außerordentlich und er ist der Bewunderung wert; man ahnt, daß das Spiel zu fein und zu folgerichtig ist, um von Menschen erdacht worden zu sein“ (Segeberg 1995: 104). Jünger, like Jameson, cannot accept the absence of a teleology guiding History – he hopes to discover a metaphysical substructure from this *Kommandohöhe* as he gazes with his apocalyptic vision. The linkage between Jünger's linguistic attempt to discover this metaphysical substructure and the first layer of form is suggested by Frye's naming of this layer of form *mythoi*. These mythic narrative structures may represent the only metaphysical substructure to reality that can be proven to exist. We can see, and we have seen, that broad strokes of history ARE affected by narrative framing and the concomitant changes to a culture's hierarchy of values.

### XIII.2.2. Close-Reading of *Heliopolis* as Re-affirmation of Theoretical Conclusion

As noted, this text hints that it is a sequel to *Auf den*

*Marmorklippen* and, in this capacity, embarks on a reckoning with past mistakes that include the metaphysics of pain that Jünger promoted throughout the 1920s and 1930s, the war-as-Eros perspective of his generation, and the Nietzschean impulse to the Superman. Besides addressing these issues directly, the novel also accomplishes this reckoning through its three layers of form, its meditations on class, the barbarian discourse and Christianity. The book also demonstrates how Jünger's *Schreiblehre* is congruent with the text's layers of form. Most significantly, a central feature of the text's reckoning with past mistakes is the text's foregrounding of its central dilemma: an oscillation between transcendence and engagement.

The text presents itself as a sequel to *Auf den Marmorklippen* through the return of the symbolically significant characters Fortunio and Nigromontan(us), and the strong suggestion that the city of Heliopolis is, or is near, Große Marina. Fortunio makes his reappearance in *Heliopolis* in the same way he appeared in *Auf den Marmorklippen*: he is a character who is spoken of by others, who does not appear directly in the action of the novel, and whose adventures related by others involve going into places of great danger and mystery to bring back news for those who will follow. In both novels, Fortunio's adventures are highly symbolic: he enters the realm of the Oberförster and returns with a map to guide the next ones to challenge this tyranny; in *Heliopolis* Fortunio is said to have climbed crystal towers in a region of the Caucasus where the sharp light and shadows offer a metaphysical lesson in mortality and meaning which has driven many mad. This is significant for it ties to Jünger's goal as a writer to develop a crystalline vision and way of thinking. Fortunio is also the one who helped the Bergrat – himself a mysterious character who had „Verbindung mit dem Schatz jenseits der Hesperiden und Kenntnis kosmischer Fäden, wie sie nur wenigen gegeben war“ (Jünger 1998b: 179) – to map out the labyrinth on the Pagos, a stronghold of the Prokonsul (Jünger 1998b: 180). Nigromontanus returns from being the legendary source of magical items, like his mirror, to being the teacher of the Bergrat and the main character, Lucius de Geer. Building on the associations Jünger established with this character in 1939, in the opening conversation between de Geer and the Bergrat in *Heliopolis*, we are told that Nigromontanus taught his students that the universe is a multiplicity of realities like a skin that can be cut in many places to many varying depths, and that our world is only one such cut. This, too, is a symbolic



reference to the kind of vision and thinking Segeberg tells us Jünger strove for, and it is explicitly referred to as „Nigromontanus’ Lehre von den Oberflächen“ (Jünger 1998b: 19). As the Bergrat relates the story of Fortunio’s climb, at one point he begins to quote Fortunio directly, and in this quotation Fortunio suddenly remembers his childhood in Große Marina, and it is not clear if it was destroyed in the *Feuerschläge* and was rebuilt as Heliopolis or is simply elsewhere in the setting (Jünger 1998b: 24). Finally, Jünger makes the sequel-nature of the text unmistakable when the narrator tells us, „Man traf sich dann im kleinen Jagdsalon, über dessen Eingang die Inschrift drohte: »Béhemot et Léviathan existent.« Ein Bild des Oberförsters im grünen, mit goldenen Ilexblättern bestickten Frack und Trophäen aus den Gebirgen, Wäldern und Meeren jenseits der Hesperiden schmückten ihn“ (Jünger 1998b: 37).

The metaphysics of pain that Jünger developed in *Der Kampf als inneres Erlebnis*, *Das Abenteuerliche Herz* and *Der Arbeiter*, among other texts, is questioned in the pages of *Heliopolis*. When Lucius asks the Bergrat whether beauty is – given Nigromontanus’ teaching of the world as one of many cuts in the skin of the universe – only the result of a wound, the Bergrat responds that that is the way to a metaphysics of pain. If Lucius were to pursue this, he is told, he would find applause coming from unsettling corners. This, if one takes de Geer as Jünger’s narrative mouthpiece, suggests similar discomfort that Jünger felt when the Nazis applauded his early texts that promoted a metaphysics of pain.

The novel can be read as a turning away from the war as Eros psychology that decisively affected Jünger’s generation (as Theweleit and Lethen argue) when one considers a regret expressed by the soldier de Geer, also the science fiction setting itself (i.e. the *novum*), and the significance of the scene in the Kriegsschule. When conversing with the Bergrat, de Geer expresses his regret that Nigromontanus never taught him of the two fields neighbouring the teaching of the multiple-cut universes, namely the lore of Nothing and of the Erotic. The Bergrat replies that Nigromontanus teaches the goal and not the way and that, in the Bergrat’s opinion, every way reaches the goal. He notes that Nigromontanus also applied his theory of the Surface and the Depth to love; the Bergrat, with possible innuendo, implies that he can show Lucius this when he visits, but the Bergrat looks around nervously at this point, as if this kind of erotic teaching is dangerous. This subtle indication is contrasted with the science fiction setting itself, where the reader is told that, in the world of the novel „seit der Ära der Großen

