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The Death of Civilization: Ethics and Politics in the Work of Hermann Broch, 1886-1951.

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor Philosophy

in

History

by

Donald L. Wallace

Committee in charge:

Professor David Luft, Chair
Professor Todd Kontje
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2006

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Chair

University of California, San Diego

2006

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complacency to action. It is a journey that I undertook with four others and with whom I share its success: Jim, Sean, Amy, and Luke. I also share this accomplishment with the person responsible for all aspects of my life that are happy, successful, and worthwhile—Sarah.

I dedicate this work to my family: Will, Terri, my mother—the only true intellectual I know, my father—my model of integrity and the reason I teach, and Luke—the best listener I have ever known.

VITA

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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

Death of Civilization: Ethics and Politics in the Work of Hermann Broch, 1886-1951.

by

Donald L. Wallace

Doctor of Philosophy in History

University of California, San Diego, 2006

Professor David Luft, Chair

My dissertation examines Hermann Broch and his political theory on democracy. Hermann Broch (1886-1951) was one of the three or four greatest modernist writers of the first half of the twentieth century. His polyhistorical novel, *The Sleepwalkers* (1931-33) and his stream of conscious, prose-poetry novel, *The Death of Virgil* (1945) broke new ground in terms of narrative structure, playing with the relativity of time, and exploring the unconscious through words. His contributions to democratic theory is less well known but from a historical point of view equally as

valuable for understanding the possibilities for intellectual engagement with the modern world.

In the dissertation I explain how Broch's lifelong concern for ethics and value construction transformed into a political theory of human rights and Total Democracy. Broch's theory centered on the individual as the source for political stability; for the individual's cognitive autonomy allowed for an antidote to the modern tendency for outbreaks of irrational, mass hysteria. It is a theory I describe as "critical humanism." My dissertation further examines how Broch's critical humanism reveals a sustained commitment to the Enlightenment Project—how that commitment developed and was challenged in the context of Vienna 1900 and in exile in the United States, how that commitment shaped Broch's theory of social value construction, and finally how it impacted his conception of United States democracy.

The ultimate source of Broch's critical humanism was his experience of dislocation in the modernist world of Vienna 1900 (assimilation, anti-Semitism, and identity crisis). The relativism he experienced in his youth developed into a theory of value relativity. In his exile he connected his ideas on ethical relativism to the struggle of democracy and fascism. Broch left behind 1000s of pages of material on his impressions of democracy and freedom in the United States. Broch's European view, which was pro-American and pro-democratic, allows for an interpretative approach to liberal democracy that is devoid of nationalism and free from the debates over positive and negative rights.

Introduction

Great is the anguish of the man who becomes aware of his isolation and seeks to escape from his own memory; he is obsessed and outcast ... there awakens with him a doubly strong yearning for a Leader to take him tenderly and lightly by the hand, to set things in order and show him the way. ... Yet even if the Leader were to come the hoped-for miracle would not happen ... it is the breath of the Absolute that sweeps across the world, and from our dim inklings and gropings for truth there will spring up the high-day and holiday assurance with which we shall know that every man has the divine spark in his soul and that our oneness cannot be forfeited; unforfeitable the brotherhood of humble human creatures. ... “Do thyself no harm! For we are all here!”¹

Hermann Broch (1932)

The following study explores the intellectual basis of modernity and the position of a leading modernist thinker, Hermann Broch. I examine Broch’s intellectual commitment to the Enlightenment Project—how that commitment developed and was challenged in the context of Vienna 1900 and in exile in the United States, how that commitment shaped Broch’s theory of social value construction, and

¹ Hermann Broch, *The Sleepwalkers*, translated by Willa and Edwin Muir (New York: Vintage Books, 1996), 647-8.

finally how it impacted his conception of United States democracy. The Enlightenment Project was an intellectual worldview characterized by its belief in progress, rationality, secularism, and individual autonomy. The Enlightenment Project underlaid the scientific, industrialized, and mass political world of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and led Europe to the position of world hegemon technologically, economically, and militarily. Nevertheless, in the context of a growing intellectual and cultural critique of modernity, the Enlightenment Project became viewed as the source of the modern age's most infamous products: exploitation (colonial, environmental, and economic), genocide, and world war. The dialectical irony that Marx found implied in capitalism is *mutatis mutandis* equally applicable to the study of the Enlightenment Project—its very success produced its own grave digger.²

Hermann Broch (1886-1951) was one of the three or four greatest modernist writers of the first half of the twentieth century. His polyhistorical novel *The Sleepwalkers* (1931-33) and his stream of conscious, prose-poetry novel *The Death of Virgil* (1945) broke new ground in terms of narrative structure, playing with the relativity of time, and exploring the unconscious through words. His influence on German literature was somewhat undermined by the historical moment—he began to publish his novels as fascism spread across Europe and Nazi regime came to power in Germany. By the time he completed the third volume of *The Sleepwalkers* accessibility to a German audience was greatly reduced. He completed his second

² Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, (New York: International Publishers Co., 1948), 21.

great novel, *The Death of Virgil*, in exile. Nevertheless, both works were well received and established Broch's literary legacy and have remained his primary source for fame.

Whereas the other great novelists of the period, Joyce, Proust, Dos Passos, and Mann packaged their most enduring, influential, and severe critiques of modern society in their literature, Broch's aesthetic work was one of many forms that a larger, overarching system of social criticism produced. The focus of his social criticism was the disintegration of values in modern Europe, that is, Europe's abandonment of a universal value for regulating individual moral actions as well as the rules and regulations of states. Broch referred to his social criticism as value construction, and regardless of genre the ultimate goal of his work was always to promote open and universal value systems.³ In fellow Viennese novelist Robert Musil, we find a close parallel to Broch's eclectic blending of intellectual goals with disparate forms of presentation and inquiry. Jean Paul Sartre immediately jumps to mind as well when describing such intellectual eclecticism. Like Sartre and Musil, such a combination led to a philosophical essayism, a method by which Broch employed his literary talents to engage in contemporary politics and cultural criticism.⁴ In this dissertation, I examine the sources of Broch's intellectual eclecticism, how it reflects on and interacts with the historical context of fin-de-siècle Vienna and the United States of

³ "Open Value System" was Broch's term, by which he meant a social set of values and regulations that were flexible enough take in advances in knowledge or changes in worldview without necessitating oppression or triggering an outbreak of mass hysteria.

⁴ For a discussion of essayism and its influence on the European intellectual history of the first half of the twentieth century see David S. Luft, *Robert Musil and the Crisis of European Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 18-22.

the 1940s, and the specific political form that Broch's overarching social criticism took.⁵

It was one of the great ironies of Broch's life that his reputation was built on his literary talents, yet he never self-identified as a novelist and clearly felt that his most important contribution to society was not to be found in his aesthetic activities. It is difficult to categorize how Broch conceived of his primary vocation. He certainly felt that mathematics and logic were important fields of inquiry, but he never obtained enough specialized training to be called a mathematician or philosopher. He read and studied extensively in the field of epistemology and psychology, though again he lacked any specialization in these fields. He sought a pragmatic application for his studies on mass politics, yet he had no university training in sociology. He wrote a great deal about and took part in political issues and organizations; he was especially concerned with the economic and legal structure of contemporary democracies. Here again, however, he lacked university instruction and was never a member of any specific school of social criticism or political theory, such as the Frankfurt School or

⁵ Most of the scholarly literature on Broch has been written by Germanists and has concentrated on his fiction. In the last two decades several philosophers have contributed important studies on his epistemology. The importance of his politics has less received attention and remains the most underexplored area of Broch's thought. See Paul Michael Lützeler, *Hermann Broch, Ethik und Politik: Studien zum Frühwerk und zur Romantrilogie Die Schlafwandler* (Munich: Winkler Verlag, 1973); Almud Greiter and Anton Pelinka, "Hermann Broch als Demokratietheoretiker," in *Hermann Broch und Seine Zeit*, edited by Richard Thieberger (Bern: Peter Lang, 1980), 24-36; Monika Klinger, *Broch und Die Demokratie* (Berlin: Duncker und Humblot, 1994); Robert G. Weigel, *Zur geistigen Einheit von Hermann Brochs Werk: Massenpsychologie. Politologie. Romane* (Tübingen, Germany: A. Francke Verlag, 1994). A recently published collection of essays also deals directly with Broch's political thought; this volume, however, came to my attention after the completion of my dissertation and will not be consider in my work. *Hermann Broch: Politik, Menschenrechte—und Literatur?*, edited by Thomas Eicher, Paul Michael Lützeler, and Hartmut Steinecke (Oberhausen, Germany: Athena Verlag, 2005).

Austro-Marxism. He rarely pursued his political goals through political parties or specific ideologies.

In the end, Broch wrote novels, poems, and plays; he produced political pamphlets and articles; he wrote a psychological treatise on the dangers of mass hysteria; he studied mathematics; and he produced an epistemology of the modern mind. He was an eclectic spirit with a versatile intellect. The challenge in this study is to cut through the eclecticism and draw out the fundamental unity of Broch's work, that is, his Enlightened, humanistic search for a universal value system that would serve as the foundation to open, stable, and democratic societies. I direct my study toward Broch's political solution to the issue of universal value, his theory of "Total Democracy." The ideas of universality, totality, and internationalism were connected in Broch's political theory. Democracy represented the best form of government, but democracy was not a universal concept. It could promote exclusionary and closed value systems as well as open ones. Even the political notion of freedom could lack universality and openness in a context where the source of value excluded individual cognitive freedom. In his theory of Total Democracy Broch attempted to prove that value production came from the individual ego and that the ego (a cognitive space) as a shared or universal aspect of humanity was the sole locus of universal value production.

The challenge for democracy in the context of the early twentieth century was to recognize the source of value construction and to construct democratic institutions that protected and nurtured the source of ethics, the individual. This led Broch to

challenge the European and American limitations of their democratic principles and to extend his political theory from defining the relationship between democracy, values, and the individual to the creation of human rights and the protection of human dignity. He packaged his human rights theory in the form of internationalism. In the first two chapters of the dissertation, I set out the mature political theory of Hermann Broch from his time in exile. My discussion demonstrates how the context of fascism prompted Broch to shift his epistemological theory of individual cognition from the aesthetics to the politics.

My interest in Hermann Broch developed out from three interpretations of his thought: Hannah Arendt in 1955 (after years of friendship and correspondence with Broch) assessed Broch's political theory as naïve and outdated.⁶ H. Stuart Hughes in discussing the success and failure of émigré intellectuals in the United States during the 1930s and 1940s portrayed Broch as a tragic figure, who failed to create any long term influence in his adopted country.⁷ Steven Beller in his discussion of Jewish assimilation in turn-of-the-century Vienna characterized Broch's position in Viennese society as an exception and unrepresentative of the Jewish experience.⁸ In my dissertation, I challenge all three of these assessments of Broch's work and life. In the case of both Beller and Hughes, their claims were not made in the context of a study

⁶See Hannah Arendt, "Hermann Broch," in *Men in Dark Times* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1968), 111-52.

