

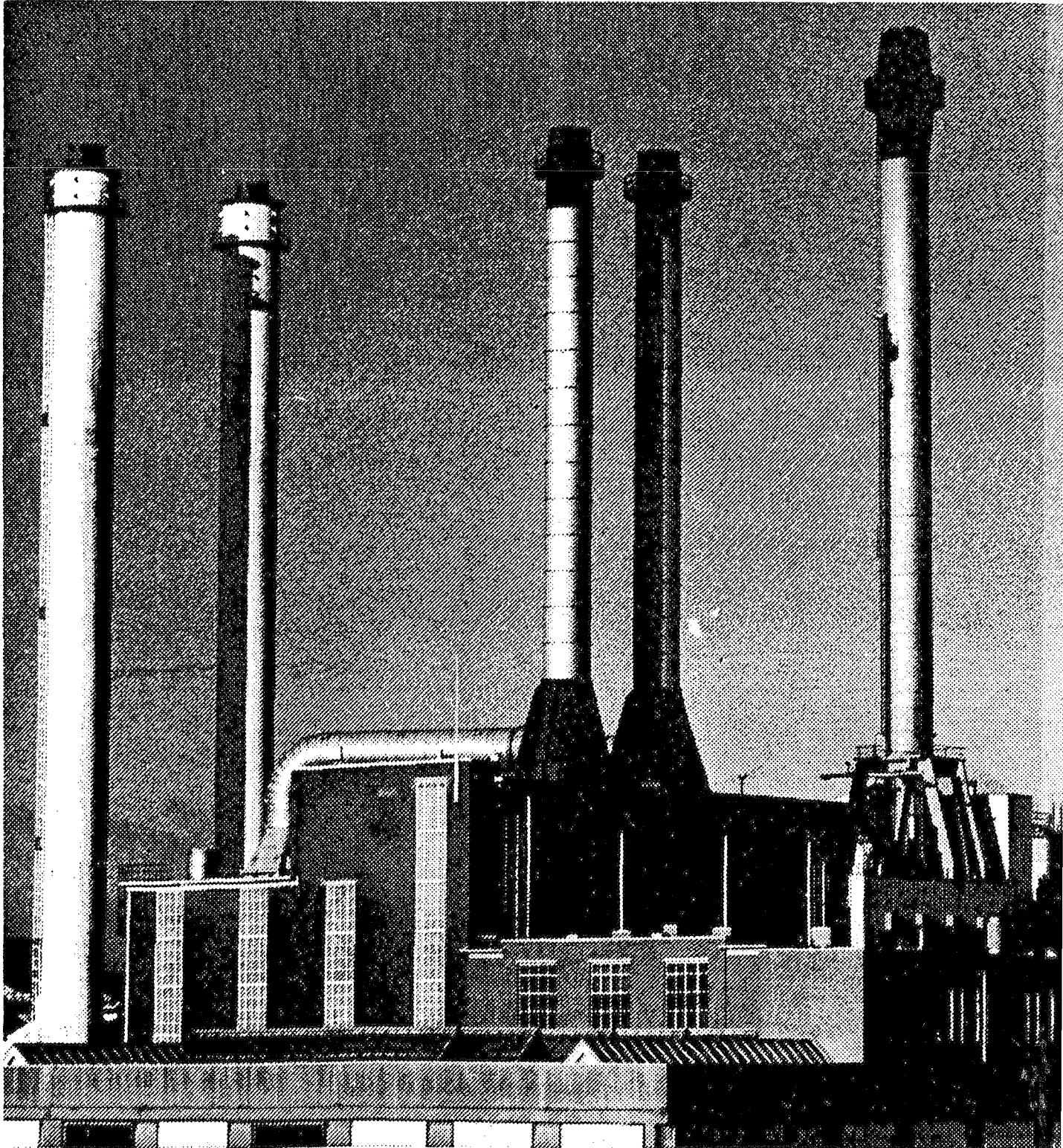
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THE WORKER

ON NIHILISM AND TECHNOLOGY IN ERNST JÜNGER

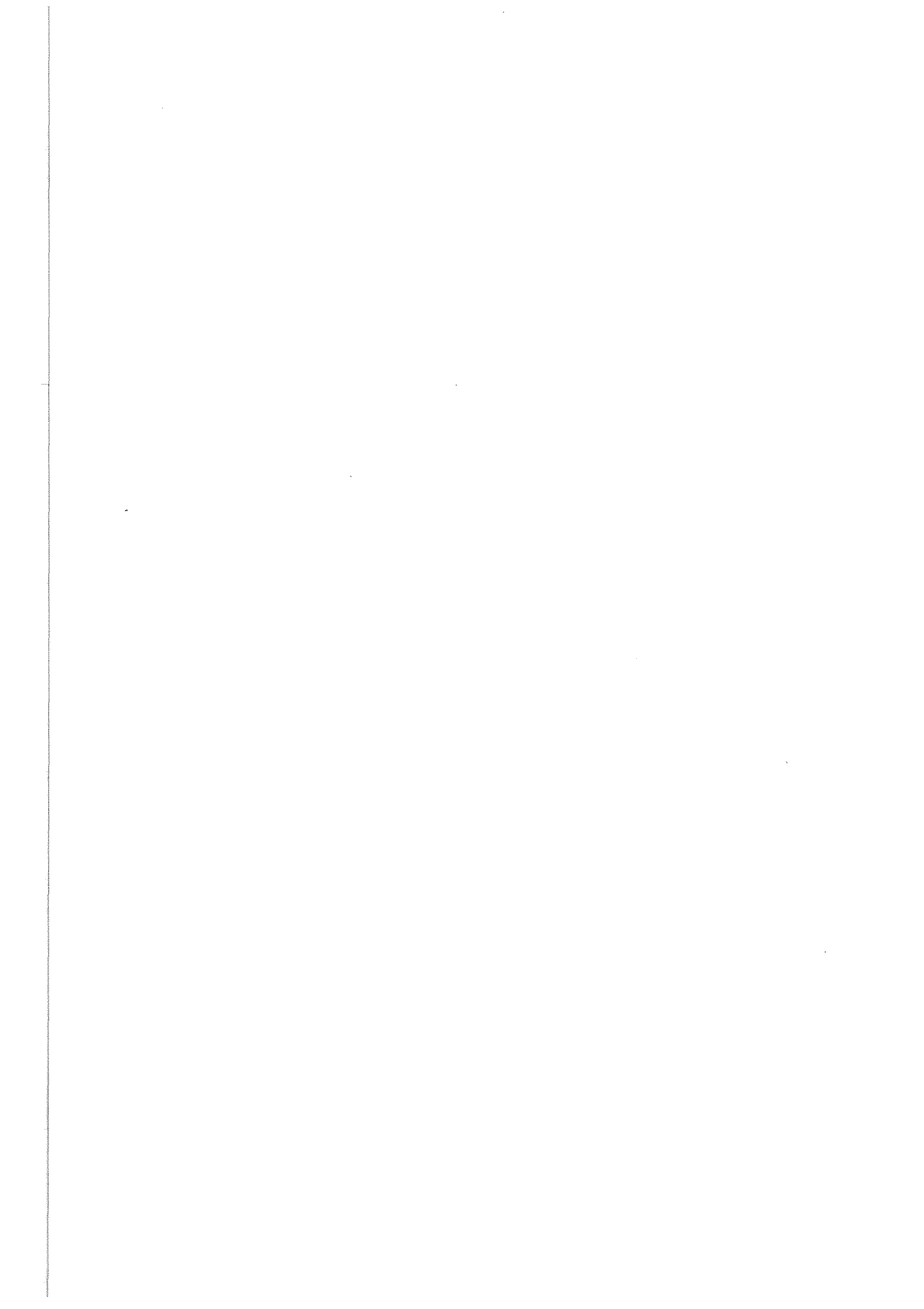


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THE WORKER

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JAN POPMA
1989



CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	5
I. BACKGROUNDS	11
1. <i>WAR</i>	13
2. <i>THE CONSERVATIVE REVOLUTION</i>	21
II. TECHNOLOGY AND NIHILISM	29
1. <i>CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK</i>	31
2. <i>TOTAL MOBILIZATION</i>	34
3. <i>ON METHODOLOGY: THE NOTION OF GESTALT</i>	40
4. <i>THE WORKER: TECHNOLOGY AS WILL TO POWER</i>	44
5. <i>THE PERFECTION OF TECHNOLOGY</i>	49
III. AMBIVALENCES: SOME CRITICAL REMARKS	59
1. <i>THE MONOLITHIC MYTH</i>	62
2. <i>THE TURNING POINT</i>	67
3. <i>TECHNOLOGICAL DETERMINISM</i>	73
4. <i>THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF NIHILISM</i>	82
5. <i>A CONSERVATIVE REVOLUTION ?</i>	91
QUOTATIONS IN GERMAN	103



INTRODUCTION

*Technology will be the language of the future
- like a tidal wave it deluges everything.*

Ernst Jünger

This thesis treats of the apparently rampant advance of technology and some of its social, cultural and political implications.

This topic, to be sure, is not exactly novel: it has been dealt with by numerous philosophers and social scientists, and from innumerable perspectives. Many scholars, especially in the 19th century, attested to the rather optimistic conviction, that the progress of scientific knowledge and its technological applications would gradually help mankind forward on the thorny path towards redemption. And this secularized chiliasm is still persistent in the minds of many scientists today. The more science succeeds in penetrating the most hidden secrets of nature, the more science-based technology would be able to master life - and to expel suffering. Yet, even if this optimistic attitude towards science and technology prevailed throughout the 19th century, and may probably still be considered predominant in our days, there has ever since been smouldering dissent as to this pseudo-religious optimism - and even overt rejection.

The diverse trends of criticism form a wide spectrum, ranging from prudent support of progress to the more or less vehement dismissal of the notion of 'progress' altogether. Since these criticisms are rather diverse, I cannot deal with them *in extenso* here: in this thesis I have therefore focused on just one source, notably the writings of the German philosopher Ernst Jünger.

In a 1971 interview, Jünger stated that "the most horrid perspective is that of a technocracy exercised by mutilated minds and vandals, in an age of degeneracy in which all imagination will have totally faded away"¹. Here, Jünger summarizes - and abhors - what he phenomenologically described in his 1932 book on "the Worker"². In this book, which stands at

1. Haagse Post, 27-01-71, p.53

2. Ernst Jünger - Der Arbeiter: Herrschaft und Gestalt
(the Worker: dominion and Gestalt)

I shall cite this book by denoting its paragraphs, which are the same in all editions.

the heart of this thesis "on nihilism and technology", he assembled many of the experiences that were -and still are- being adduced to criticize the alleged supremacy of scientism on the one hand and technology-based production on the other. Jünger's line of argument shows great similarity to one of the most brilliant analyses of the negative consequences of an unhampered expansion of technology (or, more general, of instrumental rationality): the "dialectic of Enlightenment" by Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno. Like those philosophers, Jünger sought to understand the rise of technology as emanating from the humanistic dream of Enlightenment and the "cult of progress", as Jünger put it.

Progress, according to Horkheimer/Adorno, has more and more deteriorated into a one-sidedly materialistic direction, focused on material growth only, whereas the sciences, once the most eminent regalia of humanity, are more and more being reduced to an instrument of power over its object. Due to the immanent logic of subjectivity - being the essential characteristic of modern rationality - the linear utopia of a liberating science (and technology) has taken a turn for a likewise linear history of decline, in which science and technology have wrested from legislating subjectivity and come to subject mankind.

To summarize the Frankfurt ideas, the humanistic dreams of reason have produced monsters, in the form of its apparent counterpart, that is to say: in the form of totalitarianism - be it in the guise of capitalism, fascism or stalinism. And this eclipse in the development of rationality seems to be inevitable. Totalitarianism, in this view, is more than just the abhorrent excrescence of *political* reason, it is essentially entwined with reason as such, as the knowing subject seeks to rationally *master* its object. To paraphrase Martin Heidegger: subjectivity permeates the world with domination.

The history of reason has not kept its promise of redemption - quite the contrary. But unlike Horkheimer/Adorno, Jünger did not denounce this development as 'deterioration' of the initial promise of progress. He rather "accepted the most extreme process of rationalization outlined by Weber as inevitable"³. The process of technological development as well as its consequences - such as the 'radical disenchantment of the world', the 'dehumanization of inter-human relationships' (Weber) or the infringement of the system on the lifeworld (Habermas) - had to be affirmed as man's ineluctable fate. According to Jünger, the criticism of technological rationality remained within the realm of humanism - that is to say, it denounces the dominion of technology because it is thought to violate man's

3. John Orr - German social theory and the hidden face of technology
in: Archives européennes de sociologie, 1974, p.314

sovereignty. Technology, from the humanistic point of view, is to be considered an instrument in the hands of mankind, wholly at the service of the liberation of humanity. Jünger, however, thought this claim to be a "bourgeois prejudice", the manifestation of anthropocentric haughtiness. Man, according to Jünger, is not at all the centre of creation. Rather, man is but an insignificant creature in the presence of the overwhelming, metaphysical power of Being.

This metaphysical notion of *power* is obviously akin to Nietzsche's philosophy of *Will to Power*. And indeed it is my claim, that "the Worker" represents a socio-historically updated version of Nietzsche's universal history (*Universal-geschichte*), which interprets the history of *nihilism* as a series of modulations upon an essentially constant, ontological substratum of Will to Power. This Will to Power is, by immanent necessity, urged to deploy its ontological essence, and as it is logically absurd to pass judgement on necessity⁴, the only option seems to be to *affirm* necessity and execute this deployment of power.

Now, "the Worker" is situated on the intersection of this metaphysical conception of power and the socio-political theory on the advent of mass-society, and the political mirror-image of the *deployment of power* implies that the political constitution of society be such that society's powers will be deployed to the full. This claim led Jünger to espouse a rather totalitarian political position. In fact, Jünger advocated the excision of even the last remnants of humanity from society, as he thought individual human selfinterest - as he conceived it - to be at odds with the maximum deployment of power. And because of the firmness of these pronouncements, his 1932 book on "the Worker" has often been condemned as an early draft of a millennial fascist order.

Still, I think that an overly politicized reading of "the Worker" tends to obfuscate the unbiased perception of (what I consider) Jünger's most revealing observation: that totalitarianism is not, in the first place, linked to a *political* order, but that it is, in a sense, connected to an immanent "*Will to Power*", which haunts the implementation of technology, and of which fascism, stalinism and capitalism are congeneric manifestations. Here, we should clearly distinguish the various levels of the term *totalitarianism*. On the political level, it is clear that totalitarianism refers to an englobing form of centralized dictatorship. But we may also understand it on a more sociological level, referring to the dissolvment of the social bond, the individual's powerlessness being the precondition of the increased power of this central government. In its most general form, the term totalitarianism refers to a process in which all power is

4. Cf. Friedrich Nietzsche - *Menschliches Allzumenschliches*, aph.107

being aligned into *one* direction, resulting in an absolutely closed social order which may be considered a negative monolith. In "the Worker" we may recognize this latter conception of totalitarianism, which in fact gathers the political as well as the sociological conceptions. "The Worker" depicts a process of technological labour, in which the traditional bonds are being dissolved and all the atomized social powers are being aligned into one direction - the sheer increase of power.

To fully consider the apparent proximity of technology and totalitarianism - this, I think, is what is at stake in "the Worker". At least, it is the mainspring of my writing this thesis: to unflinchingly envisage the ultimate consequences of the apparently irreversible advance of technology, without beforehand resorting to the mitigating myth of 'humanity'.

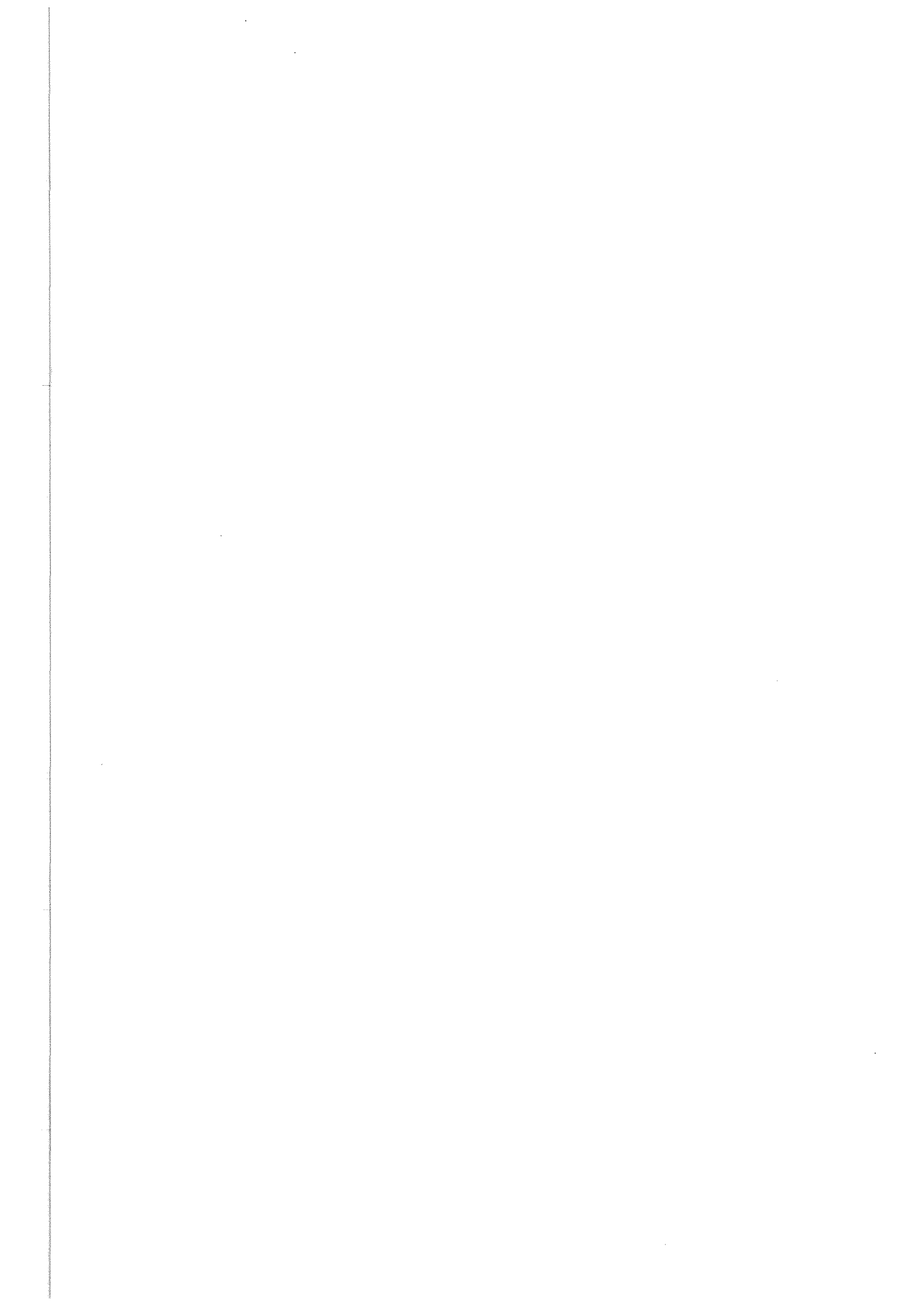
As I have indicated above, the social and cultural implications of the advance of technology have been pondered by many philosophers and social scientists. The reasons why I have chosen to concentrate on Jünger are threefold. Firstly, the overwhelming force of his phenomenology of technology very much impressed me as a pitchblack picture of mass-society. Secondly, I felt close to his vehement anti-bourgeois criticism on the political level (even if this criticism is obviously impaired by its blatant lack of nuance: for example, his criticism on the then current forms of parliamentary democracy was being inflated to the rejection of the notion of democracy in general). Thirdly, on the theoretical level I subscribe to what may be called methodological anti-humanism. That is to say, I advocate a scientific position that does not start from the hidden supposition that man be the centre of sociological analyses.

My initial admiration for Jünger, however, has by now somewhat subsided, and has turned into the intellectually more challenging experience of *ambivalence*. This implies that this thesis will not result in unambiguous conclusions, but merely in a series of open-ended remarks: on the one hand, I still hold his account of the era of technology to be illuminating on the phenomenological level but, on the other hand, his theoretical determinism is obviously impaired by various flaws on the analytical level. Whereas on the political level, I do endorse his anti-bourgeois and anti-parliamentary criticism, even if I do not think that this critical attitude should imply the abolition of the notion of democracy altogether, and I most certainly do not subscribe to the political myth he advocated (a political myth which he invoked, as I shall attempt to demonstrate, to somehow make sense of the developments which he deemed ineluctable). These ambivalences are to be expanded upon in part III of this thesis.

In section II, I shall mimetically set forth Jünger's views on the near dominion of the Worker. On the one hand, this dominion refers to the landscape of industrial mass-production, what Jünger called the *Werkstätten-*

landschaft. According to Jünger, the era of industrial production is an era of nihilism: it is dedicated to mere growth of productive power and an incessant revolution of technological means, but it lacks the legislative power to proclaim the goals to which this increased potency should contribute. On the other hand, however, this dominion also refers to the entrance of a new elite destined to rule over this *Werkstättenlandschaft*, and to finally mould the increased power into one direction so as to bestow *meaning* upon the apparently meaningless development of technology. Jünger claims the dominion of the Worker to be the inevitable outcome of the history of nihilism and, quite in line with Nietzsche, supposes this dominion to finally *overcome* nihilism.

This imaginative philosophical *tour de force* can only be properly valued, I think, in the light of the cultural revolution he explicitly pursued: to break away from the run-down, self-indulgent order of bourgeois society. This revolutionary persuasion not only reflected a personal inclination, but represented a widespread anti-democratic movement known as the *conservative revolution*. Thus, it is deeply embedded in a wider social context, and it may be illuminating to review this context, its philosophical notions and its specific vocabulary. In part I, I shall therefore sketch Jünger's biographical and socio-cultural backgrounds, in order to attempt to clarify his philosophical and political position.



I. BACKGROUNDS: THE CONSERVATIVE REVOLUTION

Ernst Jünger is a German philosopher and writer of uncontested literary mastery, but of dubious political standing. In the 1920's, he partook in the process of social and political fermentation from which sprang the beginnings of the nazi-movement. Even if it is historically demonstrable that Jünger was not an adherent of the nazi-party¹, the controversy over whether or not his philosophical views provided the nazi-ideologues with their basic concepts still casts a shadow of suspicion over the interpretation of his works. And this suspicion is not wholly unfounded: even if his political position was not, I think, the position of a protofascist, his *interbellum* writings undeniably bear the marks of totalitarian inclination. This totalitarianism attaches especially to the book on which I have focused in this thesis: "*der Arbeiter: Herrschaft und Gestalt*"². This should lead us to take precautions in dealing with such dubious material - even if, as is my contention, on closer examination "the Worker" emerges not as a plea for totalitarianism, but rather as a struggle with the idea of totalitarianism as the seemingly ineluctable fate of mankind, in order to face up to and *overcome* this terrifying prospect.

In this chapter, I shall endeavour to outline the socio-historical as well as the biographical backgrounds to those writings of Jünger's on which I shall base my reflections "on nihilism and technology". However, in so doing one should be very cautious not to lapse into psychological, sociological or political reductionism. I do not mean to say that any attempt to explain philosophical theory on the basis of the specific personal or social situation would be futile: quite the contrary. Yet, the philosophy of Jünger is so narrowly intertwined with his personal experiences and the cultural and political situation of his time, that the core of his views is only too likely to be blurred by political prejudice or,

1. From 1923 onwards, Jünger rejected Goebbels' repeated proposals to accede to the office of NSDAP party-ideologue. In 1933 he refused membership of the newly formed poets-academy, and ever since May 1941, when he was quartered in Paris, he was linked to the circle of officers-resistance, that conspired against Hitler (von Stülpnagel/Rommel), for which Jünger devised a manifesto on the sensible use of peace -*der Friede*.

Cf. Yves de Smet - Ernst Jünger

Desclee de Brouwer, 1963, p.10 ff.

2. Ernst Jünger - *Der Arbeiter: Herrschaft und Gestalt* (1932)

as I have just noted, sociological and psychological reductionism. For example, the outcome of an over-*politicized* reading of "the Worker" would most probably be condemnation - that is to say, condemnation on the basis of the evaluative standards Jünger himself sought to overcome (such as the left/right dichotomy).

Many scholars have dismissed Jünger's writings (particularly those conceived before 1933) as proto-fascist³. This interpretation, as I have just stated, is not unfounded: some of his early writings glorify the experience of war, and "the Worker" is deeply marked by the revolutionary boast of the nationalist movements to which he was, in fact, closely allied. However, to restrict our interpretation of "the Worker" to the undeniable influence it had on these nationalist movements (and even on the Nazi-ideologues) would take the edge off the argument: the dominion of the Worker - that is to say, the triumph of nihilism - is not merely restricted to the cesspool of *interbellum* Germany. To gain clear understanding of what I consider to be the *topical* interest of his views - notably the relation between technological development and political domination -, I shall therefore try to deliver Jünger from the burden of the nazi-legacy⁴, and trace the history of nihilism as it extends to *our* time.

However, we must not ignore the personal and social backgrounds which, to a certain extent, determined the specific point of view from which Jünger tackled the phenomenon of nascent totalitarianism. This does not mean, to be sure, that I shall attempt to give an exhaustive account of these backgrounds, in order to socio-historically *explain* the roots of his philosophy: I invoke these backgrounds merely to try to illuminate the terminology that permeates "the Worker".

3. Cf. Joachim Petzold - Wegbereiter des deutschen Faschismus
Köln, 1983

4. The critics of Jünger have founded their opinions almost exclusively on his *interbellum* publications. However, these comprise only a relatively small part of his writings, and his later works (from 1939 onwards!) should serve to correct this biased interpretation. These later works prove him to be a philosopher of great delicacy, very much concerned with the protection of what he considered culturally valuable. In his 1939 "*Auf den Marmorlippen*", a scarcely concealed indictment against Hitler, Jünger portrayed the (his?) ill-fated effort to resist the rise of Tyrannis, whereas in "*Der Waldgang*" (1951), he contemplated the position of the individual against the overwhelming dictatorship of the technological order: the great Individual resists destruction in taking refuge with art, philosophy and religion as the domain of man's nobility, thereby regaining his 'essential' freedom.

1. WAR

*War is our father, it has begotten us in the
blazing womb of the trenches as a new breed,
and proudly we recognize our provenance.*

Ernst Jünger

Ernst Jünger was born March 29th, 1895, of petty bourgeois parentage. His father was Dr. Ernst Jünger, chemist. The Jünger-biographers describe young Ernst as imaginative, filled with fantasies of escape⁵.

When Ernst Jünger left for Africa, november 1913, to join the foreign legion, we may assume that he⁶ fled, in fact, from *Europa* - its name being the symbol of *Civilization*. Now, this escapism might very well be interpreted in a psychological fashion, restricted to the individual peculiarity of a somewhat twisted adolescent, but this would pass over the fact that this psychic disposition was characteristic of a generation⁷ - the longing to tear oneself loose from the *fin de siècle ennui*, from the decadence of 19th century bourgeois society. The psychic disposition likewise manifested itself in the enthusiasm with which the young threw themselves into World-War I: in the cries of jubilation of the volunteers "hides the revolutionary protest against the old values, whose validity has irrevocably come to an end"⁸.

Ernst Jünger himself was one of those young persons who were "innerly

5. Cf. Yves de Smet - op.cit. p. 5ff.

and: Wolfgang Kaempfer - Ernst Jünger

Stuttgart, 1981, p.8ff.

6. "Here '*Europa*' is understood to mean much more than just the geographic Europe: it contains America, insofar as it is a daughterland of our culture".

Friedrich Nietzsche - *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches*: II,215 (*)

Notes marked (*) refer to the appendix containing the original quotations.

7. Even if the typical experience of this generation was broken up, according to the specific class-position: the German *Jugendbewegung*, which was mainly being assembled from avant-garde elites, varied from reactionary to communist.

8. Ernst Jünger - *Der Arbeiter*, par.15 (*)

malcontented with the barren life they had led before 1914". Suffering under their own "*weltanschaulichen Ratlosigkeit*" (desperation concerning the world view), they "indulged in pure activism, in order to evade this situation"⁹. Thus, when '*Europa*' stands for bourgeois society, lacking any inner vitality, '*Africa*' may likewise be considered in its symbolic value: it stands for ferocity, vitality and independence. Whereas '*Europa*' is considered the 'Empire of estrangement', '*Africa*' symbolizes elementary life. Just the same, the outbreak of World-War I contained the promise of regaining *life* in its essential vitality.