Feuerschläge die Armeen zum stärksten Hort des Friedens geworden waren“ (Jünger 1998b: 38). It is the scene in the Kriegsschule that is the clearest sign of a turning away from war as Eros. While a critic like Müller can write of Jünger’s texts „Jüngers Helden indes sind ‚Draufgänger, unbekante, eherne Gesellen‘, die nicht für irgendwelche höheren Ziele kämpfen, sondern aus Lust am Kampf und der Sucht nach ‚sportsmäßigen Sensationen‘“ (Müller 23), and a contemporary like Benjamin could criticize Jünger’s “negative-pacifist” stance on war (instead of pacifism’s complete rejection of war, Jünger stood for an unequivocal acceptance and promotion of war), the scene in the Kriegsschule demonstrates a clear change in Jünger’s thinking. While the brothers in *Auf den Marmorlippen* wanted to live a life purified of violence, the setting of *Heliopolis* clearly demonstrates that a cultural change has occurred in Jünger and in Germany. De Geer tells the young soldiers of the twin tensions that they exist within: the tension between Freedom and Obedience, and the tension between Justice and Security. Of the first he tells them – in contrast to the *obedience is freedom* formula that he expressed in his earlier writings – that „Befehle gegen die Ehre [*sind*] als unverbindlich [*zu*] betrachte[*n*]“ (Jünger 1998b: 198). Of the second, de Geer quotes „der alte Spruch des Herzogs Ernst von Gotha: »Ein guter Fürst wird nicht das für recht halten, was das sicherste ist, sondern das für das sicherste, was recht ist.«“ (Jünger 1998b: 199). In contrast to the recently destroyed NS regime, where all responsibility was claimed to rest with the Führer – which is what, for example, Wehrmacht officers who protested the SS Einsatzgruppen were told – de Geer tells the soldiers, „Der Fürst will Sie nicht nur am Werk, er will Sie auch an der Verantwortung beteiligen“ (Jünger 1998b: 198).

Finally, the novel functions as a partial repudiation of the Nietzschean Superman concept that Jünger was arguing for when he posited that the sacrifice of the *Frontsoldat* in World War I occurred in order to develop a New Man, essentially a Superman. The conclusion of *Heliopolis* has Phares, the captain of the Regent’s spaceship, saying:

Wir billigen die Lehre Zarathustras, nach welcher der Mensch vom Übermenschen überwunden werden muß. Wir sehen sie nicht ethisch, sondern in der historischen Notwendigkeit. Der nächste Schritt liegt darin, daß auch der Übermensch zu überwinden ist, in dem er am Menschen scheitert, der in der Begegnung höhere Macht gewinnt. (Jünger 1998b: 338)

With this statement by the near-messianic figure of Phares, Jünger is

symbolically re-phrasing his own development since his days as a World War I soldier, and, simultaneously, that of the national narrative as well. In this way he does not have to repudiate his belief that the fighting of World War I produced a new, harder man, a cold persona superman like himself, but that this new man, this hard German man that had just waged war on the whole world, had to allow himself to be overcome by common humanity again. While the Superman is thus overcome, and become merely human once again, this new human, this new German, has been strengthened by this encounter with the Superman: strengthened, as the scene in the *Kriegsschule* suggests, to temper the martial with a decisive injunction to the just and the moral. This relativizing, or tempering, of the Nietzschean teachings is also accomplished in the text through the Parsen, who are Zoroastrians, and through the comparison of their beliefs with Christianity.

These reckonings, and more, are expressed within the three layers of form of this text: the tragedy *mythos*, the *Neophantastik Schreibweise*, and the science fiction genre. The tragedy *mythos* here, as elsewhere in Jünger's work, is accompanied by an undiminished drive toward romance. The text makes a few references to its *Phantastik* antecedents, and employs *Phantastik* incidents and a surprising *Unschlüssigkeit* effect at its conclusion within the *Neophantastik* framework necessary for a science fiction genre text. The novel is science fiction as it employs the two central conventions of science fiction, extrapolation and *novum* – which are almost identical to the parallel conventions in science fiction's sister genre, fantasy: i.e. the supernatural and sub-creation.

*Heliopolis* is a tragedy in its binary structure. There is an act provoking revenge – or an act that disturbs the invisible order (an order, as noted above, that Jünger is determined to understand and textually represent). We have a hero, in Lucius de Geer, who begins the tale at the top of the wheel of fortune as a valued soldier in the Prokonsul's struggle against the Landvogt. Just as *Auf den Marmorklippen* was a text that circled the centre of the act that launches the catastrophe, *Heliopolis* is, too. The introduction of the 1949 German reader to the Parsen quarter of the city of Heliopolis, and to the rioting there and persecution of the Parsen, immediately establishes a parallel with what had just happened to the Jews in the Holocaust in Germany. This makes the text's sub-plot of the persecution of the Parsen a metaphor for the persecution of the Jews. The fact that there was no direct metaphor for the Jews in 1939's *Auf den Marmorklippen* and there is one in this 1949 sequel is testament to the fact

that the tragedy of Germany in World War II and the Holocaust are now inextricably intertwined, or are one and the same, in the German national narrative.

As in *Auf den Marmorklippen*, the text actively searches for the act that provoked this tragedy. The text presents two moments that can be taken as the act provoking revenge, and the text itself considers a phenomenon likened to possessing the Ring of Gyges as the act that throws the invisible order out of balance. The first moment in the text is when de Geer calls his secretary from the *Blaue Aviso* while the Landvogt's chief of police, Messer Grande is watching him. He says nothing of significance to her, but thinks afterwards: „Schon hatte ihn Verstimmung über das Gespräch ergiffen, als ob er einem Zwang erlegen wäre; auch schien es ihm, daß seine Stimme nicht frei genug gewesen sei“ (Jünger 1998b: 47). This moment is then underlined by the narrator, who speaks for de Geer, as being the beginning of the tragic catastrophe: „Lucius ärgerte weniger die Blöße, als daß er sie fühlte: indem man sie wahrnahm, erkannte man die Aura des Schreckens, die den Inquisitor umwebte, und damit den Anspruch an. Die Niederlage begann mit dem Verlust der Unbefangenheit“ (Jünger 1998b: 47-48). This sense of the tragedy beginning is directly connected to the corpse laid out on the steps of the prison run by the Landvogt, the Casteletto, that all aboard the ship see as the *Blaue Aviso* passes through the strait of Castelmario. Their reaction to this sight can be seen as the act provoking revenge or the act that disturbs the natural order:

Die Reisenden fuhren schweigend an diesem Bild vorbei.  
Man sah, daß sie der Anblick tief beschäftigte, doch  
wechselten sie kein Wort. Man war bereits im Bannkreis von  
Heliopolis. (Jünger 1998b: 52)