⁷ Hughes, H. Stuart, *The Sea Change* (New York: Harper & Row, 1975. Reprinted in *Between Commitment and Disillusion*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1987), 28.

⁸ Beller, Steven, *Vienna and the Jews, 1867-1938: A Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 49.

on Broch, but as singular examples to prove larger points about their primary subjects. My goal is not to challenge their works, only to use their assumptions as a starting point for reconsidering Broch's overall importance to an understanding of European history in the first half of the twentieth century.

Arendt's evaluation is more significant because it does come in the context of an examination of Broch, and it comes from someone deeply engaged with Broch's thought and life. In regard to Arendt's claim, I do not challenge her fundamental criticism of Broch's thought as nineteenth-century. I argue instead that Arendt's assessment of Broch's humanist thought failed to see the modern applicability of Broch's critique on democracy and that she also failed to see that the fundamental danger of Broch's humanism was not its naiveté but its essentialism.

Hermann Broch was a humanist. In fact, I argue he was a critical humanist in that he demanded that individuals take a rational and critical stance *vis-à-vis* the social institutions and the cultural values of the world in which they live. I borrow the term "critical" from Steven Beller and Alan Janik, who use the term to characterize the intellectual world of Vienna 1900, the world in which Broch lived for the first 52 years of his life. In their work, they argue that the key characteristic of the Viennese intellectual milieu during the first decades of the twentieth century was a politically and ethically engaged public. They attribute this engagement to the creation of an isolated group of Jewish intellectuals, who paradoxically in the process of assimilation carved out their own independent cultural identity. This parallel Jewish culture then set out to understand the paradox of its own formation, that is, how an attempt to

formulate a universal identity resulted in the formation of an alternative identity. As the role of anti-Semitism grew in Austrian politics, their inquiries took on more urgency, and they by necessity focused their energies on the modern world, the ultimate source of their intellectual freedom and the cultural exclusion.

Broch's humanism fits this paradigm in terms of both time and theme. He was an Austrian Jew born in 1886 and came to intellectual maturity over the last years of the Habsburg Empire and the initial years of the Austrian First Republic. He, like many of his contemporaries, feared the growing imbalance between rationality and irrationality. He saw the growing rationalism of science and its increasing specialization as disconnected from the spiritual needs of the individual. At the same time, he saw the expanding importance of the masses in modern politics. He did not see mass politics as an expansion of democracy and did not see the masses as a mere collection of individuals. Individuals retain the ability to reason; the masses, however, are formed out of the express desire to slip out of reason and into a "twilight consciousness." The First World War confirmed for Broch the destructive force of these modern tendencies—unlimited technological capability unchecked by ethical forces and mass irrationality as a tool for *Realpolitik*.

In this atmosphere of dissolution, Broch's humanism was a search for totality. He did not envision the fulfillment of totality in political terms (Marxist, Hegelian, nationalist, et al.). Indeed, Broch's search for totality came in the form of aesthetics and value theory. In this sense, he fits in well with Janik and Toulmin's characteristic

of Wittgenstein's Vienna.⁹ Broch sought during the period 1908 to 1935 to provide German speaking Europe with a linguistic model for pursuing an absolute truth.

My dissertation examines how of Broch's critical humanism transformed from an aesthetic, value theory to an openly political theory on the operation of mass hysteria in the modern world. In 1938, Broch fled Austria after a brief imprisonment by the Gestapo. He eventually immigrated to the United States, and he spent the last twelve years of his life in the New York and New England area. His experience of National Socialism and the coming of the Second World War obviously set the context for the intellectual transformation of Broch's critical humanism. I argue, however, that Broch's exile experience did not fundamentally change his humanism. There was, in fact, a clear continuity in the basic claims of Broch's critical humanism from as early as 1908 until his death. The continuity and depth of Broch's critical humanism provides us with an important tool for understanding two historical epochs, Vienna 1900 and post-War United States. It also allows us to reevaluate the three judgments on Broch mentioned above: Was Broch an idiosyncratic member of the Viennese world of the early twentieth century? Was Broch's experience in the United States a failure with no long lasting influence? Was Broch's critical humanism an outdated, and largely irrelevant, theory for social formation in the modern world? Through an examination of Broch's critique on democracy and his theory on human rights, as well as an examination of the cultural and emotional context of his Viennese upbringing, I argue that the continuity of Broch's critical humanism allows us to

⁹ Janik, Allan and Stephen Toulmin, *Wittgenstein's Vienna* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1973).

answer “no” to all these questions. Broch was not exceptional, his thought was completely embedded in the world in which he lived; his eccentricities force us then not to marginalize Broch’s experience but to broaden our historical conceptions.

The question of Broch’s position in the United States is more complicated; it is complicated by the incomplete nature of Broch’s *Mass Hysteria Theory* (unfinished, unpublished, and unedited in his lifetime). The result has been to limit immensely Broch’s influence on American thought. From another perspective, however, Broch’s commitment to critical humanism, which only deepened in exile, guaranteed his historical significance. Broch left behind thousands of pages of material on his impressions of democracy and freedom in the United States. By examining what he had to say about American democracy, our historical perspective is once again widened. Broch’s European view, which was pro-American and pro-democratic, allows for an interpretative approach to liberal democracy that is devoid of nationalism and free from the debates over positive and negative rights. Even from a current perspective, Broch’s unique view allows us a fuller appreciation of the relationship between democracy and freedom.

The continuity of Broch’s thought was the very basis for Arendt’s critique, and her criticism goes a long way to prove my point. Her ultimate judgment on Broch was that his humanism failed to break free of his own conception of history. In Broch’s philosophy of history outbreaks of mass hysteria accompanied transitions in human knowledge; yet, humans always maintain the absolute power (reason) to reset their value systems. Resetting the value system required a political “conversion,” such as

the conversion to Christianity after the fall of the Roman Empire or the conversion to science after the Middle Ages. For Arendt, modernity had moved history past humanism. The totalitarian state offered humanity something new and never before seen, and its very *raison d'être* was survival and expansion. Human as a concept played no role in its logic. Broch's theory was in such a situation utopian. Broch, himself, agreed with much of Arendt's critique, as seen from their letters. But, he backed his theoretical utopianism with a practical politics of internationalism and democratic propaganda, what he called Total Democracy. Through legal enforcement of the inviolability of human life, Broch thought he could create a space for critical humanism to grow.

I believe Arendt underestimated the potential of Broch's internationalism; totalitarianism can be checked by aggressive response to human rights violations. Unfortunately, Broch's concerns about the nationalism and the morality of economics have yet to be overcome. Like Arendt, I see little prospect that Broch's humanist theory of knowledge will serve as a workable solution. Arendt, however, further underestimated the dangers of Broch's humanism, that is, its essentialized nature. The continuity of Broch's thought is helpful from a historical perspective, because it broadened our perspective on the intellectual history of two eras. His humanism, however, carried over an inherent flaw as well: how does one enforce a humanism based on the "earthly absolute" of human cognition, in a world where cognition is not considered the ultimate value? Broch's Total Democracy was conceived in the

historical context of a western self-destruction; in the context of globalization, Broch's humanism smacks of parochialism.

By necessity, my study also probes the origins and characteristics of the concept of modernity. In particular, I examine how Broch's value theory reflected the context of a contested view of humanism in the modern world. Positivism and an optimistic view of human progress heralded modern Europe as the culmination of mankind's cultural and technological ability. With European potential appearing unlimited, the bourgeois values and a capitalistic worldview assumed either the burden of spreading civilization or the battle of social Darwinism and its cultural interpretation of the survival of the fittest. Both views supported the European expansion throughout the world through militarization and imperialism. By the mid-twentieth century the combination of European self admiration and justified domination of the globe had produced multiple attempts at genocide and several world wars. The ultimate combination of human technological advancement and unchecked visions of superiority came in Germany in the early 1940s. The mechanized murder of European Jewry was blatant evidence of the power of human ingenuity and the vacuousness and savagery of the human spirit. It was proved to many that the Enlightenment Project and its cult of rationality had a dangerous, instrumental side. It was what Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer called the dialectic of the Enlightenment.¹⁰

¹⁰ Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments*, translated by Edmund Jephcott (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002).

For Broch the problem of instrumental reason and the dangers of unmediated rationality had been clear since his youth. As a modernist thinker, Broch challenged the meaning of “real” and “objective.” He felt these terms had been misappropriated by relative value systems whose only claim to “objectivity” or “truth” relied on forcible suppression of other truth claims. In a state of competing relative values, one ends up with a disintegration of values. Nevertheless, Broch did not abandon the Enlightenment and his belief in the human mind’s capacity to construct an open democratic society. He did not call for the abandonment of liberalism or free markets. Broch, like Nietzsche, Wittgenstein, and others, paved the road for post-modernism’s attack on truth and realism through his linguistic arguments about meaning and correspondence in language, but he did not take the post-modern turn.

He argued instead for a recommitment to the understanding of the irrational through science. The Enlightenment goal of individual autonomy became Broch’s solution to the fall of liberal democracies in Europe. In both Vienna and the United States, Broch allied himself to a critical humanist stance as he attempted to alleviate the negative aspects of modernity without abandoning the hope for progress and development. The key separation between the post-modernists and Broch was Broch’s sustained optimism and the post-modernist’s idea of despair. Broch’s modernism and his humanism allowed him to retain the notion of autonomy and thus to retain the possibility of individual action and change.

While some have argued that Broch’s engagement with the question of modernity set the stage for the post-modernism’s investigation of knowledge and

power in the modern world, from a post-modernist point of view the modernist theories of Broch were a half hearted journey towards truth. Broch saw the relativism of the modernity. Instead of embracing it and discovering the truths it could reveal about the political structure of power, Broch chose instead to hide from modernity's relativism and to employ its own attributes, reason and human autonomy, to correct and end it. Because of his humanism, contemporary scholarship has often misinterpreted the political aims of Broch's theory or failed to see the ways in which he still has relevance. As seen in the affirmative/critical debate below, Broch's focus on totality and empowerment has been read as proto-fascist and authoritarian. Since the rise of post-modernism, the humanist stance itself has been relegated to the conservative spectrum.¹¹ Broch's political theory has for this reason been conceived either as Utopian or reactionary. I hope that my dissertation opens a dialogue expressly with post-modernism and challenges the perceptions of naiveté and conservatism in Broch's critique of democracy. As Michael Lützel has pointed out, Broch's thought suggests some connections to contemporary leftist ideologies such as Amnesty International. The point is that Broch's thought is not as simple as utopian or conservative, when seen from a historical point of view. His thought is leftist and progressive in the context of 1930s (yet not Marxist). From a twentieth-first century point of view, one can argue he supports an epistemology that propagates a power structure designed to oppress and marginalize, because Broch's fundamental idea is a universal law for human knowledge and society. Broch's optimism,

¹¹ See Martin Halliwell and Andy Mousley, *Critical Humanisms: Humanist, anti-Humanist Dialogues* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2003).

however, can also be a source for continued dialogue and individual growth, especially his belief in internationalism and his struggles for protecting human dignity.