The focus on *life* as opposed to *Reason*, which is summarized in the philosophical concept of *vitalism*, is not to be mistaken for romanticism. Romanticism, according to Jünger, is merely escapism, inspired by "the mirror feeling (resentment) towards the present situation", longing for an idolized past whose criteria are in fact "derived from the present"¹⁰. Whereas romanticism is a form of bourgeois escapism, the enthusiasm of the pre-war young is not of romantic origin - they do not seek to shield themselves from reality, but on the contrary seek an *intensified experience* of life. "Insofar as this protest contained an heroic heritage, insofar as it contained love, it rose beyond the romantic space into the sphere of power"¹¹. Thus, the concept of power, which plays a central role in "the Worker", is closely connected to an irreducible experience of life. Jünger was confronted with this experience amidst the desolate landscape of the battlefield, and this experience bears upon both the soldier's individuality and the bellicose collectivity. Therefore, we must clearly distinguish its psychological -, sociological - as well as its combattant-technological dimensions.

On the *psychological* level, the experience of war is closely linked with the anti-bourgeois vitalism I have just referred to. This notion of *bourgeois*, which plays an important critical role in "the Worker", refers not to a sociological category (the bourgeois being defined by its 'objective class position'), but to an essentialist anthropological typology.

In his 1934 essay "*Ueber den Schmerz*", Jünger attempted to develop a comprehensive account of the *condition humaine* by contemplating man's attitude towards the ineluctable fact of death and suffering. As the desperate attempt to evade suffering is considered to be the driving force of history, this also provides us with an evaluative standard to weigh the successive historical eras: the attitude of man vis-à-vis death, his

9. Alfred von Martin - Der heroische Nihilismus und seine Ueberwindung
Krefeld, 1948, p.86

10. Ernst Jünger - Der Arbeiter, par.14

11. Ernst Jünger - Der Arbeiter, par.15 (*)

capacity to cope with suffering, contains a standard of value of the diverse types of man.

The Bourgeois is the Typus which seeks to evade suffering by resorting to the tepid pleasures of material comfort. Man is tucked in, yet he has lost touch with the essential forces of life, thus having become estranged from his "inner self". The repression of suffering by apparent material comfort generates its own kind of particularly unconscious suffering, in the form of *ennui*. *Ennui*, to be sure, is a debilitated kind of suffering, just like the bourgeois values of peace and security represent a pathetic kind of existence. According to Jünger, however, the bourgeois form of life is destined to ruin, as the experience of suffering and death can never be expelled - not even by unbounded material wealth.

As it is impossible to keep suffering at a distance¹², the only way to deal with it is to confront it. This will have man regain access to life, have him regain the experience of the abundance of life. Jünger's African adventure may well be considered an attempt to *overcome* bourgeois decadence, to restore life in its essential vitality. Likewise, the explosion of 1914 provided the opportunity to regain an experience of *vis vitalis*. Exposed to danger, man is thrown back upon elementary life: "under this brightly shining armour, under all the drapery, with which we decked ourselves like magicians, we remained naked and rough like the peoples of the woods and the steppe"¹³. During war, the varnish of civilization is torn off, and nature bursts out, in an orgy of violence. On the psychological level, the experience of war implied the loss of individuality: the individual is being shattered by overwhelming fear and an ecstatic awareness of the surrounding earth. "...ecstasy. This state of the holy man, of the great poet and of great love, is also granted to those of great bravery (...). This bravery is a kind of ecstasy beyond all others, an unleashing that breaks all chains. It is a kind of merciless, unbounded rage, comparable only to the forces of nature. Here, man is like the howling storm, the seething sea and the roaring thunder. Here, man is merged with the Universe."¹⁴. Here, the individual surrenders to the overwhelming power of life (and death), thereby obtaining a privileged metaphysical experience of Being. Only he who has the courage to submit to his own existential fear and to acknowledge his own *nothingness* can overcome his narrow-minded individuality - and be really in touch with life as such.

Hence the cult of heroism, which is also preeminent in Jünger's own war-experience¹⁵: the complete submission to the ontological substratum of

12. Cf. Ernst Jünger - Der Arbeiter, par.13

13. Ernst Jünger - Der Kampf als inneres Erlebnis

in: Werke (Stuttgart, 1980), Band 7 (Essays I), p.12 (*)

life, the conscious exposition to death not only debases the individual to absolute nothingness in the face of Being, but at the same time *elevates* the heroic individual "beyond the law of suffering", thereby conferring absolute *sovereignty* on the soldier. In the presence of death, man discovers what is truly valuable: "when man approaches the point at which he shows himself equal or superior to suffering, he gains access to the sources of his power and to the secret, that hides beneath its dominion"¹⁶. Under the 'categorical imperative of the heart'¹⁷, man understands, immediately ('*blitzartig*') and with unerring instinct, what is right. The glorification of war implies the abdication of rational, universal morality: the heart has a more direct relation towards truth and value than has the Mind. The heroic individual has obtained a privileged experience of Being, and is therefore morally superior compared to the bourgeois.

Yet, the sorties of the Stoßtrupp, the opportunities to individual heroism were sparse. Most of the time was spent in the cruel reality of the trenches, and the routine of every day life in the trenches indelibly stamped its marks on Jünger. The bleak collectivism of the trenches, to be sure, does not neutralize the experiences of individual heroism - quite the contrary. It even tends to reinforce those experiences I have just touched upon. In submerging in the excavations, the individual soldier merges with the world - the soldier is entrenched in 'mother earth', he has returned to the eternal womb of Being. The experience of life in the trenches is in fact a metaphysical experience, as I shall expound shortly.

Likewise, this experience underlines the *nothingness* of the individual. This refers not only to the psychological dimension of war, but to the

14. Ernst Jünger - Der Kampf als inneres Erlebnis
op.cit. p.54 (*)

On the fascist implications of this glorification of the unconscious,
cf. Theodor Adorno - Der Begriff des Unbewußten in der transzendentalen
Seelenlehre (1927)
in: Gesammelte Schriften, Band 1, p.319ff

15. Jünger himself was renowned for his death-defying acts of bravery. His personal record mentions fourteen major injuries, and on september 22nd, 1918, he was rewarded the highest military honour ('*pour la mérite*'). He undoubtedly belonged to the elite of the trenches, which Mussolini called '*aristocrazia trinceresta*'.

16. Ernst Jünger - Ueber den Schmerz
Werke (Stuttgart, 1980), Band 7, p.143-191, par.1 (*)

17. Ernst Jünger - Das Abenteuerliche Herz, I
Werke (Stuttgart, 1979), Band 9 (Essays III), p.173

second, *sociological* dimension as well. After the promise of heroic individualism was stunted by the dreary reality of the trenches, new germs of enthusiasm were to be cultivated to wrest *meaning* from the horror of despondency. In his war novel "Battle as an inner experience", Jünger not only celebrated fear and elementary life, but also subtly expressed the tacit *solidarity* among the soldiers in the trenches: "Ultimately, it is *one* great fate, which carries us all on the same wave. Here, we have once been together as an organism confronting the hostile world, as men that are, despite their minor questions, sorrows and joys, connected by an encompassing assignment"¹⁸. And this assignment fell to these men by "einer großen Vernunft"¹⁹.

The solidarity of the soldiery has often been interpreted from the nationalist perspective. War, according to this ideology, had finally achieved what Bismarck, despite his political genius, had not: national unity. The original class differences, between the propertied aristocracy and the masses of proletarian origins, were thought to have dissolved in the conciliatory unity of the *Nation*. In the trenches, the soldiers were supposed to bury the hatchet of internal controversy for the sake of Germany. This, to be sure, may be considered scarcely concealed ideology. Even if everyone was equal to the indifferent works of death (the "*Wahllosigkeit der Bedrohung*", the caprice of threat, as Jünger put it²⁰), social relations were reflected in the hierarchical structure of the army: the prussian-aristocratic military command deciding the fate of the proletarian masses of cannon-fodder. Furthermore, there remained the division between this disposable trench-soldiery on the one hand and political command, that kept itself out of range, on the other. This aggravated class difference turned out to be the basis of intensified resentment against the bourgeois political order of the Weimar-Republic.

Jünger, I think, did not adhere to the ideology of equality in referring to the "encompassing assignment", nor did he think of *Germania* as the "great Reason". First, he was too much of an elitist to identify himself with the coarse populace that inhabited the trenches - even if he saw that the soldiers depended on their mutual readiness to sacrifice in order to survive. But instead of as a body of equals, he conceived of the trench-soldiery as an *organism*, that is to say as a strictly articulated order, that allotted every individual soldier his specific task. This implied absolute nothingness of the individual on the sociological level: the indi-

18. Ernst Jünger - Der Kampf als inneres Erlebnis,
op.cit. p.85 (*)

19. Ibid.

20. Ernst Jünger - Ueber den Schmerz, par.3

vidual was being sacrificed to the great cause. But Jünger, in the second place, did not think *Germania* to be the cause to strive for, he did not think the *Nation* (in its political sense) to be the embodiment of the great Reason, but rather the *Idea* (in a hegelian sense) which occurred in History. This Idea revealed itself as *Will to Power*: "fallen under the spell of the clenched strength of the Reich marching towards the great battle, the meaning of History in the Iron Age instantaneously revealed itself to him. Everything crystallized in the experience of the column silently marching towards the battlefield, the answer to all the questions appeared in a flash: life as such, the individual existence as well as the epoch as a whole, everything abides the law of Will to Power"²¹.

The third aspect of war I have referred to is its combatant dimension, and concerns the specifically technological character of the trenchwar. Modern warfare, according to Jünger, displays a specific form of weaponry which, in turn, is to be handled in a rather specific way: the implementation of this weaponry resembles a labour process in which the soldier is reduced to a mere extension of the arsenal. The term *Materialschlacht* is quite revealing in this context. The soldier is no longer an individual combatant, armed with his particular weapon, in modern warfare the soldier is to be considered a "day labourer of death". The soldier in the trenches is, in fact, a "*Worker-Soldier*". And as war took on the form of a gigantic production process, the production process of industrial labour assumed a more or less bellicose character: *war economy*.

After its initial military successes, by the end of 1916 all the odds were against Germany. First of all, the German armies were badly outnumbered by the combined Entente-divisions. At home, famine - and shortage in general - reigned, as Germany had completely been sealed off from overseas imports of raw materials and food by the British naval blockade. And after Rumania, with its material riches, had likewise been closed off, Germany had become totally dependent upon its own resources. Germany had to fight a two-front battle: both against the enemy in the field and shortage at home. This battle was led by field-marshal Hindenburg and his chief of staff Erich Ludendorff. As war had depleted the storages of manpower, and the soldiers could not be wasted in the trenches infinitely, Hindenburg/Ludendorff conceived a desperate last attempt to sweep aside the allies before the arrival of the numerous American armies. In 1916, Ludendorff proclaimed the *Auxiliary Labour Law*, which mobilized all German men between the age of seventeen and sixty, and imposed enforced employment on the so-called *home front*.

21. Hans-Peter Schwarz - *Der konservative Anarchist*
Freiburg, 1962, p.70

The home front, that is to say war economy, was organized by the father of the idea of *Planwirtschaft*, the former SPD-politician Walter Rathenau, who both stimulated the invention of many new *Ersatz*-materials (in order to obtain full economic autarky), and 'rationalized' industrial production - i.e., he mainly increased the scale of production, by organizing the different branches of economic enterprise into compulsory cartels under a kind of pseudo-military command. This war economy "implies the triumph of the monopoly system. The economy of an entire country has really become a single, enormous concern now, that commands uniformly, according to definite rules, from the capital down to the smallest village. The state has really become a centralized, highly perfected machine of Power and Force, and it can no longer allow for any 'liberties' within its borders"²². In the course of 1917, Germany had become a centrally organized State: the state of the Worker-Soldier, as Jünger was to call it.

The Workers' State was dedicated to the unleashing of power and its transformation into a clenched force, a process which Jünger called *total mobilization*²³. This term not only pertains to war on the front, but also includes the organization of society at large. World War I was more than just a psychological event: as the Roman numeral indicates, this war may be considered the beginning of a new era. One of the main characteristics of this war was the mobilization of the civilian population to taking care of the home front, and the massive involvement of non-professional military draftees. According to Jünger, these developments immediately resulted from the universalization of (democratic) civil rights. As civil rights spread among the people, this people of 'equal and free' citizens had become inescapably obliged to secure its sovereignty and defend its sovereign residence: the democratic nation-state. Hence, "the armed representation of the country is no longer the duty and privilege of the professional soldier alone, but has become the task of the able bodied in general"²⁴. And even if this deployment of civilian conscripts was not wholly novel, the scale of it was absolutely unparalleled in history, and as such this World War may be considered the first 'democratic' war, the mass-army being "the purest expression of democracy"²⁵.

In retrospect, according to Jünger, this war represented more than just an escalated conflict between national interests, it implied the collision

22. Arthur Rosenberg - Geschichte des Bolschewismus
Frankfurt, 1975, p.86-87 (*)

23. In 1930, Jünger wrote a short essay which may be considered a preliminary draft to "the Worker": Ernst Jünger - "Die totale Mobilmachung"
in: Werke, Band 7, p.119-143

24. Ernst Jünger - Die totale Mobilmachung, par.3

between two eras²⁶ - between democracy on the one side and traditional nationalism on the other side of the frontline (even if the participating nation-states were themselves internally divided into these two camps). The Entente may be considered to have ultimately wiped out the last strongholds of resistance against the rise of democracy: the imperial order of Germany and the monarchy of Austria/Hungary. And even if czarist Russia sided with the victorious powers, the Russian variant of the out-dated order did not live through the war.

In a sense, the first World War heralded a world-wide revolution²⁷. In February 1917, a bourgeois revolution swept aside the reign of the czar, whereas in Germany the imperial order was to be replaced by the bourgeois-democratic parliamentary order of the Weimar-Republic. But these bourgeois revolutions were never viable: the Bolshevik October-revolution brought down the social democratic republic, whereas the Weimar Republic was incessantly being attacked by anti-democratic forces, both from the 'left' and from the 'right'. I put these predicates between parentheses, as they are derived from the parliamentary spectrum, whereas these vehement criticisms discarded parliamentarism *tout court*. Besides, in the revolutionary struggle against bourgeois parliamentarism, the left/right-dichotomy ran into all kinds of blended political colours, known under such paradoxical names as 'national-bolshevism', 'revolutionary nationalism' and, more general, the 'conservative revolution'.

Jünger himself was heavily involved in this antidemocratic undercurrent of the Weimar-Republic, which not only rejected parliamentary representation but discarded the notion of democracy altogether. Jünger sheltered fugitive members of the *Freikorps*, and published in periodicals such as *Stahlhelm*, *Standarte*, *Arminius*, *Vormarsch*, *Widerstand* and *die Kommenden* - all journals of the anti-democratic splintergroups emanating from the demobilized soldiery. As Armin Mohler put it: "the national revolutionaries (i.e. the frontgeneration JP) are no longer anchored in the former world, and thus they are becoming the actual carrier of what we have previously described as German nihilism"²⁸. In fact, this revolutionary counter-

25. Gerhard Nebel - Ernst Jünger

Wuppertal, 1949, p.121

To be sure, I think it patently clear that "mass-war" does not at all coincide with "democratic war", as democracy not only refers to the massive character of institutions, but also to quite specific organizational and political forms.

26. Cf. Ernst Jünger - *Der Arbeiter*, par.45

27. Cf. Ernst Jünger - *Der Arbeiter*, par.69

and Ernst Jünger - *Die totale Mobilmachung*, par.2

movement was a *nihilistic revolution*, as Hermann Rauschning labeled it in his famous "Revolution des Nihilismus" - notably a cultural revolution against what they considered the sedated bourgeois order. In the next paragraph, I shall attempt to summarize these criticisms and elucidate the specific vocabulary in which they were being expressed.

2. THE CONSERVATIVE REVOLUTION

For a considerable time now, our European culture seems to be rushing towards catastrophe: restlessly, violently, hastily.

Friedrich Nietzsche

The term '*conservative revolution*' does not, primarily, refer to a *political* movement: it mainly refers to a "*sittlich-geistige Bewegung*" - a movement of cultural criticism. The culture under attack, as I have already noted, was bourgeois society, or rather: *Zivilisation*. In German *Kulturphilosophie*, the term civilization does not refer to a phase in the development of culture (as it does in French and English tradition, in which the terms *civilization* and *culture* even tend to coincide), but rather designates the *degeneration* of culture: we must "not confuse the dissolving and necessarily degenerating means of civilization with culture", as Nietzsche put it²⁹.

In his famous "*Untergang des Abendlandes*", the German philosopher Oswald Spengler characterized civilization as the order of indolence: the bourgeois cult of progress, with its emphasis on material comfort only, implied the decay of *seelische Gestaltungskraft*. This claim assembled the pre-war rebellion against bourgeois society, and heavily influenced the conservative revolution (or at least its more intellectual branches) as it attacked the (bourgeois) Weimar-Republic.

28. Armin Mohler - Die konservative Revolution in Deutschland
Stuttgart, 1950, p.177

29. Friedrich Nietzsche - Nachlaß
Werke (Schlechta-Edition), Band III, p.810

Here, I think, the term *conservatism* is to be understood not in its political - but in its philosophical meaning, and is probably related to Nietzsche's suggestion of *eternal recurrence*. This conservative philosophy of history is rooted in the *ontology* of Will to Power, and dismisses the teleological conception of history. It states, that history is *not* a more or less linear development towards a goal which lies beyond the present world, but conceives of the world "as a limited and well-rounded totality (...). No development can ever extract more from Being than it contains. Rather, the mode of development being determined by Being"³⁰. History is but an infinite series of rearrangements of one and the same *eternally constant substance*. As the world is a manifestation of a finite substance (a finite number of power-quanta), the number of possible combinations can not be infinite. This implies a repetitive conception of history, which claims that history is a kind of kaleidoscope, in which a finite number of essential elements are being combined and re-combined by Time, to produce only a relatively small number of historic forms. History, then, is the process in which the *essential* forms ('*Ausformungen*') of Being are being sculpted from the same, eternal material³¹.

This philosophy of history implies, that the perfection of Being is not to be attained by progressively appropriating *external* sources. Perfection is already, albeit slumberingly, present in the heart of Being itself. This immanent perfection needs only to be deployed. Full deployment of the immanent *potentia* is the essential vocation of Being, and it is the vocation of man to have Being attain perfection: man should be sensitive to the inner essence of Being, and voluntarily surrender to being its instrument.

On the socio-political level, the perfection of Being was considered to express itself in the well-balanced, majestic culture of a grand, millennial order. Here we may get to understand the proximity of the '*conservative*' and the *nationalist* revolutionary principles. The *essentialism* of the philosophy of history made itself felt in nationalist political theory. This nationalism developed within the terminological framework of *Volk* (people), *Nation*, *Reich* and *Führer*. The concepts of *Volk* and *Nation* refer to a presumed, eternal unity of traditional *Gemeinschaft* (community), deriving its solidarity from the essential values it is

30. Ernst Jünger - *Der Arbeiter*, par.48

On Nietzsche's ontology of Will to Power and its 'cyclical' implications:
cf. Gilles Deleuze - *Nietzsche et la philosophie*
Paris, 1962, p.29-34, p.53ff.

31. Cf Armin Mohler - *Die konservative Revolution in Deutschland 1918-1932*
Stuttgart, 1950, p.132ff

thought to embody. *Nation* is a "'*Schicksalgemeinschaft*', created by a perennial Will"³². This *Gemeinschaft*, however, had been tarnished by civilization (and notably by the cradle of civilization: France)³³, and it was considered the task of the German people to restore the lost unity of the *Nation*. *Nation* is "a people unified in a special direction of the Will, willing to fight for its inner unity, that is being recognized as a God-given task"³⁴.

The concept of *Nation* contains pseudo-religious overtones and refers to a kind of mystical experience. No wonder, nationalist *Empfindung* resurged in the post-war ruminations of the experience in the trenches: "Now, while it has become a matter of life and death, while we are wading through the dirt and while we are under constant fire, sharing dirt, lice, bread and thirst - now, at last, we are together. Finally we have found each other: we, who have longed for each other for so long (..). Finally time has come. There she is (..) the indefeasible *Nation*"³⁵. *Nation* is "a *Volk* moulded into a political unity, with a decisive political Will".

This decisive political Will, which moulds the power of the *Volk* into one direction, represents itself in the *authoritarian State* - the *State* being the legislative and executive instrument of the *Nation*. This authoritarian *State* is of a radically different nature as is parliamentary democratic government - such as, for example, the Weimar-Republic. As parliamentary democracy may be considered the institutional embodiment of society - viz. the brittle equilibrium of conflicting interests - , it can never be the "*Ausdruck des Ganzen*", the expression of the unified power of totality. The authoritarian *State*, on the other hand, does not seek to safeguard the individual rights of its citizens, it must not be liable to

32. Kurt Sontheimer - Antidemokratisches Denken in der Weimarer Republik
München, 1983 (1962), p.253

33. German nationalism has a long tradition , but it most potently sprang up in the first quarter of the 19th century. No doubt, this nationalism must be valued against the background of the humiliating domination of Napoleonic France, and the most vehement expression of this nationalism can be found in Fichte's 1807 lectures: "*Reden an die deutsche Nation*" (address to the German Nation). We must, however, understand that the political implications of Fichte's national-democratic ideology differed greatly from revolutionary, interbellum nationalism.

* Cf. George Mosse - The crisis of German Ideology
New York, 1964

34. Kurt Sontheimer - loc.cit.

35. Franz Schauwecker - Aufbruch der Nation
Berlin, 1929, p.209

the whims of social demands: society is not to be regarded the supreme goal of politics, but should rather be subordinate to "a dominion, in which eternal values apply"³⁶. The State must not pursue any abstract, utopian ideal, it should merely carry out the imperative vocation of the *Nation*: to fully deploy its immanent, essential power. "The new State should not be the political representation of a victorious 'Idea': rather, a new consciousness of force should document itself. In the foundation of the new, revolutionary and totalitarian form of dominion, the will to merely develop all energy should establish a picture that lives in the chest of the young generation and in the heart of a new kind of man"³⁷. The State, in sum, is not the instrument of whoever may appropriate it, it is *imperium*, a specific type of command in which the *perennial values* express themselves. It is the clenched force of the *Nation*, attaining its eternal destiny.

This eternal destiny is contained in the politico-metaphysical notion of the *Reich*. *Reich* is the fundamental substratum of each and every form of government: all forms of government are modulations of its *immanent power*. When the political expression of the *Reich* coincides perfectly with its essence, the end of time will have been reached. "The vocation of the *Reich* is the ultimate task. Its fulfillment will engender the order of the world. The *Reich* is the ultimate order of the world"³⁸. This implies that, ultimately, the *Reich* is destined to assume *world-dominion*. And only by realizing universal reign does the *Reich* coincide with its *divine* essence, and will the millenary *Gottes-Reich*³⁹ be established. The nationalist revolutionaries understood the advent of the divine Empire to be ineluctably written in destiny. As Jünger put it: "we nationalists have decided to want necessity, that which destiny wants"⁴⁰, and they did not hesitate to destroy everything that blocked the *Nation* in attaining this essential vocation of Being.

Now, this "surrogate religion"⁴¹ of the *Reich* obviously played an im-

36. Kurt Sontheimer - op.cit. p.119

"eine Herrschaft, in der Ewigkeitswerte zur Geltung kommen".

37. Alfred von Martin - Der heroische Nihilismus und seine Ueberwindung
op.cit. p.81 (*)

38. Fritz Büchner (ed.) - Was ist das Reich?
Oldenburg, 1932, p.50

39. Otto-Ernst Schüddekopf - Nationalbolschewismus in Deutschland
Frankfurt, 1972, p.226ff.

40. Ernst Jünger - Der Charakter
in: Die Standarte, 13-5-1925, p.150

41. Otto-Ernst Schüddekopf - op.cit. p.223

portant, mythical role, bestowing meaning upon the apparently senseless experiences of the trench war. It also served as a revolutionary myth in the battle against the Weimar-Republic.

Not surprisingly, the conservative revolution recruited most of its adherents from the demobilized soldiery - the *Freikorps* and the *Bünde*. These may very well be considered the prolongation of war-experience (as they were put into action as *Grenzschutz*, to suppress the insurrectionary Poles, and to wipe out the workers' councils). As such, they served as a refuge for the estranged demobilized. But they may equally be considered to resume the anti-bourgeois revolt: war had transformed the pre-war young from individual rebels into cold-blooded political revolutionaries. The vehemence of their souls having been sharpened by the experience of death, they would not allow pre-war decadence to return.

The main target of their vehement criticism was the Weimar Republic. Not only had it turned Germany into a *Reparationskolonie* (1919 treaty of Versailles, 1921 Paris-conference, 1929 Young Plan), it also submitted to the West as a political and cultural example: parliamentary disunity of particularistic interests, materialistic greed, the organization of social life on the basis of abstract mechanisms, such as formal-legal principles and the impersonal structure of money-based exchange. In sum: the Weimar Republic had sacrificed the *essential German values of Gemeinschaft* to the materialistic cosmopolitanism of *civilization*. "As the leadership of the new state tarnished the idea and the honour of the *Nation*, the former front-soldiery had to rise against it"⁴².

This revolt may be divided into two phases - although these two could have coincided. The first phase of revolutionary battle was of an *anarchist* nature: the existing order should be destroyed in "the great purification through nothingness"⁴³. The Freecorps assumed the role of *Partisan*, who is living "underneath the orderly zone", and whose main task lies in sabotage⁴⁴. This sabotage serves no other purpose than to destroy the bourgeois order, without any *positive* goal. This, as we have seen, was a phase of *revolutionary nihilism*. The second phase was characterized by the search for a revolutionary model to be pursued. This model was to be provided by the ideology of the *Reich*.

42. August Winnig - Das Reich der Republik
Stuttgart, 1930, p.191

43. "die große Säuberung durch das Nichts"

Cf. Ernst Jünger - 'Nationalismus' und Nationalismus
in: Das Tagebuch X-38, Berlin 21-09-1929

44. Cf. Ernst Jünger - Ueber den Schmerz, par.10

Unlike the earlier champions of this ideology, the nationalist revolutionaries did not have to resort to the memory of times long gone, in which Germany had in fact been a great Empire. "One only needed to add the acknowledged counterslogans *nationalism* and *socialism* to the repudiating attitude towards the 19th-century values, to transform it into a kind of political activism and radicalism that was unknown to the youth-movement before 1914"⁴⁵. And the model of the new *Reich* could be adopted from the young Soviet-Union. Even if the revolutionary nationalists rejected the internationalist inclinations of the young Soviet-Union, the socialist revolution was considered to drive back world capitalism (viz. the West), and socialism was deemed the fulfilment of a *Volks-gemeinschaft*, the destruction of class-society as the realization of a truly communal nation.

Bolshevik Russia was considered the spiritual "'Jungbrunnen' from the East, from which the German people could draw new strength, to relieve the weary civilization of the German republic and Europe"⁴⁶. Germany and Russia⁴⁷, according to the revolutionary nationalists, had a common *Schicksal*⁴⁷ (to destroy the West). And the Bolshevik Revolution very much served as an example of how to wage war against overwhelming odds. The combative power that the Bolsheviks had developed was enormous, and the red army managed to fight the combined western and counter-revolutionary powers successfully. The Soviet experience had shown what could be achieved by revolutionary sacrifice and a ruthless, dictatorial organization of all military and labour-power⁴⁸.

The experience of Soviet power, of the revolutionary vanguard and the authoritarian State, of forced industrialization and revolutionary sacrifice: these elements all mingled with the experience of war - total mobilization, the destructive power of technology, the cult of heroism and sacrifice -, to converge in Jünger's 1932 book on "the Worker", which may be considered the most eloquent expression of the ideology of the *Reich*. But I do think, that "the Worker" transcends the narrow-minded nationalism that did, in fact, characterize many of the *interbellum* versions of this ideology⁴⁹. As may be concluded from historical evidence, Jünger was more

45. Otto-Ernst Schüddekopf - op.cit. p.139 (*)

46. Otto-Ernst Schüddekopf - op.cit. p.58 (*)

47. Cf. Hans von Hentig - Das Deutsche Manifest
München, 1921

48. In his influential work "Preußentum und Sozialismus", Oswald Spengler sought to connect the idea of the Prussian authoritarian State with "the valuable parts of the German proletariat". As the two great revolutions (October 1917 and November 1918) had clearly shown, power was vested with the proletarian masses.

inclined to national bolshevism⁵⁰, which claimed that the time of national etatism had passed. "Germany is dead. Today, we still fight in the name of tomorrow's fatherland, when the proletarian power must crush yesterday's dreams in favour of reality. Yesterday we still had a tradition, a history, a culture - this ended the moment we lined up under the banner of the proletariat, that will have its tradition start tomorrow"⁵¹.