This reaction points to the centrality of the text's meditation on transcendence and engagement; while de Geer ponders that these kinds of tactics are part of the Landvogt's terror campaign, the reader wonders why the main character shares in the terrorized reaction of the ship-goers. That precisely this problematic is what the text addresses and is what structures its archetypal tragedy is suggested by the text's invocation of *déjà vu*: „Nachdem der Regent der Juden angenommen hatte und sie sowohl durch die Beschlüsse von Sideon als durch die Pläne Stieglitz und Karthago mit Land versehen hatte, traten die Parsen die Erbschaft der Verfolgung an“ (Jünger 1998b: 67). In other words, the text responds to the still-fresh historical question, in 1949, of why the terror of the Nazis

was not countered when there was still time to save the Jews and prevent the Holocaust, by *replaying* the scenario, this time with the Parsen. There is an acknowledgement of the centrality of this question by stating that the Regent – the text’s god-like off-stage manifestation of legitimate authority – looked after the Jews with grants of land. There is a suggestion in this, given that Britain and the Allies did allow for the state of Israel to be founded in 1949, that the Regent represents the authority of the great powers in concert, just as the exile to Ansgar’s house in Alta Plana at the end of *Auf den Marmorklippen* symbolically indicated that right and justice were to be found with the Allies. At any rate, the tragedy of *Heliopolis* is essentially a replaying of the recent tragedy of Germany, with the Parsen explicitly labelled as the textual metaphor for the Jews.

While these moments in the text represent that *Augenblicke* Frye speaks of, where the reader can see the paths toward and away from catastrophe simultaneously, the narrator suggests another factor at play, one represented by the symbol of a magic item, a ring or a cap of invisibility. De Geer reveals the desire to transcend one’s actual situation, to become invisible to it, when he relates his feelings as he is about to actually engage in the political conflict by secretly meeting with an agent.

Bis dahin ist der Tag auf eine neue und unbekante Weise mir geschenkt. Die feinen Fäden, mit denen die Gewohnheit, der Alltag, die Pflicht uns binden, sind zerschnitten, und damit zieht Freiheit wie in den Träumen ein. Ich werde einen Tag verbringen, der jenseits der Gesetze liegt, als ob ich den Ring besäße, der Unsichtbarkeit verleiht. Mir wird der einsame Jubel jenes Zwerges deutlich: der Jubel darüber, daß niemand meinen Namen kennt. Gewaltig tritt die Versuchung an mich heran. (Jünger 1998b: 108)

A second mention of the ring of invisibility connects this desire for transcendent freedom directly with the counter-balancing movement of tragedy that comes in as soon as the act provoking tragedy, or the unbalancing of the invisible order, has taken place. It occurs during Ortner’s telling of his life story, which has him clearly descending into evil. He relates the moment of his fall in a way that can allegorically be applied to Jünger himself and Germany as a whole during the NS regime:

Damit [*i.e. by relying on evil*] entfernte ich mich vom menschlichen Geschlecht und trat in eine neue Ordnung ein. Der Mensch, der magische Macht gewinnt, wie sie die

Tarnkappe, der Glücksring symbolisieren, verliert das Gleichgewicht, die Spannung, die uns im Lauf der Welt erhält; er tritt an Hebel, die unermesslich sind. Bald schlagen die Gewalten gegen ihn zurück. (Jünger 1998b: 136)

The significance of this symbolism is underlined when Herbert analyses the use of this theme in a famous work in the Fantasy genre; his summation, focussing on the Ring of Gyges in Plato, leads us to the conclusion that *Heliopolis'* meditation on the act provoking tragedy is directly connected to Germany in the 1930s:

Glaucon has suggested to the Greek sage [*i.e. Socrates*] that justice is the product of human invention, nothing more. It is as transient as human desire. All men would naturally prefer to act unjustly to others. Their innate preference for the unjust follows from the fact that they are creatures of desire, from the fact that desire is inescapably self-concerned. But men also fear suffering the injustices of others who act on their own desires. With fear mediating desire, they eventually agree to compromise with others, and to avoid doing injustices if others will do the same for them. Justice has no other roots than this. (Herbert 155).

Herbert then goes on to relate the story of how Gyges exploited the power of the ring and of Glaucon's subsequent attempt to get Socrates to take a stand on the story: "Socrates sees that mortal judgments regarding what is just and unjust are always finite and partial, and that the rhetoric of righteousness threatens to conceal that" (Herbert 157). This meditation on morality, on the intertwining of *Recht* and *Unrecht* and the Socratic transcendence of moral decisions, is the heart of *Heliopolis'* meditation and also the source of the tragic catastrophe in the novel.

The text, significantly, translates Jünger's undiminished romance drive into a romance episode that is inserted into the tragic narrative structure. This romance episode is significant in terms of the text's central dilemma of transcendence versus engagement, for it shows de Geer's continuing attempts to help the persecuted Parsen in a textual replaying of missed opportunities to save the Jews. His attempts to help are modest, and are focussed on the Parsen woman, Budur Peri. During the operation by the Prokonsul's forces against the Landvogt's installations on Castelmario, de Geer frees Budur's uncle, Antonio. Although Antonio dies from his wounds after seeing the prison explode, there is a sense of victory nonetheless. A blow has been landed against

the Landvogt and a Parsen man was liberated and could die in freedom. De Geer and Budur Peri celebrate the *anagnorisis* with a drug trip. Here, differently from *Auf den Marmorklippen* and Jünger's earlier texts, there is the opportunity to textually enjoy a romance *anagnorisis*.

The over-all archetypal tragedy structure, however, is too buttressed by recent events to be significantly altered by the romance episode, and the episode becomes the vehicle driving the narrative to a victory-in-tragedy – in other words, a phase three tragedy – conclusion. In a chapter entitled „Der Sturz“, after the drug trip, de Geer is called in by the General and is reprimanded for endangering the mission by taking the twenty extra minutes to free Antonio, and by revealing to non-Prokonsul personnel that the mission was taking place. The Landvogt demands that the Prokonsul hand de Geer over for the destruction of the Toxicologische Institut, and the political power-struggle between the two factions is such that de Geer is relieved of his duties, but not handed over. This leads to de Geer's eventual exile from Heliopolis, and the tale's victory-in-tragedy nature is emphasized at the conclusion, where the reader is told that de Geer and Budur Peri would one day return from their space flight with the Regent. Given that the Regent is the god-like symbol of authority and he is said to have had the power to bring order and peace to the world in the past, the text is expressly stating that the victory will come one day, but, for now, de Geer and Budur Peri go into exile.