I have organized my narrative around the experiences and the writings of Hermann Broch, who was born in Vienna, Austria on 1 November 1886 and died in New Haven, Connecticut on 30 May 1951. Broch was a Viennese Jewish exile who in his youth participated in the intellectual world of *fin-de-siècle* Vienna and in his final years engaged in the intellectual world of New York and New England. I tie together through an examination of Hermann Broch's political and ethical theory¹² these two distinct experiences. Both of these milieus provide insight into the disparate strands of intellectualism that offered themselves up to Broch the social theorist and cultural critic as a means for understanding and correcting what he saw as the deficits of modernity. These deficits included the unchecked outbreak of mass hysterical events: fascism, militarism, and genocide.

It is hardly surprising that an Austrian Jewish intellectual writing during the 1940's in American exile would devote his abilities to questions of fascism and human rights. This was indeed the case for Hermann Broch. Broch devoted the last decade of his life to developing theoretical bulwarks against totalitarian forms of government. What was surprising about Broch's intellectual approach to the problems of modernity, however, was that his solutions represent nineteenth-century ethical formulations. There was no significant shift in the foundations of Broch's ethical

¹²Throughout the dissertation I present a close relationship between Broch's ethical and political works. This is not to say that the works are epistemologically inseparable, but that in terms of the focus of my dissertation the two areas are often coincide.

value system and ideas on social justice between his Austrian and American periods. Broch remained wedded to Enlightenment notions of individual autonomy, to nineteenth-century conceptions of the irrational, to a critical approach to positivistic science, as well as the hope for cosmopolitanism as antidote to national and ethnic identity.

This was not to say that the Holocaust did not affect Broch in a profound way; the personal and social tragedy of the war and National Socialism served, in fact, to heighten his already elevated sense of duty. Intellectually, however, Europe's bid at self-destruction during the first half of the twentieth century did little to shake Broch's confidence in the very concepts that seemed unable to prevent and, in some cases, appeared to aid the actual destructive impulse. By examining more closely Broch's model for an ethical value system, we gain a broader understanding of the possible reactions to these catastrophic events within the European, Jewish intellectual community, and specifically the paradoxical connections among totalitarian ideologies and enlightened Western society.

While politics did not play a principal role in Broch's Viennese writings, his intellectual maturation within Vienna established an ethical commitment that would underlay his exilic political writings. Additionally, the vital issue of modernity that became the focus of his political efforts was the defining issue for any intellectual active in *fin-de-siècle* Vienna. With Broch's exile, his discussion of politics became explicit. This was a key difference between the Viennese context and the American context. Whereas in America, politics functioned as a *modus operandi* for the

expression of ethical thought; in Vienna ethical thought was expressed through an aesthetic prism. There was continuity, however, in the fact that Broch's ethical message did not change. His literary metaphors of death and love and his ethical philosophy were equally significant in his American political essays as they were in his Viennese literature; in the end, they were both political statements. Broch never escaped the educational influence of Vienna, and he returned towards the end of his life to the essayism and literature of his early years. My dissertation illuminates the political aspect of Broch's thought that stood chronologically in between his more strictly artistic works.

Broch's approach to fascism and totalitarianism bore the marks of his early education in Vienna, Austria. In fact, Broch's entire intellectual production reflected a persistent eclecticism and dilettantism produced by the conflict between his own interests and the influence of his father in Broch's educational and career path. As a young man, Broch demonstrated an early concern for metaphysics and philosophy; his father, however, had already determined that young Hermann would be educated in a technical field and would enter the textile industry. Broch attended *Realschule* instead of *Gymnasium*, and he received his University degree in Engineering. For the first forty years of his life, Broch diligently followed the *cursus vitae* set out by his father. During this same period, however, Broch led a second life; much like Kafka, Broch spent his nights studying philosophy and mathematics, as well as pursuing writing. He was an active member of the Viennese café scene when time allowed.

In 1925, at almost forty years of age, Broch ended his dual existence; he divorced his wife and sold the family textile factory, and he entered the University to pursue philosophy and mathematics. By 1927, Broch was a full time member of the Viennese intellectual scene, and he had begun his first and most well-known novel, *The Sleepwalkers*. Broch never finished his University degree; in fact, he was in many ways disappointed by the limitations of positivism and specialization that marked the University of Vienna. The years of duplicity in Broch's professional and personal life combined with the self-didactic nature of his philosophical and epistemological training left an "impatient eclecticism"¹³ and clear dilettantism in his thought.¹⁴

Even before Broch came to the United States, his concern with the politics and the disintegration of a democratic value system in Europe was evident. His earliest political articles from 1919 and 1920 address the protection of individual freedom and democracy in post-War Austria. In his 1919 article, "Constitutional Dictatorship as Democratic Soviet System," Broch opposed the strict limitation of government authority to the workers alone, fearing that the will of one segment of society would suppress the freedom of all other segments.¹⁵ Broch's 1935 novel, *The Spell*, is a

¹³ Ernestine Schlant, *Hermann Broch* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1978), 22.

¹⁴ See Ernestine Schlant, *Hermann Broch*, 22-25 and Manfred Durzak, *Hermann Broch*, 33-4 for a discussion of Broch's auto-didactic education in the Humanities and the eclecticism of his pre-1948 theory on knowledge.

¹⁵ "Constitutional Dictatorship as Democratic Soviet System," Hermann Broch, *Kommentierte Werkausgabe: Massenwahntheorie*, vol. 12, edited by Paul Michael Lützeler (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1978), 11-23.

psychological examination of mass hysteria within a small Austrian town.¹⁶ In the book, Broch outlined the rise of a *Führer* and the town's irrational obedience to him. The end results were an attack on the marginalized members of the community and the ritual killing of a young woman. One sees even in these earlier works Broch's concern with modern mass politics and the role of mass hysteria in destroying a Europe tradition of humane democratic values.

In examining Broch's published articles and his unpublished manuscripts from his American exile, one finds an increasing concern about the rise of fascism; in the late 1930s and early 1940s, Broch produced a series of articles addressing need for the United States to lead an international movement to eradicate fascism.¹⁷ In his articles and in his unpublished manuscripts, Broch's definition of fascism is much more than an economic system or a form of nationalism (though Broch would agree that both of these are included). Broch's view of fascism was a psychological one, a mass psychological one.¹⁸ To overcome such a mass aberration of social values required an understanding of the value system and social rituals that supported it. Thus, Broch's discussion of American fascism did not rely on a simple comparison of political

¹⁶ The novel was not published until after Broch's death; the final version represents a posthumous edition of four unpublished manuscripts written between 1935 and 1951.

¹⁷ These included published articles: "Political Duty of 'American Guild for German Cultural Freedom,'" "On the Dictatorship of Humanity within a Total Democracy," "Gone with the Wind and the Return of Slavery in America," and *The City of Man*. Additionally, I have examined unpublished manuscripts and articles drafts, which were subsequently published by Paul Michael Lützeler: "Autobiography as Work Program," and "A Study on Mass Hysteria," as well as unpublished manuscripts from the Broch archive in the Beinecke Library, Yale University. These manuscripts are for the most part untitled and undated, but based on internal evidence can be dated to the late 1930s and early 1940s.

¹⁸ Broch most important, but unfinished, political text from exile is his *Massenpsychologie*, as well as his *Massenwahntheorie*.

oppression but developed a comparison of the ideological tendencies within the historical treatment of minority groups and the creation of national myths.

Hermann Broch's political theory did not fit neatly into any defined intellectual movements of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It did, however, clearly reflect an active engagement with various major intellectual movements, even if it was a refashioning of disparate elements of the movements: movements such as Liberalism, the Enlightenment, *Lebensphilosophie*, positivism, and psychoanalysis. The refashioning makes Broch's thought difficult to categorize, and, when viewed in isolation, it appears vacillating and naïve. The eclectic nature of Broch's mind corresponded to the eclectic nature of his education and the family dynamics of his youth. A crisis of identity, which developed out of his Jewish assimilation and his relationship to an oppressive father, produced a duality in his thought, a neurotic tension between productivity and impotence. Alongside the historical influence of assimilation and liberalism, Broch's personal development was crucial for the direction of his political thought. Broch's lack of professional, academic training prevented a strict specialization in his thought and fostered a dilettantism, which reflected Broch's early engagement with journalistic philosophy and *Kulturkritik*. Broch's neurotic personality fueled his growing intellectual critique of a European value vacuum throughout the first decades of the twentieth century; in the 1930s, however, the political reality of fascism refocused Broch's psychological battles unto the field of politics; the result was a psychologically based theory for the development

of Total Democracy, that is, a democratic system in which freedom and duty are equally imposed by force of law.

Broch's theory of Total Democracy, though criticized by some for its authoritarian rhetoric, called upon the forces of Western democracy to protect human life by any means necessary, to out propagandize fascism and to employ all necessary force against those who trespassed on the sanctity of human dignity and life.

Epistemologically, his theory revolved around the individual as the source of value in society. Societies lack the cognitive powers found in the individual, and, thus, societies or governments could not serve as value producers. Fascist governments did co-opt such a purpose, but the result was always a value system constructed on the irrational, based on a psychological appeal to mass hysteria. Such systems were "closed" based on the exclusive access to ideals such as blood, nation, or culture. The individual, however, could operate on a transcendent plane, comparable to medieval transcendent values that came from the Church and God. The individual could negotiate rationality and irrationality and could participate in the universal process (open to all human) of creating a new civic humanism.

After the "death of God,"¹⁹ Broch diagnosed a destructive impulse in the European value system, which he characterized as an unchecked competition among relative group values. He wanted to reinstate an absolute value through the individual. Individuals, however, live in societies, and thus societies play their part in the

¹⁹ In terms of Broch, the Death of God refers to the fact that "the nineteenth century displaced faith as a central value, a guardian of humanity, and the church as a governing institution in education" (Hermann Broch Archive. Yale Collection of German Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library).

maintenance of their own value systems. The basic opposition in Broch's value theory, whether political or aesthetic, was the opposition between an open and closed system. "Fundamental to Broch's categories is his distinction between the open and the closed value system—the open system being able to accommodate cognitive advances, the closed system dogmatically excluding them. The open system, due to its cognitive activities, is ethical; the closed system, which feeds on the semblance of activities but is actually static, is aesthetic and 'evil.'"²⁰ For Broch, a society's legal system recapitulated its values; thus, laws must protect the individual, who was the source of value. The method by which a society maintains its value system Broch called its regulative principles. Democracy had several of the keys for building an open value system: regulative principles that accepted the equality of humans (natural law) and a legal structure that protected the citizen from the state. What Western democracies lacked was a legal structure that protected the dignity of the citizen from attacks from other citizens. In his theory of Total Democracy, Broch added the recognition of the individual as the source of transcendent value²¹ to the regulative principles of democracy.

Virtually every study on Broch has had to address his views on ethics and value, but the relationship of these theories to his political context has been much less examined.²² My dissertation investigates Broch's implementation of ethical values

²⁰ Schlant, *Hermann Broch*, 70.

²¹ That is a value created by something stronger than race, nation, money, or ethnicity.