The claim, that Jünger did not advocate nationalist imperialism, is to be substantiated in the next section, in which I shall expound his theory on the dominion of the Worker as the victory over the bourgeois order and the realization of the *weltrevolutionäre Tendenz* in the great *Imperium* of the Worker's State. I shall do so rather mimetically, only to critically analyze his theories on the rise of this new order in the last section of this thesis.

49. Cf. Ernst Jünger - Der Arbeiter, par.44

50. Ernst Niekisch, the leader of this trend of revolutionary nationalism, was one of Jünger's closest friends.

51. K.O. Paetel - Zwischenbilanz

in: Die sozialistische Nation, mai 1931, p.63



II. TECHNOLOGY AND NIHILISM

In the previous chapter, I have expounded the biographical, historical and socio-political backgrounds to Jünger's book on "the Worker". In the context of this thesis, this excursus may prove useful to indicate the specific terminology applied in "the Worker", or to adduce some leads in the attempt to understand Jünger's specific interpretation of the rise of technology and its cultural, social and political implications. However, the political and historical backgrounds have also tended to obfuscate a thorough interpretation of this main theme. So far, the greater part of Jünger-studies has focused mainly on the totalitarian implications of his philosophy, on its supposedly ideological character. Yet, this politicized reading has obviously stifled the discussion about its essential core¹. And even if we should like to attack "the Worker" as mere ideology, it does not suffice to simply *reject* it as such - we should first critically analyze it, and lay bare its alleged political biases and theoretical inconsistencies. Before we set the dogs of criticism at their prey, they must first be baited.

So before critically dissecting "the Worker", we should first get to understand what Jünger has intended to convey. Therefore, I shall attempt to reproduce his line of argument here. Still, I am very much aware of the fact that 'mere' representation inevitably entails interpretation as well. In my reading of "the Worker", I have reorganized the materials around the Nietzschean theme of nihilism. First of all, because this theme of nihilism immediately crossed my mind the first time I read "the Worker": it wells up from the text itself. Secondly, the revolutionary movement in which Jünger partook is also known as the "revolution of nihilism"². And in fact, I have emphasized the nihilist overtones in the portrayal of the historical and socio-political backgrounds as well.

So, before exposing the argument, it may be illuminating to cast a brief glance at the Nietzschean conceptual framework in which I am to expose Jünger's philosophy (par.1). Then, I shall present the history of nihilism and the specific modulations of society it entails. Jünger con-

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1. Cf. Norbert Dietka - Ernst Jünger nach 1945:
das Jünger-Bild der bundesdeutschen Kritik
Peter Lang, 1988, passim.
 2. Cf. Hermann Rauschning - Die Revolution des Nihilismus
Zürich, 1938

ceived of history as a process in which the era of the Bourgeois, due to its immanent logic, is falling apart (par.2) and must leave the field of history to the new *Gestalt* of the Worker. However, this new era of the Worker has not yet arrived, and we are situated in an *interregnum*: the old world of the Bourgeois is gone for good, but a new order has not yet established itself. Ours, according to Jünger, is an age of chaos. Still, to the more sensitive mind, the understanding is dawning that this chaos is but a transitional phase, and that from chaos a new order will arise. This understanding may bestow meaning upon the apparently senseless history of decay, bestow meaning upon chaos. To attain this understanding does, however, require new forms of experience - the experience of the deeper unity of Being. So before we may get to understand Jünger's claim of the forthcoming dominion, we must first dwell on his *essentialist* gnoseology (par.3). In paragraph 4, I shall resume Jünger's statements on the transitional era. To characterize this era, it may be called the dictatorship of nihilism. Like Nietzsche, however, Jünger sought to *overcome* this nihilism, and in the last sections of "the Worker" he indicated that a turning-point may in fact be anticipated (par.5).

1. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

We must recognize nihilism as the great fate, as the fundamental power, whose influence nobody can evade.

Ernst Jünger - Ueber die Linie, par.5

"The Worker", I think, was conceived within a theoretical framework that was mainly influenced by Friedrich Nietzsche. And I also think, that it shares Nietzsche's vitalistic philosophical motivations: the desire to revitalize life and the desire for a great culture. And even if it is rather hazardous to ascribe an essential meaning to Nietzsche's philosophy, I think we may broach its most scandalous elements, and especially the notion of Will to Power, from this vitalistic perspective. "This Will to Power expresses itself in the squandering of energy: - accordingly, transformation of energy into life and 'life in highest potency' appears as goal"³. The desire to stir up life to highest potency is also connected - once again: in my interpretation - with the concept of nihilism.

The concept of nihilism is a rather complex and multi-layered one. It refers not only to a kind of radicalized epistemological scepticism, which denies the possibility of some indubitable knowledge of Truth, but to the psychological experience of the utter meaninglessness of life, the denial of the legitimacy of any socio-political order whatsoever (political nihilism), and also to the impossibility to found norms and values on rational standards (ethical nihilism). The first two elements recall the experience of the rebellious young (the *fin de siècle* ennui) and of post-war rebellion against the Weimar-republic respectively. In sum, we may state that "radical nihilism is the conviction of an absolute untenability of existence, as regards the highest values man has acknowledged; in addition to this the insight, that we have no right whatsoever to presuppose something *beyond* or *an sich* of things, that would be 'divine', or substantial morality"⁴. This is the experience known as 'the death of God': traditional values have lost their obligatory force, the 'death of

3. Friedrich Nietzsche - Werke III, 586 (*)

4. Friedrich Nietzsche - Werke III, 567 (*)

God' is being experienced as a moral and existential void. Nihilism is "the radical rejection of value and meaning"⁵.

Still, Nietzsche "did not take nihilism to be the end, but rather as a phase in an encompassing process"⁶. Or, as Heidegger stated in his comment on Jünger's account of nihilism: "the domain of complete nihilism forms the transition between two eras"⁷. According to Nietzsche, the dissolution of traditional values contains a promise, not a loss, as it implies the liberation of man from the ties of tradition. This means, that man can finally stir up life 'to highest potency' without being held back by moral considerations. Here, nihilism reaches a breaking-point (a 'zero-line', as Jünger called it): will man have the power to tear himself loose from the chains of tradition?; will he affirm nihilism as an opportunity to rise above tradition and proclaim Man sovereign?; or will he remain attached to *das nichtige Nichts*? In the first case, nihilism may be considered an exalted value beyond morality, "an indication of the increased Power of the spirit: active nihilism"⁸.

Hence, Nietzsche distinguished various levels of nihilism. And even if the distinct levels are in itself rather complex, we may divide them into *passive* -, *radical* (or: *persistent*) - and *active* nihilism. The first notion is mainly a concept of cultural criticism: it refers to the belief in values which are to be considered hostile to life (such as christianity, which preaches the nothingness of earthly life and glorifies celestial life in the hereafter). These values, according to Nietzsche, strip man of the responsibility to autonomously set values by himself. The passive nihilist, accepting these transcendent values as truth, thereby renounces autonomous, legislating majesty. Nihilism proper arises from the growing scepticism concerning the transcendent values: this is the age of *radical* nihilism, the disbelief in traditional values. But as long as man does not have the power to autonomously proclaim new values, he *persists* in the belief of the obnoxious values of the passive phase: "rather than not believe at all, man wants nothingness"⁹. Man does not, as yet, have the strength to either live in this moral void or fill up this *nihil* with new values. "This nihilism represents a pathological, intermediate state (..):

5. Friedrich Nietzsche - Werke III, 881

6. Ernst Jünger - Ueber die Linie, par.1
in: Werke, Band 7, p.237

7. Martin Heidegger - Zur Seinsfrage,
Frankfurt, ⁴ 1977, p.6

8. Friedrich Nietzsche - Werke III, 557

9. Friedrich Nietzsche - Zur Genealogie der Moral
Was bedeuten asketische Ideale, aph.28

either the productive forces are not yet strong enough, or decadence is still hesitating and has not yet invented its means"¹⁰.

Now, only if man *affirms* the dissolution of traditional values he may be able to step across the line of nihilism and proclaim himself really sovereign. To be sure, only few men have the force (or will-power) to make the jump from radical to active nihilism. As Jünger put it in "*das abenteuerliche Herz*": "we have been marching towards a magical zero-point for a long time now, which only those men may cross that dispose of other, invisible powers". Nietzsche would have called these men the *höhere Mensch* ('higher man': who is not to be mistaken for the *Ueberschensch*, although often enough the two seem to coincide), and Jünger saw this 'higher man' embodied in the *Typus* of the Worker-Soldier. And despite some differences, I do think that the Worker-Soldier does fit the part in Nietzsche's *theatrum philosophicum* (even if only in Jünger's *mise-en-scène*). The Worker as an active *Typus* will rise to sovereign dominion, because he has got a privileged experience of the world's essential meaning (i.e. Will to Power). Will to Power, being another word for life, is what must always surpass itself¹¹: in man, there is always something that reaches *beyond* man¹². And this may be achieved by the radical abnegation of the principle of individuality¹³.

Yet, Will to Power is not merely the name of the ontological substance¹⁴, it is also the name of the legislating *Will* (of the affirmative nihilist) to direct all power to the realization of the one goal: to surpass man and enable the arrival of the *Ueberschensch*¹⁵. Hence, the two central experiences of war, notably the loss of individuality and the unification of power under central command, were being celebrated as the *Aufhebung* of man: the fearless contempt of *suum esse conservare* implies the ultimate unleashing of man's power, whereas the disciplined command moulds power into one direction: the realization of the glorious Nation.

10. Friedrich Nietzsche - Werke III, 557 (*)

11. Friedrich Nietzsche - Also sprach Zarathustra
(Von der Selbst-Ueberwindung)

and Friedrich Nietzsche - Was bedeuten asketische Ideale, par.27

12. Friedrich Georg Jünger - Nietzsche
Frankfurt, 1949, p.129ff

13. Cf. the works of Georges Bataille ("Sur Nietzsche", but also his other works), who emphasized the notion of "loss of Self" as the precondition to Sovereignty.

14. Cf. Friedrich Nietzsche - Jenseits von Gut und Böse, aph.36

15. Cf. Friedrich Nietzsche - Werke III, 440

2. TOTAL MOBILIZATION

The sacrifice of the individual, the fearless affirmation of danger contrasts sharply with the softhearted sensitivity of the *Bürger*. As I have already indicated (p.15), Jünger conceived of the bourgeoisie not as a sociological category, as a social class (even if he does, on occasion, speak of 'the third estate'), but rather as a specific type of man: "the Bourgeois may be understood as that kind of man, that recognizes security as its highest value, and arranges his life accordingly"¹⁶. This desire for security stems from *horror vacui*. This existential fear, in turn, is an indication of the radical nihilism the Bourgeois has become a prey of, as the traditional, theocentric values have been demolished by the demystifying, rational powers of the Enlightenment.

Most importantly, the departure of God implies that suffering no longer has a chastening meaning, leading to redemption in the eventual communion. Suffering is utterly meaningless. But obviously, the Bourgeois does not have the power to endure this meaninglessness, and this makes man seek refuge in, what Jünger was to call, "the people's church of the 19th century"¹⁷: the ideology of progress. The Bourgeois finds consolation in the firm belief that suffering may be gradually expelled by the powers of Reason: "the highest power, through which the Bourgeois attains security, is Reason"¹⁸.

In the celebration of Reason, man is on the verge of entering the realm of active nihilism. Reason has dethroned God, but as Nietzsche indicated, reason may also serve as an instrument of the Will, in formulating new, life-enhancing values. This power of Reason is twofold: on the one hand, Reason formulates the goal to which the world must be urged, on the other hand it develops the means to achieve this goal. To rephrase it in the terminology used above: Reason stirs up power, and Reason moulds power into one direction.

As I have claimed before, the goal pursued is the redemption of mankind. The way to achieve this goal may be called *civilization* - in the traditional sense of collective, rationally coordinated transformation of

16. Ernst Jünger - Der Arbeiter, par.13 (*)

17. Ernst Jünger - Die totale Mobilmachung, par.2

18. Ernst Jünger - Der Arbeiter, par.13

Cf. Jeffrey Herf - Reactionary Modernism
Cambridge, 1986, p.102

the world so as to create the preconditions of a higher culture. However, the way in which this transformation has taken place has, in due course, turned against itself (and 'civilization' has turned at odds with the ideal of high culture). To understand this detour in the bourgeois path towards redemption, we must examine the specific character of the transformation of the world wielded in the era of the Bourgeois.

This specific character is being shaped by the consequences of nihilism. As God is dead, the void of his departure may be occupied by man, and in fact man has proclaimed himself foundation (*subiectum*) of the world. The experience of subjectivity is the only indubitable foundation of truth as well as moral values. The latter implies that the goals of Reason - that is to say: redemption - essentially revolve around Man. On the epistemological level, this implies that the world must obey to the authority of the Subject: the world is but an object of the subjective Will. According to Heidegger,¹⁹ this subject/object relation is the basis of a mechanized world-view, which in turn is the basis of modern technology. *Technè* is the 'art' of achieving one's goal, and in this process the objectified world is merely considered material to be moulded so as to fit the subjectively defined goal.

However, the radical enforcement of the cartesian principle of subjectivity contains some serious consequences. First, subjectivism does in fact imply absolute individualism. The subject has nothing to go by but the certainty of its own existence. From this perspective, it has become increasingly difficult to enforce all-embracing moral standards. Therefore, "Spinoza's phrase '*conatus esse conservandi primum et unicum virtutis est fundamentum*' contains the true maxim of all of western civilization"²⁰. This may be adduced, I think, as one of the reasons why the desire for redemption is being conceived as mere egoistic quest for material well-being: in the absence of any transcendent goals, the only goal seems to be the optimization of life as it is. The collective notion of the 'progress' of humanity is being debased to material growth only.

A second, related consequence is the reduction of rationality to the mere achievement of this nihilist goal²¹. Rationality being reduced to technological instrumentality, it has been incorporated in a very specific labour process. And in this labour process, that was intended to alleviate

19. Martin Heidegger - Die Zeit des Weltbildes

in: Gesamtausgabe, Band 5, p.75ff

20. Max Horkheimer/Theodor Adorno - Dialektik der Aufklärung

Frankfurt, 1982 (1944), p.29

21. Cf. Ernst Jünger - Der Arbeiter, par.13: "every victory of technology is merely a victory of comfort".

the burden of existence, the individual finds himself crushed, by the labour process itself as well as its social implications.

The achievements of technological rationality are indeed impressive. One need not be an expert in the history of technology to understand that the successive technological revolutions have very much increased man's power, and this increased power could indeed contain a promise. Still, "it is questionable, if all the mechanical inventions yet made have lightened the day's toil of any human being"²². Marx indicated, that this apparently inexplicable deferment of deliverance was connected with the specific relations of production in which industrial labour was embedded. Jünger, however, claimed that it was (the development of) *technology itself* that imposed its yoke upon mankind. As soon as man has invented a specific machine (no doubt to serve man's purpose), the machine can be handled only in very specific ways: "the implementation of the technological means entails a very specific form of life, which extends over the great things of life as well as the small"²³. Technology, according to Jünger, is not the instrument at the service of whoever may utilize it, it rather imposes its own, immanent dynamics upon the individual: "he who embarks on technology cannot control it, but is at its mercy. Man is being lived by the possibilities of technology"²⁴.

Even though we may question the technological determinism in these claims (cf. below, par. III.3), I think it clear that this portrayal of technology does refer to a historically demonstrable and patently real process. In the history of industrial production, mechanization and increase in scale have tended to go hand in hand with fractionalization of tasks and division of labour. As Marx stated, machine production "carries the social division of labour immeasurably further than manufacture does"²⁵, and in large-scale production the individual becomes an increasingly specialized part of the labour process. The worker becomes tied to his partial function exclusively, and is being converted into an automatic implement of the process: "in the factory, a dead mechanism exists independently, and the workers are being incorporated into this mechanism as living appendages"²⁶. The individual merges with the machinery, so as to form what Jünger called an '*organic construction*': "the close and ir-

22. John Stuart Mill - Principles of political economy
in: Karl Marx - Das Kapital, MEW 13, p.391

23. Ernst Jünger - Der Arbeiter, par.47

24. Gerhard Nebel - Ernst Jünger
Wuppertal, 1949, p.30

25. Cf. Karl Marx - op.cit. ch.XII-XIII

26. Ibid. p.445

refutable fusion of man with the equipment at hand"²⁷. And "the more labour loses its individual character, adopts an anonymous character instead, the more the 'person' - with its claims to freedom and 'worth' - becomes superfluous"²⁸. The individual worker is being reduced to his instrumental value of labour-power: "like a part of a machine, his virtue lies in his replaceability within the minute division of labour"²⁹.

It is clear that Jünger's conception is decisively influenced by his experiences of trench-war, with its specific division of labour, its increased importance of technology (*Materialschlacht*), as well as the subordination of the individual soldier to the machinery, and especially its denial of individual worth: "behind every fallen man, relief is already standing in reserve"³⁰. Still, as may be inferred from the thematic and terminological proximity to earlier writings on the sociology of industry - like, for example, Marx's, whose writings are pervaded with military terminology (such as the 'industrial reserve army') -, this conception of industrial labour is not a mere blow-up of his own experience. The main reason why Jünger took war to be a "first rate example" is that it "disclosed technology's immanent character of power, leaving aside all the economic and progressive elements"³¹.

Another characteristic aspect of technological labour that contributes to the "dissolvment of the individual"³² is the process of social disintegration which accompanies the increase of scale. In manufacture there was division of labour as well, yet in its initial stage, manufacture hardly differed from corporate guilds³³. Division of labour immediately implied interdependence of labour, the specialized tasks being reassembled in new forms of immediate cooperation. In fact, "cooperation remains the basic form of the capitalist mode of production", as long as division of labour or machinery do not play too important a role³⁴. Hence, as Emile Durkheim indicated, division of labour "holds together social aggregates

27. Ernst Jünger - Der Arbeiter, par.53

28. Alfred von Martin - Der heroische Nihilismus
op.cit. p.113

29. Jeffrey Herf - op.cit. p.103

Cf. John Orr - German social theory and the hidden face of technology
in: Archives européennes de sociology, 1974, p.316

30. Ernst Jünger - Der Arbeiter, par.43

cf. ibid. par.33: "man fällt nicht mehr, sondern man fällt aus".

31. Ernst Jünger - Der Arbeiter, par.47

32. Ibid. par.31

33. Karl Marx - Das Kapital, MEW 13, p.341ff.

34. Ibid. p.355

of the more advanced type"³⁵.

However, as new technologies are being introduced and scale increases, the division of labour is being intensified. This implies, that immediate solidarity is broken down, and cooperation is to be organized either by hierarchical coordination (division of manual labour and executive power on the factory-level), or by abstract mechanisms of regulation on the level of society at large. Most important, the close-knit, cooperative social structure of the guild, which provided an anchorage for the individual to determine his position, is being dissolved by formal-legal principles of individual 'freedom'. And equally, the traditional bond of "common ideas and sentiments", of the shared norms and values that "held together pre-industrial societies"³⁶, has lost its binding force and is gradually being taken over by the abstractly mediating mechanism of the market. In this process, "the abstraction, and therefore the cruelty of all human relations, is continuously increasing"³⁷.

In fact, this is the starting-point of "the Worker": the much-lamented rise of mass-society (to the cost of *Gemeinschaft*), the experience of a totally secularized, functional system of production, founded on abstract mechanisms, formal principles and estranged social relations, in which the individual is totally absorbed in "bands, strap-works, sequences and stripes of faces that flash by, like columns of ants, whose advancement is no longer dependent on their own free will, but subject to automatic discipline"³⁸. It is the experience of life in the megapolis, completely avowed to labour, to the transformation of life into productive force, and the mobilization of this productive force to maximum intensity as the only goal: it is the experience of life under *total mobilization*, of the transformation of life into energy.

The illusion of progress has obviously lost its attraction, 'civilization' has in fact taken mankind away from culture instead of attaining it: "who would dare to deny that 'civilization' is more closely connected to progress than is 'culture', that in the megapolis civilization finds its natural expression and that it is able to maintain means and concepts to which culture bears no relation, or to which it is even hostile"³⁹.

However, unlike many of his contemporaries, Jünger did not lament this

35. Emile Durkheim - De la division du travail social
in: Stephen Lukes - Emile Durkheim
London, 1973, p.148

36. Ibid. p.141

37. Ernst Jünger - Die totale Mobilmachung, par.8 (*)

38. Ernst Jünger - Der Arbeiter, par.31 (*)

39. Ernst Jünger - Die totale Mobilmachung, par.5 (*)

history of decline - quite the contrary. Clearly, "the 'triumphal progress of technology' leaves a broad trace of destroyed symbols (..) - an anarchy, that tears the unity of life to pieces. The destructive side of this process is recognized (..). The essence of technology appears to be of nihilistic nature, precisely because its attack extends over the totality of relations and because no value is capable of resisting it. This fact, however, should make us particularly suspicious, and it reveals that, even if technology is itself beyond value and seemingly neutral, it is at service"⁴⁰. The chaos, that characterizes mass-society, indicates "the decay of the old order"⁴¹, and it should be affirmed as the necessary first stage of a new order: "only after the old order is completely destroyed and has become meaningless, the reality of an other force field can emerge"⁴².

This obviously parallels Nietzsche's claim of a turning-point in the process of nihilism: only after nihilism has developed fully, and after the prevailing values are annihilated totally, mankind may rise to a new era of active nihilism. To the nihilist revolutionaries of interbellum Germany, this meant that the bourgeois order was to be destroyed totally, and Jünger himself proclaimed a "great purification through nothingness"⁴³. To these revolutionaries, the experience of nothingness had been imposed by the experience of war. Yet, to understand that 'nothingness' was not the end, but rather the inevitable precondition for a new *Kultur*, required that this experience be properly estimated. Man had to look *beyond* the surface appearances to understand the essential meaning of meaninglessness: that a new *Gestalt* was about to emerge.

40. Ernst Jünger - Der Arbeiter, par.47 (*)

41. Ernst Jünger - Der Arbeiter, par.59 (cf. *ibid.* par.32)

42. *Ibid.* par.40 (*)

43. Ernst Jünger - 'Nationalismus' und Nationalismus

in: Das Tagebuch, X 38

Berlin, 21-09-1929

3. ON METHODOLOGY: THE NOTION OF GESTALT

Sofar, I have considered the process of decline mainly from the socio-historic point of view. As such, this process is well known, and Jünger is not the first to deal with it - and probably not even the most elaborate theoretician either. What is most interesting in "the Worker", however, is that, while undermining the optimistic conception of technology as an instrument of progress, Jünger does not raise his voice in anti-technological lamentation. In fact, "the Worker" applauds the rise of technology, and even affirms its totalitarian implications. For that reason, it is characteristic of rather a specific attitude towards technological development, an attitude that Jeffrey Herf has rightly labeled *reactionary modernism*. Ernst Jünger was one of the most prominent representatives of this intellectual movement, that sought to "convert technology from a component of alien, Western *Zivilisation* into an organic part of German *Kultur*"⁴⁴. The reactionary modernists turned away from "backward-looking pastoralism" as a viable alternative to the rise of technology. The traditional order was considered irrevocably lost, and technology was deemed man's ineluctable fate - and fate can not be but affirmed. In fact, the rise of technology was considered the prelude to a new, balanced *Kultur*.

Still, "it takes special eyes to see more than just a process of pure destruction"⁴⁵, and in "the Worker", the notion of a "*neuen Aufschlag des Auges*" (a new perception) plays an important role⁴⁶. In this intermediate paragraph, I shall therefore attempt to clarify Jünger's specifically metaphysical and essentialist approach of the experience of technological labour.

In the 1963 essay entitled "Name-Typus-Gestalt"⁴⁷, Jünger expounded a theory of knowledge that may very well be considered a methodological postscriptum to "the Worker". In this essay, he distinguished three forms

44. Jeffrey Herf - Reactionary modernism
op.cit. p.1

45. Ernst Jünger - Der Arbeiter, par.46

46. Ernst Jünger - Der Arbeiter, par.8

Cf. Volker Droste - Ernst Jünger: "Der Arbeiter"
Studien zu seiner Metaphysik
Göppingen, 1981, p.26ff. et passim.

47. Ernst Jünger - Name-Typus-Gestalt
Werke (Stuttgart 1981), Band 13 (Essays VII), p.85-173

of knowledge, of which 'empiricism' relates to "the knowledge of phenomena and their junction through facts"⁴⁸ whereas "*Gestalt* and *Typus* are forms of higher experience (*Anschauung*)"⁴⁹. As the subtitle to "the Worker" - dominion and *Gestalt* - indicates, the notion of *Gestalt* is of the utmost importance. The more so if we consider Jünger's claim that the socio-historical phenomena, that tend to come with the rise of technology, can only be properly interpreted "if one assumes the dominion of the *Gestalt* behind them"⁵⁰. Still, as Jünger claims, the dominion of the *Gestalt* "makes the meaning (*Sinn*) of the *Typus* subservient to itself"⁵¹, so before we may engage ourselves in the exposition of the notion of *Gestalt* we must first deal with the concept of *Typus*.

Jünger's concept of *Typus* is, in a sense, related to Weber's methodological notion of the 'ideal type': this 'ideal type' is designed to provide man with "abstract concepts of relationships which are conceived (...) as stable in the flux of events, as historically individual complexes in which developments are realized"⁵². This classification of related events, however, contains a specific epistemological tension between the subjective *act* of classification on the one hand and the *objective relation* between the events on the other. In Jünger's intricate conception of typology, this tension has been swept to the extreme.

On the one hand, Jünger evokes an extreme form of nominalism: a *Typus* is the nominalistic result of the legislative, *typensetzende Gewalt* (type-determining force) of the organizing subject. This determining intellectual force is the way in which man imposes his will upon the chaotic world. "In addressing the world, man gains possession, at first based on magical authority, and later on rational authority"⁵³. A *Typus* may be considered a projection of the subjective Will, and the *typen-setzende Gewalt* may be considered a form of intellectual labour, in the sense that 'labour'⁵⁴ is the way in which the subject seeks to actively *master* the world: "we may recognize every real instinct by the fact that it understands, that in (the systems of dynamic thought) it is neither new knowledge⁵⁵ nor new efficiency that is at stake, but essentially new dominion".

48. Ernst Jünger - Name-Typus-Gestalt, par.1

49. Ibid.

50. Ernst Jünger - Der Arbeiter, par.41

51. Ibid.

52. Max Weber - The methodology of the social sciences
Free Press, 1949, p.101

53. Ernst Jünger - Name-Typus-Gestalt, par.114

54. Ernst Jünger - Der Arbeiter, par.28

On the other hand, the Typus is not wholly subjective. According to Jünger, typology presupposes a kind of substratum which is being moulded by the intellectual, nominalistic labour of the subject. Jünger calls this substratum the *Ungesonderte* (the Undivided) or *Wesensgrund* (essential foundation). This substratum can not be moulded completely at the discretion of the subject. Rather, the *Ungesonderte* has an independent *typenbildende Macht* (type-forming power). In nomenclature, the name touches upon the Universe: "the type-forming power of the universe surges from the *Ungesonderte*, the word surges from the nameless. The *Ungesonderte* and the nameless are one and the same; world's foundation and man's foundation are one"⁵⁶. In typology, the gnostic subject senses the proximity of the *Ungesonderte*: every Typus reflects something that goes beyond discursive rationality, and although the typus is never an exhaustive name, it provides us with a "sensation (*Ahnung*) of the fullness of the Undivided"⁵⁷.

It is clear, that this notion of the *Ungesonderte* is closely connected to the essentialist conception of history I have described above (I.2). History is a process in which the essential forms (*Ausformungen*) of Being are being sculpted from the same, eternal substratum. Now the name of the respective *Ausformungen*, the way in which the *Ungesonderte* expresses itself as a totality, is *Gestalt*. The *Gestalt* is the immanent substance that is present in all things, but which cannot be experienced or described in the usual, discursive way⁵⁸. Rather, it implies that the gnostic subject abandons his *typensetzende*, active subjectivity: "whether we surmise the domicile of the *Gestalt* in the Geist, in the Idea, in Paradise, in the *Urgrund* or in our inner self - in any case, access is being refused. From the outpost, dazzling lights, terrific shadows can be recognized. Who wants to advance further must leave behind his body and self"⁵⁹.