There is a tension between the *Phantastik* and *Neophantastik* insofar as the text makes deliberate references to the *Phantastik* tradition in German literature, and yet charts a clearly *Neophantastik* path leading to the science fiction genre. Kleist, whose oeuvre has extensive *Phantastik* sequences, is mentioned at the beginning of the story and is mentioned again as a key figure who „so früh, so tief den neuen Äon vorausgesehen hatte und auch vielleicht sein erstes Opfer gewesen war“ (Jünger 1998b: 164)<sup>111</sup>, and then there are direct references to E.T.A. Hoffmann in Ortner's tale. The device of the artificial eyes is taken from *Der Sandmann* and the accompanying mentioning of „Bittermandelöl“ (Jünger 1998b: 142) – along with the style of the entire chapter – instantly calls „Die

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<sup>111</sup> This reference recalls Foucault's statement about how a text kills its author and thus underlines the significance of de Geer's thought in a dialogic relation to this analysis: Kleist's texts were the expression of the paradigm-shifting discourses of his time. These discourses required expression, and their power, as Foucault's statement underlines, was such that the writer could not cope with them.

Abenteuer der Sylvesternacht“ to mind. These references suggest that there is a textual awareness of the regions of form that the text is entering, and this acknowledgement is strengthened with Jünger citing guides that he did not cite in *Auf den Marmorlippen*. This suggests that his 1939 book represents his being forced into the *Phantastik* and *Neophantastik* by the political situation, whereas *Heliopolis* represents the war-autobiographer and political essayist Jünger acknowledging that he is conscious of his movement into new textual and conceptual regions, and that he is following in the footsteps of giants like Kleist and Hoffmann. The chapter „Ortner's Erzählung“ is entirely in this *Phantastik* tradition, and its embedding in a science fiction framework shows the movement toward the *Neophantastik*. Interestingly, the *Phantastik*-*Neophantastik* oscillation we have noted elsewhere remains a factor in the text as there is a return of the *Unschlüssigkeit* effect at the end of the text, where the text hints that space travel is only a drug trip and not a real movement through space at all. This apparent textual reluctance at fully pursuing the *Neophantastik* course into science fiction is a factor in the text's usage of the science fiction conventions of extrapolation and the *novum* (the “new world” setting).

There are several technological extrapolations that Jünger posits as the basis for his science fiction story. He is fascinatingly prophetic – again – in describing things like the Zentralarchiv, which seems to be a description of the Internet (Jünger 1998b: 172), and of the Phonophors, particularly the hand-held Sprecher, which function like cellphones (Jünger 1998b: 279). Beyond these and other technological extrapolations, Jünger extrapolates atomic war (Jünger 1998b: 61), climate change (Jünger 1998b: 153), and space travel (Jünger 1998b: 158). Nuclear war is the extrapolative element in the story which decisively changed the world we know into that of the story's setting. The Regent – again, in a manner suggesting the great powers working in concert – seized the monopoly on atomic weapons after the *Feuerschläge*, in a manner suggesting the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Nevertheless, the anachronistic sum of these technological extrapolations is the recreation of the political dynamic of Weimar Germany and the early Nazi Regime as the text's *novum*.

The *novum* of the novel recreates the political tension of 1920s and 1930s Germany in order to, as argued above, explore again the dynamic – and the moral failings – that created the Nazi terror and the Holocaust. The Landvogt's faction, concentrated in the Zentralamt, is



given clear Nazi attitudes and trappings (Jünger 1998b: 54-55) and is contrasted with the Prokonsul's faction based in the palace in a way that suggests a Hitler-Hindenburg tension (Jünger 1998b: 72), or a Nazi Party-Army tension. The *novum* is expressly linked to the history of Wilhelmine Europe (Jünger 1998b: 133-134) and it is strongly hinted that Heliopolis is Berlin (Jünger 1998b: 146). The sub-title of the novel, *Rückblick auf eine Stadt*, would seem to confirm this allegorical equation. The forces, attitudes and philosophical associations of the two factions are compared in the text, whereby the Landvogt's atheistic, populist, statistical and technological approach is linked to the term *Nivellierung*, while the Prokonsul's aesthetic, elitist, traditional and militaristic approach is linked to the term *Evolution*. In this dialectic we see Jünger's rejection of the lowest-common-denominator approach of the Nazis, but also his continuing attraction to an elitist, hierarchical military tradition. The fact that he sees the potential for evolution in this latter approach is shown through the novel's Kriegsschule sequence. The tension between the two factions dominates the novel, and the institutionalized and almost static state of the power struggle – one effect of which is to force de Geer's dismissal from service and ultimate exile – points again to the *Recht* interwoven with *Unrecht* concept from *Auf den Marmorklippen*.

The inability of the text to resolve this tension is part of its tragic narrative pattern, but this unresolved state puts the focus on figures like the Regent – who seems to represent some ultimate international power or a suggestion of the monarchic – and on other textual elements to find narrative movement. The text does make references to social class, including Ortner's symbolic journey through all of them (Jünger 1998b: 129), but does not put any particular weight on these meditations, which is significant in that it demonstrates that Jünger is no longer finding it necessary to play the petty bourgeois role of making a point of supporting the proletariat. This can be read as Jünger reaffirming his Ragnarokian motif of re-birth through catastrophe, for the re-birth can happen and, in 1949, is happening, now that the major crisis – which provoked the petty bourgeois to side with the proletariat – has passed. The text also revisits the Dionysian interpretation of the barbarian discourse. In terms of this, the text makes a blatant symbolic statement whereby the Prokonsul's vineyards produce a wine that blends the Apollonian and the Dionysian (Jünger 1998b: 58). This distancing from, or tempering of, the Dionysian and the violent ecstasies associated with Dionysus is underlined with the caution of winning the world at the cost

of one's *Heil* (Jünger 1998b: 115). This evocation of a central feature of Germanic barbarism's *Weltanschauung* (Wolfram 22), that of a spiritual health that associated one's well-being with one's actions, makes the necessity for a moral, or Apollonian, aspect clear. The text also suggests, and in this parallels Jünger's own evolution, that the Dionysian cold persona barbarian can turn to drugs (Jünger 1998b: 160) and de Geer's expectations of the drug trip is given in terms of a romance narrative quest (Jünger 1998b: 31).