²² "An enormous bulk of Broch's theoretical writings still awaits analysis and recognition. While studies of Friedrich Vollhardt and Monika Ritzer have focused on the philosophical discussions that influenced Broch's thought in the early decades of the 20th century, his political writings as well as his

within the political realm. I examine the context of Broch's intellectual development in order to reconstruct the parameters of Broch's epistemological vocabulary during a period of not only social and political but also intellectual (1914-1945) dislocation. There was an obvious consistency in Broch's thought over this period: his concern for ethical questions and his focus on value systems and their destruction in modern society. My dissertation examines the genesis of these concerns in his youth, as well as the pragmatic application of ethics to politics from the mid-1930s onward. The result of combining Broch's life in Vienna and his exile in the United States with his political thought is that we observe a greater variety of responses to the questions of modernity in both Europe and the United States during the first half of the twentieth century. This is especially effective owing to the continuity of his ideas both across the geographical spectrum of exile (from Austria to the United States) and across the thematic spectrum of his work (from literature to epistemology to politics). At the most fundamental level, Broch's political ideas were democratic, grounded in the individual, cosmopolitan (international), anti-fascist, and anti-Marxist. His political theory and activism strove to accomplish two main goals: to create a stable, open democracy in which the individual's human rights and dignities were protected and to guide the individual towards an ethical value system.

In order to accomplish the first goal, Broch wrote passionately about the creation and support of democratic, international institutions that would create and enforce laws for the protection of human rights. Broch argued for a society whose

work on mass psychology have been largely neglected." Ernestine Schlant, "Hermann Broch und die Demokratie: A Review," *The German Quarterly*, vol. 70, # 1, (Winter 1997), 86.

social and political structures were aware of the dangers of mass hysteria. He pursued his second goal in his epistemological and psychological essays. Through his work on mass psychology, he hoped to guide the individual away from the “twilight consciousness” of mass movements such as fascism, and to help the individual overcome the fear of death. Broch saw the collective fear and avoidance of the fundamental human experience of death as one of the leading causes for both mass psychosis and the loss of metaphysical, absolute thinking (e.g. the death of God and the closing off of the Platonic ideal). He believed that overcoming these two barriers to individual self-maturation could realign mass society with a universal ethical value system, similar to the religious system of Middle Ages. For the present study, I limit my investigation to his political ideas on protection of human rights. Nevertheless, the innate connection between his political ideas about human rights and his mass psychological theory is something that also calls for further investigation.

Broch saw the condition of the modern age, which to him was disastrous, as a “value vacuum”; since the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, Western society had witnessed the growth of ethical relativism, what he called “a gigantic Machiavellianism.”²³ He believed that the solution was to restore the absolute, conceived as rational (*logos*, rationality); his epistemological plan was Kantian based ethical/epistemological self maturation, i.e., the value creation in the “loneliness of the I.” Broch united his Kantian conception of the individual as the locus of ethical activity with a pragmatic political conception (developed out liberalism) of the

²³ Hermann Broch, “*Autobiographie als Arbeitsprogramm*,” in Hermann Broch *Psychische Selbstbiographie*, edited by Paul Michael Lützeler (Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1999), 83.

unbound intellectual. For Broch, the individual played a key role in ending the harmful effects of an ideologically driven politics. In all of this, the legacy of Broch's Viennese upbringing was clear. Broch's liberalism centered on the individual as a free thinking entity, but it was also a liberalism that operated outside the market system and laissez faire economics. In his political theory, Broch was highly critical of materialistic values and the aesthetic value of the middle class. Broch even criticized the University's focus on professionalization and specialization as part of the bourgeois, valueless worldview—all of which is set forth in his Vienna period with his theory of "kitsch" or valueless art. Underlying Broch's critique of modernity as a period of relativity in ethical values—the loss of universal or absolute conceptions of human value—was a critique of a contemporary, anti-humanistic worldview.

It was as a humanist that Broch engaged politics. Such a position stands in many ways in opposition to the intellectual picture of Vienna in the first decades of the twentieth century—a Vienna of logical positivism and scientific materialism. Rudolf Haller claims uniqueness in Viennese philosophy that is marked by an emphasis on scientific materialism over German Idealism.²⁴ David Luft also stresses the influence of scientific materialism over German Idealism among a wide spectrum of intellectuals; Luft, however, also stresses that Vienna was distinguishable by its integration of scientific materialism and philosophical irrationalism. In recent years, scholars, such as Malachi Hacoen, have effectively argued for the existence a more varied and humanistic intellectual milieu within post-War and inter-War Vienna.

²⁴ Rudolf Haller, *Questions on Wittgenstein* (London: Routledge, 1988).

Broch's philosophical development, his attraction to Kant, and his rejection of scientific philosophy support Hacoheh's view, although Broch's ethical and humanistic approach to politics differed from that of progressive politics, which Hacoheh sketches through the figure of Karl Popper. In the end, Broch occupied a place between the progressive, late Enlightenment world Hacoheh discussed and the world of philosophical irrationalism described by Luft. It was a political culture of critical humanism. Critical humanism was the political idea of basing a value system on the common or universal experience of being human—ironically exemplified by death. Critical humanism was a blending of progressive notions of nationalism with a philosophical irrationalist's approach to human nature, sexuality, and the ethical impulse. In both cases, scientific materialism underlies the basic epistemological assumptions of Broch. Although I cannot claim Broch's experience as a general pattern for all Viennese Jewish intellectuals, I can show that the Jewish intellectual in Vienna in the first decades of the twentieth century had a diverse set of intellectual identities from which to choose. Furthermore, Hermann Broch, like Karl Popper in the case of liberal progressivism, was the vehicle for much of the migration of critical humanism after the 1938 annexation of Austria to Germany.

Broch's Viennese context suggested a strong anti-humanist influence in the milieu marked by assimilation, positivism, Catholicism, Austro-Marxism, Freudian thought, and a tradition of cultural criticism based on Schopenhauer and Nietzsche. Yet, Broch, in fact, brought with him out of Vienna a humanist value system. It was a system that borrowed from the progressive cosmopolitanism of Popper in its

enlightened foundations. His humanist politics were certainly not liberal in the classical sense, a fact that explained a great deal about his overlooked position in the United States. His politics, while focused on the individual, conceived of citizenship not simply in terms of freedom, but also in terms of responsibility. Broch's notion of Total Democracy centered on, on the one hand, the responsibility of states to not oppress their citizens, or stated differently, the freedom of citizens to prevent state intrusion into their lives (liberalism equaling freedoms "from"); on the other hand, citizens were condemned by the same force of equality implied in natural law, to respect the freedom and humanity of fellow citizens. Broch's position demanded an active legal structure for the maintenance of such a citizen responsibility. While technically not Rousseauian and not part of the positive (freedom to) versus negative rights (freedom from) debate, which reached its height during Broch's exile with the implementation of President Roosevelt's New Deal, Broch's thought nonetheless found American democracy's strictly Constitutional foundation as untenable and even dangerous. Throughout the 1940s, Broch questioned whether the democratic tradition of the United States could survive the growing irrational forces of modernity with appeals only to the Bill of Rights. While government structures and citizen freedoms could be sustained or safeguarded in this fashion, Constitutional democracy provided no protections for human on human violence once it became sanctioned by appeals to irrational fears of invasion, internal contamination, and the like.

Broch's political theory was created in response to a European problem (fascism); in an American context, his solutions sounded repressive and reactionary—

a plea for greater governmental power. His solutions, owing to his individual experience as a German-speaking, Jewish intellectual from the Habsburg Empire, were cosmopolitan and internationalist, putting them out of step with the growing power of the United States. Broch's politics were liberal, democratic, anti-fascist, and anti-Marxist; yet, his ideas on freedom, responsibility, and supra-national humanity clearly reflected a European mind addressing evils of a European making. In the end, Broch's eclectic selection from the various traditions during his maturation in Vienna led to a political theory whose eclecticism limited its very impact. As shown in my final chapter, political theorist and friend, Hannah Arendt read Broch's political theory through the context of the enlightenment and the nineteenth century. Thus, she could reject the pragmatism of Broch's thought as outdated and provincial.

Broch Sources and Secondary Criticism

Just before his death in 1951, Hermann Broch donated his papers to the Beinecke Library at Yale University.²⁵ These archival sources form the basis for this dissertation. In addition to the Broch archive at the Beinecke, I have drawn on materials from the Vienna City Archives and the Broch Museum Teesdorf (near Vienna). From 1974 to the present day, Lützel and Suhrkamp have published most of Broch's work²⁶ in a 13 volume, 17 book series with commentary, as well as in

²⁵ In addition to the Broch Archive at the Beinecke, the Deutsche Literaturarchiv in Marbach-am-Neckar, Germany house a large collection of Broch's letters and manuscripts.

²⁶ Broch vast correspondence is only partially published, and his multiple versions of manuscripts and articles are only accessible in the archives.

particular books of correspondences.²⁷ Throughout this dissertation, I have used the Lützeler edition to cite Broch's work. Much of the work published by Lützeler, however, has been compiled from a collection of disparate archival documents. Thus, Lützeler has presented unified works and titles in his editions that do not reflect directly the condition of the material in the archive. In some cases, I have quoted or referenced both Lützeler edition and the archival material. For the most part, I have quoted or translated directly from the archival sources.

My narrative is structured around the sources that are closest to Broch's intellectual development and production. These include Broch's own writings and his correspondence, private and public, with other intellectuals. Since Broch's own words serve as the major guide to his intellectual development, I have been careful to separate his narrative from mine. Throughout the dissertation, I make clear that Broch's own impressions are important and worthy indicators of the events, but that I must also weight them against the historical record and challenge the internal logic of their composition.

I locate my examination of Broch within the historical context of its composition, within the historiographical context of European and American intellectual history, and within the secondary scholarly debates around Broch. More than fifty years after his death, Broch research has moved beyond both the historical

²⁷ Hermann Broch, *Kommentierte Werkausgabe*, 13 vols. (Frankfurt am M.: Suhrkamp, 1974-81), referred to as *KW* for remainder of the dissertation; *Briefe über Deutschland, 1945-1949 : die Korrespondenz mit Volkmar von Zühlendorff and Hermann Broch* (Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp, 1986); *Der Tod im Exil : Hermann Broch, Annemarie Meier-Graefe Briefwechsel 1950/51* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2001). Lützeler has also published correspondences outside of Suhrkamp, see: *Hannah Arendt und Hermann Broch. Briefwechsel 1946-1951* (Frankfurt am M.: Jüdischer Verlag, 1996).

events and the early struggles of the field. Scholars today approach Broch as a historical figure and not as a living human. For scholars working immediately after Broch's death, the separation between these two concepts was not easy to manage or maintain. The situation led to fierce debates about how to understand Broch's thought. It is difficult to comprehend fully the ferocity of the debate living and researching in the post-Lützel world of Broch studies. The reviews and the symposiums of the late sixties and earlier seventies describe a battle over the humanity and intellectual honesty of Hermann Broch that seems unthinkable today. This is not to say that the critical examination of Broch's thought was unnecessary or unfounded. During my initial encounter with Broch (whom I read originally in the 1952 edition of his collected work), I found myself engaged in a similar battle over Broch's intellectual position *vis-à-vis* democracy and fascism. The large amount of published material on Broch that appeared during the eighties, however, has expanded the angles by which to evaluate Broch's claims.