This notion of an "immediate, visionary experience"⁶⁰ of the *Gestalt* obviously refers to the experiences of war. Here, the experience of the *Ungesonderte* - or the *Urgrund* - was possible only through complete surrender of individuality to the surroundings. Merging with the universe, the soldier attained immediate "correspondence between inner and outer experience"⁶¹. And this correspondence between man and *Gestalt* is possible

55. Ernst Jünger - *Der Arbeiter*, par.23 (*)

56. Ernst Jünger - *Name-Typus-Gestalt*, par.10

57. *Ibid.* par.40

58. Ernst Jünger - *Der Arbeiter*, par.27

59. Ernst Jünger - *Name-Typus-Gestalt*, par.119 (*)

60. *Ibid.* par.103

61. Ernst Jünger - *Name-Typus-Gestalt*, par.26

only because the Gestalt governs man. The knowledge that welled up from the trenches was the momentary insight into the "coincidence of the individual will with the 'Weltwille' (will of the world), the coincidence of individual ethos with the cosmic nomos, of personal liberty with *gestaltliche* destiny. The organic insertion of the individual within the totality of the world provides the individual existence with *gestaltlich* legitimized power and gives this existence a meaning that transcends its temporality and its 'physis', i.e. a meta-physical meaning"⁶²

The Gestalt is not only the faceless, *immanent order of Being*, but also the *Subjektivität* that gathers all 'individual' beings⁶³. Gestalt is the complacent Being (*ruhendes Sein*) 'within' the dynamic, physical world, the 'rescendent' (Droste) metaphysical "*Quelle der Sinngebung*"⁶⁴. It is the fatal disposition of all beings to belong to the Gestalt, and the Gestalt assigns every individual being its definite task: to excavate the essential meaning of Being.

As I have indicated, the Gestalt "makes the meaning of the Typus subservient to itself". Here, it should be noted that this notion of 'Typus' is even more complicated than the duality between active typology on the one hand and the reflection of the *Ungesonderte* on the other. In "the Worker", the concept of Typus refers not only to the epistemological device with which the world is being appropriated, but also to the name of the epistemic subject to appropriate the world. In fact, this second meaning of the word may be considered even more important. Still, the excursus on its epistemological meaning may help to clarify the meaning it has taken on in "the Worker" - as the Typus in the second meaning (the subject to uncover the essence of the Gestalt) -, is itself split into two parts. On the one hand, it refers to an actively planning elite, dominating the world according to its own subjective Will, but on the other hand, this *domination* over the world is not a goal in itself: the active Typus is merely a preliminary stage to a real *dominion* to come. In this dominion, Being finally attains its essential meaning.

In the next two paragraphs, I shall deal with the active Typus and the 'essential meaning of the world' respectively.

62. Volker Droste - op.cit. p.95 (*)

63. Martin Heidegger - Zur Seinsfrage
Frankfurt, ⁴1977, p.16ff.

64. Ernst Jünger - Der Arbeiter, par.43

4. THE WORKER: TECHNOLOGY AS WILL TO POWER

"We have reached an epoch, in which the history of development fails if it is not practised from a reversed perspective, that is to say from a perspective in which the Gestalt - the Being that is not subject to time - determines the development of life"⁶⁵. According to Jünger, the Gestalt determines history, and we must understand that "the Gestalt must not be conceived from the general and mental concept of infinity, but from the specific and organic concept of totality"⁶⁶. Hence, history is not the linear process in which mankind strives for ever-increasing comfort (progress), but merely the process in which Being deploys its inner essence. The 'conservative' conception of history conceived of the world as "a limited and well-rounded totality (..). No development can ever extract more from Being than it contains. Rather, the mode of development is being determined by Being"⁶⁷. Still, even if the ontological substance itself is eternally constant, the form in which it expresses itself is historically variable.

The specific way in which Being expresses itself in modern times is *technology*: "machine technology may be understood as the symbol of a specific Gestalt, namely the Gestalt of the Worker"⁶⁸. Technology is "the instrument, the projection of a specific form of life, that may conveniently be called *labour*"⁶⁹. Here, it is clear that the elements gathered in paragraph two of this chapter should not be restricted to their socio-economic dimension, but must be interpreted as manifestations of an encompassing, metaphysical process. The rise of mass-society is a phenomenon of metaphysical purport, and "the depersonalization indicates that in the end it is not the act of an individual, but of the power that encompasses the individual that is at stake (notably of the Will to Power that superiorly elevates itself to self-consciousness)"⁷⁰.

As we have seen before (II.1), Will to Power "expresses itself in the squandering of energy", but also refers to the legislative Will to direct

65. Ernst Jünger - Der Arbeiter, par.36 (*)

66. Ibid. par.41 (*)

67. Ibid. par.48 (*)

68. Ibid. par.23 (*)

69. Ibid. par.28 (*)

70. Gerhard Loose - Ernst Jünger: Gestalt und Werk (*)
Frankfurt, 1957, p.121/122

this energy to the one goal: "life in highest potency"⁷¹. We have encountered these two elements in the experience of war, but we may also consider industrial labour from this perspective. In the paragraph on total mobilization, however, we have only commented the first element of Will to Power: the transformation of life into energy. In this process, technology "demands that nature provides energy that may be provoked and accumulated"⁷². However, this does not, as yet, determine the specific organizational form in which the unleashing of power takes place: "the apprehension of nature as instrumentality precedes the development of all particular technical organization"⁷³. In fact, the initial stage of the process is totally dedicated to the "complete destruction of the old form to the benefit of the intensified dynamics of the labour process"⁷⁴.

Still, as we have seen, "the further this destruction, this transformation of forms advances, the more the possibility of a new construction, the possibility of an organic construction will come within reach"⁷⁵. The traditional connections in society are gradually being dissolved into an amorphous mass of detached atoms, but on the other hand these 'individual' atoms may be reassembled into an organic unity. In socio-economic theory, this unity is known under the concept of *Totalarbeiter*. In Jünger, this concept appears in the Typus of the Worker. "Total labour is the way in which the the Gestalt of the Worker is beginning to permeate the world"⁷⁶, and in this process, the Gestalt of the Worker - of which technology is the main symbol - 'implements' the Typus of the Worker to deploy its essential Being.

However, this Typus of the Worker is not just the generalization of the amorphous mass of labourers within the bleak reality of technological labour. This latter conception only applies to the lowest level of the typology: it refers to the Worker as the *passive Typus*. But Jünger also distinguishes a "second, active level of the Typus"⁷⁷, and this *active Typus* is most characteristic of Jünger's celebration of the Worker - as well as the bone of contention to his critics.

71. Friedrich Nietzsche - Werke III, 586

72. Martin Heidegger - Die Frage nach der Technik
in: Vorträge und Aufsätze
Pfullingen, 1954, p.22

73. Herbert Marcuse - One dimensional man
Boston, 1966 (1964), p.153

74. Ernst Jünger - Ueber die Linie, par.14

75. Ernst Jünger - Der Arbeiter, par.43

76. Ibid. par.31 (*)

77. Ibid. par.67

To understand the distinction between the passive and the active Typus, we may best treat it within the context of Nietzsche's conception of nihilism. It is clear, that total mobilization as "the complete destruction of the old form" pertains to the realm of radical nihilism. In the absence of higher values, the only goal may be the sheer increase of Power. Power, in nihilism, is a goal in itself. However, just like Nietzsche did not consider radical nihilism as the end of the development of nihilism, Jünger did not take total mobilization to be an aim in itself. Underneath the initial anarchism of the process a new order is being announced, and the destruction of the old bourgeois order is being affirmed only as a transitional period in the ascent of this new order (in fact, the entire bourgeois era is deemed to be merely a provisional stage between two imperial periods). The enormous, but anarchistic growth of means of production lies ready "as the instrument of a dominion in great style"⁷⁸. On the other hand, Jünger marks⁷⁹ that a new *Herrschaft* is needed "to rise to the eruption of new powers".

As regards the latter aspect, the increase of power and the consequences it entails - such as social entropy, anarchy of production, increased complexity - inevitably demands the rise of new forms of dominion to conduct this increased but aimless power into one direction. The active Typus, thus Jünger, must seize power and mould "the boundless masses and energies set free by the process of decline of bourgeois society"⁸⁰ into an organic construction, and "the more the old bonds have been undermined, the more they have been eroded and the more the atoms have been wrenched out of joint, the less resistance may arise against an organic construction of the world"⁸¹.

The seizure of power is being legitimized by the sheer fact of "the mastering of things that have become too powerful - the control of absolute movement, which can only be achieved by a new breed of men"⁸². This new breed, that is to say: the active Typus will rise from the chaos of the *Werkstättenlandschaft* (landscape of the factory), as Jünger calls it, the wasteland of industrial production (or, which is the same, of trench-war)⁸³, and will appoint itself "the supreme allocating authority"⁸⁴ (or rather, it is this authority appointed by the metaphysical Will). Clearly,

78. Ernst Jünger - Der Arbeiter, par.22

79. Ernst Jünger - Die totale Mobilmachung, par.3

80. Ernst Jünger - Der Arbeiter, par.75

81. Ibid. par.47 (*)

82. Ibid. par.24 (*)

83. Cf. Ernst Jünger - Der Arbeiter, par.72

84. Ernst Jünger - Ueber den Schmerz, par.9

Jünger thought of the war elite to embody this supreme authority, but as I have already noted in chapter I, he was also very much impressed by the bolshevik revolution and its main instrument: the dictatorial *Planstaat*.

In this planning-State, which may be considered the embodiment of the active Typus, "every claim to individuality is regarded an illegitimate expression of the private sphere"⁸⁵. The "ant-like community"⁸⁶ of the passive Typus is wholly instrumental to the legislative power of the State. However, "the State too has ceased to be an ideal value, a value in itself: in a time that has become totally instrumental, the State itself is merely the most encompassing instrument"⁸⁷. Even the active Typus must remain subservient to the power of the Gestalt.

To clarify the relation between Typus and Gestalt of the Worker, we may recall the earlier notes on methodology. In "Typus-Name-Gestalt", 'Typus' was a dual concept. On the first level, it referred to the legislative power of the epistemic subject seeking to dominate the world. This obviously parallels the second, active level of the Typus in "the Worker". The Worker as a Typus "affirms the earth within an ever-expanding process of total domination and control in reaction to morality"⁸⁸, striving "only for pure domination over the world as an aimless aim. Under the planetary course of the stars, the battle over the totality of the visible earth and measured time-space remains trapped into the meshes of nothingness"⁸⁹. The active Typus remains tied to the realm of total mobilization, i.e.: tied to radical nihilism. The *Planlandschaft* is still burdened with a *Werkstättencharakter*⁹⁰, even if, in its "character of concentration and advance"⁹¹, it may be considered a higher form of mobilization. Still, "it follows from the *Werkstättencharakter* of the second phase, that it does not embody a definite situation - if anything of the sort be even possible on earth -, but does indeed serve for the preparation of such a situation"⁹².

The active Typus is on the verge of breaking from radical nihilism, it

85. Ernst Jünger - *Der Arbeiter*, par.11

86. Ibid.

87. Alfred von Martin - *Der heroische Nihilismus* (*)
op.cit. p.107

88. Phillip Fandozzi - *Nihilism and Technology*
Washington, 1982, p.24

89. Kostas Axelos - *Einführung in ein künftiges Denken* (*)
Tübingen, 1966, p.84

90. Ernst Jünger - *Der Arbeiter*, par.56

91. Ibid. par.79

92. Ibid. par.56 (*)

prepares the advent of a situation in which the Gestalt of the Worker will express itself. This *self-expression of the Gestalt* parallels the other side of the Typus as described in "Typus-Name-Gestalt": the Typus foreshadows the rise of a new dominion, in which the essential, resplendent power of the Gestalt will be deployed. "In the *Werkstättenlandschaft* (..) planning takes place as part of a total mobilization that aims for *Herrschaft* (dominion), while *Gestaltung* (formation) already refers to and realizes itself by means of dominion. The task of total mobilization is the transformation of life into energy (..). It therefore denotes the potency of life, while formation gives expression to Being"⁹³. While *planning* seeks to master the world from a subjective stand, *Gestaltung* is the immediate expression of Being as Will to Power, thereby bestowing life with meaning. And this *meaning* legitimizes all suffering.

However, true *Herrschaft* is not, as yet, established: "we live in one of the extraordinary epochs in which dominion does no longer and dominion does not yet exist"⁹⁴. Planning, as the ultimate manifestation of total mobilization, remains within the realm of radical nihilism: it does not acknowledge any definite goal but the sheer increase of power and the revolution of the *means* of domination, and "the actual reason for the increase of suffering in the world lies in the fact, that such a dominion has not yet been realized and that because of this we live in a time in which the means appear to be more important than man"⁹⁵. For these means to be transformed into "the instrument of a dominion in great style", as I called it, it is necessary that the anarchistic, "revolutionary growth of means"⁹⁶ should come to an end. And only then may nihilism be overcome, and the jump *über die Linie* (beyond the line) be conceived. According to Jünger, the conclusion of the revolutionary phase must inevitably spring from its own, immanent logic, after which a state of perfection may arise: "a state of perfection - if this is reached, the development will come to its conclusion"⁹⁷, and a truly balanced culture may be expected.

93. Ernst Jünger - *Der Arbeiter*, par.62 (*)

94. *Ibid.* par.53 (*)

95. *Ibid.* par.22 (*)

96. *Ibid.* par.56

97. *Ibid.* par.49

5. THE PERFECTION OF TECHNOLOGY

The only possibility to maintain a meaning for the concept 'God' would be: God not as a moving spirit, but God as maximal-state, as an epoch - a point in the development of Will to Power: from which we may explain the further development as much as the previous one

Friedrich Nietzsche - Werke III, 585

In this chapter, I have attempted to portray the rise of the Worker against the philosophical background of nihilism. To be sure, to view "the Worker" from this perspective is not novel, but even within the same theoretical framework, interpretations of Jünger's position within this tradition differ greatly. In this chapter, I myself have advocated rather strict a parallel between Jünger's theories on the rise of the Worker and Nietzsche's conception of nihilism, whereas others have claimed that Jünger did not keep strictly to Nietzsche's history of development. To Jünger, thus Wolfgang Kaempfer, "the complete deployment of active nihilism is not, as it was to Nietzsche, the victory over the traditional system of values by means of its negation, but exactly its 'phenomenology' in the stadium of the decline of these values"⁹⁸. In a sense, Kaempfer's interpretation is correct: "the Worker" may indeed be considered a phenomenological picture of a history of decline. But as I have stated, it is my contention that this phenomenology pertains to the realm of *radical* nihilism - even if the principle feature of this portrayal is called the *active Typus*. And it is also my contention, that Jünger *did* in fact take nihilism to be a victorious process, in which nihilism could eventually be overcome. In this paragraph I shall attempt to evince this claim.

In order to fully appreciate the philosophical depth of "the Worker", we must understand the ascent of the *Typus* as the manifestation of the *Gestalt* of the Worker. This *Gestalt*, however, is not only the faceless, immanent order of Being, that is to say, the internal connection of power-

98. Wolfgang Kaempfer - Ernst Jünger
Stuttgart, 1981, p.121/122

quanta, but also the *meaning* of this world. Now, the passive as well as the active Typus are manifestations of the immanent order, the *Werkstättencharakter* of labour, and both of these manifestations are clearly perceptible. But "the entrance by the last and highest representative to the space of labour has not yet taken place"⁹⁹. Jünger clearly distinguishes three hierarchically ordered levels of the Typus: "while at the lowest level of the order the individual is taken hold of and subjected as merely blind will, as a planetary function, at the second level the Gestalt of the Worker inserts this individual, as the carrier of special labour, into a multiplicity of planned constructions. At the last and highest level, however, the individual appears as being immediately connected to total labour"¹⁰⁰. And only at the highest level of total labour, in which the 'individual' conceives of himself as "the expression of a specific Being that seeks to fill its space, its time, its immanent Gesetzmäßigkeit (pattern)"¹⁰¹, may the Gestalt of the Worker be affirmed as the *meaning* of labour.

In this meaning, "the process of mobilization, which contains devastating qualities, which burns up men and means"¹⁰², will find a conclusion. And according to Jünger, technology does in fact move towards "a situation of perfection - if this will be attained, the development will come to an end"¹⁰³. The mobilization of ever more power, the incessant revolution of technological means, is destined to come to an end: "there are no valid reasons to deny the assumption that one day there will be constancy of means"¹⁰⁴. Jünger underpinned this claim with reference to the "historical fact" that rest be history's general rule, while the revolution in which we are involved is merely a transitory phase, between two closed and internally balanced eras¹⁰⁵. Here, Jünger simply brushed linear history aside¹⁰⁶ and adhered to the then current cyclical theory of history which stated that "no development can ever extract more from Being than it contains"¹⁰⁷. Likewise, "our technical world is not a domain of unlimited possibilities, but rather contains an embryonic character that is moving towards a specific kind of maturity"¹⁰⁸. Perfection is the situation in

99. Ernst Jünger - *Der Arbeiter*, par.43

100. *Ibid.* (*)

101. *Ibid.* par.28

102. *Ibid.* par.54.

103. *Ibid.* par.49

104. *Ibid.* par.52

105. Cf. *ibid.*

106. Cf. *ibid.* par.26

107. *Ibid.* par.48

which the embryonic character is fully developed, in which technology's development coincides with its essence - or, as I have just put it, "has filled its pattern".

"However versatile, explosive and variable technology may present itself in its empirical character, it does nonetheless move towards a very specific, univocal and necessary order that is enclosed beforehand as a task, as a germ-like goal"¹⁰⁹, and to Jünger it was patently clear, that the revolutionary, anarchistic growth of technological means was due to the fact that the "highest representative" of the Worker had not yet entered the space of labour: "it must be understood, that this changeability does not exist as such, but merely that technology is not, as yet, engaged in a service that is beyond doubt - or, in other words, that dominion has not yet established itself. To establish such dominion, however, is the ultimate task that lies at the root of the technological process"¹¹⁰. Here we may get a first inkling of the turning-point in the development of technology: while "in the *Werkstättenlandschaft* (...) planning takes place as part of total mobilization, aiming for *Herrschaft* (dominion), *Gestaltung* (formation) already refers to and realizes itself by means of dominion"¹¹¹. While mobilization is oriented towards the production of dominion, "the perfection and constancy of means does not produce dominion, but actualizes dominion"¹¹².

Now, the turning-point in this development must be localized, I think, in the active Typus of the Worker. This claim may be rather surprising, and to understand the intent of this turning-point we must, once again, carefully analyze this notion of the active Typus, which is ambiguous. On the one hand, the active Typus pertains to the realm of radical nihilism, but on the other hand, the active Typus does, in the end, manage to cross the line of nihilism, to make the jump into *active* nihilism. However, this concept of active nihilism is rather ambiguous as well. This ambiguity equally transects the notion of the *höhere Mensch* in Nietzsche. On the one hand, it is clear that the *höhere Mensch* is the active nihilist who rises above all moral values to autonomously proclaim his own goals and to proclaim himself master over the world. However, on other occasions, the *höhere Mensch* also features as the mouthpiece of the experience of *amor fati*. Now, I have not studied Nietzsche in detail concerning this matter, but I think that in Jünger the paradox between absolute subjectivity (the

108. Ernst Jünger - *Der Arbeiter*, par.49

109. *Ibid.* par.48

110. *Ibid.* par.53 (*)

111. *Ibid.* par.62 (*)

112. *Ibid.* par.54

planning Typus) and absolute submission to total labour may be resolved.

On the level of total labour, "in the abandonment of individuality we find the key to a space, the knowledge of which had been lost for a long time"¹¹³. In total labour, the Worker is "more deeply embedded into Being"¹¹⁴, and this has him gain privileged access to the essential goal of Being as well as to the understanding of the individual's role in achieving this goal. True sovereignty lies in this recognizing necessity, and in accepting the predetermined place of the individual in the totality of Being. To actively proclaim 'new' goals and 'new' values must in fact be understood as the articulation of the essential, life-enhancing values of Being (as opposed to the life-belying values of the Bourgeois).

In the paradoxical fusion of absolute subjectivism and absolute submission, we may also get to understand Jünger's specific conception of freedom. The most general expression of this concept is found almost at the beginning of "the Worker": freedom lies in the consciousness of necessity¹¹⁵, and man should "recognize the freedom of the actor as a specific expression of necessity"¹¹⁶. According to Jünger, the individual is not the center of his own universe, but is totally submerged by the supra-individual power of the Gestalt: it "is from the Gestalt that the individual receives his vocation and meaning to his existence"¹¹⁷. The Gestalt is the *form* in which Being expresses its essential power, in which the *Ausformungen* are being sculpted from the eternal substance, and in this process, man is allotted the role of the sculptor of Being. Freedom, in this essentialist conception, exists to the extent that the totality of the world, in which the individual is enmeshed, comes to expression¹¹⁸, and the freedom of the 'individual' lies not in *liberum arbitrium*, but in the process in which totality is being brought to expression. Man, like every other *modus* of the substance, has been assigned the task to fully deploy the *potentia* of Being, and freedom lies in the acceptance of this assignment¹¹⁹. The Typus is characterized by "an attitude that recognizes its assignment, and therefore its freedom, in labour"¹²⁰: "freedom can not

113. Ernst Jünger - Der Arbeiter, par.65 (*)

114. Ibid. par.11

115. Ibid. par.1

116. Ibid. par.16

117. Volker Droste - Ernst Jünger: "der Arbeiter"
op.cit. p.10

118. Ernst Jünger - Der Arbeiter, par.43

119. Cf. Martin Heidegger - Die Frage nach der Technik
op.cit. p.32

120. Ernst Jünger - Der Arbeiter, par.11

be sensed with respect to suffering, but only with respect to activity, that is to say the laborious transformation of the world"¹²¹. "Only if the claim to freedom is uttered in this context we can truly speak of dominion, of the era of the Worker"¹²². In the dominion of the Worker, power, freedom and the responsibility to fulfill his assignment are one and the same.

Here, we may get to understand the difference between labour in its "pure character of domination (*Bewältigung*)"¹²³ and labour as true dominion¹²⁴. While in the preliminary stages of the Worker, notably the *Werkstättencharacter* and planning, the Typus seeks to impose his 'subjective' *Will* upon the world, on the highest level labour becomes *Gestaltung* (formation, sculpting) of the substance: the *substantia* is destined to coincide with its 'objective', essential meaning, and man shares in the highest metaphysical power if this correspondence will eventually be achieved. Therefore, "the actual freedom of the Typus lies in the fact that he belongs to a field of power, a field which is being controlled by the Gestalt of the Worker"¹²⁵, and it is man's destiny to fulfil this vocation, to embody the Gestalt with his power. This vocation, or '*Artung*', which thoroughly moulds the individual, is his only legitimation, and man's responsibility lies in the consciousness and affirmation of his own *Artung*, deploying his 'own' (i.e.: his assigned) potentia to the extreme¹²⁶. As we have seen, the 'individual' power is best maximized when the individual merges with the unified Typus of the Worker as much as

121. Ernst Jünger - *Der Arbeiter*, par.16 (*)

122. *Ibid.* par.19 (*)

123. Volker Droste - *op.cit.* p.69

124. In french interpretations of Nietzsche, notably Gilles Deleuze's (cf. his very influential "*Nietzsche et la philosophie*" (1962)), the concept of *Wille zur Macht* has been translated as *volonté de puissance* (in contrast to *volonté de pouvoir*: cf. also Spinoza's distinction between *potentia* and *potestas*). *Pouvoir* refers to power as domination, whereas *puissance* has a more positive connotation of *capacity*. This translation entailed an important interpretative and philosophical shift in the field of Nietzsche-studies. Those to read *Macht* solely in its oppressive meaning are likely to interpret Nietzsche in a coarse and negative manner. The same misinterpretation of the notion of power also haunts the reception of Jünger: those to lament his alleged proto-fascism obviously refer to the oppressive meaning of power as domination only.

125. Ernst Jünger - *Der Arbeiter*, par.40 (*)

126. Cf. Ernst Jünger - *Der Waldgang*, par.31: freedom is "the fatal desire to realize one's own existence". (*)

possible. The highest form of the Typus, in turn, is the State as the unity of mass-power. "The 'heroic type' wants total power and therefore a total State - even if he himself can only be the object of State-command, even if he can only be situated on the level of the subservient"¹²⁷. Being only a particle of the Typus, the 'individual' shares in the metaphysical movement of deployment, and therefore "is not just the material of destiny but its bearer as well, and life is not just the field of necessity but of freedom as well"¹²⁸.

"One must understand, that dominion and service are one and the same"¹²⁹. Thus, true dominion is not domination but lies in the desire to be dominated, in the desire for total sacrifice. As Kostas Axelos put it: "through the revolutionary abnegation (*Aufhebung!!*) of the individual and the private, humanity itself should become the objective subject, and subject everything - as an object - to its will"¹³⁰. Only in absolute servitude to Being may perfection be carved out from the ontological substance¹³¹, and we must understand that, in the presence of the overwhelming power of the Gestalt, the trashheap of nullified individuals is but the "mass of stone that gets wasted as the statue is being sculpted from the block"¹³². And just as "it is man's highest form of bliss to be sacrificed, it is the highest art of command to pronounce goals that prove worthy of this sacrifice"¹³³.

127. Alfred von Martin - op.cit. p.112 (*)

The legitimation of the State as well as of the Typus lies in "the specific and necessary, yet on no account willed relation to Power, that may be called *Auftrag*"*. Legitimation is not an act of will, nor is it based on rational foundation -it is received from the assignment by the metaphysical order of Being (cf. above, note 62). This explains the paradoxical relation between freedom and obedience: "*Gehorsam, das ist die Kunst zu hören*" - "obedience is the art of listening"^{**}.

* Ernst Jünger - *Der Arbeiter*, par.21, ** Ibid. par.1

128. Ernst Jünger - *Der Arbeiter*, par.19 (*)

129. Ibid. par.1: Cf. Ernst Jünger - *Der Waldgang*, par. 18

130. Kostas Axelos - op.cit. p.76 (*)

131. Only in confrontation with total labour does Being obtain "value and distinction". Ernst Jünger - *Der Arbeiter*, par.28

132. Ibid. par.36

133. Ibid. par.22 (*): clearly, the servitude to Being, to which both the passive and the active Typus are called, on the other hand implies that only few are chosen to pronounce the essential goals of Being: dominion does in fact imply domination, even if this may be considered to be 'metaphysically legitimized'.

Now, the core question remains: what did Jünger hold to be the essential goals of Being? To take an advance on the critical evaluation of "the Worker" (cf. part III), I should like to indicate what I consider to be Jünger's underground motive in portraying the dominion of the Worker. Even if, as I have indicated, Jünger must not be mistaken for a romantic anti-modernist, I do think that the motivation of "the Worker" revolves around his loathing for the path that modernity, according to Jünger, had taken on. As we have seen, Jünger sought to wrest technology - being one of the most eminent regalia of modern times - from its 'materialist and bourgeois' implementation, in order to make it the instrument of an idealistic order. This quest for an ideal order, this cultural revolution against the bourgeois era had obviously taken root in a ramified movement of cultural criticism: the conservative revolution. According to the conservative revolutionaries, the bourgeois era was an era of degeneration, devoid of even the tiniest bit of cultural *grandeur*. The conservative revolution, from its vitalistic backgrounds, sought to restore life in full majesty, and for Jünger too life obtained worth and value only inasmuch as it expressed majesty: "it is not of any importance that we live, but only that (...) the pursuit of a life in great style and according to great criteria is once again possible"¹³⁴.

However, to Jünger it was patently clear, that *grandeur* was not to be interpreted in an individualistic, bourgeois sense: according to Jünger, the individual was on the verge of disappearance, and this process was deemed unstoppable. Henceforth, majesty was to be vested in collective unity, in the *Gemeinschaft*: in a great culture, the collective *Werk* of a people attains its "deeper unity of life", and the conservative revolution was inspired by the Will "that seeks to symbolically express that it pertained to the everlasting"¹³⁵. The collective unity, in the terminology of the conservative revolution, was the *Reich* - and the dominion of the Worker was to be considered an *imperial* form of government. From this perspective, we may get to understand "the Worker" as being rooted in the chiliastic dream of a restored *Imperium*.

Now, what is the specific form that this *Imperium* has assumed in "the Worker"? Here, Jünger's position remains rather vague, but we may assume, that Jünger, like Nietzsche, may have derived his model from the *Imperium Romanum*, "a most admirable masterpiece of great style"¹³⁶, "a great style that was more than just art, but had become reality, truth, life"¹³⁷. The

134. Ernst Jünger - Der Arbeiter, par.56 (*)

135. Ernst Jünger - op.cit. par.17

136. Friedrich Nietzsche - Der Antichrist, par.58

137. Ibid. par.59

Imperium embodied the essential values of Being. These values were not, as one would expect from the belligerent overtones in both Nietzsche's and Jünger's works, values of aggressiveness or even of imperialism. Just like dominion does not coincide with domination, *Imperium* is not the same as imperialism: on the contrary. Even in "the Worker" Jünger explicitly rejects imperialist wars, as war represents "an unwanted waste of energy, that is thereby being guided away from a more encompassing deployment of power"¹³⁸. Rather, the values that are being embodied by the *Imperium* are approximately the same as those that characterized the idealistic values of Jünger's own wartime-experience: "it is rather the virtues of poverty, of labour and of valour that represent the visible sign of a formation deeper than the bourgeois ideal may even dream about"¹³⁹. A balanced form of life, to be sure, must not be mistaken for material satiation, but as inner peace. The *Imperium* represents a kind of chiliastic utopia: finally the anarchistic dynamics of society comes to rest, and a time has arrived in which a majestic life is conceivable.