Related to this distancing from the figure of the beyond good and evil Dionysian barbarian – or this anticipation of the re-assessment of the Germanic barbarian that Fischer-Fabian discusses as a post-1945 phenomenon – is the text's focus on Christianity. Whereas in *Auf den Marmorklippen* the Nordic barbarian gods are stated to exist side by side with Roman deities and Christianity<sup>112</sup> – and the implication is made that the brothers, who are from the North of the fantasy story's sub-creation, have the worship of these Germanic gods as their heritage – in *Heliopolis* de Geer doubts their existence, or tries to hold two conflicting convictions at once, when he agrees with the comment that the pagan gods are dead (Jünger 1998b: 164) by saying, „Pater Foelix lehrt mit Recht, daß Christus sie als ein neuer und höherer Herakles vernichtete. Doch lehrt er auch, daß die Uralten noch gegenwärtig sind“ (Jünger 1998b: 164). Beyond this statement, however, the barbarian Germanic gods make no appearance in the text, and the text foregrounds the Christian perspective that many intellectuals in Germany adopted in the later stages of the war and on into the early post-war years. This is not to say that the text is uncritical of Christianity: Pater Foelix's teachings, as the above quote suggests, are not doctrinaire Church dogma, and Ortner criticizes the Church's lack of belief in its own teachings during his tale. In his *Phantastik* story – which has no corroboration in the rest of the text – he claims to have been in league with Satan (Jünger 1998b: 132, 135) and declares that his resultant meteoric rise through the social

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<sup>112</sup> In *Auf den Marmorklippen* Christianity is represented by Pater Lampros, who is a „Christenmönch“ at the pilgrim's church of „Maria Lunaris“ which has a horn of plenty as its weathervane/cross, i.e. a version of Christianity explicitly linked to its pagan roots by its highlighting of the lunar aspect of Maria (Jünger 1998a: 59), and Christianity co-exists with the Olympian Graeco-Roman gods and the Germanic gods. In fact, Lampros is respected by people of all faiths in the sub-creation: „Doch liebten ihn auch solche, die an den Zwölf Göttern hingen oder die aus dem Norden stammten, wo man die Asen in weiten Hallen und umzäunten Hainen ehrt“ (Jünger 1998a: 64).

classes was possible because the Christian Church does not really believe in evil (Jünger 1998b: 140) and that it is not fulfilling its mission (Jünger 1998b: 145). Ortner's tale also re-introduces a theme that appears in Jünger's work throughout the 1920s and 1930s, and which he shares in common with Howard, that of the Satanic city (Jünger 1998b: 141). The text's negation of the figure of the positively-valued barbarian as a significant factor does not allow this figure, or *Gestalt*, to be the solution to the civilization versus barbarism theme that the Satanic city brings up, rather the focus is put squarely on a practical application of Christianity. The Zoroastrianism that accompanies the text's replacement of the Jews with the Parsen is used to highlight Christianity's suitability for a constructive social role, something that is also a further tempering of the iron-clad extremes of Nietzschean thought. The following exchange between de Geer and Budur Peri, as the drug is taking effect, expresses this meditation:

»Ich glaube, daß keine Mücke verloren ist. Ich glaube auch, daß der ärgste Verbrecher ewiger Wonnen teilhaftig wird. Das scheint auch Pater Foelix' Ansicht, doch spricht er sie nicht aus.«

»Was könnte uns dann noch verpflichten, gut zu sein?«

»Das ist auch die Frage, derentwegen Pater Foelix seine Einsichten verhüllt. Sein Schweigen ist pädagogischer Natur.«

»In unserer Lehre«, sagte Budur Peri, »sind Gut und Böse auch im Jenseits streng getrennt. Sie gleichen sich im ewigen Wechsel und unvermischbar miteinander ab.«

Lucius hatte sich erhoben und schritt auf dem Teppich auf und ab. Die Stimme schien ihn aus der Entfernung zu erreichen – er dachte vage: »Darum sind eure Priester auch Magier. Für sie ist Reinheit, was bei uns Liebe ist.« (Jünger 1998b: 312)

The fact that de Geer paces at this question and only thinks the answer, and then breaks off the conversation as he feels the first worrying effects of the drug, symbolizes the difficulties in adopting this philosophy of forgiveness through love in the face of a lifetime of agreeing with a thinker who equated Christian love with weakness and branded it a slave morality. The text demonstrates its support for this effort toward Christianity in the approval the General expresses toward the moral-theological training that de Geer promotes in the Kriegsschule, and in the text's equation of the Landvogt's Zentralamt with atheism. In contrast

to Nietzsche's teaching of the Superman as the highest expression of humanity and thus a justification for history's excesses – which Nietzsche implicitly states, for example, when he claims that all the terror and killing of the French Revolution was worth it because it brought forth a Superman like Napoleon – de Geer accepts Pater Foelix's teaching that man is not the measure of all things (Jünger 1998b: 207). Finally, and this is of great significance to the text's central dilemma – and its symbolic application to Germany's collective response to the Holocaust: de Geer accepts Pater Foelix's equation that knowledge equals responsibility equals guilt (Jünger 1998b: 252).

The text's central meditation is embedded in an artistic philosophy – Jünger's *Schreiblehre* – that implicitly supports an analysis of meaning through an analysis of the text's layers of form. De Geer, who writes and is a lover of writing, relates a belief in art that connects understanding reality with the attempt to bridge the gap between transcendence and engagement. He states:

Das Zielen nach Worten war höchste Schützenkunst. Das Zentrum freilich würde man nie erreichen – es lag im idealen, im unausgedehnten Punkt. Doch wies die Anordnung der Pfeile auf das Verhältnis des Künstlers zum unsichtbaren Ziel. Das blieb im Wechsel sein unabdingbarer Beruf: mit Worten den Sinn zu richten auf das Unaussprechliche, mit Klängen auf die unerhörten Harmonien, mit Marmor auf die unbeschwernten Regionen, mit Farben auf den überirdischen glanz. Das Höchste, was er erreichen konnte, war Transparenz. Daher war auch sein Amt inmitten der Vernichtung notwendiger als je. (Jünger 1998b: 91)

Here Jünger proves Fischer's assessment of his writing-as-romance-warrior perspective, and his pursuit of a crystalline – transparent – vision. The connection between such a vision and being able to detect the archetypal mythic narratives that shape entire peoples – and thus the work of individuals – is made when de Geer notes, „Doch hatte sich das Bewußtsein ungemein verschärft, war in das Dunkel der Schächte eingedrungen wie ein Grubenlicht. Das gab die doppelte Beleuchtung, die die Regionen des Traumes, ja selbst des Mythos als des Völkertraumes, erhellte wie nie zuvor“ (Jünger 1998b: 93). This impression is strengthened when the artist Halder notes,

Der Zeitgeist fließt in die Charaktere ein. Metall und Prägung hängen voneinander ab. Das eine steht in Beziehung zum

ewig Gleichen, die andere zu der Stunde, in der der Künstler geboren ist. (Jünger 1998b: 106)

The *Zeitgeist* – essentially the tenor of all the discourses extant at a specific moment in history – becomes part of the artist just as the eternally constant – the archetypal and the mythic – does.