In 2000, I began to visit and research at the major archives for Broch in New Haven, Connecticut and Vienna, Austria. What quickly became apparent to me was that the accessibility of Broch's work in published form or through his *Nachlass* made it impossible for anyone not to recognize the complexity of Broch's thought and his psyche. It also meant that the elements of humanist and fascist rhetoric that permeate Broch's work could not be pitted one against the other but had to be examined as an outgrowth of the man and his times.

Immediately after Broch's death in May 1951, Robert Pick, Hannah Arendt, Erich Kahler, and Anne-Marie Meier-Graefe (Broch's second wife) began to edit his *Nachlass*. This work took place in an atmosphere of grief and much of the commentary from the period is somewhat eulogistic. In addition to numerous obituaries, there were many encomiums to Broch written by scholars and friends. At the time of Broch's death, Alvin Johnson, president of the New School for Social Research, was working hard to nominate Broch for the Nobel Prize in Literature. Scholars had begun dissertations and biographical works on Broch. The amicable tenor of in memoriam surrounding Broch was effusive and mixed with the praise was a bittersweet sense of tragedy. The prominent role played by friends and relatives in the early formation of Broch scholarship made the interpretative edge somewhat dull. From a biographical perspective, however, such outpouring of emotion is very telling about the individual human—his relationships, his faults, and his generosity.²⁸

After several decades, scholars began to question the early interpretations of Broch; the work of Manfred Durzak, Dorrit Cohn, Ernestine Schlant, Wolfgang Fresse, and Karl Menges formed the key works in the late 1960s and early 1970s.²⁹ The new critical view of Broch's work led to a division in Broch scholarship during the 1970s, often referred to as the affirmative/critical debate.³⁰ The debate divided basically along the line of positive and negative interpretations of Broch's thought.

²⁸ During the initial stage of Broch scholarship, the redaction of Hannah Arendt, Wolfgang Rothe, and Ernst Schönwiese was also important in making Broch's thought accessible and readable.

²⁹ I have grouped these scholars according to time period and influence, not thematic or interpretive similarities.

³⁰ See Hermann Broch, *Werk und Wirkung*, edited by Endre Kiss (Bonn: Bouvier, 1985).

The affirmative school, still characterized by a high degree of personal encomium, adhered to a positive interpretation of Broch based on personal knowledge of Broch the man or through his anti-Hitler and pro-democratic writings from the 1930s and 1940s. The affirmative school presented a positive, almost heroic (even if somewhat esoteric and tragic) interpretation of Broch's ethical engagement with modernity. The critical school, working in stated opposition to "the mere acclamation" of the affirmative school,³¹ attempted to balance the "irrationally positive view of Broch's uniform objectivity, which on the basis of an apparently exact calculus, attempts to alter his true essence."³² The critical school claimed that the affirmative school unjustly isolated Broch's literary thought from his philosophical, political, and ethical intentions.³³

Karl Menges argued that behind Broch's thought and the image of him as a *poeta doctus* lurked a darker, hidden side. In his study *Kritische Studien zur Wertphilosophie Hermann Brochs*, Menges argued that underneath of the surface of Broch's critique on the disintegration of values was a solution that reeked of fascism and authoritarianism. "Broch was a democrat against his will, who among other things also wrote novels ... whose general intellectual guise is not free from a somewhat tragic paradox."³⁴ The notion of Broch as a proto-fascist began to gain

³¹ Karl Menges, *Kritische Studien zur Wertphilosophie Hermann Brochs* (Tübingen, Germany: Max Niemeyer, 1970), 3.

³² Menges, 2-3.

³³ In this dissertation, I will breakdown this division in a search not for Broch the modern novelist, but Broch the ethical *Politiker*.

³⁴ Menges, 178.

adherents and throughout the early 1970s Broch scholars looked behind Broch's critique of the disintegration of values and found a philosophy of irrationalism built on the foundations of Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, and Weininger.³⁵

At this same time, scholars such as Ernestine Schlant began to establish a middle way between mere acclaim and accusations of fascism. Her work from the early 1970s addressed Broch's philosophical and aesthetic theories. Schlant was highly critical of the eclectic and dilettantish nature of Broch's thought, while affirming the picture of a man passionately devoted to the improvement of the human condition in the modern world. Schlant's work provided important insight into the role of Kantian thought in Broch's ethical system. The new direction, however, did little to end the controversy. The critical school still attacked the assumptions of the affirmative approach, criticizing their methodology throughout the 1970s and 1980s for its uncritical acceptance of Broch's textual voice: its lack of a deconstructionist point of view. A more subtle reading of the interpretive division is presented by Robert Halsall, though he does not support either of these views himself, seeing the split as a result of readership—ideal versus aesthetic.

The existence of these two types of Broch reader might go some way to explaining the widely diverging critical assessments of his work ... The 'ideal' reader, who might be identified with the 'affirmative' critics ... seeks to resolve the ambiguities of the outcomes of the novels in terms of giving the benefit of the doubt to intention over results. The undoubted moral and intellectual status of the author is seen as a guarantor of good intentions. ... The 'aesthetic' reader, on the other hand, lingers over the

³⁵ See also Wolfgang Freese, "Brochforschung im Lichte der Rezeptionstheorie," in *Modern Austrian Literature* 13 (1980), 159-188.

inconsistencies and ambiguities, leaves the question of worth of the intentions out of the question, judging the works as ‘failures’ purely in terms of the results produced.³⁶

From a historian’s point of view, the division between the intentions and results of Broch’s literary work is a less important question; in this dissertation, I am more concerned with the context behind his thought than the evaluation of its claims.

Through a better understanding of the historical context that shaped Broch’s worldview, one is better able to understand that the contradictions within Broch’s thought do imply irresolvable divisions among his humanity, his humanism, and his political agenda.

At the heart of much of the debate was the problem of Broch’s sources. The published editions of his work, in both individual volumes and the Rhein Verlag Collected Works, were incomplete and often faulty. Several of Broch’s key works, his novel *The Spell* and his project on *Mass Hysteria Theory*, were incomplete. In the Broch archives at Yale, there are multiple versions of *The Spell*, and his social thought is not only incomplete but scattered about within his *Nachlass*. There are multiple carbon copies of various texts, some with handwritten corrections, some with English translations. Large portions of texts are untitled; almost all of the various sections of his mass psychology are incomplete and use faulty pagination. Broch shared large parts of his work with friends, adapted chapters into outlines and proposals for grant applications, leaving much of his work fragmentary and scattered throughout his

³⁶ Robert Halsall, *The Problem of Autonomy in the Works of the Hermann Broch*, (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2000), 248-50. Halsall, himself, tends to understand Broch’s literary, ethical position as on in which the very process of writing (in the terms of Broch’s modernist stance) exists to expose the very limits and ambiguity of written communication.

correspondence or in third party institutions. The 78 boxes of primary material at the Beinecke can be as mystifying as they are helpful. For this reason, the work of Paul Michael Lützeler has proven indispensable to the field of Broch studies. Lützeler began in the 1970s to redact Broch's work, using primary material from both the Beinecke Library in New Haven and the German Literary Archive in Marbach, as well as generous gifts of information from friends and relatives of Broch. The result of Lützeler's efforts over the 1970s and mid-1980s was a new and far more comprehensive edition of Broch's work, including cogent commentary from Lützeler.³⁷ He also produced a comprehensive and historically sensitive biography of Broch.

The availability of carefully edited and philologically correct texts initiated a new wave of Broch scholarship that quickly moved beyond the issue of authoritarianism or textual criticism. Friedrich Vollhardt's *Hermann Brochs geschichtliche Stellung*³⁸ represents the most significant effort to move beyond these issues and to present Broch's thought in the context of its literary and philosophical history. Vollhardt's study examines the early foundations of Broch's ethical value system and his philosophy of history. Vollhardt's work demonstrates the extent to

³⁷ Throughout the dissertation I rely on Lützeler's commented works for citation. For Broch's work on mass psychology, however, I rely on my own interpretation of his intent based on my readings of Broch's *Nachlass*. The problematic nature of Lützeler's redaction in terms of mass psychology is discussed below, but in general I do not assume that a representative edition can be reproduced. Thus, I present an interpretation of Broch's theory based on compilation of his letters, his drafts, and his published articles.

³⁸ Friedrich Vollhardt, *Hermann Brochs geschichtliche Stellung: Studien zum philosophischen Frühwerk und zur Romantrilogie 'Die Schlafwandler' (1914-1932)*, (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1986).

which Broch's value theory was grounded in an intellectual tradition of *Kulturkritik* and then transformed into a new form of narrative in the modernist novel. Following the work of Lützel and Vollhardt, questions of intellectual inheritance and historical context came to the fore. Two monographs, by Monika Ritzer and Monika Klinger, addressed in detail the philosophical genealogy of Broch's ethical value systems.³⁹ In addition to these two monographs, a series of articles and edited volumes addressed the issue of politics in various ways. Since the 1990s, recognition of the importance of Broch's political thought has grown steadily.⁴⁰ Overall, however, the examination of the historical context surrounding Broch and his political/cultural theory remains small in comparison to the focus on literary criticism.

Although the exchange among scholars over the issue of Broch's reception is secondary to my own work, the issue at the heart of the affirmative/critical debate is central, i.e., the tension between Broch's humanist theory and his totalitarian rhetoric. As in much of modernist writing, Broch's political theory sets out from a paradox of language; in particular, Broch confronts the meaning of totality in modern society. The term totalitarian has obvious negative connotations for the contemporary reader; even for Broch and his contemporaries the term brought to mind images of repression, violence, and hatred. Such connotations, however, represent an historical bias and, in Broch's mind, unfairly indict the positive, socially necessary side of totality. One

³⁹ Monika Ritzer, *Hermann Broch und die Kulturkrise im frühen 20. Jahrhundert*, (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 1988) and Monika Klinger, *Hermann Broch und die Demokratie* (Berlin: Duncker und Humboldt, 1994).

⁴⁰ See Hermann Broch, *Visionary in Exile: The 2001 Yale Symposium*, edited by Paul Michael Lützel, et al., (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2003) and Anton Pelinka, "Hermann Brochs Bild von Amerika" in *Hermann Broch Werk und Wirkung*, edited by Endre Kiss (Bonn: Bouvier, 1985).

could obviously create a false, or rhetorical, dichotomy between totalitarian and total in order to emphasize this point. In Broch's case such a rhetorical game was not being played; when he compared totalitarianism with Total Democracy, the political parameters and stakes were the same. Broch argued that the political nature of totality, its role in social construction, and its democratic possibilities were directly related to the same notion of totality represented by fascism and Soviet communism in the first half of the twentieth century. Did this mean that Broch supported certain aspects of totalitarianism? At a minimum, one must ask how a refugee from Hitler's terror ended up arguing for the "Dictatorship of Humanity" in his American exile? On a basic level, Broch was being rhetorical and employing an ironic play on words. On a more fundamental level, Broch was a product of the intellectual milieu of his youth, and that intellectual milieu was one fully immersed in the positive view of totality. The story of Broch's struggle to maintain the positive, humanist notions of a universal totality in the face of mass hysterical claims for totalities, based in fact on exclusion, was at the same time the struggle of modernity.