Yet, "a condition, that may be taken for the symbol of *Eternal Peace* (italics added -JP), will never be guaranteed by a treaty between states, but only by a State of undisputable and imperial rank, in which '*Imperium et libertas*' are being united"¹⁴⁰, "in which the boundless sphere of power is referring to one point from which it is manifested as a sphere of justice"¹⁴¹. So, even if dominion is not restricted to mere domination, the *Imperium* does contain the characteristics of dictatorship¹⁴², and "the Worker" may rightly be considered an apology of totalitarianism (in the sense that it strives for Totality), even if we should clearly distinguish dictatorship, as being based on a subjective will, from a totalitarian order, which is being founded on the objective essence of Being - hence, on truth -, and which is thereby legitimized.

Soon afterwards, political fanatics (that Jünger renounced as a mindless mob) tried to establish the *Reich*, and under the impression of this *real* experience of the Worker-State, Jünger's attitude towards the Gestalt of the Worker got more and more ambivalent. In the concluding part of this thesis, I shall deal with his ambivalences - as well as my own.

138. Ernst Jünger - *Der Arbeiter*, par.79

139. *Ibid.* par.59 (*)

140. *Ibid.* par.56

141. *Ibid.* par.21

142. Like dominion, the term *Imperium* refers to a specific *Raum*, a *Machtsraum* to which the *Planlandschaft* is but the "preliminary stage"(par.80), but also to the exercise of power over this territory. Humility in the presence of Being does not at all preclude domination over others.





III. AMBIVALENCES: SOME CRITICAL REMARKS

So far, I have merely enunciated Jünger's theories on technology and nihilism, without keeping proper distance, and I have done so for various reasons. A first consideration bears upon the particularity of the pre-sensible readership of this thesis. On the one hand, it may consist of readers who do not, as yet, have profound knowledge of Jünger: to those readers, I have attempted to present an unbiased account of what I consider to be the central elements to the understanding of "the Worker". No doubt, however, my summary is marked by the specific problematic, the specifically structured theoretical space in which it is embedded: both the definition of the problem ("on technology and nihilism") and the specific theoretical framework from which it is being considered tend to shape the 'unbiased' exposition of Jünger's philosophy. What may, to the uninitiated reader, appear to be a more or less perspicuous reproduction of "the Worker" may also be interpreted as a clear-cut demarcation of my position within the community of Jünger-scholars. For example, I have paid relatively little attention to the aestheticist interpretation of Jünger's philosophy, which claims the 'stereoscopic experience' the richest harvest to be earned from "the Worker"¹. This aestheticist approach, I think, tends to neglect or even embezzle the undeniable political implications of Jünger's philosophy: "the Worker" did in fact "supply the ideological formulae, that helped the German imperialists and military to overcome the shock of defeat in World War I, to prepare a fascist dictatorship and to conduct a mental mobilization for a renewed battle over world-hegemony"², even if Jünger attempted to "get of the train of history"³ in time. But on the other hand, I have also tried to avoid an over-politicized reading (such as Petzold's).

In my opinion, "the Worker" represents a *kulturphilosophischer Mythos* (culturo-philosophical myth), which served not only as a *mobilizing myth*,

1. Cf. Volker Droste - Ernst Jünger: "Der Arbeiter"
Göppingen, 1981

No doubt, this experience is fundamental to fully understand the metaphysical scope of "the Worker", but this experience is merely the precondition of metaphysics, not its content.

2. Joachim Petzold - Wegbereiter des deutschen Faschismus
Köln, 1983, p.319

3. Gerhard Loose - Ernst Jünger: Gestalt und Werk
Frankfurt, 1957, p.123

unleashing revolutionary energy and *directing* it against bourgeois society, but which also functions as a symbolic representation of both Jünger's 'elementary experience' and the social reality of technology - to bestow *meaning* upon the apparently aimless history of decline.

In this mythical nature of "the Worker" lies a second reason for the rather mimetical approach I have pursued in section II of this thesis. As a myth must be conceived as a perfectly self-contained world view (and also as an irrefutable revolutionary prospect), to critically analyze this myth means to annul its unifying power and its transparency. In maintaining the integrity of Jünger's work on the dominion of the Worker, I have attempted to capture and convey some of the attraction it exerted at the time (even if my thesis lacks the literary magnetism and rhetoric power of Jünger's writing).

In this last section, however, I should like to express my reservations as to Jünger's myth of a Great Dominion, as well as his own ambivalence towards "the Worker" and the political implications it entailed. In a 1980 interview, he admitted that, despite the mutilated fascist annexation of his thoughts, to him "the Gestalt of the Worker remains the most important. It is the only invulnerable figure"⁴. But on the other hand, he admitted that "at the time" he was "too optimistic"⁵ as regards the possibility that nihilism could be overcome. And he most certainly despised the plebeians that arrogated themselves the role of the elite that was to accomplish this task: he never aligned the Nazi-party. I myself totally agree with Jünger's views here: I think that the Worker reigns as fatally as ever, but I also think that this dominion will not, by itself, have us cross the line of nihilism. I think that on the phenomenological level his portrayal of the *Werkstättenlandschaft* still exerts impressive force, but I do not at all think that "the Worker" may claim validity as regards the political 'optimism' - let alone that I subscribe to its totalitarian inclinations. We must therefore clearly distinguish between the phenomenological understanding of the Worker, as the actual manifestation of Will to Power, and the transcendent level of the Worker as "*sinngebende Instanz*", bestowing sense upon the world).

These ambivalences as regards "the Worker" imply that we should reconsider this revolutionary *kulturphilosophische* myth - and on various levels. First, we must find an explanation why Jünger devised a myth that celebrated the dominance of technology, whereas he himself obviously

4. Le Monde, 1980

5. L'Herne, 1983 (nr.45)

cit. in: Eric Bolle - Afscheid van wat nooit geweest is
Groningen, 1985, p.40

despised the brute oppression it imposed on cultural *noblesse*. I shall argue, that this apparent conflict originated from Jünger's deterministic conception of technology and his linear conception of history (par.1). As a result of this determinism, the only possible way out depended on the plausibility of the immanent turning-point in the history of nihilism. Like Nietzsche, Jünger was being torn between two extremes: absolute surrender to fate on the one hand and megalomaniac subjectivism on the other, but never managed, I think, to make the turning-point credible (par.2). An other aspect which undermines the myth of a new order lies in the fact that the analytics of technology that underpinned this myth is obviously invalidated by recent materials in the history of technology and in the sociology of labour (par.3).

Despite the inadequacies on the analytical level, however, the phenomenology of technology as the domain of nihilism may, I think, still claim validity. Jünger's terrifying portrayal of negative Utopia has us face a totalitarian order of techno-scientific rationality and unbridled capitalist productivism gone astray, an order which obviously entails a serious threat to the survival of mankind and of humanity (par.4). This threat can not, I think, be averted within the same order that produced it. This conviction had me reflect on the possibility of an alternative to the political solutions now current. From this perspective, I have reconsidered the anti-materialist, anti-bourgeois and anti-parliamentary revolution that Jünger advocated, and to some extent I felt attracted to it (par.5). Here, I balanced on the verge of dictatorship. However, the dictatorship of politics over economy, and of legislating normativity over instrumental rationality, poses the question of *legitimation*. I think, that we may not appeal to the "privileged understanding of the essence of Being" as the legitimation of political elitism. Still, we should not content ourselves with Jünger's later option of withdrawal to the realm of culture and aestheticism. We should rather ponder the possibility of deploying power *within* the realm of labour, in order to find a way out of the triple alternative of submission, totalitarian dictatorship or individualistic escapism - all manifestations of one and the same monolithic conception of society. And this deployment of power is not to be conceived from the perspective of centralized, subjective domination: the alternative implies *humility* before the magnificence of nature as concerns the material reproduction of life, *co-operative fraternity* as to the social relations (of production) and relentless *sabotage* of any form of political imperialism which seeks to blindly exploit the world and tends to impose material growth as the nostrum of its own moral and cultural decadence. I shall therefore return to Jünger's utopia of an anti-materialist order, in which man emerges as the attendant of Being, yet without holding to the totalitarianism which he deemed the inevitable precondition of this new culture.

1. THE MONOLITHIC MYTH

As I have stated in the introduction to this thesis, Jünger's philosophy must be valued in the light of the cultural revolution he explicitly pursued: to break away from the rundown, self-indulgent order of bourgeois society or, in philosophical terminology: to *overcome* nihilism. In this matter, Jünger kept close to the Nietzschean philosophy of cultural decline, and just like Nietzsche he envisaged a turn for the better - the *Ueberschensch* and the *Worker* respectively.

Even if it is obvious, that the 'overman' does *not* coincide fully with the Worker⁶, I think it clear that the notion of the Worker represents a collectivist form of the *Ueberschensch*. The *Ueberschensch* "is the meaning of this earth"⁷, the "Typus (!JP) of highest magnificence"⁸, who rises above morality, who resides beyond human values, and is being legitimized by the splendour of the imperial values he embodies.

Likewise, the Worker is to be conceived as a "Typus of highest magnificence", who is being legitimized by the magnificent form he imposes upon chaos, by the splendour of the imperial values he embodies. These values, as I have indicated above (II.5), are "the virtues of poverty, of labour and of valour"⁹, austere majesty and serene loftiness amidst the blazing reality of Work.

These virtues are unmistakably kindred to the central experiences of the Great War: hardship, community, sacrifice. In drawing this analogy, however, we once again hover on the verge of the psychological and sociological reductionism that lay in wait in section I. If we consider, for example, the Typus of the Worker as representing the new order, it is obvious that the Typus has been modelled on the figure of the front-soldier. And just as the Typus of the Worker includes both a passive and an active manifestation, the soldiery falls into the mass of cannon fodder on the one hand and the "active breed", the elite of the "Stoßtrupp" on the other. This vanguard clearly served as a model for the active Typus, the collective embodiment of the *Ueberschensch* - the Typus of the Worker proper.

6. "It would be mistaken to take the Worker for the *Ueberschensch*".

Ernst Jünger - Aus der Korrespondenz zum "Arbeiter" (10/10/1980).

7. Cf. Friedrich Nietzsche - Also sprach Zarathustra, Vorrede, 3

8. Cf. Friedrich Nietzsche - Ecce Homo: Warum ich so gute Bücher schreibe, par.1

9. Ernst Jünger - Der Arbeiter, par.59

From this perspective, it would be quite easy to unmask "the Worker" as a projection of Jünger's own psychological and communal experiences in the trenches, thereby discarding it as mere literary fancy, as a myth devised to alleviate the post-war estrangement (just as the Free Corps may be considered a communal fantasma to evade post-war reality).

However, to reduce "the Worker" to a merely literary magnification of the psycho-social estrangement of the front-soldier would have us content ourselves with only a partial understanding of its mythically soothing effect. It is my contention, that Jünger not only tried to master the individual soldier's disorientation, but that he equally sought to overcome a general experience of aimlessness in society at large: the myth of a new order being devised as a means to make sense of an obviously senseless history of decline, of disenchantment and of the process of communal dissolution. Thus, to relieve estrangement not only on the psychological level, but on the social level as well. This, I think, may be inferred from Jünger's theoretical preoccupation with the apparently unstoppable advance of a totalitarian order as well as from his bibliographically demonstrable antipathy towards the totalitarian reality he anticipated - even if, in "the Worker", he undeniably applauded totalitarianism. I hope to solve this seeming contradiction in his philosophy presently.

Jünger's theoretical focus, in a sense, ranks him among a ramified tradition in social theory and cultural philosophy dealing with the experience of rationalization - that is to say: the cultural and political implications of the growth of instrumental rationality. Most of the philosophers and social scientists who have focused on this problematic have more or less lamented what they considered to be a history of *decline*, and some have sought to find a way out - the way out of the history of decline being conceived either as the memory of unsullied times long gone (reactionary traditionalism), as forms of detached subjectivity (Adorno), or as a life-world shielded from the degeneration of the system, thereby preserving the promise of liberation as the *meaning* of evolution (Habermas). Obviously, these criticisms all presuppose an *outside* to history.

Jünger would undoubtedly have felt out of place in this tradition. Even if he might have acknowledged the facts put forward by these theoreticians, he disagreed with the alternative current at the time (i.e. restoration), and would no doubt have disagreed with the more modern criticisms of the process of rationalization. According to him, nothing could ever evade necessity, remain outside the inevitable course of history. As I have tried to evince in section II, this historical determinism implied that man cannot but affirm the totalitarian outcome of technological development within the realm of nihilism.

This, to be sure, amounts to an unconcealed ideological justification of technocratic totalitarianism pure and simple, and we could easily re-

ject it as such (to see through its apologetic nature, however, does not in itself mean its definite refutation: this should be achieved on the basis of rational arguments only). But to reject "the Worker" as pre-meditated ideology too easily passes over the fact that Jünger himself, as may be gathered from his later works, rejected totalitarianism. And I think this fact must not remain unexplained.

Various attempts have been made to handle the apparent break in Jünger's development. Some commentators have tried to simply pass over this duality by neglecting the dubious political implications of "the Worker", whereas others have simply disposed of his later works as a thin attempt to disguise his totalitarian inclinations. The first line of argument, in my view, underestimates the actual impact "the Worker" had on its contemporaries, whereas the latter is politically biased - to discard "*Auf den Marmorlippen*" as an act of opportunism, as does Petzold¹⁰, is to wholly misjudge the great risks that Jünger ran by having this allegoric attack on dictatorship published (considering that it was first published in 1939!). I think, therefore, that the anti-totalitarianism in his later works is to be taken seriously. By so doing, we can no longer resort to the trivial observation that obviously Jünger's intellectual development is broken up into two irreducibly separated periods. If we accept the claim of a radical break, this should not be indicated only as a matter of fact, it should also be explained. Now, it is my claim that this explanation may be found rather easily, because underneath this apparent break we may discern a fundamental continuity, and also because the *anti-technocratic* and *anti-totalitarian motivation* of the later works is equally, albeit inarticulately, present in "the Worker": "we may discern - even in the middle of the book on "the Worker" - something of a desire to somehow connect power with justice and eternal peace"¹¹.

As I have stated in section II of this thesis, "the Worker" represents a more socio-political elaboration of Nietzsche's 'universal history' of nihilism and his metaphysics of power. From a sociological point of view, it may be considered a metaphysical, essentialist reflection on the process of rationalization. This process of rationalization has predominantly been valued from two perspectives: the first stresses the growth of man's rational power, and anticipates the gradual expulsion of suffering, whereas the second stresses the negative backlashes of this increased rationality - such as the dissolvment of *Gemeinschaft*, or the separation between goal-oriented, instrumental rationality and legislating practical

10. Joachim Petzold - op.cit. p.318 ff.

11. Alfred von Martin - Der heroische Nihilismus und seine Ueberwindung
Krefeld, 1948, p.135

rationality. In sum, the criticism of the process of rationalization claims that the process has completely gone astray and has therefore lost its *meaning*.

Jünger acknowledged both of these tendencies in the process of rationalization. On the one hand, the power to achieve (*tèchne*) has undeniably increased, while on the other hand the so-called disenchantment of the world is equally undeniable. According to Jünger, however, these two dimensions of the process do not at all have to be counterproductive.

To relieve the tension, Jünger sought to take a perspective from which *meaning* could be wrested from the apparently meaningless process of disenchantment: "Faith in the *meaning* of our world is not only a necessity (..), it is equally the hallmark of every attitude that still has a future"¹². And as Loose rightly claims: "'The Worker' is essentially a touchstone of faith, or at least of the willingness to believe"¹³. Even if Jünger mocked the humanist utopia of redemption through progress, his anticipation of the millenary *Reich* is in a sense inspired by a longing for redemption. As I have already indicated, "it all comes to gaining a perspective from which the losses may be regarded the rubble, that is being wasted as the statue is being sculpted from a block"¹⁴.

The *chiliastic* perspective of a new *Imperium* serves to bestow meaning upon the inevitable course of history through the meaningless barbarity of the technological *Werkstättenlandschaft*. Only from this perspective may the sacrifice of the individual be 'justified'. And only from this perspective may the dissolvment of the traditional bond be affirmed as the preliminary stage to a new *Gemeinschaft*. The *meaning* of this *Gemeinschaft* wholly depends on the existence of *das Werk* (the Work)¹⁵, and this metaphysical task moulds the aggregate masses of *Gesellschaft* (in which the individual acts merely out of selfinterest) into the unified body of *Gemeinschaft*. In the terminology of Deleuze/Guattari¹⁶: the traditional bonds of community are being 'decoded' only to be reassembled on another level. They are brought into line by the unifying goal of the *Werk* - the result of the dominion of the Worker and its collective effort. Jünger's conception of

12. Ernst Jünger - *Der Arbeiter*, par.16 (*): "whoever may attempt to wrest meaning from this process, that is connected with so much suffering, thereby renders himself the bone of contention"(cf. *Der Waldgang*, par.18).

13. Gerhard Loose - *Ernst Jünger: Gestalt und Werk*
Frankfurt, 1957, p.105 (*)

14. Ernst Jünger - *Der Arbeiter*, par.36 (*)

15. Cf. Ernst Jünger - *Der Arbeiter*, par.11

16. G. Deleuze/F. Guattari - *Capitalisme et schizophrénie: l'Anti-Oedipe*
Paris, 1972

the *Werk*, that is to say: of the great *Imperium*, serves to neutralize the apparent contradiction between rationalization and disenchantment: the technological order entails its own kind of lustre.

In "the "Worker", Jünger portrayed a totalitarian order in which the ant-like masses are being aligned into one monolithic body. The *perfection of technology* contains the promise of a new, majestic order. Only on the basis of this mythical picture could Jünger reconcile "power with justice and eternal peace", could estrangement within a thoroughly technocratic order be alleviated and the social clash of relations be overcome. The reason he drew precisely this picture lies, I think, in his deterministic conception of history. The evolution of rationality, and disenchantment as its consequence, is considered to be unstoppable, technology the ineluctable *fate* of man. On the basis of this *linear evolutionism* and his *technological determinism*, the only way out is to break through the 'zero-line' of nihilism and to subdue technology to a legislating elite (the active *Typus* of the Worker): the technical means "will be obedient instruments of destruction, as long as the *Geist* aims for destruction, and they will construct as the *Geist* is determined to great constructions"¹⁷.

Now it is my contention, that Jünger did *not* merely sing the praises of totalitarianism, but sought to understand its essence and its inevitability, in order to face up to man's ineluctable *fatum* (technology) and find a way out of nihilism.

Due to the determinism in his analyses, the picture he held out was to be accepted rather than to be *validated* - as are all myths. Yet, if one carefully scrutinizes this myth, its foundations turn out to be cognitively vulnerable, and the transparency of the totalitarian picture is rather easily invalidated.

17. Ernst Jünger - Der Arbeiter, par.57 (*)

2. THE TURNING POINT

The totalitarian picture of an imperial culture, of a sublime dominion of the Worker, depends on at least two basic assumptions: firstly, "that one day there will be constancy of means"¹⁸ (that is to say: perfection of technology), and secondly, that a legislating sovereignty will rise to appropriate these (technological) means and direct their power to the one goal -to deploy the essential majesty of Being. In this paragraph, I shall critically analyze these assumptions and the respective cognitive claims on which they are founded.

As we have seen (II.5), the prophecy of perfection is based on the 'historical fact' that *balance* is history's essential form. This claim, in turn, is based on ontological conservatism and a cyclical conception of history. This cyclical conception stealthily intertwines with and breaks off the inevitable linearity of the process of rationalization, so as to render plausible the turning point in this history of cultural decline. Jünger's conception of history thus appears to be rather confused, a blend of two mutually exclusive philosophies. I think, however, that in "the Worker" these have most subtly been reconciled. Jünger, as we have seen, conceives of history as a 'kaleidoscopic morphology', in which the same essential order eternally recurs in imperial, well-balanced epochs, whereas they are being separated by transitory phases of chaos. These periods in which the kaleidoscope of history is being tossed may be considered in a more or less linear way: the phase of chaos may be analyzed from the evolutionary perspective, whereas the essential order of Being is not being essentially disrupted. Still, even if his prophecy may not be disclaimed on the basis of methodological inconsistency, it may be renounced as defective on another level: the claim of the essentially balanced nature of history is not at all, I think, convincingly substantiated. Unlike Spengler, Jünger did not attempt to strengthen his claims by empirical evidence, nor did he fill in his morphological frame-work with concrete historic epochs (for example, it remains vague, what concrete era -if any- served as the example for the dominion of the Worker).

This shortcoming on the scientific level acutely reduces the persuasiveness of the argument: as the theory of history is unsound, the assumption of 'perfection' loses its footing. The immanent logic of the turning-point fails to provide the required cognitive cogency to affirm terror as ineluctable fate.

18. Ernst Jünger - Der Arbeiter, par.52

The reproach of scientific inadequacy, however, may not affect Jünger's theories at all. To be sure, I think it would be mistaken to read "the Worker" as a scientific treatise, and its *mythical* character obviously evades scientific validation¹⁹. But if we drop its cognitive claims, the distinction between dictatorship and totalitarianism elaborated at the end of paragraph II.5 stands out to be wholly artificial, and I do not at all feel metaphysically obliged to affirm the dictatorship of nihilism as a transitory phase in the ascent of a new *Imperium*. If totalitarianism distinguishes itself by its privileged knowledge of the essential truth, and this apparent truth is shown to be merely mythical projection, the philosophical legitimation of totalitarianism can no longer be distinguished from mere apologetics of dictatorship pure and simple.

With this first claim of perfection being discarded, the second assumption, of a legislating sovereignty destined to appropriate and direct perfected technology, obviously loses its foundation. And even if, despite these objections, we would hold to the claim of perfection, the assumption of a sublime elite remains problematic (and politically dubious).

Nietzsche, no doubt the strongest intellectual influence on Jünger, thought it conceivable that one day the entire world would fall under the reign of the *Ueberschensch*, who would dare to impose his will upon the world and order its unity. As a literary figure, this notion of the *Ueberschensch* may exert some attraction, but its realization entails some major difficulties. Firstly, as regards the actual subject of this reign: "who should be master of the world?"²⁰, "who will set the goal that will remain standing over humanity and over the individual as well?"²¹.

Whereas Nietzsche dealt with this problem very carefully, putting off any definite answer, Jünger proceeded with less caution. To him, it was clear that the *Ueberschensch* had found its embodiment in the frontsoldieri (notably the elite of the *Stoßtrupp*). The *Ueber-Mensch* is the man who has risen above all human values, and obviously the frontsoldieri had risen above the 'petty bourgeois' values.²² In the war-novels, the experience of lawlessness amounted to unbounded decisionism. In "the Worker", however, the "venture of decision" seems to vanish: "essentialist thinking gets

19. In fact, the cyclical theory of history, which is being invoked as legitimation, has itself been vehemently attacked as mythical ideology.

Cf. Theodor W. Adorno - *Reaktion und Fortschritt* (1930)

in: *Moments Musicaux* (1964), p.153-160

20. Friedrich Nietzsche - *Also sprach Zarathustra: das trunkne Lied*, par.4

21. Friedrich Nietzsche - *Werke III*, 874

22. In *Stahlgewittern* (1920), *Der Kampf als inneres Erlebnis* (1922)
Das Wäldchen 125 (1925), *Feuer und Blut* (1925).

into radical antithesis to the postulate of decisionism"²³. The determinism that stands out in "the Worker" obviously negates the decisionistic conception of *liberum arbitrium*. However, as von Krockow rightly claims: "in essentialist thinking, the connection with 'necessity', that was still concealed in decisionism, comes to the surface, whereas on the other hand the subjective *Willkür* (caprice), that was unmistakable in decisionism, is being veiled".

As I have indicated in paragraph I.2, the "nationalists have decided to want necessity, that which destiny wants"²⁴, and this form of decisionism still applies for "the Worker". The Stoßtrupp-soldiery finds its expression in the 'aktive Typus' of the Worker-Soldier: "a ruling race based upon the glories of achievement"²⁵, legitimized by the privilege of metaphysical experience. In the Typus of the Worker-Soldier, Jünger attempted a delicate balance between humble submission to Being and megalomaniac subjectivity (parallel to Nietzsche's conception of the *Ueberschensch*). Yet, this balance was rather crudely upset by the barbarism that arrogated itself the role of the active Typus. And even if Jünger may be accused of having applauded totalitarianism - which, as I have tried to indicate, stemmed not so much from his genuine enthusiasm as from the desperate attempt to bestow meaning upon the apparently inevitable history of nihilism -, he most certainly felt revolted by the 1933 claim to actually establish world-wide dominion.

Still, Jünger thought totalitarianism the inevitable outcome of the development of technology and technological labour, even if this totalitarianism would no longer bear the promise of a great imperial order enacted by the active Typus²⁶. Nietzsche already expressed his "absolute mistrust

23. Christian Graf von Krockow - Die Entscheidung
Stuttgart, 1958, p.109

24. Ernst Jünger - Der Charakter
in: Die Standarte, 13-05-1925, p.150

25. John Orr - German social theory and the hidden face of technology
in: Archives Européennes de sociologie, 1974, p.318

26. The alleged turning-point from the passive to the active Typus, like Nietzsche's jump from the last man to the *Ueberschensch* (or, for that matter, the marxist claim that the miserable underclass would inevitably rise to a self-conscious, revolutionary proletarian power), remains wholly dependent on an irreducible *switch*. This not only concerns a switch on the level of Gestalt (from the Bourgeois to the Worker), but also on the level of the organization of discourse: from the rational discursivity of historic reconstruction to the language-game of political prediction. Even if we may, as I am inclined to do, assign some validity to the historic ana-

regarding the organizing strength of the will for the whole"²⁷. Jünger, in more updated terminology, found himself confronted with "the most horrid perspective of a technocracy that will be exercised by crippled minds and vandals, in an era of degeneration in which imagination will be totally wiped out"²⁸. And in 1950, he already acknowledged that "exploitation is the fundamental trait of the world of machines and automatons. It rises into insatiability whenever the Leviathan turns up. We should not be led astray, when great wealth seems to overgild the plates, as it is even more horrifying in comfort. The time of the monsterstates has dawned"²⁹. Hence, Jünger did hold firmly to the deterministic conception of the rise of a totalitarian order, but he no longer foresaw a turn for the better.

The totalitarian order being characterized by "highest organizational capacity alongside total colour-blindness as regards value, belief without contents, disciplin without legitimation"³⁰, Jünger took rather ambivalent a stand in respect of this Leviathan. In his later works, he still thought the rise of nihilism to be irresistible, and yet he tried to evade it. But nihilism could now no longer be overcome from *within* the order of technological labour: "the spiritual overcoming and control of the epoch will not be reflected in that perfect machines will crown progress, but in the fact that it will find its form in the work of art. Here it will be redeemed"³¹. Whereas in "the Worker" freedom was to be attained in total submission to technological labour and the sacrifice of individuality, here it is thought to reside with the individual who finds refuge in art, philosophy, love and religion. Whereas in "the Worker" the 'individual' totally submerged in the totalitarian *Imperium*, in the later works³² the

lysis of nihilism (or, as concerns the marxists, the socio-economic theory of capitalist development), this does not in itself justify the jump to political speculation. Theoretical and practical discourse do not automatically merge into one another: in fact, it has often been claimed that they are divided by an unbridgeable gap, and as I have tried to show, Jünger's attempt to bridge this gap may hardly be called convincing.

27. Friedrich Nietzsche - Der Wille zur Macht
in: Phillip Fandozzi - Nihilism and Technology
Washington, 1982, p.7

28. Haagsche Post, 27-01-71, p.53

29. Ernst Jünger - Ueber die Linie, par.18 (*)

30. Ernst Jünger - Blätter und Steine
in: Graf von Krockow - op.cit. p.108

31. Ernst Jünger - Ueber die Linie, par.20 (*)

32. Cf. Ernst Jünger - Auf den Marmorklippen (1939)
and notably: Ernst Jünger - Der Waldgang (1951)

Individual is totally severed from 'society': nihilism is to be overcome from without, through absolute detachment from the totalitarian order.

Whereas in "the Worker" Jünger attempted a delicate balance between submission and subjective elevation, in the later works this strained duality split into a dichotomous alternative: either submission (to the totalitarian order) or aesthetic escapism. However, I think that these seeming differences in Jünger's position do not, on closer investigation, document a radical breach in the continuity of his intellectual development. In fact, I think they merely represent different shades of one and the same intellectual worldview. In the previous paragraph I have already claimed that Jünger's intellectual peripatetics were inspired by one and the same motivation: to find a way out of the apparently ineluctable history of nihilism. Inspired, that is to say, by a quest for new values.