All these concerns and issues are expressed in terms of the major dilemma that the text is a meditation upon, the transcendence versus engagement dialectic. The novel begins by symbolically highlighting this tension and by indicating a movement away from *Auf den Marmorklippen's* troubling insistence on transcendence. The symbolism is encoded in the title of the chapter, „Die Rückkehr von den Hesperiden“, and the fact that it is the main character – a Jüngerian hero once again hopeful to find himself in a romance narrative and thus be the carrier of the values of the reader – de Geer, who is piloting the ship back from the Hesperides. In Greek myth the Hesperides were “the sisters who, assisted by the dragon Ladon, guarded the golden apples which Hera had received, on her marriage with Zeus, from Gæa. [...] The gardens of the Hesperides were placed far in the west, on the verge of the ocean, or in the land of the Hyperboreans” (“Hesperides” 697). With this mythic connection to Hyperborea, we arrive again at Jünger’s connection with Howard. While Howard had his barbarian hero Conan of Cimmeria have a life-long hatred of Hyperborea – and thus, a symbolic rejection of the utopian ideal that the term manifests – Jünger’s hero returning from the Hesperides in Jünger’s first major work of fiction after the war, and only the second of his oeuvre to employ the *Neophantastik Schreibweise*, functions as an acknowledgement that the transcendence prized by the brothers in *Auf den Marmorklippen*, even while political chaos and tyranny were destroying their world around them, was an utopian ideal that must be left behind, just as the *Blaue Aviso* leaves the science fiction *novum's* Hesperides Islands behind. Despite his symbolic textual stance against Hyperborean utopias, the tension between personal freedom (at a level equivalent to that of the positively-valued barbarian) and fascism was left unresolved by Howard’s death; Jünger, however, is able to come through the Ragnarokian catastrophe he predicted, and promoted, to re-consider, in 1949, his own Hyperborean fixation on transcendence.

This is not to say that *Heliopolis* represents an unequivocal favouring of engagement over transcendence: there is an on-going oscillation between the two positions throughout the text which, in itself, reveals the need to reconsider the transcendence stance in light of

Germany's recent history and Jünger's role in it. This deliberate playing out of the transcendence-engagement dialectic is underlined when de Geer is assured that the laying of the corpse on the steps of Castelmarino by the Landvogt's men was expressly staged for the people on the *Blaue Aviso*, and that the unrest and plundering in the Parsen quarter upon the ship's docking in Heliopolis was intended to "refresh" the situation for those returning from the Hesperides (Jünger 1998b: 82). The reaction by de Geer and the ship's passengers to Messer Grande and his terror tactics, however, show the continued tendency to avoid engagement. The loss of this very first chance to act – if only by expressing outrage or concern at the sight of the corpse – is the act provoking revenge and what makes the story follow the archetypal pattern of tragedy. In other words, the laudable intention to move toward engagement is de-railed at the very outset by the invocation of the mythic narrative pattern of tragedy, and the rest of the novel is a belated and hesitant attempt to undo this initial error. Even the attempt at wringing a romance conclusion by engaging in a direct attack against the Landvogt is, despite its seeming initial success, not enough to avert either the tragedy or a renewed movement toward transcendence with the novel's concluding drug trip and – possibly illusory – space travel exile. This dynamic is foreshadowed by the consideration given to a proposal made to the Prokonsul by Dom Pedro to stage a coup and eliminate the Landvogt. Not only does this episode foreshadow the novel's trajectory as a whole, but it also metaphorically represents the historical difficulties opponents of the Nazis had in finding common ground to work together. This dynamic was already explored in *Auf den Marmorklippen* and is not presented any differently here. Dom Pedro's hope that the Prokonsul and his men, including de Geer, would make common cause with him is countered with the statement,

Indessen war einzuwenden, daß die Feinde unserer Feinde nicht notwendig auch unsere Freunde sind. Die Ziele des Prokonsuls sind umfassender. Er würde sie gefährden durch Anteilnahme an Operationen, die nicht das Ganze in Rechnung ziehen. (Jünger 1998b: 87)

This reasoning is something the reader is asked to consider while the Parsen are being actively persecuted and killed in the text; and the conclusion that „Es ist vorauszusehen, daß der Versuch Dom Pedros scheitern wird“ (Jünger 1998b: 87), is reminiscent of, and seems to metaphorically justify, the inertia and tendencies toward transcendence

that doomed Stauffenberg's coup attempt in July of 1944.

The text continues this oscillation between the poles of transcendence and engagement throughout. For example, when de Geer's friends conclude that food, wine and art are not, in the manner of the Dandy, transcendence, but prayer, the implication of this connection to the religiously expressed desire for justice, happiness, peace and health through prayer is that those states are more desirable than simple hedonism. This is almost immediately followed, in the text, by an ironic scene where de Geer talks of being undercover and waiting for a meeting with an agent allied with the Prokonsul – in other words, an act of engagement – and expressly states that doing nothing is an expression of *Herrschaft* (Jünger 1998b: 109); in other words, this echoes a repeated theme of *Auf den Marmorklippen* in which transcendence is in itself an expression of decision and mastery. This ambivalence and oscillation is also expressed by the fact that the Prokonsul and his allies, who refuse, for example, to support Dom Pedro's initiative, and thus take a de facto transcendent position, do train for engagement (Jünger 1998b: 152). Part of this training is to insist on the answer to two questions before being able to proceed to action: who is the enemy and where is legitimate power (Jünger 1998b: 153)? To the reader, these answers seem clear: the Landvogt – who is expressly stated in the text as being behind the persecution of the Parsen – is the answer to the first question, and the Prokonsul is the answer to the second. Yet, the fact that it is these *questions* that are central to the training of the Prokonsul's forces – and not the *answers* the reader is ready to supply – reinforces the transcendent inertia that plays into the Landvogt's hands. The transcendent position is reinforced when de Geer remarks on the sweetness of living in a time of political crisis, and on the transcendent freedom inherent in horseback riding (Jünger 1998b: 169); this transcendent position is also reinforced when de Geer expresses a fatalistic dandy-esque philosophy:

Für welche Augen waren diese Schauspiele erdacht? Wenn sich die Linien nicht im Sehr-Fernen schnitten, sich nicht ergänzten im Unbekannten, blieb der Triumph des Todes sein letzten Sinn. Dann mußte man versuchen, ein wenig Süße aus ihm zu saugen, bevor die Blüten welkten, ein wenig Nektar als Raub und Lohn. (Jünger 1998b: 154)