Structurally, the design of the dissertation is not chronological. I have chosen to structure the chapters instead by theme. In Chapter 1, I examine Broch as a historical subject—his importance as subject of study and his relevancy to his own milieu and the contemporary world. In Chapter 2, I define for the reader Broch's basic political theory in terms of democracy and fascism. I examine Broch's political activism from the mid-1930s until his death in 1951. I limit this discussion to Broch's outwardly pragmatic political work and his articles and pamphlets on geo-politics and

international relations.⁴¹ In chapters 3, I extend Broch's political ideas on the individual within the democratic process to his ideas on the protection of the individual through a program of internationalism and the human rights. In Chapters 4, 5, and 6, I explore Broch's youth and early adulthood in Vienna from the point of politics and ethics—connecting Broch's assimilation, his family life, and his education to the development of his ethical politics. In these chapters, I illustrate the world Broch inhabited from the turn of the century to First Austrian Republic, and I stress key aspects of this period that aid us in understanding the political stance of the mature Broch. My examination focuses on Broch's concern for human rights, his growing internationalism, and his efforts to educate the world in the ways of democracy. It also draws the reader's attention to the complex networks of influences that guided the development of his theories. From the individual personal influences of his family and psyche to the larger cultural influences of education and assimilation to the historical shifts and political developments of war and fascism, Broch's life and thought expose a complex and contested European understanding of the modern world. In the conclusion, I summarize the legacy of Broch's political activism by examining Broch's relationship to Hannah Arendt. The discussion is based on the correspondence between the two from their mutual period of exile. By exploring Arendt's critique of Broch as a person and a political thinker, we gain a clearer notion of the limits of Broch's influence during his life and immediately after his death.

⁴¹ His work on the epistemological and theoretical foundation of values and law is set aside for further development at a later time.

Chapter One

Broch as Subject:

The Central Issues of Broch as Modern Thinker

Hermann Broch was 28 years old at the outbreak of the First World War and only just developing a mature view on the world; the timing of his maturity conditioned Broch's intellectual outlook, placing the issues of modernity and the concept of a cultural crisis at the forefront of his thought. Social theorists and intellectuals in the first half of the twentieth century confronted positivism, industrialization, the politicization of the masses, and the growth of nationalism (in a European and colonial context).⁴² The merger of these issues between 1914 and 1918 forced upon the European intellectual⁴³ a challenge—how to think about and justify a world where God was “dead,” technology unlimited, and centuries old political institutions extinguished. It was the question of modernity. The artistic and literary efforts of Broch and other intellectuals from the generation of 1905⁴⁴ carried the sense

⁴² See George Mosse, *Masses and Man: Nationalist and Fascist Perceptions of Reality* (New York: H. Fertig, 1980).

⁴³ Obviously the First World War affected non-intellectuals as well. Here, however, my focus is how the intellectual experienced, reacted to, and formulated explanations to the events.

⁴⁴ The generation of young men and women (an under-explored group in terms of Austrian history) who came to intellectual maturity around 1914. This group of intellectuals was not only influenced by the experience of the war, but they carried that influence into the interwar years and into the Second World War. Many of thinkers, like Broch, would also carry their experience into exile. I borrow the term from H. Stuart Hughes and David S. Luft. My definition most closely follows that of Luft. See H. Stuart Hughes, *Consciousness and Society: The Reorientation of European Social Thought, 1890-1930* (New York: Vintage Books, 1958) and David S. Luft, *Robert Musil and the Crisis of European Culture, 1880-1942* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1980).

of crisis and the importance of the “question of modernity” into the interwar period. With the idea of crisis, Hermann Broch found his place in the history of European intellectual development. The characterization of European society as a “value vacuum,” “a disintegration of values,” and a “gay apocalypse” came directly from Broch.⁴⁵ By studying Broch’s oeuvre, especially his political writings, we can explore the parameters of the debate concerning the crisis of modernity. Intellectuals of Broch’s generation had the task of understanding the modern world violently thrust upon them—a fact the opening lines of Broch’s *Intellectual Autobiography* made clear:

This may be called an autobiography only inasmuch as it gives the history of a problem that happens to be of the same age as I am, so that I have constantly had it before my eyes—as anyone else of my generation willing to deal with it. It is, to state it bluntly, the problem of a loss of the absolute, the problem of relativism that denies the existence of absolute truth, absolute value, and, consequently, absolute ethics.⁴⁶

Broch’s concern for ethics, his fears about the future of western society, and his historical position as an exile thinker make him an excellent source for better understanding thought in the modern age. In this chapter, I set out Broch as a modern thinker, and more importantly, as a case study for the complexity of thought in mid-decades of first half of the twentieth century. I highlight the interconnectedness of

⁴⁵ See Hermann Broch, *Hugo von Hofmannsthal and his Time: European Imagination, 1866-1920*, translated by Michael Steinberg (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984).

⁴⁶ Hermann Broch, “Autobiographie als Arbeitsprogramm,” in *Psychische Selbstbiographie*, edited by Paul Michael Lützeler (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1999), 83.

familial relations, social and ethnic classifications, education, politics, and intellectual networking to the formalization of Broch's answers to the question of modernity.

Broch's first published novel, *The Sleepwalkers* (1932)⁴⁷ addressed explicitly the disintegration of values in *fin-de-siècle* Europe. The following passage from the third book of the trilogy gives a clear indication of Broch's assessment of the predicament of modernity. The quotation presented the problem, which in 1932 literature seemed aptly suited to solve, but which by 1940 loomed so large that the simple act of writing seemed immoral in comparison.

The decision for pure abstraction was already irrevocable. And the infinite remoteness, the inaccessible noumenal remoteness of that point towards which all lines of inquiry and chains of probability were now destined to strive, rendered impossible at one stroke the binding of all single value systems to a central value. . . and since they [single value systems] can no longer combine in the service of a supreme value, they claim equality one with the other: like strangers they exist side by side, an economic value system of "good business" next to an aesthetic one of *l'art pour l'art*, a military code of values side by side with a technical or an athletic . . . And woe to the others, if in this conflict of systems that precariously maintain an equilibrium one should gain the preponderance and overtop all the rest, as the military system does in war, or as the economic system is now doing, a system to which even war is subordinate, – woe to the others! For the triumphant system will embrace the whole of the world, it will overwhelm all other values and exterminate them as a cloud of locusts lays waste a field.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Rhein Publishers in Stuttgart, Germany published *The Sleepwalkers*, a trilogy, over the period of 1930 to 1932: The first novel, *Pasenow or the Romantic* (1930), the second novel, "Esch or the Anarchist" (1931), and the third novel, "Huguenau or the Realist" (1932).

⁴⁸ Hermann Broch, *The Sleepwalkers*, translated by Willa and Edwin Muir (New York: Vintage International, 1996), 446-7.

Broch clearly saw modernity as a problem, and the main expression of that problem was a lack of an all embracing social value. Writing from the point of view of 1931, Broch had the historical example of the World War One with which to build his foreboding message of crisis. Nevertheless, there were deeper roots to Broch's criticism; these roots are connected to a well established intellectual critique of European values in the modern world.

Like many other critiques of modernity, Broch questioned the status quo of the early twentieth century. He questioned in particular three areas of modernity. He worried about an overreliance on rationality; he questioned a strictly linear, progressive movement of history; he rejected the Victorian worldview of self-control and moderation.⁴⁹ His criticism was, however, a tempered criticism. It was tempered by his commitments to reason, progress, and individual autonomy. Broch's paradoxical relationship to modernity was not a sign of confusion or immaturity; it was, in fact, typical of an important modernist theory that runs from Arthur Schopenhauer to Friedrich Nietzsche to Sigmund Freud to Max Weber. Broch's evaluation of modernity as value vacuum and his theoretical cure place him squarely in the tradition of Philosophical Irrationalism.⁵⁰

Like other philosophical irrationalists, Broch argued that European scientists, politicians, and artists needed to take seriously aspects of the human mind that could not be simply quantified. He did not, however, pursue the irrational at the expense of

⁴⁹ See Peter Gay, *Schnitzler's Century: The Making of Middle-Class Culture 1815-1914* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2002) for a discussion of the Victorian morality of self control.

⁵⁰ See David S. Luft, *Robert Musil and the Crisis of European Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980).

the rational. He followed, instead, in the path of Nietzsche and Freud, and he sought a recognition and balancing of Apollonian and Dionysian impulses. In particular, he looked for the balancing mechanism in the unconscious.⁵¹ Broch's preconceptions and his deep respect for irrationality, the spiritual, and mysticism did indicate a rejection of the Enlightenment project or a Romantic turn away from rationality and science; they represented a commitment to the logical capacity of the human race, that is, a commitment to critical humanism.

History also played an active part in Broch's intellectual understanding of society and value construction. Broch's historical philosophy was embedded in the nineteenth-century European tradition of historicism. He thought that history was an objective aspect of European social development. History was not the mere recording of the past; it was an intellectual and spiritual agent within the culture of Europe. Like the majority of intellectuals in Europe Broch thought history proceeded in a linear and progressive matter. He, however, expanded his ideas on history to entail two separate notions of historical movement: linear and cyclical. He rejected, however, Spengler's organicist and degenerationalist view of history. History was cyclical based on the relationship of value systems to expanding knowledge, not on the basis on biological or natural rhythms. In this way, Broch was neither straightforwardly progressive in his understanding of time nor was he dialectical in a Hegelian sense nor was he Spenglerian or degenerationalist in his cyclical view. He merged a progressive, linear notion of historical movement with a rotational notion of social value construction.

⁵¹ The influence of psycho-analysis will be discussed more fully below.

In the realm of social mores and morals, Broch both lived and wrote against the general assumptions of bourgeois control and chastity. The repressive and emotionally distancing effects of strigent social regulation are visible in his literature and in his personal reflections of his adolescence. The gulf between corporal and emotional love is highlighted in his trilogy *The Sleepwalkers*, where Pasenow, the protagonist of the first novel, finds his only sexual satisfying experience in an illicit affair with a show girl. In terms of his marriage to a socially acceptable woman, Pasenow proved unable initially to consummate the marriage. The criticism of bourgeois love was even stronger in relationship to familial bonds, where Broch's autobiographical writing recalls a family dynamic devoid of intimacy and openness. He self diagnosed his own neurotic sexual tendencies, especially his uncontrollable infidelity, as a result of an oedipal relationship within his family. Nevertheless, Broch did not reject the general moral structure of his middle class existence. His literature lacks the decadent aims of a Wilde or a Huysman. He did not want to tear down or rebel against the overly rational world of the turn of the century Europe; he wanted to correct its repressive tendencies and to control the outbreak of mass violence that results from the psychological instability present in the modernity. In fact, his theory on mass psychology paralleled Freud's diagnostic approaches. In both Broch and Freud, we see the basic characteristic of philosophical irrationalism—belief in the importance of the irrational side of human existence and a deep commitment to a rational and scientific cure for it the outbreak of uncontrolled irrationality in the masses. The crisis of modernity may be triggered by the pressures and unfamiliarity

of a mechanized and scientifically alienating world, and the dangers of modernity may be expressed through irrational behaviors on the individual and mass level, but the solution to such problems for men like Freud, Durkheim, Weber, and even Nietzsche were to be found in an Enlightened approach to the human mind and society. The same was true of Broch.