Over time, the solution shifted from affirmative submission to detached aesthetic hermitage - from revolutionary boast to subdued distinction³³. But despite appearances, it is my contention that these radically different solutions are but two manifestations of one and the same conception of society, which was interwoven with the elitism that characterized Jünger's philosophy from the start.

In "the Worker", Jünger obviously held quite monolithic a conception of society. Or rather, 'society' (that is to say: the bourgeois, cosmopolitan order of *Gesellschaft*) was to be replaced by the organic whole of *functional unity*³⁴. And, in "the Worker", the seeds of a solidary community were thought to be sown. In the later works, these seeds were thought to have germinated, only to see that "the time of the monsterstates has dawned". But even if the Worker-State has not kept its promise of a great *Imperium*, the Leviathan still represents the same monolithic order, in which the ant-like workers are all working into one direction, to achieve the one goal - the sheer increase of power. This *Werk*, however, remains within the realm of *radical* nihilism, and quantitative growth has not yet resulted in a qualitative turn.

Despite the horrid optimism, I think that in "the Worker" too the

33. On the important notion of *Vornehmheit* (distinction):

cf. Graf von Krockow - op.cit. p.110 ff.

34. Thus, even if he rejected *Gesellschaft*, Jünger did not fit the *Gemeinschaft/Gesellschaft*-dichotomy. Whereas the champions of *Gemeinschaft*, at least for the greater part, advocated a hark-back to idolized times long gone, Jünger thought the organic community to reside in solidarity, in the division of technological labour.

Cf. Jeffrey Herf - *Reactionary modernism*
Cambridge, 1984

qualitative turning-point is merely hopeful chimaera, not yet turned into reality. Hence, in the absence of any really attainable perspective, the phenomenology of society is actually the same in both periods: it depicts the nihilist order of vacuous labour, a closed system of technological functionality (I shall deal with this phenomenology of nihilism in paragraph III.4). And I think that the respective solutions to the problem of nihilism amount to the same as well: the monolithic block of society is being confronted by a dissociated elite - be it the active Typus to formulate *new values* and overcome nihilism, or the last stronghold to resist nihilism (to be sure, Jünger himself neatly fitted the description of the elite: i.e. the front-soldier and the detached poet respectively). So the model remains basically the same: the elevated subject over-against the world - be it as centrally planning subjectivity, organizing the ant-hill of workers, or as solitary individuality over-against the totalitarian order, in the end Jünger did not succeed in breaking with the dualist principle of subjectivity after all. Yet this conception of subjectivity is seriously invalidated by Jünger's thinly concealed aversion to rationality.

Jünger's conception of rationality, however, is as blunt as is his conception of society. Instead of a detailed analysis of the class-structure of the advanced societies, their internal divisions and conflicts of interests, he thinks of society as mass-society only. Just the same, he conceives of Reason not as an intricate balance of instrumental, practical-normative and expressive rationalities, but merely reduces one element of rationality (its instrumental power, *Zweckrationalität*) to be rationality *tout court*. Jünger takes a historical reality (viz. the one-sidedness of rationality: cf. par. III.4) to be the *essence* of Reason, and rejects rationality on this basis, to invoke the *other* of rationality as the solution of the immanent nihilism of Reason. In "the Worker", Jünger found refuge in glorifying the legislating power of subjectivity (decisionism), while in his later works, he made aesthetic individuality absolute³⁵.

To summarize, on the one hand we have the monolithic block of the technological-rational order, and on the other hand absolute subjectivity (totally detached from any rational foundation). This division is absolute and totally irreducible. The turning-point from passive to active nihilism

35. Thus, both in the criticism of rationality and in the solution to its one-sidedness, Jünger witnessed the *dissemination* of reason. But on the other hand, he held to the unity of reason in trying to legitimize political dictatorship on the basis of privileged understanding of truth. I shall return to this theme in the concluding paragraph.

must not be understood through intersubjectively verifiable logic, but depends wholly on the privileged experience of the elevated individual (even if, in the war novels as well as in "the Worker", this individual has given up his individuality). On the basis of this dual conception of historic reality, Jünger goes from one extreme to the other - from absolute affirmation to absolute escapism. But both of these extremes are manifestations of the same essential attitude towards historic reality: surrender to necessity, *amor fati*. Whether he went along its course or rather sought to fence himself off from it, history was deemed inevitable and technology was considered man's ineluctable fate.

Jünger's historical essentialism and technological determinism form the basis of his flirtation with totalitarianism. In this paragraph, I have questioned Jünger's historical essentialism. In the next, I shall try to indicate that the other abutment of the totalitarian edifice may equally be undermined, by sociological as well as historical evidence.

3. TECHNOLOGICAL DETERMINISM

"The Worker", as Gerhard Loose put it, "is an adventurous game with the idea of nihilism"³⁶. Here, nihilism is not to be understood in its epistemological sense, as the ultimate consequence of the 'commandment of truth', but rather as "the essence of technology"³⁷. In "the Worker", Jünger ponders the totalitarian implications of the irresistible rise of technology as the history of nihilism. Nihilism and technology are thus closely related, and the specific meaning of these two concepts shapes up in their interaction. On the one hand, technology develops within a void of legislative impotence and moral despair, whereas on the other hand technology breaks down all values: "no value has the strength to withstand technology's attack"³⁸. This relation of nihilism and technology implies

36. Gerhard Loose - Ernst Jünger: Gestalt und Werk
op. cit. p.129

37. Ernst Jünger - Der Arbeiter, par.47

Cf. Paul Virillio - Das Expeditions-corps
in: Fahren, fahren, fahren
Berlin, 1978, p.16

38. Ernst Jünger - Der Arbeiter, par.47

that technology no longer is the "organ of progress, moving towards reasonable-virtuous perfection (...), closely connected with the values of knowledge, morality and humanity"³⁹. The experience of war has blotted the cult of progress, and has exposed the "martial side of the Janus face" of technology⁴⁰.

Here, 'technology' refers to concrete mechanical devices, such as a locomotive that can move "a company of soldiers instead of a restaurant-wagon", or a motor that can drive "a tank instead of a luxury car"⁴¹. However, 'technology' is more than a set of mechanical tools to be implemented by mankind - even if to achieve opposite goals. In fact, the fundamental misconception would be "to put man in an immediate relation to technology - be it as the creator or the victim of technology (...) Man is not immediately related to technology, but mediately"⁴².

Man's relation to technology, thus Jünger, is mediated by the Gestalt of the Worker. Therefore, the general definition of technology is: "the way in which the Gestalt of the Worker mobilizes the world"⁴³. In this sense, 'technology' refers to a conceptually higher level than the mere set of technological products. It refers to a metaphysical *Will*, which contains the *essence* of technology, but which is not itself something technological: it is Will to Power which expresses itself in "the language that pertains to the space of labour"⁴⁴. In the process of technological labour, the metaphysical Will implements both man and machine: "in this context the machine plays a role as subordinate as does man, it is only one of the organs by means of which this language is spoken"⁴⁵. Obviously, Jünger "attempts to reify all purely instrumental aspects of productivity and organization into symbolic attributes of the worker's Gestalt"⁴⁶.

The experience Jünger sought to deal with is the nothingness of the individual vis-à-vis the encompassing processes in which it is being absorbed - such as modern warfare or industrial labour. In the process the individual is but a cog in the machine, and the machine totally determines man's every move. The 'space of labour' is localized in the trenches, or generally in the landscape of a nation at war. Its 'language' is *military command*, its model is Rathenau's *Planwirtschaft* (cf. above, p.19): "war is

39. Ernst Jünger - *Der Arbeiter*, par.46

40. *Ibid.*

41. *Ibid.*

42. *Ibid.* par.44 (*)

43. *Ibid.*

44. *Ibid.*

45. *Ibid.* (*)

46. John Orr - *op.cit.* p.319

a first-rank example, because it exposes technology's immanent character of power, to the exclusion of its economic and progressive elements"⁴⁷.

Jünger's theories on the rise of technological labour and the hierarchical relations of production may very well be considered a projection of his own war-time experiences. Yet I think, that this kind of psychological reductionism overlooks the fact that Jünger's theories were obviously in accordance with widespread trends in sociological and economico-historical theorizing on the hierarchically organized structure of highly segmented labour executed by a mass of insignificant and replaceable men. In fact, it is the fordist/tayloristic conception of technology-based production: the enforced division of highly mechanized and disqualified labour, organized by central command. Undeniably, fordism emerged as the dominant paradigm of industrial development in the 1920's, so Jünger's theories may in fact claim more 'objective' validity. Still, Jünger does hold a particular position in this realm of ideas, and here I should like to critically examine some of the most outstanding elements in his philosophy - notably its metaphysical and blatantly deterministic overtones.

Jünger in fact glorifies this dehumanizing mode of production as the most efficient form of mobilization. It is thought to be the most adequate expression of Being in the age of technology. Therefore, the development towards centrally organized production is essentially being determined by Being, and this course of history must be affirmed as ineluctable necessity. "Total mobilization, the measures taken by organizational thinking, are only an indication of the higher mobilization that time imposes upon us"⁴⁸. Man is compelled to humble submission in the presence of this superior power - as he has always been humble in the presence of God (as Jünger put it somewhere, this era is characterized by a new kind of religiosity). Yet this new deity is not a transcendent 'person', it is the faceless, immanently regulating power of Being: *deus sive operator*.

Jünger's celebration of the Gestalt of the Worker, as I have repeatedly stated, reveals a profound desire to bestow meaning upon the apparently aimless process of technological labour. His reification of the metaphysical Will in fact entails a deification of the willed meaning of meaninglessness. However, as I have tried to evince in the previous paragraph, the claim of a turning-point is not at all convincingly established. And if, consequently, we leave out the metaphysical ornamentations, the process Jünger described in "the Worker" comes down to unbounded, aimless expansionism per se, not a transitory phase on the way to a new meaningful order: the 'metaphysical Will' merely designates the faceless, immanent

47. Ernst Jünger - Der Arbeiter, par.47

48. Ernst Jünger - Die Totale Mobilmachung, par.6 (*)

regulation of the process, not its goal.

Stripped of its politico-metaphysical chiasm, we may get to understand "the Worker" as the essentialist characterization of capitalism. As economic growth is capitalism's basic condition of existence, it is structurally expansive. Its inner logic being the *Wertgesetz* and the principle of *Verwertung* (the realization of surplus-value), the demand of ever increasing acceleration of the circle of capitalist production/realization may be interpreted as total mobilization. Its main regulative system being the market, its medium being money and abstract-formal relations, we may in fact claim that capitalism is being organized by abstract axiomata, by faceless-immanent mechanisms of regulation⁴⁹. And in capitalism, Will to Power (the metaphysical desire to fully deploy the potential of Being into all directions) is being reduced to mere 'want of growth'⁵⁰, it is the reign of nihilism.

In the process of extortion of surplus-value, capitalism is apparently, and by inner logic, forced into increase of scale. Monopolism and large-scale factory, being the uniquely efficient form of industrial production, are the ineluctable fate of capitalist development. Seen from this perspective, Jünger's deterministic account of the inevitable rise of technology may very well be considered the metaphysically blurred reification of the capitalist mode of production, or even its ideological legitimization: "deterministic accounts of technology are seen as ideology legitimizing control by those currently directing its path"⁵¹. Still, I think it too easy to simply discard Jünger's philosophy as mere ideology: this claim may exert attraction within the scope of political strategy, but I think it is still to be substantiated by theoretical argumentation. So instead of just refuting Jünger's philosophy because of its alleged proto-fascism, I should like to critically analyze its cognitive claims and attempt to undermine its theoretical foundations.

Now, Jünger's deterministic conception of technology obviously supports his totalitarian point of view - be it as the apology of capitalist extortion or as a manifesto for political dictatorship to overcome nihilism (viz. capitalism). So in order to effectively deal with this

49. G. Deleuze/F. Guattari - *Capitalisme et schizophrénie: l'Anti-Oedipe*
Paris, 1972, p.263ff

50. Cf. Jean-François Lyotard - *Notes sur le retour et le capital*
in: *Des dispositifs pulsionnels*
Paris, 1980, p.297

51. Stewart Russel - *The social shaping of artefacts*
in: *Social studies of science*
London, vol.16 (1986), p.332

totalitarianism, we must first analyze whether or not the deterministic foundations of "the Worker" were cognitively tenable at the time. If the claim of historical determinism is substantiated, we shall then have to investigate to what extent technological determinism may still claim validity as concerns the present-day situation: is there "a historical warrant to think that now, as then, the shape of industrial society will be substantially determined by an immanent logic of technological change"⁵².

The first question is a matter of the history of technological development. Given the fact that mass-production was obviously victorious at the time, we must ask whether or not it was so by necessity, whether or not it was the only possible option. Or could we imagine viable historical alternatives to this seemingly rampant rise of the large-scale mode of production? To answer such questions would require elaborate historical investigation, yet I am not a trained historian, so I must not dwell on this problem in detail here. However, as historical literature indicates, the route to mass-production was *not* the only path to mechanization, and "throughout modern industrial history observers had been repeatedly struck by the persistence of small firms in the face of ever more confident predictions of their disappearance"⁵³. And these alternatives existed until well after World War II⁵⁴.

So even if "by the 1920's the sheer material success of mass-production in practice made it almost irresistible as a paradigm"⁵⁵, it is historically demonstrable that the road to mass-production and increase in scale was *not* a 'natural trajectory', as some have called it⁵⁶. As historical evidence indicates, the 'craft alternative' of technological advance under cooperative relations of production contained all the elements of "an astonishingly viable economic system"⁵⁷.

52. J. Zeitlin/C. Sabel - Historical alternatives to mass-production
in: Past & Present, no.108 (1985), p.133-134

53. Ibid. p.138

54. Cf. *ibid.* p.156-157

55. Ibid. p.173

56. Cf. R. Nelson/S. Winter - In search of a useful theory of innovation
in: Research Policy, 6 (1977), p.56ff

57. Jonathan Zeitlin/Charles Sabel - *op.cit.* p.143ff

Cf. Roberto Mangabeira Unger - Social theory: its situation and its task
Cambridge, 1987, p. 109

and Roberto Mangabeira Unger - Politics, part I: False necessity
Cambridge, 1987, p. 29 et passim.

These investigations in the history of industrial development seriously undermine deterministic conceptions of technology such as Jünger's. The fact that mass-production proved victorious does not stem from technology's inner logic, but from a complex dynamics of economical, political and institutional factors. We must "conceive the dominant forms of mass-production not as the uniquely efficient form of industrial society but rather as the consequence of a series of complex, often unwitting, political choices whose history has only begun to be written"⁵⁸. In fact, success or failure of a specific, economically viable mode of production depends on "the accidents of the struggle for power"⁵⁹. So the route to be taken in industrial development is determined not only by the inner logic of technology, but represents a political choice between alternative possibilities of innovation, and only retrospectively may the development of technological labour and industrial organization be (mis)conceived as a one-directional path -by leaving the alternatives aside⁶⁰.

Still, even if not by inherent necessity, mass-production had worked its way up to become the dominant form of industry. So we must pose the second question: whether or not the dehumanizing mode of production is still predominant in our days. The answer to this question seems to be rather straightforward: "in recent debates on the politics of labour and the sociology of industry, one has for the most part reached consensus of opinion that the conception of a jointless compactness of a tayloristically administered organization of labour -as it arose from the 'subsumption-theorem'- is no longer tenable"⁶¹. The tayloristic concept of production

58. Charles Sabel - Works and Politics
Cambridge, 1982, p.37

59. Jonathan Zeitlin/Charles Sabel - op.cit. p.139

60. It is my contention, that Jünger's deterministic conception of technology has its origins in some serious flaws on the analytical level. While invoking *power* as the central concept in "the Worker", its centralistic elaboration is obviously too poor to utilize it as an adequate analytical instrument. Whereas in Nietzsche power wells up from below, from constellation of heterogeneous and contradictory forces striving for hegemony, in Jünger the accent has shifted to the exercise of centralized power from above, without proper analysis of *how* this dominion has come about. Even if I do think *power* to be a useful tool in social analysis, it should not be implemented as a monolith to crush all detail, but rather developed in an analytics of specific relations of power.

61. T. Malsch/R. Seltz (ed.) - Die neuen Produktionskonzepte auf dem Prüfstand
Berlin, 1987, p.12 (*)

is obviously past its prime.

There is, however, divergence of views as to the assessment of the present-day situation. Some scholars have assumed a situation of several co-existing paradigms. This assumption appears to be in line with the aforementioned historical theory on the alternative modes of production existing alongside one another, and it helps to refute determinism. Yet another line of argument erodes determinism *from within*. In their book on the end of the division of labour⁶², the German sociologists Horst Kern and Michael Schumann claim that the process of rationalization has profoundly changed its character: they foresee and actually perceive a development into an organizational restructuring, aiming for integration of all functions belonging to the production process, by means of increased practical knowledge. Ongoing technological rationalization does no longer imply dequalification of labour -quite the contrary: it implies the *ganzheitliche* combination of various tasks. Thus, according to Kern and Schumann, the tayloristic paradigm has been discarded: the present day in fact witnesses a paradigmshift.

I have invoked this theory of Kern/Schumann as it represents a most daring attempt to find a way out of humiliation from *within* the *immanent logic* of capitalist development. According to them, the process of capitalist realization itself drives capitalist production beyond taylorism⁶³. Capitalism is thought to contain the seeds of social progress within itself, if only the relations of production would be torn loose from the "privatistic constrictions"⁶⁴. The line of reasoning here is practically the same as in Jünger. On the one hand there is the deterministic account of history, and on the other hand political decisionism to achieve the turning-point. Kern and Schumann, to be sure, obviously advocate a radically different way out, and their analyses of technological-industrial development in fact refute Jünger's. Thus, this line of argument seems to beat Jünger on his own ground: his deterministic philosophy of technology is simply superseded.

However, the theories of Kern and Schumann provoked immediate reaction⁶⁵ -for the greater part rather critical, to be sure. I must not

62. Horst Kern/Michael Schumann - Das Ende der Arbeitsteilung?
München, 1984

63. Cf. *ibid.* p.26, 319, 323

Cf. Thomas Malsch - 'Neue Produktionskonzepte' zwischen Rationalität
und Rationalisierung

in: Thomas Malsch/Rüdiger Selz - *op.cit.* p.57ff

64. Horst Kern/Michael Schumann - *op.cit.* p.321

65. Thomas Malsch/Rüdiger Selz - *op.cit.* *passim*

elaborate these criticisms here, yet I should like to touch upon some of them as they may be of relevance to this thesis. A first point at issue is of a methodological nature, and not surprisingly the determinism of Kern and Schumann is roasted on two points that were leveled against Jünger as well: the relation between the immanent *logic* of development and the dynamics of power is worked out inadequately⁶⁶, and Kern/Schumann take the experiences in some of the so-called 'core industries' they have studied to represent the path of development in general⁶⁷. These methodological shortcomings should be corrected by multi-variate analyses, involving economical, political, organizational, juridical, socio-cultural and institutional elements⁶⁸, geared to the micro-level of the individual firm instead of all-encompassing statements about the development of industrial production in general.

The second line of criticism, then, is even more biting: even if the critics would endorse the findings on the empirical level, as to some extent they do, they do not share the conclusions drawn from the material. Kern and Schumann claim, that increased technological possibilities (such as those emanating from the micro-electronic revolution) make feasible new forms of flexible and integrated labour. The process of increasing utilization of full competence of the individual labour lays open the road to social liberation of labour, hence to social progress. However, as some of the critics emphasize, as long as production remains tied to capitalist relations of production the 'liberation of labour' will remain wholly illusory: the integration of the various 'dimensions of action' does not imply the end of the division of labour, but merely "compression of performance"⁶⁹, while the hierarchic division between planning and production persists⁷⁰.

Kern and Schumann, according to Malsch, remain tied to the capitalist logic of realization, and unwittingly tend to glorify its "labour-saving and performance-compressing innovation" under "new forms of control and restriction by means of micro-electronic informational and organizational technologies"⁷¹. The micro-electronic revolution does not at all herald a

66. Hans-Joachim Braczyck/Gert Schmidt - 'Die Hauptsache kommt erst'

in: Thomas Malsch/Rüdiger Selz - op.cit. p.44

and Veit-Michael Bader - Das Ende der Arbeitsteilung?

in: Thomas Malsch/Rüdiger Selz - op.cit. p.84ff, 102

67. Hans-Joachim Braczyck/Gert Schmidt - op.cit. p.42

and Thomas Malsch/Rüdiger Selz - op.cit. p.17, 23

68. Cf. Veit-Michael Bader - op.cit. p.97ff

69. Thomas Malsch - op.cit. p.67

70. Cf. Veit-Michael Bader - op.cit. p.100

post-fordist, post-tayloristic era, quite the contrary: "the present re-organization reinterprets Fordism as much as it perfects it"⁷². The new means of production aggravate capitalist exploitation rather than alleviating it. To once again quote Jünger: "exploitation is the fundamental trait of the world of machines and automatons (..). We should not be led astray, when great wealth seems to overgild the plates, as it is even more horrifying in comfort"⁷³.

The logic of development may indeed contain germs of a new order, but as long as these are not dynamically 'cultivated' the technological means amount to intensified unleashing of (labour-) power and perfection of all-embracing conduct: under the regime of unbridled capitalist growth (or in the centralized, socialist State, for that matter), technology cannot but serve total mobilization.

So even if we may find Jünger's glorification of political totalitarianism to be based on an analytically unsound theoretical position, and therefore to be repudiated, I think the portrayal of total mobilization applies to our time probably even more than to Jünger's. This is what attracted my attention to "the Worker" in the first place: the phenomenology of the technological era shown to be immanently totalitarian. The order of technological labour absorbs all power in society, and it tends to destroy everything that may dare resist its axiomata.

Hence my ambivalence towards "the Worker": even if I despise its totalitarian solutions, I feel very much obliged to answer the questions it poses. I also endorse Jünger's criticism of materialist indolence and individualist complacency, yet I do not subscribe to his dictatorial-collectivist political options. In the next paragraph I shall attempt to expound the phenomenological picture of the order of nihilism, and try to evince its topical interest. In the last paragraph, then, I shall contemplate some of the political implications of the dominance of technology, and notably of the struggle to *overcome* its nihilism.

71. Thomas Malsch - op.cit. p.74

Cf. Barbara Garson - The electronic sweatshop
New York, 1988

72. Charles Sabel - Work and politics
op.cit. p.209

73. Ernst Jünger - Ueber die Linie, par.18

4. THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF NIHILISM

In the previous paragraphs, I have attempted to rock the foundations of Jünger's celebration of political totalitarianism: his monolithic conception of mass-society, the peculiar mixture of two philosophies of history and the deterministic conception of technology. But what if the political myth does in fact collapse under the weight of rational scrutiny? Does "the Worker" have any significance other than as a political manifesto? Those who read "the Worker" from the political point of view would, I think, be inclined to deny it any validity outside the political context in which it was being conceived. Yet Jünger himself claimed that the "substantial essence" had too much been obscured by the "political and polemical surface" of the problem⁷⁴. So if we strip "the Worker" from its political top coat, its 'substantial essence' may be uncovered.

Stripping "the Worker" from its political tenor by annulling the claim of the turning-point, all that remains is the plane landscape of total mobilization - that is to say: the domicile of the passive Typus. In the portrayal of this landscape, Jünger constructed a picture of the inherent totalitarianism of technology.

I have deliberately used the metaphor of 'landscape', as the notion of the *Werkstättenlandschaft* is one of the most evocative elements in his phenomenology of the technological era. And it is also one of the many elements in this phenomenology that apply to our time as well. "In fact the *Werkstättenlandschaft*, that characterizes our time and that is generally called industrial landscape, has already covered the globe with its buildings and installations, its towns and its districts. There is no region left that has not yet been chained by streets and railways, by cables and wires, by airlines and fairways (...). The bourgeois conception of liberty has engraved the traces of anarchy into the landscape. Blind competition over the districts of natural resources and the piling-up of individuals to an atomized society in large cities have, in no time, generated a change whose inroads lead to the ruination of the atmosphere and the poisoning of the rivers"⁷⁵. Chimneys loom at the horizon, the world has become one large factory in which nature is being reduced to mere fuel for the production process, the rivers being reduced to driving-power of the hydro-electric plant, reduced to waste-pipes of the global

74. Ernst Jünger - *Der Arbeiter* (1963 preface)

75. Ernst Jünger - *Der Arbeiter*, par.63 (*)

mill⁷⁶. Nature has no intrinsic value, it exists only in its relation to the production process. In fact, the dualism natural/cultural landscape is being leveled to just *one* uniform landscape.

The same goes for man in mass-society. According to Jünger, the masses are characterized by *uniformity*. In fact, whereas the notion of masses implies *unity* as the collective counterpart of individuality, the present-day crowd may no longer be considered a mass in this 19th-century sense, but is merely an aggregate of homomorphous units of uniform conduct⁷⁷: "wherever we may encounter the masses, it is undeniable that it is being penetrated by an other structure. It presents itself in bands, in chains and stripes of faces rushing by, and also in ant-like columns whose advance is subject not to its own discretion but to automatic disciplin"⁷⁸. We need only invoke such present-day experiences as the queues of commuters flocking back and forth to work, the uniformity of their tele-culture and the overcrowded tourist resorts to understand the topical interest of this phenomenology of 'mass-society'⁷⁹. It is the "droning marching-pace of a disjointed next-to-eachother in motion"⁸⁰.

The dissolution of the masses, their *Bindungslosigkeit*, is the "pre-condition of totalitarian dominion"⁸¹: "the more the old bonds have been undermined, the more they have been eroded and the more the atoms have been wrenched out of joint, the less resistance may arise against an organic construction of the world"⁸². Nowadays, to be sure, this kind of totalitarianism is of a different kind than the dictatorship of the active Typus. The latter may be considered the revolution of *active nihilism*. Be it the 'full deployment of the essence of Being', be it the decisionistic seizure of political power, this revolution of active nihilism did in fact pursue a positively defined goal: "the pursuit of a life in great style"⁸³. In contrast to this political totalitarianism, I think the

76. Cf. Martin Heidegger - Die Frage nach der Technik
in: Vorträge und Aufsätze
Pfullingen, 1954, p.22ff

77. Ernst Jünger - Der Arbeiter, par.64

78. Ernst Jünger - Der Arbeiter, par.31

79. Cf. Godfrey Reggio's 1983 motion-picture 'Koyaanisqatsi' which impressively depicts the facelessness, the 'bands and stripes' of the metropolis.

80. Hans G. Helms - Die Ideologie der anonymen Gesellschaft
Köln, 1966, p.13

81. Ibid.

82. Ernst Jünger - Der Arbeiter, par.47

83. Ibid. par.56

present day may be considered the dictatorship of *radical* nihilism. This is precisely what most interested *me* in reading "the Worker": the phenomenology of a society fallen prey to nihilism, of the consequences that resulted from this nihilism.

No doubt, Jünger's portrayal of nihilist mass-society lacks detail, and this criticism not only concerns his 'sociology' of industrial labour, but also applies to various of the other elements of his phenomenological picture of mass-society. For example, the supposition of a totalitarian order of *bindungslose*, atomized individuals I have just touched upon is not at all substantiated by empirical evidence and may, I think, be considered a specific interpretation of mass-society against the ideological background of an illusory communal paradise. It is a normatively structures counter-myth, devised to oust the myth of progress and humanity. Still, even if it may be considered too firm and deterministic a view of mass-society, this phenomenology of nihilism does, I think, point to the negative undercurrent consequences that haunt the 'progress' of society.

These negative consequences, thus Jünger, develop within the entwinement of nihilism and power. In the absence of encompassing moral guidance, the only goal may be the *optimization of life* as it is now, rather than to strive for an uncertain ideal yet to be established. In "the Worker", Jünger portrayed some of the manifestations of the aimless increase in power, and some of his prefigurations are surprisingly relevant to our time as well - even if at first glance they seem to be of little importance. One of the manifestations of radical nihilism lies in the admiration for great sporting achievements. Whereas in ancient times sport was part of a religious celebration of the Gods (such as in the early Olympic games), in modern times the athletes themselves are worshipped. In this glorification of the sportsman we may recognize a pseudo-religious celebration of mankind itself: according to Jünger, it represents the metaphysics of power. Sport arouses enthusiasm because here the spectator witnesses the approximation of perfection. The metaphysical significance of sports is therefore especially manifest in the cult of setting records: sport no longer presents the ideal of the sane mind in a healthy body, it is intended to monomaniacally stretch man's power to the limit of its possibilities - and well beyond.