This philosophy seems to be supported by a direct reference to the sequel-reality of the novel to *Auf den Marmorklippen* when the mystic name of Nigromontanus – he of the mirror that offers transcendence – is

evoked as de Geer recalls: „»Verliere, um zu besitzen«, hieß eine der Regeln Nigromontans“ (Jünger 1998b: 156). The text's unwillingness to give up the transcendence option is a function – just as the problematic of fascism is in the works of Howard – of an insistence on the individual will against the demands of the outside. In this, Jünger, as in his preference of the anarchist to the communist in his political essays, is demonstrating the *Haltung* of the *Einzelgänger* (Glaser, Lehmann, Lubos 404) which is a core value of Jünger's – that of the lone, questing romance hero. Jünger expressed this anarchistic attitude when he was younger, and even in 1949 cannot divorce himself from it:

Jeder Einzelne, sofern er nur in sich selbst die Gesellschaft entschieden vernichtet hat, kann sofort dazu übergehen, diese Vernichtung auch am äußeren Bestande der Gesellschaft zu vollstrecken, insofern er es nicht überhaupt verachtet, sich selbst in dieser Form noch mit ihr abzugeben, weil er es vorzieht, in der Ferne, in ursprünglichen Landschaften als Täter oder auch in der hermetischen Abgeschlossenheit eines Großstadtzimmers als Denker und Träumer seinem Willen den Rang einer absoluten Instanz zu verleihen. (Jünger 2000: 141-142)

In the time between *Das Abenteuerliche Herz* and *Heliopolis*, the ability to sympathize with the anarchist and the vision of the personal will as *absoluten Instanz* has been shaken.

While the pendulum swing back toward transcendence after the symbolic opening motion toward engagement seems decisive when one considers the above examples, the romance attack on the Toxicologische Institut and the novel's concluding promise that de Geer and Budur Peri will return with the Regent to set things right ends the victory-in-tragedy narrative on a note of engagement, although Hohendahl concludes that “Jünger negates the possibility of a political or military solution” (Hohendahl 43). This interpretation is strengthened by the fact that representatives of the opposing factions are at the Raketenhafen at the end of the book, and that de Geer's imminent exodus is welcomed by all: „Dem Chef, dem Landvogt und auch den anderen politischen Mächten war sie angenehm; sie schaffte Klarheit über einen Stein im Schachspiel, der zwischen den Fronten stand“ (Jünger 1998b: 341). This re-affirmation of the static political tension seems to justify this new expression of transcendence, and it is even linked to a romantic idea of adventure (Jünger 1998b: 341). While the setting of this final scene, with



the obelisks of the rockets in the background, and the reader's memories of earlier mentions in the text of rockets in the sky above Heliopolis reinforce the science fiction genre and its *Neophantastik* foundations, the novel ends with an abruptness reminiscent of *In Stahlgewittern*: de Geer, Budur Peri and Phares, the pilot, do not get into a rocket and blast off. Instead, we are left with them standing on the ground after being told of their training which seems more of a preparation for a metaphysical experience than physical training for a technological experience:

Sie [i.e. *the preparation for the flight*] ging nicht auf besondere Weihen aus; sie zielte eher auf die Verwirklichung des Traumes durch Erhöhung der Imagination und ihrer Herrschgewalt. Die Rolle, die bei den Mauretaniern die Askese und bei Nigromontan die Lehre von den Oberflächen spielte, war hier der Überwindung der Schwere zugeteilt. Das war ein Wissen, das sicherer führte als jedes Visum – ein Ausweis existentieller Art. Er konnte nicht durch Fleiß erworben werden; die Nähe von Phares, sein Händedruck waren wichtiger. Er schien Organe aufzuwecken, die man geahnt, doch deren man nicht mächtig gewesen war. Merkwürdig war die Anheftung – wie durch ein Äderchen, ein Würzelchen, durch das es die andere Seite des großen Stromes zu erreichen galt. Das Einfache daran war das Erstaunliche. Dann stellte sich ein Bewußtsein des Überflusses ein und mit ihm Heiterkeit. (Jünger 1998b: 342)

This strange conclusion seems to parallel Jünger's deliberate violations of the fantasy sub-creation in *Auf den Marmorklippen* to achieve the same end: to, in a very Brechtian way, remove the fourth wall, dispel the illusion of believability, and thus re-connect to the primary world of the reader – in this case, Germany in 1949 – and invite the reader to ponder the *Bewußtsein des Überflusses*.

### XIII.3. Final Statement

The main purpose of this dissertation was to demonstrate that every cultural text attains its ability to change society through the narrative form that expresses its hierarchy of values. These mythic narratives are utterances not only in the class discourse of the day, but in other cultural discourses, including the the barbarian discourse of the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s. What has been demonstrated is how archetypal

mythic narratives could not only change society, but that this change could be forced, as was done by the Nazis. The Nazis, along with other groups on the right, insisted firstly on the victory in tragedy of the *Kultur der Niederlage* to express the narrative of Germany during the Weimar period, and then institutionalized a romance narrative whose attempts at re-valuing the romance protagonist constituted a hybris that provoked the thoroughly tragic narratives of World War II and the Holocaust. Zapf's arguments about cultural evolution due to the organic nature of culture and society do hold true, as *Innere Emigration*, exile, and passive and active resistance demonstrated that such radical forced cultural change was not sustainable in Germany. The American example provided by Robert E. Howard shows how similar attitudes, utterances and positions within the barbarian discourse – and a similar tendency toward fascism – were deflected thanks to an archetypal national romance paradigm not predicated on a tragic past, and how an historical engagement and international discourse allowed for a continued national association with the romance. The concluding sentence of the popular work, *Band of Brothers*, about Easy Company, 506<sup>th</sup> Airborne Division, who fought in many of the same battles as the Frundsbergers, specifically makes reference to the romance conception of heroism: “In one of his last newsletters, Mike Ranney wrote: ‘In thinking back on the days of Easy Company, I’m treasuring my remark to a grandson who asked, ‘Grandpa, were you a hero in the war?’ ‘No,’ I answered, ‘but I served in a company of heroes’” (Ambrose 425). This denial of individual heroism in favour of a collective heroism serves to strengthen the national association of the United States as a romance hero, and the fight against Germany aims to dispel the spectre of fascism. Indeed, the American experience of World War II follows the romance pattern of *agon* (conflict), *pathos* (death struggle), *anagnorisis* (recognition of the hero) as related in *Band of Brothers*. The romance *mythos*' explicit emphasis on positive values and moral considerations becomes applicable to the Americans in World War II when it is framed as it is by a member of Easy Company, Webster, after American forces entered Germany in 1945:

For Webster, the effect of the D.P. camp was to stir up his hatred of the Germans. “Why were these people here?” he asked himself about the D.P.s They had done nothing, had no politics, committed no crime, possessed nothing. They were there because the Nazis needed their labor.