Before his exile, Broch challenged the crisis of modernity from the point of view of an artist; he attacked the valueless direction of modern art, what he termed *kitsch*,⁵² and he lay out the ethical relativism of European culture. Historical circumstance, however, changed Broch's personal fortunes in 1938. The German annexation made his continued stay in Austria impossible. Following his exile, Broch's mind became increasingly occupied with democracy and fascism. It seems obvious that Broch's shift in focus coincided exactly with the changes in his historical context. Nevertheless, I argue that Broch's changing historical fortunes only partially explain his shift in focus.

In a circumstance of World War and genocide, Broch was clearly prompted by a sense of duty to his family and friends, and as an engaged intellectual he was prompted by a sense of duty to society at large. As a historically interesting subject, however, Broch's significance is not simply the parallel development of fascism and his anti-fascist theory. It is, on the contrary, the complicated nature of Broch's position as an intellectual in exile. Broch's experience suggests that even in a situation where good and evil was clearly identifiable, intellectuals could in the post-

⁵² Broch's theory on kitsch is one of the most thoughtful examinations of the relationship between society and art. See his essay, "Evil in the System of Art," *KW* 10/2.

War West take a pro-democratic and pro-American position, while maintaining and nurturing a European tradition of internationalism. For Broch, this meant sustaining a humanist approach to value production, i.e., he saw the individual not merely as a free, autonomous agent, but also as the source for rationality and value in the world. By examining Broch's early thought next to his exilic political theory, we see a more varied set of intellectual traditions operating outside the polarized positions of fascist and anti-fascist or communist and liberal democratic. We also see a sustained continuity in the midst of massive dislocations, both intellectual and socio-cultural.

Broch is a particularly apt subject for study in regard to the intellectual dislocation of the first half of the twentieth century, because his intellectual endeavors represented a struggle for continuity in the midst of repeated temporal and spatial discontinuity, both on a personal and on a global level. Broch's life was one defined by duality. He was born into an upper-class Jewish merchant family in the midst of rapid Jewish assimilation; yet, he was also born a Jew less than a decade before the anti-Semitic leader of the Christian Socialist party, Karl Lueger, began his 12 year tenure as mayor of Vienna. Broch was a Catholic convert and a connoisseur of Germanic culture at the very moment that Pan-Germanist and Catholic parties were spreading their anti-Jewish political platforms. Intellectually, he was an adherent of the Prussian, Enlightened philosophy of Immanuel Kant; yet, his own books were unavailable in German-speaking Europe during the 1930s and 1940s. The first half of Broch's life was devoted to technical, vocational training and work; yet, his intellectual legacy to the world was based on centrality of metaphysics. Such dualities

resulted not from an erratic and fickle mind, but from the conflict of Broch's intellectual *telos* with the historical and social demands of his era.

In terms of spatial dislocation, moreover, Broch is an apt candidate for study. For his forced emigration to the United States in 1938 separated Broch physically from old world Europe and compelled him to reconsider the value of that world in the midst of the United States and its growing responsibility in geo-politics. It also separated Broch from his homeland, such distance reduced any appeals to nationalism in Broch's political thought. His political stance was that of an outsider (Jew and exile), and it appealed in the end not to notions of *Heimat*, but to more universal notions of humanity. In terms of temporal dislocation, Broch's lifespan placed him in an important position between the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries. Broch was born in 1886 and was thus a member of a generation of European intellectuals whose educational experience and whose earliest mature works developed in the decades prior to the First World War. For Broch, as for many members of this "generation of 1905,"⁵³ the late nineteenth century context of his intellectual maturation engrained specific notions of epistemology that in a post-1919 world gave hope to the intellectual avant-garde, but in a post-1945 world appeared outdated and naïve. It is, however, necessary to conceptualize the context of these epistemological formulations in order to understand in a historical sense the development of Broch's thought and thus gain more insight into the possibilities for ethically organizing the social and political worlds of turn-of-the-century Europe. In

⁵³ See note 14 above.

Broch's case it means understanding Vienna at the turn-of-the-century. I focus specifically on the influence of Kant, liberalism, ego-based psychology, and philosophical irrationalism, as well as the socio-political role of his Jewish heritage and his assimilation into the *Bildung*-based cultural world of Vienna.

At the end of the nineteenth century, Wilhelm Dilthey remarked of Hegel that the generation who could read Hegel was dead. Writing a dissertation on Hermann Broch, it is clear that the generation of Americans who could read and understand writers such as Broch, Musil, and Döblin (even English writers like Dos Passos and Joyce) is dying. The reasons for the growing inaccessibility of writers such as Broch are varied. The most obvious barrier is language, but today that barrier has been much addressed, Broch's literary works (though not his political) are available in translation. The second reason, however, is historical. The cultural and epistemological vocabulary of thinkers within the generation born in the final decades of the nineteenth century generated its meaning through reference as much to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (and in some case the ancient world) as it did to the twentieth century. Although the language and words are familiar to us today, their cultural signifiers are different. Broch's generation stood with its feet into two separate intellectually historical milieus. The first milieu was the modern age of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.⁵⁴ For the generation of 1905, the intellectual legacy of the

⁵⁴ The notion of modern here is defined by the thinkers within this epoch, and it represents the notion of post-Renaissance rationality and ideas of scientific and social progress. It is important to realize the sense of unity and separateness felt about this period (most often defined by Enlightenment) is a product of the epoch and reflects a general inability of the thinkers within the epoch to understand or sense the high degree of historical continuity between periods like the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, and the Enlightenment. Hermann Broch is particularly susceptible to such errors. As we will see his philosophy of history is dependent on the contrast between medieval unity and modern disunity. The

modern age included historicism, historical materialism, positivism, liberalism, and philosophical irrationalism. The obvious problem, however, with the historical conception of the modern age as situated between the French Revolution and the end of the nineteenth century (terminating in the First World War) was that the post-modern age did not begin until the final decades of the twentieth century; so how do we classify the first half of the twentieth century? In part, that is what my dissertation attempts to clarify, by demonstrating that the temporal location of thinkers within the generations spanning the last half of the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth centuries is highly significant for understanding the intellectual trends and production of such thinkers—in a sense to help bridge the growing gap between writer and thinkers like Broch, Musil, and Joyce.

Without attempting to locate and defend an “inter-modern age,” the historical period examined in this dissertation, which roughly corresponded to the intellectual production of Hermann Broch and other members of the generation of 1905, represents a transition period in the understanding of modernity. As my investigation of Hermann Broch demonstrates, for thinkers old enough to experience the nineteenth century’s political, social, and technological dénouement—the First World War—the first half of the twentieth century represented a brief period in which the intellectual legacy of the nineteenth century still offered guidance in understanding human society in the modern age. As Broch’s life demonstrates, it was a period of transition and blending that ultimately fell victim to the delegitimizing and deathly elements of its

purpose in my discussion of periods and milieus is not to establish historical barriers that block continuity, but to illuminate the very process of historical transmission and blending.

own legacy, and after 1945 to the creation of a new world order. If the thinkers of this period, such as Broch, are going to retain any importance to readers of the twenty-first century, then an understanding of their thought and its historical context is necessary. Such an understanding draws our attention to issues that were, in Broch's terms, still "open" *vis-à-vis* our intellectual worldviews. These are issues like non-specialization, legitimate non-rational challenges to science and progress, liberal democracy that openly and theoretically challenged the market system values, and an honest engagement with the ethical mores of the Enlightenment. Many of these ideas ring hollow in the twenty-first century or lack pragmatic possibility. Nevertheless, there is value in explaining in a systematic way their history and adding complexity to what is too often viewed as a simple story of social, political, and intellectual progress.

Beyond the linguistic and historical barriers to Broch's thought, there is also a thematic barrier. This dissertation is first and foremost an investigation into the under-examined field of Broch's political thought. Much of Broch's political work addressed the theme of crowd violence and civil unrest, as seen in mass political movements such as National Socialism. The solutions suggested in Broch's work, however, have more to do with the development of the individual and the application of liberal politics through the exploration of metaphysics. Broch, like many other writers of the *fin-de-siècle* Europe, struggled with the role of the irrational in modern society. Both the dangers and the rewards of irrational impulses dominated the ethical, political, and aesthetic conflicts within his work. Today, however, the irrational has become either tamed or illegitimate in the eyes of much of society. The

effects of both the Second World War and the Cold War have left the mainstream American mind alienated from and in fear of the powers of the irrational.⁵⁵ The legacy of fascism has been the exclusion of the metaphysical and subconscious from public, political debate. The political relationship of the individual or the community to the capitalist, middle class ideology is no longer a source for debate. Like the irrational, opposition to the modern Western societal teleology of the market system is almost a dead question. The American middleclass has reached the “end of history.”⁵⁶

Of course, since September 11, 2001 American society has had to come to grips with the fact that beyond the limits of an imaged Western civilization, both internal and external limits, this question is far from dead. In an epoch with only one superpower there is always the danger of forgetting that ideas of democracy, human rights, and individual autonomy were not exclusively the province of the United States. From a point of view where European values had failed, Broch saw the merit in the liberal democratic views of the United States. As an exile, however, he was situated far enough from the nationalism of the US to question whether its assumptions about freedom were capable of promoting a universal social value system, that is, whether American democracy could spread freedom and promote internationalism and still maintain its “pursuit of happiness.” Broch’s theory of Total Democracy suggests that there is an inherent conflict between universal freedom and internationalism on the one hand and the United States particular commitment to

⁵⁵ This is a driving force in the present political climate of America and in its approach to the “War on Terror.”

⁵⁶ Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: Free Press, 1992).

success on the other. It is this fact more than any other that makes the investigation into Broch's thought timely and important. For, in order to understand Broch's questions and examine some of his answers to the problems of modern society, we must go through a historical investigation that reconstructs a world in which such questions and answers were not as yet concretized.

Throughout the twentieth century, the recognizable position of the intellectual has paradoxically diminished as her/his influence has increased. The paradox is the result of a broadening of specialization and the expansion of an expert knowledge into everyday life: the role of media and advertisement, for example.⁵⁷ Broch's political ideas demanded that in promoting a liberal democratic world order the West must engage in an internal debate and not simply in external contestation. Is the West really democratic? Can it be in the modern world? The case study of Broch allows us to see that the foundations of western democratic values were ambiguous. After 1945, the debate was sidelined by the clarity of good and evil in the Cold War, and especially with the decline of Marxist ideology within the intellectual world of the late twentieth century. The issues raised by Broch and the intellectual milieu that brought forth these issues exposed an active contestation about the meaning of freedom and democracy in the Western tradition and demonstrated some doubts about the value system underlining the democratic west.