In the pursuit of ultimate power, the sportsman ceases to be an inviolable individual: his body is subject to the rigid discipline of training and to scientific and medical investigation in order to prepare it for its metaphysical task - to achieve the ultimate. In many branches of sport the body is also supported by technological devices⁸⁴ in order to optimize the achievement. For example, the tendency in cyclo-sport to totally merge the athlete with his bicycle to form a perfect unity (an organic construction) in order to wrest maximum power from his body, even if this goes to the

physical detriment of the sportsman. The individual athlete is but a functional element geared to the production process of sport.

The relation of the sportsman to scientific and medical support does, I think, have another dimension as well. Whereas on the one hand science and technology optimize the athlete's capacities, on the other hand the athlete provides science with the perfect guinea pig to deduce man's optimum. It has become the concealed metaphysical task of specific sciences, such as physiology and kinesiology, to determine the ideal picture of man's possibilities. And the results of these branches of science are in fact implemented in the optimization of industrial production as well.

Moreover, while in sports, and the sciences that relate to it, the ideal of man is merely reflected, scientific technology has by now so terrifically developed its means that this ideal has obviously come within reach - or at least, the ideal of attaining this ideal has become imaginable. Eugenetics, at one time considered the product of the insane minds of nazi-scientists, is now openly practiced in modern science - especially in genetic engineering. And while Nazism sought to attain perfection by destroying everything that did not conform to the ideal and prevented the genetic inferior to procreate, genetic engineering seeks to attain perfection by creating the ideal (but also by aborting the ab-normal).

As God has been dethroned, Man has arrogated himself the role of the supreme legislator, deciding over life and death, and the technocratic argument tends to brush aside ethical objections. But then, where can we find the *criteria* to oppose these developments? Must we oppose this faustian science on the basis of the *grand récit* of humanism, claiming that all life is equally valuable? But where resides the legitimacy of this ideology? Where may we find an encompassing moral foundation? Here, I would not dare to even suggest an answer to these questions.

But what counts here, is that these scientific endeavours obviously stem from the desire to *optimize* life, while the question concerning the standards to determine the intrinsic value of life is left outside of consideration. The same nihilism also haunts another branch of upgrading: education. In "the Worker", Jünger conceived of instruction as the "loving and thoroughly reflected upbringing of a specific kind of man"⁸⁵, that is to say the drilling of 'raw material' into usable labourpower. To achieve this goal, the young child was to be separated from its parents by force, to be raised in a specific manner so as to optimize the power of the imperium. No doubt, the present day educational system (at least in the

84. Cf. Friedrich Georg Jünger - Die Perfektion der Technik
Frankfurt/M, ⁵ 1968 (1939), par.40

85. Ernst Jünger - Der Arbeiter, par.77

western democracies) does not allocate the pupils as rigidly as Jünger proposed, nor does it carry out specialization in the prescribed manner. Still, it is my contention that the present day, 'democratic' educational system is equally marked by many elements that may indeed be considered totalitarian.

First, the fact that in most western democracies too school attendance is compulsory: from a certain age onwards, all children are obliged to attend school, and both the lower and the upper age limit tend to shift. Moreover, at the lower limit especially, many parents are inclined to voluntarily hand over their responsibility and their authority by lodging their children with pre-school kindergarten and crèches, in order that they themselves may reenter the labour process. Seen from this perspective, compulsory attendance extends facilities for the parents to fully submit to the process of *total labour*.

But the relation of the educational system and total labour is even more intricate, especially as concerns the curriculum of the students. No doubt, (compulsory) education could contain a promise: the students may, by means of a well-balanced curriculum, very well be raised to become free individuals - as in fact it is written in the charter of some alternative forms of education. However, the mainstream of education is *not* devoted to the emancipation of the individual through *Bildung*. Rather, it is being organized so as to "raise usable labour-power". First, the transfer of knowledge takes place under rather hierarchical relations of education. This way, the young student is, for the most part, being raised to submit to institutional discipline. But secondly, and more important, the upbringing of usable labour-power is secured by the contents of the curriculum. Recent developments in education reveal increased emphasis on mathematical, technical and especially computational skills: the young students are being geared to fit the system of labour. The curriculum serves as an important mechanism of selection, and even if the allocation of students is not compulsory in an immediate sense, it is being prepared by systems of examination, the distribution of raw material between vocational and scientific training etc.. And even scientific education is more and more being reduced to an instrument of total labour: "the effect to be obtained is the optima contribution of higher education to the best performativity (...). Higher education (...) must continue to furnish the social system with the competences that correspond to its demands, that are to maintain its internal coherence"⁸⁶. In the absence of guiding principles, the only goal of education may be the optimization of life as

86. Jean-François Lyotard - La condition postmoderne (*)
Paris, 1979, p.79

it is: "the universities and institutions of higher education are from now on solicited to form competences, and not ideals"⁸⁷.

The decree of a uniform curriculum is no longer the responsibility of the board of governors, to a large extent it is being enacted by central government. And this is but one of the many tasks that the State has assumed. One of the most important tasks that the State has taken on is environmental planning. As Jünger stated quite convincingly: "housing and urban development, powersupply and the organization of traffic, foodsupply and games, that are all, in turn, involved in a great order of landscape-formation, posit so acute their demands and are so intricately interwoven, that the necessity of a unified and systematic arrangement automatically urges itself"⁸⁸. As Jünger argued, planning arises by necessity as a response to increased mobility: the process of total mobilization implies stepped up production and hence accelerated circulation - circulation of capital, of products and especially of labour. Not surprisingly, environmental planning is primarily to be considered in its logistic function: how to rationally arrange space so as to stir up circulation to maximum velocity, how to organize space so as to attain maximum efficiency in time and allocation of means. This logistic arrangement of space is founded on demographic investigation, which seeks to statistically pinpoint the basic material of the labour process - especially the workforce -, and this statistical location can only be perfect if no particle slips scrutiny: hence the totalitarian implications of planning.

In the process of total mobilization, speed increases. This, according to Jünger, calls for ever more potent forms of control. To him, this meant the rise of centralized and ever more simple forms of dominion. However, as is clear from modern political philosophy and political science, the centralized conception of the State is obviously inadequate: "the State is no longer a dominant class itself, but rather it is constituted by those classes that have become independent and that delegate it to the service of their power and their contradictions with the dominated classes. It no longer is the transcendent law that regulates the fragments: it must, for better or worse, design a totality to which it gives the immanent law"⁸⁹. The State is no longer an autonomous, supreme legislator, "it no longer determines a social system, but it is being determined by the social system to which it incorporates itself by means of the play of its functions"⁹⁰. These functions of administration and control tend to get ever more versatile and penetrating - as a response to the increased com-

87. Jean-François Lyotard - op. cit. p.79

88. Ernst Jünger - Der Arbeiter, par.77

89. Gilles Deleuze/Felix Guattari - op. cit. p.261/262 (*)

plexity of the system of total labour, but also due to growing technological possibilities. Even if I can not elaborate this point here, we may conclude from sociological literature that we are enmeshed in a process in which centralized control is gradually being replaced by seemingly neutral, self-steering organizational systems of *totale Verwaltung* (total administration). The preponderant system of the modern, industrial State is "the anonymous, statistically controlled order"⁹¹.

The State has changed from a political body into a functional instrument of the Worker, and political totalitarianism has, to a considerable extent at least, been replaced by immanent, micro-totalitarian mechanisms of systems-reproduction. To once again phrase it in our general formula: in the absence of higher values, the only goal of politics as well tends to be the optimization of the system of total labour. And even if the State and its apparatuses may appear to be a battlefield of conflicting interests, it is my contention that only those contestants may enter the battlefield that have already submitted to the axiomata of total labour⁹². And in fact, the political 'alternatives' have obviously grown to similar variations of the same basic assumption: production⁹³ and growth.

The State is but an epiphenomenon of total mobilization, adopting a favourable policy towards the aimlessness of growth on the one hand, regulating the increased flow of productive energy on the other: unleashing of power, control over power.

In general, it is the task of the State-machinery to keep mobilization up. In addition to the aforementioned tasks - notably: to look after and optimize the logistic conditions of production, and to upgrade manpower by means of education and permanent training -, this implies interventions such as unemployment benefit and subvention. In macro-economic theory, subvention counts as an important (though contested) instrument of balanced economic growth and increased productivity. Likewise, many

90. Gilles Deleuze/Felix Guattari - op. cit. p.262 (*)

Even if the State has lost its immediate political function, in reproducing the existing system it has undeniably internalized capitalist class interest, and may thus be considered to represent political power: "the State, whatever its form, is an essentially capitalist machine, State of the capitalist, the ideal collective capitalist".

Friedrich Engels - MEW 20, p.260

91. Hans G. Helms - op.cit. p.2

92. Cf. Jean-François Lyotard - *Le différend*

Paris, 1984, par.12-13

Cf. Ernst Jünger - *Der Arbeiter*, par.4

93. Cf. Ernst Jünger - *Der Arbeiter*, par.70

economists consider unemployment pay to be an element of economic growth as well. And even if this claim is hotly disputed, social security as such is widely acknowledged to at least stabilize the system, both economically and politically.

To sum up, it may be said that those who are entitled to allowance are, by this very allowance, fettered to the system that has granted this benefit. Not only do they assume the role of consumer, thereby fueling the machinery of production, they also, and more importantly, are subject to various restrictions and obligations (as the counter-balance to their rights). For example, in some countries or other, the unemployed are bound to regularly report to the social services department ('stamp' their dole card) and they are also liable to involuntary inspection (so as to prevent abuse). The unemployed are sometimes compelled to give a full account of their whereabouts, list their voluntary work (or they are forbidden to volunteer), and state their financial position. They are obliged to attend retraining (or, on the contrary, forbidden to study), obliged to put in applications, or even forced to move to another town whenever a vacancy may have arisen there. As Jünger put it: "as the natural consequence of social support, the individual rights such as freedom of establishment and the free use of resignation are severely curtailed"⁹⁴, and "the allotment of subvention must entail interventions in the independence of the economy and economic competition"⁹⁵.

In sum, these obligations and restrictions amount to one central consequence: at all times, the unemployed is to remain at call - the unemployed remain chained to the process of total labour as a 'reserve army of labour'⁹⁶. In Jünger's terminology: the unemployed are an integral part of the Worker. Hence the immanent totalitarianism of the social-capitalist State.

Still, I should once again like to stress that I do not think the State to be only an instrument of domination to confront the powerless individual or that the functions of the state I have just referred to - welfare, education, planning - are *per se* totalitarian. Jünger's conception of society is too monolithic, and his views are too biased in this matter.

94. Ernst Jünger - *Der Arbeiter*, par.63

Obviously, the 'free use of resignation' mostly implied a 'free' choice between work or starvation, and the alleged 'independence' in fact implied dependence on charity - which also entailed social control. Still, it is clear that those who resign voluntarily are not entitled to benefit.

95. *ibid.*

96. Cf. Karl Marx - *Das Kapital I*

MEW 13, p.657ff

society is too monolithic, and his views are too biased in this matter. What I have tried to indicate, however, is the ambivalence contained in the 'regalia of progress'. I do not advocate that we should do away with education, quite the contrary - I think that education and knowledge are in fact essential instruments of resistance against totalitarianism -, nor do I claim that we should abolish social security. I have merely reconstructed Jünger's myth of a workers' State to point out the seeds of totalitarian domination contained in some of the most precious attainments of the present day society. However, I do not think that these seeds will germinate by inescapable fate or by logical necessity. Just like the implementation of new technology is embedded in specific relations of production, the 'superstructure' of society is the resultant of a complex dynamics of economical, political and institutional factors, of "a series of complex, often unwitting, political choices". Hence, we must not fatalistically give in to the pitch-black prospective of a totalitarian order, but ponder the possibilities of *resisting* the Leviathan.

In the last paragraph, I shall therefore reflect upon an alternative to nihilism. Obviously, this question can not be answered within the limited context of this thesis, so I shall have to conclude this thesis with a series of open-ended remarks.

5. A CONSERVATIVE REVOLUTION ?
confessions of ambivalence

*total mobilization has entered a phase
that is even more endangering than the
former*

Ernst Jünger

"The Worker" is an overwhelming book. Or at least: its mythical power did overwhelm *me* the first time I encountered it. No doubt, its overwhelming force is for a great part due to its revolutionary ardour and its vehement anti-bourgeois criticism, to which I am admittedly rather susceptible. Yet, I was also very much impressed by its more substantial elements, notably the analyses of the unstoppable rise of technology and its totalitarian implications. On the other hand, however, I was put off by Jünger's objectionably nationalist boast, and I was also very much aware that in my reading "the Worker" I was sailing close to the wind. I hope that my thesis has so far testified this tension, even if it may have been discharged somewhat by the methodical split between mimetical representation and critical detachment. In this paragraph, however, the ambivalence is to be resuscitated.

In the previous paragraph, I already set out to restore the persuasiveness of the argument, even if I had just tried to subvert its deterministic tenor. However, even if the specific development of technology and domination over the world (both nature and man) has not occurred by necessity, it is my contention that most of the elements that Jünger assembled in his monolithic myth may in fact be discerned in our days - and I could even adduce some elements I have not yet discussed here.

As long as the Worker does not recognize the essential values of Being, he remains a *passive Typus*, residing in the moral void left behind after God's departure. And as transcendence has been levelled, all lofty values turned obsolete, the only possible attitude towards life seems to be: to optimize life as it is. However, 'life as it is' obviously implies, that the passive Typus is to administer the legacy of the Bourgeois. That is to say: in the absence of higher values, the Worker has turned bourgeois, and resorts to material comfort as the realization of life's 'optimum'. However, as Jünger pointed out: "the prolongation of the road which appeared

to lead to comfort and security, from now on broaches the zone of danger"⁹⁷. This statement appears really prophetic in the light of the current state of affairs, and notably of the catastrophic problems of environmental pollution. Bourgeois-materialistic consumerism and the capitalist logic of growth (two of the central manifestations of nihilism) have obviously stepped up mobilization to the verge of disaster, and "the number of major and minor catastrophes clearly indicates, that the private sphere is no longer capable of handling the tasks it has assumed"⁹⁸: the prevention of catastrophe calls for measures "that may not be compatible with the old conception of liberty"⁹⁹.

This understanding is by now dawning on large sections of the polity, and 'unconventional policies' are being advocated even by politicians of undisputed democratic repute. In a somewhat twisted sense, we may therefore share Jünger's moderate optimism of "Ueber die Linie" (even if Jünger considered the threat of nuclear war rather than the ecological problem): "the immensity of powers and means indicates, that from now on totality is at stake (...). It is all about the planet. This is a first glance of hope. For the first time, we may discern a solid, down-to-earth goal amidst the boundless inconstancy of progress"¹⁰⁰. The question remains, however, how this 'solid goal' - viz. the preservation of the ecological system as the precondition of human existence - is to be achieved politically. Now it is my contention, that present-day political institutions are not at all geared to the task, neither nationally nor internationally. The democratic model of balanced interest has proven incapable of achieving anything but useless and delaying compromise - the more so as most solutions remain tied to the logic of growth (the 'dictatorship of economic thinking', as Jünger put it). The "situation of grave danger, that is contained in unlimited mobility and that gets ever more endangering to the extent that bourgeois security turns out to be utopical, demands measures that are more authoritative than those that may be drawn from the funds of liberal democracy"¹⁰¹.

By detour, I have returned to Jünger's anti-democratic criticism of the parliamentary model and the United Nations (or in Jünger's case the League of Nations) respectively. However, I do not at all subscribe to Jünger's solutions to the problem. According to him, "the most diverse necessities demand ever more penetrating solutions of an encompassing nature, to which

97. Ernst Jünger - Der Arbeiter, par.12 (*)

98. Ibid. par.63 (*)

99. Ibid.

100. Ernst Jünger - Ueber die Linie, par.14 (*)

101. Ernst Jünger - Der Arbeiter, par.72 (*)

only the State, and a rather specific kind of State, is capable"¹⁰². Now, this claim does indeed exert some attraction, at least it does on me. But then this attraction is counterbalanced by my discomfort about the current path by which this world-state is in fact coming about and the specific form it is likely to assume.

To clarify this dilemma, I should once again like to refer to the writings of Jünger, in which it has deceptively been resolved. In an essay on 'the World-State', Jünger claimed that only by close cooperation of the United States and the Soviet Union may we expect "the limitation and domestication of the means of power that had risen beyond the control of the historic states"¹⁰³. History will prove that "the Gestalt of the Worker is more powerful than even the last and oldest of the major contradictions: the contradiction of East and West"¹⁰⁴. Indeed, according to Jünger, this expectation has already been redeemed: "the planetary order has already come about, as concerns both *Typus* and equipment. This fact, however, has not yet been recognized"¹⁰⁵.

Even if for other reasons, I think Jüngers prophecy has come true: the Worker has indeed overcome the East/West dichotomy. But the *Typus* of the Worker is not the resendent or even transcendent legislator, the active or sovereign *Typus* to overcome nihilism. The only true internationalism, the truly revolutionary movement is the immanent movement of Kapital. And despite appearances - especially relating to economic competition -, the movement of Kapital negates the confines of superseded nationalisms.

And while this movement does indeed evade the dominion of the 'historic states', I do not as yet see anything of a World-State to resume control over this boundless, nihilistic movement. Nor do I think it likely that any such legislative body may be established, even if it is imperative that it be. Admittedly, this claim that an encompassing legislative body be imperative balances on the verge of advocating an anti-parliamentary dictatorship: the current situation calls for a revival of political *Gesinnungsethik*, for unequivocal ecological creed. But when I claim that world-wide measures are imperative, I do not wish to say that these are to be decreed by an all-powerful 'master of the world'¹⁰⁶.

To be sure, I do not wish to exclude the advisability of a dictatorial elite beforehand, so as to defend the hegemony of the current democratic

102. Ernst Jünger - Der Arbeiter, par.63 (*)

103. Ernst Jünger - Der Weltstaat, par.8 (*)

in: Werke, Band 7 (Stuttgart, 1980), p. 525

104. Ernst Jünger - Der Weltstaat, par.30 (*)

105. Ibid. (*)

106. Cf. above note 20

institutions - as I have claimed before, it is my contention that these are for the most part geared to a totalitarian system which imposes its axiomatics upon us. But I think it too cynical an answer to simply advocate the replacement of one form of totalitarianism by another, all the more so as all present-day totalitarian experiments have proven incapable of dealing with the problems of both the material and immaterial reproduction of society.

Even if its ideology conjures up the coming of the workers' paradise, in reality the material reproduction of so-called really existing socialism adds up to even more poignant forms of degradation of both the individual worker and the environment than does capitalist production. For some reason or other, central planning has turned out to be rather less effective than its defenders would maintain, and it has also tended to intensify what it sought to overcome: domination.

These unfortunate historic experiences urge to proceed with caution in pondering on the apparent necessity of an ecological dictatorship. But there is, I think, a more fundamental argument to take into account here, which concerns the important question of *legitimation*. With the ascendancy of technocratic categories over political ones, this question has for the most part been precluded - the only criterion being efficiency, the optimization of a system whose legitimacy is itself beyond dispute. If, however, the ecological dictatorship proclaims a revaluation of politics over economy, this immediately revives the question of legitimation, and the main reason for not throwing myself into unbounded reveries about an ecological dictatorship lies precisely in my 'typically bourgeois' quest for a solid, legitimizing foundation of political and social conduct. This quest presupposes, in the first place, that such a foundation be desirable. And I think it is, at least if we are not willing to surrender to decisionistic caprice.

To put it in very broad outlines, the question of legitimation has been broached from two perspectives. First, the attempts to found political discourse on the firm basis of *truth* (that is to say, on undisputable theoretical insight). The most important representative of this model is marxism, at least its more objectivistic and deterministic variants. The revolution and its vanguard are being legitimized by the *truth* of their politico-scientific theories. Another exponent of this line of argument, to be sure, is Jünger's claim of the privileged position of the active Typus, a privilege being derived from a superior, metaphysical experience of Being (cf. above, note 35). Yet, the objectivistic trends of political discourse have gradually lost their footing: their theoretical claims to truth have for the most part been undermined by empirical evidence, but especially by epistemological insight. Besides, the former bond between theoretical reason (the domain of truth) and practical reason (the realm

of justice) has dissolved. Henceforth, political discourse can no longer be legitimized by resorting to theoretical reason.

The second trend of legitimation departs not from theoretical reason, but from practical reason. But just as I have outlined the 'objectivistic' theories of legitimation only in very gross terms, disregarding the details of their contents and focusing on their common, general form only, to summarily sketch the second line of legitimation theory would be even more audacious. The theme of legitimation would in fact require a thesis of its own, so I must not elaborate it here. However, the diverse practical discourses of legitimation may be considered to hold one thing in common: political discourse is no longer based on truth but rather on values - be they particularistic in character, or universalistic (such as the *grand récit* of Enlightenment).

Now, given a diversity of values, the central question of legitimation is, I think, what right we have to impose *our* values upon others or, vice versa and perhaps more appealing, what gives them the right to impose their values upon us? To ask this question implies the quest for an indubitable moral foundation. However, as the history of philosophy seems to indicate, this quest is in vain: apparently, no 'ultimate' foundation has stood the test of rational criticism. Hence, the quest for an indubitable foundation of moral conduct seems to inevitably lead into nihilism, into the ultimate conclusion that we may no longer pass judgment upon others. Still, even if I see no legitimate ground to *prescribe* any *specific* form of political or social conduct, I do not at all think that all behaviour is equally valid, and I even think, that some forms of behaviour may be considered impermissible - and this from a strictly amoral point of view.

In pondering the question of morality, we must not by necessity wind up in sheer nihilism, as I think we may seek alliance with a long tradition of *minimalist ethics*. Obviously, I cannot elaborate this ethics in detail here, but I should like to indicate some of its basic elements. In the absence of indubitable moral standards, we may indeed have to defer our moral judgement on the quality of specific forms of social conduct. But in order that any form of conduct be conceivable at all, it is obvious that at least its basic conditions be guaranteed. And the most basic condition, surely, is the mere fact of existence. Here we have, I think, a firm basis for a minimalist ethics, beyond the regime of moralism. However, to further specify this 'basic condition', it must be distinguished from Spinoza's equally minimalist assumption that the will to survive be the first and foremost virtue¹⁰⁷. In talking about the mere fact of existence as the precondition of life, I do not take this in Spinoza's specifically

107. Spinoza - *Ethica*, Pars IV, propos. xxii, coroll.

individualistic sense. Rather, it must be interpreted on a global level: the reproduction and preservation of the ecological system as the absolute foundation of (social) existence.

Based on the fundamental evaluative principle - viz. the preservation of the ecological conditions of existence -, we may claim that every act which irreversibly disrupts the ecological equilibrium, thereby violating the basic conditions of existence, is absolutely reprehensible. This implies, for example, a plea for anti-materialism and anti-consumerism, as it is clear that consumerism has dangerously overstretched nature's resilience. This precarious situation calls for great sacrifices - not only financial, but also existential: decrease in comfort, curtailment of indolence. Yet, the realization of these principles runs up against several problems. First, it is difficult to establish a dividing-line between intolerable consumerism and man's legitimate, essential needs. And it is also quite difficult to determine what acts are to be considered detrimental to the ecological system, and to what extent. A second, even more complicated problem is the problem of the promulgation and enforcement of protective measures and regulations - hence, the question of the institutional organization of the 'ecological revolution'.

As I have already stated, I feel absolutely dismal as concerns the current political forms, which are but the extension of collective self-interest. Yet, I have also made reservations as to the feasibility of an ecological dictatorship. What we should consider, I think, is the possibility of "a social revolution that would transcend individualism yet not lead to etatist collectivism"¹⁰⁸. This 'social revolution', though, must not be restricted to the relations of production only, that is to say the relations between *subjects* alone. We should also reassess the concept of subjectivity in general, notably the relation between subject and object. In connection to this, we should also reconsider the concept of technology. And in so doing, I shall once again affiliate with Jünger, as most of the basic concepts are derived from the last paragraphs of "the Worker".

The term 'technology' is derived from the Greek word *technè*, which generally stands for 'art' or 'skill'. But more specifically it refers to the art of achieving a goal. In modern technology, 'skill' may be translated as efficiency, the 'art of achievement' being reduced to goal-oriented, instrumental rationality. In this process, the subject/object-relation has assumed a specifically hierarchical character, in which the subject reduces the objective sphere to mere material in the process of achieving its goals. Technology is a process that burns up men and mate-

108. Jonathan Zeitlin/Charles Sabel - op.cit. p.142

rial, and this is especially true in the phase of centralized planning, in which the central, planning elite objectifies the world, subjects the world (both nature and man) to its subjective Will.

However, as we have seen (II.5), technology may assume an other role as well: after technology has reached perfection, it may serve to uncover the *essential* characteristics of Being and deploy them to full majesty. This metaphysical point of view undoubtedly influenced Heidegger's philosophy in "*die Frage nach der Technik*". Here, Heidegger not only indicated the proximity of *technè* to *poièsis*, he also emphasized that this *poièsis* is of a twofold character. Not only does it refer to the active, 'purposeful provocation of nature' by the poetic or technical subject, it also has an 'objective' side, which implies that the 'material' substratum of technological poetics is *itself* a form of *poièsis*, namely *phusis*, the "coming-up-by itself"¹⁰⁹. And in fact, "the *phusis* is even *poièsis* in the highest sense, as the physically present contains the opening up of the bringing-to-the-fore, for example the opening up of bloom in blooming, in itself". This means, I think, that the *essential* characteristics of the world are already present: "lying-present (*Vorliegen*) and lying-ready (*Bereitliegen*, *hypokeisthai*) characterize the presence of something present"¹¹⁰, and "the bringing-to-the-fore brings from concealment to unconcealment"¹¹¹. Its unveiling character elevates technology from the instrumental-epistemological realm to the realm of *truth*, to the essence of all beings.

In his ultimate manifestation, the Worker seems to attain this sublime power of technology: to reveal the essential values of Being. And here, the Typus of the Worker is no longer megalomaniac subjectivity dominating the world, but rather its *caretaker*¹¹². I think that my emphasizing this aspect of the Worker is in fact compatible with Jünger's later option of a sensitive and delicate relation to the world - even if it is clear that in

109. Martin Heidegger - *Die Frage nach der Technik*

op. cit. p.19

110. op. cit. p.18: on the aristotelian notion of *ousia* and *entelecheia* in Heidegger: cf. Werner Marx - *Heidegger und die Tradition*

Stuttgart, 1961, p. 30

111. op. cit. p.19

112. This lends an ethical dimension to Jünger's philosophy: it breaks off the haughty anthropocentrism that has characterized human conduct after God's departure, and lays the individual under tribute of an encompassing principle of absolute *humility* in the presence of nature.

Cf. Michael Zimmerman - *Toward a Heideggerean Ethos for Radical Environmentalism*

in: *Environmental Ethics*, 1983, p.99-131

"the Worker" 'nature' also includes the industrial landscape¹¹³.

Technology, in Jünger's conception like in Heidegger's, has taken on an aesthetic dimension. It is an instrument of intensified awareness of Nature¹¹⁴, the extension of our sensory powers, the instrument of truth. And truth is being uncovered in labour, that is to say in man's intimate relation to nature. And even if I myself do not endorse the essentialist overtones in these theories of truth, I do subscribe to the potentially aesthetic powers of (technological) labour. However, the turning-point from domination over the world to aesthetic dominion is not at all logically determined, as Jünger thought it was. As I have tried to indicate in reverting to the historical findings of Zeitlin/Sabel, the path of industrial and technological development is not predetermined by an inner logic alone, it is also liable to political choice and political struggle - and so are the specific relations of production in which technology is embedded. In pondering the possibility technology to obey other relations of production I should finally like to touch upon what I consider basic elements of the politics of an ecological revolution.

In the proposed ecological revolution, one of the basic themes is that of a changed attitude towards technological labour. Technology no longer aims for subjective domination over an objectified world, but is to be incorporated in the aesthetic *Gestaltung* of the world, that is *not* merely material at the disposal of man. This changed attitude towards the *object* inevitably alters the status of the principle of subjectivity. The central question is, then: can new forms of subjectivity be established so as to *normatively* conduct technology into a non-exploitative relation to nature? This is a matter of the dynamics of technological development, a matter of political choice in a wide range of conceivable techno-political options. The two extremes have already been prefigured. On the one hand, we have the collective mass of the Worker, totally submitted to the essential goals of Being. These goals, according to Jünger, are to be formulated by the privileged Typus. I hold this option to be politically dubious. First, I have already expressed my doubt as to the legitimacy of this political elite. Secondly, its hierarchical political structure is liable to be incorporated by malicious political opportunists that do not at all 'serve

113. This is also in accordance with Marx' famous statement that in industrial labour "the highly praised 'unity of man and nature' has existed from way back, and has existed differently in every epoch according to the lesser or greater development of industry".