“There was Germany and all it stood for,” Webster concluded. “The Germans had taken these people from their homes and sentenced them to work for life in a factory in the Third Reich. Babies and old women, innocent people condemned to live in barracks behind barbed wire, to slave twelve hours a day for an employer without feeling or consideration, to eat beet soup, mouldy potatoes, and black bread. This was the Third Reich, this was the New Order. Work till you died. With cold deliberation the Germans had enslaved the populace of Europe.” So far as Webster was concerned, “The German people were guilty, every one of them.” (Ambrose 351).

Beyond the influence of such archetypal national mythic narratives on their texts, what links both writers under consideration, and both cultures under consideration, are a variety of factors put together – the aesthetics of the Avant Garde, the fatherless society, the perceived de-facto existence of a *Schamkultur* in much of the Western world, and the experience of World War I – all of which make up a key component of the dynamic which constitutes Lethen’s primary object of analysis, the Cold Persona. This persona played a key role in the barbarian discourse, as it represented a physical toughness and emotional control thought to be a part of the natural, close-to-the-earth vitality of the barbarian, and both Jünger and Howard adopted it for their utterances within the barbarian discourse.

Given the influence of these major discursive currents on the texts of Howard and Jünger, the influence of these same currents on the nations as whole, and on the events of history in which they are embedded, is demonstrated. One aim has been to empirically disprove the lingering cultural stereotype promoted by international romance framing of the twentieth century – i.e. that German = Nazi – by showing that the dynamic that led to the establishment of such an equation in terms of Germany was evident in the US but did not come to a similar expression in large part because of the archetypal mythic narrative paradigm governing that nation’s trajectory. Versailles’ narrative framework was a decisive historical factor, for the German people *did* support a romance overcoming of Versailles’ implications and this narrative trajectory was parallel to Nazi ambitions and was instrumentalized by them in order to hijack this national romance desire. In the end, however, their hierarchy of values was not that of the

German people as a whole. As Hohendahl notes of Jünger's contemporary and correspondent, Carl Schmitt:

In Schmitt's opinion, international public law underwent a decisive and consequential transformation in the wake of the Great War. The Treaty of Versailles, in which German responsibility for the war was codified post factum, changed the statutes of the war. What had begun as a war between equal nation-states turned into a war against a nation under criminal leaders. (Hohendahl 31)

As we have seen, contemporary observers like Dillon noted the political and economic motivations behind this post factum romance branding of Germany as villain, and many were the predictions that it would necessarily lead to a new war because of the social chaos it would cause. The influence of meta-narratives on the work of individual writers – and thus proof of the cultural studies concept of a text being authored by a host of voices – is substantiated by a line from Jünger's *Heliopolis*: „Dann löst die Niederlage den Traum vom Siege ab“ (Jünger 1998b: 108).



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<sup>1</sup> Note: Multiple books by the same author are listed chronologically by printing date of the edition consulted. Thus, for example, the in-text citation (Howard 1976: 99) refers to the bibliographic entry Howard, Robert E. *King Kull*. London: Sphere Books, Ltd., 1976. (To keep this system visually simple and efficient, original publication dates in square brackets have been omitted. As this dissertation thematizes the historical period of the texts and proceeds chronologically, the original year of publication is expressly mentioned in the text itself. The reader may also consult the works cited themselves.

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In this ground-breaking, trilingual work, designed primarily to ensure access by English-speaking readers, the narrative framework of the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s is explored. Northrop Frye's archetypal approach to literature, and Fredric Jameson's theory of the political unconscious are applied in a comparative analysis of the works of Robert E. Howard and Ernst Jünger to create a compelling and comprehensive picture not only of the twentieth century itself but, through references to a multitude of texts from the cultural archive of the time, also of the key role narrative plays in the scripting of human destiny.

„Die Analysen der Werke von Howard und Jünger, die Burger aus Frye und Jameson entwickelt, sind stets nachvollziehbar, auch wenn man sie nicht teilt, und gewinnen durch die spezifischen, oft überraschenden Kontextuierungen im kulturellen Archiv viele neue Einsichten in die betreffenden Werke und in die Tiefenstruktur der Epoche. Die Diskussion der Sekundärliteratur ist transparent und argumentativ funktional. Hervorheben möchte ich besonders die vergleichenden Ausführungen zur Kultur der Niederlage und die Ausführungen zum breiten barbarischen Diskurs in der Epoche, aufschlussreich besonders für das Werk von Howard. Luzide die einzelnen Werkanalysen, von denen ich die Analyse von Jüngers Roman ‚Auf den Marmorklippen‘ ebenfalls hervorheben möchte. Sie geht in ihrer differenzierten, subtilen Herausarbeitung der Ambivalenzen dieses Romans über den Stand der Forschung hinaus. [...] handelt es sich bei dieser Dissertation fraglos um eine originelle und souveräne – manchmal zu souveräne - Forschungsleistung, die konsequent, materialreich und produktiv ihre Fragestellung entwickelt.“  
Prof. Dr. Gerhard Kurz, Autor von *Metapher. Allegorie. Symbol und Traum-Schrecken. Kafkas literarische Existenzanalyse.*

The analyses of the works of Howard and Jünger, that Burger develops out of Frye and Jameson, are comprehensible, even if one does not share them, and achieve many new insights into the works themselves, and into the deep structure of the era, through specific, often surprising contextualizations within the cultural archive. The discussion of the secondary literature is transparent and argumentatively functional. I would like to particularly point out the comparative discussions of the cultures of defeat and the discussions of the broad barbarian discourse of the era, informative particularly for the work of Howard. Lucid are the analyses of individual works, of which I would also particularly like to point out that of Jünger's novel, *On the Marble Cliffs*. In its differentiated and subtle working out of the ambivalences of this novel, it goes beyond the current state of scholarship. [...] this dissertation is unquestionably an original and masterful — sometimes too masterful — scholarly accomplishment, which develops its thesis methodically, richly and productively.

Prof. Dr. Gerhard Kurz, author of *Metapher. Allegorie. Symbol und Traum-Schrecken. Kafkas literarische Existenzanalyse.*