Karl Marx - Die deutsche Ideologie (MEW 3, p.13)

114. This, again, connects "der Arbeiter" to Jünger's war novels, in which the experience of war implied a higher form of cognition of Being.

Being' but merely pursue their own, particularistic interests. At the other extreme, we have the hermit, the sole individual completely avowed to art. In art, the individual artisan may perhaps fully realize the aesthetic dimension of *technè*, thereby attaining the closest possible proximity to truth, but I do not think this aesthetic individualism a valid political option: this aestheticism does not give an answer to the ineluctable necessity of the material reproduction of life, nor may the individual be able to develop sufficient power to resist the overwhelmingly powerful penetration of the system into the life-world.

Therefore, I think that a viable alternative to the Leviathan has to be developed within a system of these minimal requirements, as concerns both its political stability and its material reproduction. The latter implies, that *labour* serves as the foundation of a new order - a kind of labour that does not ruthlessly exploit nature, nor exploit men. Alternative, ecologically sound modes of agriculture have been developed and have proven to be no less 'efficient' than technological methods of farming. We must also consider 'new', non-exploitative forms of industrial labour¹¹⁵. On the political level, this entails the problem of institutional organization. Once again, this problem is too complex to deal with *in extenso* here. Still, it is obvious, that these non-exploitative forms of labour and technology refer to corporate relations of production. It is collective labour and collective political power that is the foundation of the material and political reproduction of autonomy, not the caprice of domination. True dominion may only be attained in true solidarity, in the willingness to sacrifice. And like Jünger, I think that true freedom must be developed within "the working transformation of the world"¹¹⁶.

By strange detour I have come to associate myself with some of the elements of Jünger's 'Utopia': "it is the virtues of poverty, of labour and of valour that represent the visible sign of a formation deeper than the bourgeois ideal may even dream of"¹¹⁷. However, it is clear that I do not at all enhance its institutional realization as Jünger depicted it in "the Worker". Even if I may have followed the argument of his anti-humanism, I do not think that the humility of man 'in the presence of Being' necessarily implies the celebration of anti-humanism on the political level as well. It is my contention that man's fall of the pedestal should

115. I put the adjective 'new' between parentheses, as these forms of industry have always existed in history (cf. Zeitlin/Sabel), and in fact do still exist presently. The same goes for the 'new' forms of agriculture, that draw on long traditions.

116. Ernst Jünger - *Der Arbeiter*, par.16

117. *Ibid.* par.59 (*)

incite him to humility - not only in the presence of nature, but also in social intercourse. Hence, the alternative of humble, solidary labour may in fact be considered a radically democratic, socialist alternative - even a humanistic alternative. No doubt, this alternative may seem rather naive, and most of its elements were merely touched upon. But then, I have not tried to subjectively impose answers to questions whose magnitude we may only begin to comprehend: I have merely tried to incite a communal exchange of views. And I do hope sincerely that some of those to read this thesis will have recognized this invitation.



QUOTATIONS IN GERMAN AND FRENCHI. BACKGROUNDS: THE CONSERVATIVE REVOLUTIONnote 6

"Hier (..) wird unter Europa viel mehr an Länderstrecken verstanden, als das geographische Europa (..) umfaßt: namentlich gehört Amerika hinzu, soweit es eben das Tochterland unserer Kultur ist".

Friedrich Nietzsche - Menschliches, Allzumenschliches: II,215

note 8

"Es verbirgt sich in ihm zugleich der revolutionäre Protest gegen die alten Wertungen, deren Gültigkeit unwiderruflich abgelaufen ist".

Ernst Jünger - Der Arbeiter, par.15

note 11

"Insofern sich aber unter ihm ein echtes heroisches Erbteil, insofern sich Liebe unter ihm verbarg, tritt er aus dem romantischem Raume hinüber in die Sphäre der Macht".

Ernst Jünger - Der Arbeiter, par.15

note 13

"unter immer glänzender polierter Schale, unter allen Gewändern, mit denen wir uns wie Zauberkünstler behingen, blieben wir nackt und roh wie die Menschen des Waldes und der Steppe".

Ernst Jünger - Der Kampf als inneres Erlebnis

in: Werke (Stuttgart, 1980), Band 7, p.12

note 14

"Ein letztes noch: die Ekstase. Dieser Zustand des Heiligen, des großen Dichters und der großen Liebe ist auch dem großen Mute vergönnt (..). Das ist ein Rausch über allen Räuschen, eine Entfesselung, die alle Bande sprengt. Es ist eine Raserei ohne Rücksicht und Grenzen, nur den Gewalten der Natur vergleichbar. Da ist der Mensch wie der brausende Sturm, das tosende Meer und der brüllende Donner. Dann ist er verschmolzen ins All..".

Ernst Jünger - Der Kampf als inneres Erlebnis

in: Werke (Stuttgart, 1980), Band 7, p.54

note 16

"Wenn man sich den Punkten nähert, an denen der Mensch sich dem Schmerzen gewachsen oder überlegen zeigt, so gewinnt man Zutritt zu den Quellen seiner Macht und zu dem Geheimnis, das sich hinter seiner Herrschaft verbirgt".

Ernst Jünger - Ueber den Schmerz, par.1

note 18

"Aber schließlich ist es doch *ein* großes Schicksal, das uns alle auf derselben Welle trägt. Hier sind wir einmal zusammen gewesen als Organismus der feindlichen Außenwelt gegenüber, als Menschen, die trotz ihrer kleinen Fragestellungen, Leiden und Freuden doch eine höhere Aufgabe umschloß".

Ernst Jünger - Der Kampf als inneres Erlebnis

in: Werke (Stuttgart, 1980), Band 7, p.85

note 22

"Die Kriegswirtschaft bedeutet den Triumph des Monopolsystems. Jetzt ist wirklich die Wirtschaft des ganzen Landes ein einziger ungeheurer Konzern, der einheitlich nach bestimmten Regeln von der Hauptstadt bis ins letzte Dorf hinein alles kommandiert. Der Staat ist jetzt wirklich der zentralistische Macht - und Gewaltapparat in höchster Vollendung, und er kann keinerlei 'Freiheiten' mehr in seinen Grenzen dulden".

Arthur Rosenberg - Geschichte des Bolschewismus

Frankfurt/M, 1975, p.86-7

note 37

"Der neue Staat, wie Jünger ihn sich denkt, soll nicht die politische Darstellung einer zum Siege geführten 'Idee' sein; vielmehr soll ein neues, so noch nicht dagewesenes Kraftbewußtsein einfach sich selbst dokumentieren. In der Aufrichtung der neuen, revolutionären und totalitären Art von Herrschaft soll einfach der Wille zur Entfaltung schlechthin aller Energien sich ein Abbild schaffen, der in der Brust der jungen Generation, der im Herzen des neuen Menschenschlages lebt"

Alfred von Martin - Der heroische Nihilismus und seine Ueberwindung

Krefeld, 1948, p.81

note 45

"Zu den ablehnender Grundhaltung gegenüber den Werten der Welt des 19. Jahrhunderts brauchen nur als erkannte Gegenparolen Nationalismus und Sozialismus hinzuzutreten, um ihm die Wendung zur politischen Aktivität und politischen Radikalismus zu geben, den die Jugendbewegung vor 1914 noch nicht kannte"

Otto-Ernst Schüddekopf - Nationalbolschewismus in Deutschland 1918-1933

Frankfurt/M. 1972, p.139

note 46

"'Jungbrunnen' des Ostens, aus dem das deutsche Volk neue Kräfte schöpfen könne, gleichsam damit eine zweite Jugend gewinnend (..) um die müde gewordene Zivilisation der deutschen Republik und Europas abzulösen".

Otto-Ernst Schüddekopf - Nationalbolschewismus in Deutschland 1918-1933

Frankfurt/M. 1972, p.58

II. TECHNOLOGY AND NIHILISM

note 3

"Dieser 'Wille zur Macht' drückt sich in der *Ausdeutung*, in der *Art des Kraftverbrauchs* aus: - Verwandlung der Energie in Leben und 'Leben in höchster Potenz' erscheint demnach als Ziel".

Friedrich Nietzsche - Werke, Band III (Schlechta-Ausgabe), p.586

note 4

"Der *radikale Nihilismus* ist die Ueberzeugung einer absoluten Unhaltbarkeit des Daseins, wenn es sich um die höchsten Werte, die man anerkennt, handelt; hinzugerechnet die *Einsicht*, daß wir nicht das geringste Recht haben, ein Jenseits oder ein An-Sich der Dinge anzusetzen, das 'göttlich', das leibhafte Moral wäre".

Friedrich Nietzsche - Werke, Band III (Schlechta-Ausgabe), p.567

note 10

"Der Nihilismus stellt einen pathologischen *Zwischenzustand* dar (..): sei es, daß die produktive Kräfte noch nicht stark genug sind, - sei es, daß die *décadence* noch zögert und ihre Hilfsmittel noch nicht erfunden hat".

Friedrich Nietzsche - Werke, Band III (Schlechta-Ausgabe), p.557

note 16

"Der Bürger (..) ist zu begreifen als der Mensch, der die Sicherheit als einen höchsten Wert erkennt und demgemäß seine Lebensführung bestimmt".

Ernst Jünger - Der Arbeiter, par.13

note 37

"Die Abstraktheit, also auch die Grausamkeit aller menschlichen Verhältnisse nimmt ununterbrochen zu".

Ernst Jünger - Die totale Mobilmachung, par.8

note 38

"Sie bietet sich in Bändern, in Geflechten, in Ketten und Streifen von Gesichtern, die blitzartig vorüberhuschen, der Wahrnehmung dar, auch in ameisenartigen Kolonnen, deren Vorwärtsbewegung nicht mehr dem Belieben, sondern einer automatischen Disziplin unterworfen ist".

Ernst Jünger - Der Arbeiter, par.31

note 39

"Wer möchte bestreiten, daß die 'civilisation' dem Fortschritt inniger verbunden ist als die 'Kultur', daß sie in den großen Städten ihre natürliche Sprache zu sprechen vermag und die Mittel und Begriffe zu handhaben weiß, denen die Kultur beziehungslos oder selbst feindlich gegenüber steht".

Ernst Jünger - Die totale Mobilmachung, par.5

note 40

"Der 'Siegeszug der Technik' läßt eine breite Spur von zerstörten Symbolen zurück. Sein unausbleibliches Ergebnis ist die Anarchie - eine Anarchie, die die Lebenseinheiten in ihre Atome zerreißt. Die zerstörerische Seite dieses Vorgangs ist erkannt (...). Ihr Wesen scheint deshalb nihilistischer Natur, weil ihr Angriff sich auf die Summe der Verhältnisse erstreckt und weil kein Wert ihr Widerstand zu leisten vermag. Diese Tatsache aber ist es gerade, die stutzig machen muß und die verrät, daß sie, obgleich selbst ohne Wert und scheinbar neutral, in Diensten steht".

Ernst Jünger - Der Arbeiter, par.47

note 42

"Erst die völlige Zersplitterung, das Sinnloswerden der alten Gefüge macht es möglich, daß die Wirklichkeit eines anderen Kraftfeldes in Erscheinung tritt".

Ernst Jünger - Der Arbeiter, par.40

note 55

"Jeder echter Instinkt ist daran zu erkennen, daß er begreift, daß es sich hier im Grunde weder um neue Erkenntnisse noch um neue Zweckmäßigkeiten handeln kann, sondern daß es die Frage einer neuen Herrschaft ist".

Ernst Jünger - Der Arbeiter, par.23

note 59

"Ob wir die Heimat der Gestalten im Geist, in der Idee, im Paradies, im Urgrund oder im eigenen Innern vermuten - der Eintritt bleibt uns in jedem Fall verwehrt. Blendende Lichter, ungeheure Schatten werden von den Vorposten erkannt. Wer weitergehen will, muß den Leib, den Ich zurücklassen".

Ernst Jünger - Typus, Name, Gestalt, par.119

note 62

"Erst die Koinzidenz des Einzelwillens mit dem 'Weltwillen', des individuellen Ethos mit dem kosmischen Nomos, persönlicher Freiheit mit gestaltlicher Notwendigkeit (...) -, erst also die organische Einbindung des Einzelnen in das Weltganze stattet die Existenz dieses Einzelnen mit geschichtlicher, das heißt hier: mit gestaltlich 'legitimierter' Macht (...) aus und verleiht ihr damit Sinn und Bedeutung über ihre Zeitlichkeit, ihre 'physis' hinaus, also in meta-physischer Hinsicht".

Volker Droste - Ernst Jünger: "der Arbeiter"

Göppingen, 1981, p.95

note 65

"Wir haben einen Abschnitt erreicht, in dem die Entwicklungsgeschichte versagt, wenn sie nicht mit umgekehrten Vorzeichen betrieben wird, das heißt: aus welcher die Gestalt als das der Zeit nicht unterworfenen Sein die Entwicklung des werdenden Lebens bestimmt".

Ernst Jünger - Der Arbeiter, par.36

note 66

"Die Gestalt ist nicht zu erfassen durch den allgemeinen und geistigen Begriff der Unendlichkeit, sondern durch den besonderen und organischen Begriff der Totalität".

Ernst Jünger - Der Arbeiter, par.41

note 67

"Keine Entwicklung ist imstande, aus dem Sein mehr herauszuholen, als in ihm enthalten ist. Die Art der Entwicklung wird vielmehr durch das Sein bestimmt".

Ernst Jünger - Der Arbeiter, par.48

note 68

"Die Maschinenteknik ist zu begreifen als das Symbol einer besonderen Gestalt, nämlich der des Arbeiters".

Ernst Jünger - Der Arbeiter, par.23

note 69

"...sie ist das Instrumentarium, die Projektion einer besonderen Lebensart, für die *Arbeit* der einfachste Ausdruck ist".

Ernst Jünger - Der Arbeiter, par.28

note 70

"Die Entpersönlichung deutet darauf hin, daß es sich letzten Endes nicht um die Leistung eines Individuums, sondern einer es bewegenden überindividuellen Kraft handelt (des Willens zur Macht, der sich überlegen zum Bewußtsein seiner selbst erhebt)".

Gerhard Loose - Ernst Jünger: Gestalt und Werk

Frankfurt/M, 1957, p.121/122

note 76

"Der totale Arbeitscharakter aber ist die Art und Weise, in der die Gestalt des Arbeiters die Welt zu durchdringen beginnt".

Ernst Jünger - Der Arbeiter, par.31

note 81

"Je tiefer die alten Bindungen unterminiert, je schärfer sie abgetragen, je mehr die Atome aus ihren Gefügen gelockert sind, desto weniger Widerstand besteht gegen eine organische Konstruktion der Welt".

Ernst Jünger - Der Arbeiter, par.47

note 82

"Der Ausweis dieser Legitimation besteht in in der Meisterung der Dinge, die Uebermächtig geworden sind - in der Bändigung der absoluten Bewegung, die nur durch ein neues Menschentum zu leisten ist".

Ernst Jünger - Der Arbeiter, par.24

note 87

"Die Organisation der Rüstung um der 'reinen Macht' willen bildet das um sich selbst rotierende System, innerhalb dessen der Staat nichts ist als der Faktor, welcher die Organisation in Gang setzt. Auch er hat aufgehört,

ein idealer Wert, ein Wert an sich zu sein: in einer ganz 'instrumental' gewordene 'Zeit' ist auch er nur noch 'das umfassendste Instrument'".

Alfred von Martin - Der heroische Nihilismus und seine Ueberwindung
Krefeld, 1948, p.107

note 89

"..nur noch die bloße Erdherrschaft als zielloses Ziel. Unter dem planetarischen Sternengang bleibt das Ringen um das Ganze der sichtbaren Erde und des gemessenen Zeitraumes im leeren Nichts verstrickt".

Kostas Axelos - Einführung in ein künftiges Denken
Tübingen, 1966, p.84

note 92

"Es liegt im Werkstättencharakter dieser zweiten Phase begründet, daß sie keinen endgültigen Zustand, soweit welche auf Erden überhaupt möglich sind, verkörpert, wohl aber der Vorbereitung solcher Zustände dient".

Ernst Jünger - Der Arbeiter, par.56

note 93

"In der Werkstättenlandschaft (..) in der wir uns befinden, geschieht die Planung im Rahmen einer Totalen Mobilmachung die auf Herrschaft gerichtet ist, während die Gestaltung sich bereits auf Herrschaft bezieht und durch sie ermöglicht wird. Die Aufgabe der Totalen Mobilmachung ist die Verwandlung des Lebens in Energie (..) Sie bezieht sich also auf die Potenz des Lebens, während die Gestaltung das Sein zum Ausdruck bringt".

Ernst Jünger - Der Arbeiter, par.62

note 94

"Wir leben in einem der seltsamen Zeiträume, in dem Herrschaft nicht mehr und Herrschaft noch nicht besteht".

Ernst Jünger - Der Arbeiter, par.53

note 95

"Der eigentliche Grund für das sehr gesteigerte, sehr allgemein gewordene Leiden der Welt liegt darin, daß eine solche Herrschaft noch nicht verwirklicht ist und daß wir daher in einer Zeit leben, in der die Mittel bedeutender erscheinen als der Mensch".

Ernst Jünger - Der Arbeiter, par.22

note 100

"Während auf der untersten Stufe der Rangordnung die Gestalt des Arbeiters als gleichsam blinder Wille, als planetarische Funktion den Einzelnen ergreift und sich unterordnet, stellt sie ihn auf der zweiten Stufe als Träger des speziellen Arbeitscharakters in eine Mannigfaltigkeit von planmäßigen Konstruktionen ein. Auf der letzten und höchsten Stufe jedoch erscheint der Einzelne, indem er unmittelbar zum totalen Arbeitscharakter in Beziehung steht".

Ernst Jünger - Der Arbeiter, par.43

note 110

"Man muß sich darüber im klaren sein, daß diese Veränderlichkeit nicht an sich besteht, sondern daß sie nichts anderes darstellt als ein Zeichen dafür, daß die Technik noch nicht in einem unzweifelhaften Dienstverhältnis steht -oder, mit anderen Worten ausgedrückt, daß Herrschaft sich noch nicht verwirklicht hat. Diese Verwirklichung aber bezeichneten wir als die letzte Aufgabe, die dem technischen Vorgange zugrunde liegt".

Ernst Jünger - Der Arbeiter, par.53

note 111

"In der Werkstättenlandschaft (..) geschieht die Planung im Rahmen einer Totalen Mobilmachung, die auf Herrschaft gerichtet ist, während die Gestaltung sich bereits auf diese Herrschaft bezieht und durch sie ermöglicht wird".

Ernst Jünger - Der Arbeiter, par.62

note 113

"Im Verzicht auf Individualität liegt der Schlüssel zu Räumen, deren Kenntnis seit langem verloren gegangen ist".

Ernst Jünger - Der Arbeiter, par.65

note 121

"Freiheit kann nicht empfunden werden an den Punkten des Leidens, sondern an denen der Tätigkeit, der wirkenden Verwandlung der Welt".

Ernst Jünger - Der Arbeiter, par.16

note 122

"Erst wenn der Freiheitsanspruch in dieser Fassung zutage tritt, kann von einer Herrschaft, kann von einem Zeitalter des Arbeiters die Rede sein".

Ernst Jünger - Der Arbeiter, par.19

note 125

"die eigentliche Freiheit des Typus besteht eben darin, daß er einem solchen Kraftfelde angehört. Dieses Feld wird durch die Gestalt des Arbeiters beherrscht".

Ernst Jünger - Der Arbeiter, par.40

note 126

"die als Schicksal empfundene Lust, (die eigene Existenz) zu verwirklichen"

note 127

"Der 'heroische' Typ will totale Macht und also totale Staat - auch wenn er dabei selbst nur Objekt der Staatsführung sein kann, also nur auf der Stufe der Gehorchenden seinen Platz findet".

Alfred von Martin - Der heroische Nihilismus und seine Ueberwindung

Krefeld, 1948, p.112

note 128

"...nicht nur Material, sondern zugleich Träger des Schicksals zu sein, das Leben nicht nur als Feld des Notwendigen, sondern zugleich der Freiheit".

Ernst Jünger - Der Arbeiter, par.19

note 130

"Durch das revolutionäre Aufheben des Individuellen und des Privativen soll die Menschheit selbst zum objektiven Subjekt werden und sich alles - als Objekt - unterwerfen".

Kostas Axelos - Einführung in ein künftiges Denken
Tübingen, 1966, p.76

note 133

"Das tiefste Glück des Menschen besteht darin, daß er geopfert wird, und die höchste Befehlskunst darin, Ziele zu zeigen, die des Opfers würdig sind".

Ernst Jünger - Der Arbeiter, par.22

note 134

"Es kommt nicht darauf an, daß wir leben, sondern daß überhaupt auf die Welt wieder die Führung eines Lebens im großen Stile und nach großen Maßstäben möglich ist".

Ernst Jünger - Der Arbeiter, par.56

note 139

"es sind vielmehr die Tugenden der Armut, der Arbeit und der Tapferkeit, die heute das sichtbare Zeichen einer weit tieferen Bildung darstellen, als sie sich das bürgerliche Bildungsideal träumen läßt".

Ernst Jünger - Der Arbeiter, par.59

III. AMBIVALENCES

note 12

"Der Glaube an den Sinn dieser unserer Welt ist nicht nur eine Notwendigkeit, er ist auch das Kennzeichen jeder Haltung, die noch Zukunft besitzt".

Ernst Jünger - Der Arbeiter, par.16

note 13

"'Der Arbeiter' ist im letzten Grunde ein Prüfstein des Glaubens oder zum mindesten der Glaubenswilligkeit".

Gerhard Loose - Ernst Jünger: Gestalt und Werk
Frankfurt/M, 1957, p.105

note 14

"Es kommt darauf an, einen Punkt der Betrachtung zu gewinnen, von dem aus die Orte des Verlustes als die Gesteinsmasse gesehen werden können, die während der Bildung einer Statue vom Block verlorengeht".

Ernst Jünger - Der Arbeiter, par.36

note 17

"Sie werden gehorsame Werkzeuge der Zerstörung sein, solange der Geist auf Zerstörung sinnt, und sie werden aufbauen, sowie der Geist zu großen Bauten entschlossen ist".

Ernst Jünger - Der Arbeiter, par.57

note 29

"Ausbeutung ist der Grundzug der Maschinen - und Automatenwelt. Sie steigert sich zur Unersättlichkeit, wo der Leviathan erscheint. Darüber darf man sich auch dort nicht täuschen, wo großer Reichtum die Schuppen zu vergolden scheint. Er ist noch fürchtlicher im Komfort. Die Zeit der Monstrestaaten ist angebrochen".

Ernst Jünger - Ueber die Linie, par.18

note 31

"Der geistige Ueberwindung und Beherrschung der Epoche wird sich nicht darin spiegeln, daß perfekte Maschinen den Fortschritt krönen, sondern darin, daß sie im Kunstwerk Form gewinnt. Hierin wird sie erlöst".

Ernst Jünger - Ueber die Linie, par.20

note 42

"Dieser Grundirrtum liegt darin, daß man den Menschen in ein unmittelbares Verhältnis zur Technik setzt - sei es, daß man ihn als den Schöpfer oder als das Opfer dieser Technik erkennt".

Ernst Jünger - Der Arbeiter, par.44

note 45

"In diesem Zusammenhang spielt die Maschine eine ebenso sekundäre Rolle wie der Mensch, sie ist nur eines der Organe, durch die diese Sprache gesprochen wird".

Ernst Jünger - Der Arbeiter, par.44

note 48

"Die Totale Mobilmachung als Maßnahme des organisatorischen Denkens ist nur eine Andeutung jener höheren Mobilmachung, die die Zeit an uns vollzieht".

Ernst Jünger - Die Totale Mobilmachung, par.6

note 61

"In der neueren arbeitspolitischen und industriesoziologischen Diskussion besteht weitgehende Uebereinstimmung darin, daß das vom 'Subsumtionstheorem' entworfene Bild einer fügenlosen Kompaktheit tayloristisch verfaßter Arbeitsorganisation nicht mehr zu halten ist".

T. Malsch/ R. Seltz (ed) - Die neuen Produktionskonzepte auf dem Prüfstand
Berlin, 1987, p.12

note 75

"Tatsächlich hat die Werkstättenlandschaft, die unsere Zeit kennzeichnet und die man gemeinhin als Industrielandschaft zu bezeichnen pflegt, den Erdball bereits sehr gleichmäßig mit ihren Bauten und Anlagen, mit ihren Städten und Revieren bedeckt. Es gibt keine Region mehr, die nicht durch Straßen und Schienen, durch Kabel und Funkwege, durch Flug - und Schifffahrtslinien in Fesseln geschlagen ist (...). Dies mußte auch in das Landschaftsbild jene Spuren eingraben, die überall mit diesem (bürgerlichen JP) Freiheitsbegriffe verbunden sind. Der wahllose Konkurrenzkampf um die

Reviere des natürlichen Reichtums und die Anhäufung von Individuen zu einer atomisierten Gesellschaft in den großen Städten brachten in unglaublich kurzer Zeit eine Veränderung hervor, deren Eingriff bis zur Verpestung der Atmosphäre und der Vergiftung der Flüsse führt".

Ernst Jünger - Der Arbeiter, par.63

note 86

"L'effet à obtenir est la contribution optima de l'enseignement supérieur à la meilleure performativité du système social. L'enseignement supérieur (...) devra continuer à fournir au système social les compétences correspondant à ses exigences propres, qui sont de maintenir sa cohésion interne".

Jean-François Lyotard - La condition postmoderne

Paris, 1979, p.79

note 89

"(L'Etat) ne forme plus par lui-même une ou des classes dominantes, il est lui-même formé par ces devenues indépendante qui le délèguent au service de leur puissance et de leurs contradictions, de leur luttes et de leurs compromis avec les classes dominées. Il n'est plus loi transcendante qui régit d'ers fragments: il doit dessiner tant bien que mal un tout auquel il rend sa loi immanente".

Gilles Deleuze/Félix Guattari - Capitalisme et schizophrénie: l'anti-Oedipe

Paris, 1972, p.261/262

note 90

"il ne détermine plus un système social, il est déterminé par le système par le système social auquel il s'incorpore dans le jeu de ses fonctions".

Gilles Deleuze/Félix Guattari - Capitalisme et schizophrénie: l'anti-Oedipe

Paris, 1972, p.262

note 97

"Die Verlängerung eines Weges, der zur Bequemlichkeit und Sicherheit zu führen schien, schneidet nunmehr in die Zone des Gefährlichen ein".

Ernst Jünger - Der Arbeiter, par.12

note 98

"Die Zahl der großen und kleinen Katastrophen kündigt deutlich an, daß die private Sphäre den Aufgaben, die sie für sich in Anspruch nahm, nicht mehr gewachsen ist".

Ernst Jünger - Der Arbeiter, par.63

note 100

"Das Ungeheure der Mächte und Mittel läßt darauf schließen, das nunmehr das Ganze auf dem Spiele steht (...). Es geht um den Planeten überhaupt. Das ist ein erster Hoffnungsblick. Zum ersten Male ergibt sich ein festes, sachliches Ziel inmitten des uferlosen Fortschritt".

Ernst Jünger - Ueber die Linie, par.14

note 101

"Der Zustand der großen Gefahr, der in eine unbeschränkte Beweglichkeit eingeschlossen ist und der in demselben Maße drohender wird, in dem sich die bürgerliche Sicherheit als utopisch erweist, fordert gebieterisch andere Maßnahmen an, als sie dem Bestande der liberalen Demokratie zu entnehmen sind".

Ernst Jünger - Der Arbeiter, par.72

note 102

"Die mannigfaltigsten Notwendigkeiten erheischen immer eindringlicher Lösungen totaler Natur, zu denen nur der Staat, und zwar (..) ein ganz besonders gearteter Staat, befähigt ist".

Ernst Jünger - Der Arbeiter, par.63

note 103

"... sie allein verspricht die Begrenzung und Zähmung der Machtmittel, die über die Kontrolle der historischen Staaten (..) hinauswachsen".

Ernst Jünger - Der Weltstaat, par.8

note 104

"Offenbar ist die Gestalt des Arbeiters stärker noch als der älteste und letzte der großen Gegensätze: als der von Ost und West".

Ernst Jünger - Der Weltstaat, par.30

note 105

"Die planetarische Ordnung ist sowohl dem Typus wie der Ausstattung nach bereits vollzogen. Es fehlt nur noch ihre Anerkennung".

Ernst Jünger - Der Weltstaat, par.30

note 117

"es sind vielmehr die Tugenden der Armut, der Arbeit und der Tapferkeit, die heute das sichtbare Zeichen einer weit tieferen Bildung darstellen, als sie sich das bürgerliche Bildungsideal träumen läßt".

Ernst Jünger - Der Arbeiter, par.59