In an age when the threat of neo-fascism and extremism reigns large, an exploration of the history of the West's internal debate over these issues is informative

⁵⁷ Intellectuals today are hidden from public debate behind think tanks, media corporations, and even universities.

and necessary. In 2001, the United States and Europe were quick to point out and stress the mutual legacy of democratic values and an ethical commitment to liberty. Within a year, however, the confessed similarity of outlook in terms of geo-politics was rejected by both sides. The reasons for these shifts are complicated and multiple, but the underlying issue of how western democracy and freedom can be conceived of in two separate and somewhat hostile ways was made manifest in the growing gap between “Old Europe” and the United States.

The current foreign policy direction by the United States provides an interesting introduction to the political issues that Hermann Broch confronted in his American exile. Do freedom and democracy require an aggressive policy of enforcement? Does the spread of democracy proceed on a policy of internationalism or nationalism? Is there a universal political value whose propagation throughout the world will establish the necessary universal value system for the protection of human dignity and world peace? The similarities and differences in the way that Broch answered these questions and the way in which the current policy of the United States has addressed them demonstrate an ambiguity in the relationship between freedom and force, between universal values and cultural norms. In many ways the current rationale of US foreign policy and Broch’s efforts to promote a Total Democracy or an aggressive, forcefully engaged democracy are very similar. In other ways, Broch’s fears of the fascist and totalitarian tendencies in the way the United States perceived freedom in strictly material terms resonate in the current debates of US preemptive and unilateral war. My dissertation will not attempt to answer the questions of current

US policy, but to demonstrate the fact that even today the issues that Broch engaged in the 1930s are still central to the internal debate concerning the meaning of democracy in the United States. Broch, as an intellectual émigré, allows us a bird's eye view of the initiation of this debate at the time when the United States entered into its role as superpower. Broch's work pointed out both the advantages and the dangers for democracy in this new position. He questioned the relationship of the United States to fascism; he suggested ways of conceiving of freedom and liberty in terms of human dignity and religion that foreshadow later American debates on civil rights and the generational conflict of the counter-culture movements of the 1950s and 1960s.

Intellectual History

I approached my examination of Hermann Broch from the viewpoint of an intellectual historian. Intellectual history attempts to provide the possible influences on thinkers. What influences someone to think the way they do is not always accessible, and individual creativity can make specific intellectuals peculiar even within their own cultures. But, it is obviously the case that intellectuals in different period, places, and social positions faced different sets of influences. Intellectuals in the 1970s and 1980s wrestled with questions of communism and nuclear war, as well as Marxism, in a way that intellectuals of the 1940s did not, and thinkers in the new millennium will not. The present century, for example, challenges intellectuals with the issues of globalization, international terror, and accessibility of information in ways unanticipated even by the science fiction of the nineteenth century. Intellectual historians, thus, examine not only the content of thought in a particular time period,

but also the relationship between the historical context and that thought. It exposes the possibilities and influences on intellectuals and their milieu.

Hermann Broch allows us to consider the possibilities for conceiving of fascism and democracy within the historical context of modernity. Such an investigation includes the personal experiences of Broch, his intellectual theories (including his specific eccentricities and creative inventiveness), as well as the historical development of systems of thoughts, that is, the accumulation of works around a persistent set of issues and questions. In Broch's case these issues include the negative effects of modernity (technological advancement in armaments, World War, extreme nationalism, genocide, and totalitarianism) on the maintenance of values in society. Broch elaborated on the loss of a human-centered ethical system; it was a problem whose solution was the protection of the individual life and basic human dignity. Any investigation into the relationship between thought and historical context must trace the shifting historical relationship of nations and peoples. Again in Broch's case, this includes the "sea change" in terms of intellectual immigration to the United States in 1930s, the growing menace of world fascism, and the development of the United States as a superpower.

The strict limits of this dissertation are 1886 (the year of Broch's birth) and 1951 (his death); but the more general era under study is the modern epoch—the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century in Western Europe and the United States. It was an epoch marked by the rise of mass politics, the expansion of industrialization, the apogee and the disintegration of imperialism, technological

and scientific advancement, World War, and genocide. In the story of Hermann Broch's struggle to comprehend these developments, to apply rational order to them, we gain a greater appreciation for the dialectical relationship between the intellectual and society.

The perception of intellectual history has, over the last half of the twentieth century, undergone a great deal of change: a shift from a history of ideas and a pursuit of the *Zeitgeist* to ancillary and elitist preoccupation to a leader in the importation of French theory. In the late 1980s, intellectual history seemed to claim a vanguard position in the profession *vis-à-vis* the use of post-structuralist methodology. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, intellectual historians must be aware of the methodology set out by historians such as Dominick LaCapra, Roger Chartier, and Michel de Certeau, but as an intellectual historian I have for the most part remained closely tied to the bread and butter of the historical profession—that is the focus on historical context; I operate under the idea that history is more than a linguistic operation. Nevertheless, it is clear that intellectual history's renewed acceptance in the profession is owing to the influence of French theory and the linguistic turn. From Foucault to Chartier to LaCapra, the dominance of social and economic history has been challenged, and intellectual history has regained some status in claiming access to historical understanding. Nevertheless, I pursue historical understanding from a much more reconstructive stance than a deconstructionist one. My goal is to problematize and expand possibilities and to remain unencumbered by an overly complex or strained theoretical framework. Instead, I choose to focus on a real past

that is capable of narrative reconstruction. Context functions in my dissertation to explain text, and as an investigation into the life of a novelist and cultural critic my dissertation does not separate Broch from his work (or author from his text) in any broad sense. Additionally, my dissertation argues for multiple contexts (for multiple possibilities of thought) in Broch's world, even the hermeneutic explanation of Broch's political and ethical theories relies on understanding the competing systems of thought, of politics, and of religion with which Broch engaged.

As an intellectual historian, I find it hard to argue for one clear authorial intention in any work or group of works. In the case of Hermann Broch, it is doubly difficult to make this claim, because he himself was continually conflicted over his own sense of intention and direction. In exploring Hermann Broch's life, I have stressed the discontinuities of his education, his social identity, and his personal psychology. This was not done in order to isolate Broch as exceptional or esoteric; nor was it done in order to use Broch's exceptionalism as a means of proving a larger historical rule. My focus on Broch's discontinuities highlights the multiplicity of identities and intellectual choices within the world he lived. As stated, I am operating under the assumption that history is more than a linguistic game, thus one must understand Broch's thought through recourse to more than his written works; it requires the contextualization of the people and practices in the world in which Broch lived. In both his Viennese context and in the United States, it is easy to dismiss Broch's thought as esoteric or idiosyncratic. In Broch's case, however, his deep sense of duty to friends and family and to humanity in general forced on him an obligation

to engage openly with his intellectual environs. Of course, one can engage in an idiosyncratic way as well, but in Broch's case it is quite obvious that as a careful listener and voracious reader he did not pursue thought from an isolated position.

Nevertheless, intellectual historians also remain on the fringes of the profession, often seen as art historians, philosophers, or literary critics with an obsession for dates. Taken as a whole, intellectual history remains focused on a social "elite," that is, topics in intellectual history focus on how social, political, or epistemological ideas operate within a community. For the most part, this has meant studying intellectuals possessing enough education and privilege to devote their time and energy to such pursuits. To characterize intellectual history as elitist history, however, overlooks the impact both of intellectuals within their context and of intellectual history as tool for seeing the larger society. In the case of Broch, we are certainly dealing with the educated upper class. The historical forces impacting his thought, however, are not class specific, and as Broch's life shows class, racial, and national identities were not stable concepts in the first half of the twentieth century.

The claims of intellectual history must be focused on expanding its narrative beyond the limits of the individual intellectuals or select groups of intellectuals. In its most straightforward form, intellectual history is the history of intellectuals—an examination of their lives, an interpretation of their work, and an explanation of their influence. Such a form of investigation is, however, only the foundational framework. The deeper and more significant side of intellectual history focuses on clarifying not only an intellectual's life and work, but also the milieu or society in which he or she

lives. Intellectuals should not be viewed as passive or esoteric members of society; they do not live and think outside of their historical context. In fact, like all other subjects of historical investigation—social institutions, political parties, nations, and even theoretical constructions (class, race, or gender), they react to and are influenced by the environment in which they operate. Indeed, intellectuals partake, in a fundamental way, in the formation of social systems and regulations. The intellectual historian makes accessible the world of thinkers who take seriously the role and influence of thought in their society. Most importantly, intellectual historians focus on the historical space between individuals and social institutions. We look for places and possibilities of interaction between the cultural and mental worlds; these possibilities are explained in the thoughtful engagement of people such as Broch.⁵⁸

Vienna and the United States

In my examination of Broch in Vienna, I show that his political thought was a product of Viennese modernism, and that Viennese modernism should be viewed as a critical modernism in the style of Steven Beller and Allan Janik,⁵⁹ i.e. an intellectual tradition that engaged a set of cultural and political problems tied explicitly to modern mass society. Critical modernism was a critique of the negative aspects of the modern world set off against traditional notions of civilization and cultural advance. My dissertation creates a better awareness of the complexity of the “Vienna 1900” (the last

⁵⁸ Thoughtful does not translated to helpful or honorable.

⁵⁹ See the essays by Steven Beller and Allan Janik in *Rethinking Vienna 1900* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2001).

two decades of the Habsburg Empire, from 1900 to First World War) and moves our present historiographical paradigm beyond Carl Schorske's idea of a "crisis of liberalism."⁶⁰ I do so by engaging the present historiographical trend towards "critical modernism." Critical modernism uncovered the depth of ethical thought, along with its political import, within *fin-de-siècle* Vienna. The trend has shown that Schorske's thesis that a crisis of liberalism led to a withdrawal from the political world into the world of decadent aestheticism cannot be expanded beyond the 1890s.⁶¹

For Broch, growing up during the birth of modernity and in the cosmopolitan world of Vienna, the issues of assimilation and secularization were central. The role of assimilation within the Jewish community accelerated both secularization and ethical thought. The high degree of *Gymnasium* students within the assimilated western Jewish community helped to align part of the Jewish community with progress and modernization. Assimilation demanded the abandonment of religious concerns, which were filled by an ethical focus in the aesthetic, political, and

⁶⁰ Since the 1960s, Carl Schorske has been the key figure in Austrian cultural and intellectual history. Through a series of articles published in the 1960s and 1970s Schorske created a framework for understanding Vienna as an important center for modernist thought. See Carl Schorske, *Fin de Siècle Vienna, Politics and Culture* (New York: Vintage Books, 1981) for the clearest statement of his views. Schorske's investigation of modernist thought in Vienna is not, however, unique. There were various scholars who addressed similar topics throughout the 1960s and 1970s. See Hilde Spiel, *Vienna's Golden Autumn* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1987); William McGarh, *Dionysian Art and Populist Politics in Austria* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1974); Allan Janik and Stephen Toulmin, *Wittgenstein's Vienna* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1973).

⁶¹ There is a good deal of irony involved in the notion of using Broch to redress the issue of "decadent aestheticism," for Broch's book, *Hugo von Hofmannsthal and His Time*, is the first and still most important criticism of Viennese culture as a world of decadent aestheticism—what he calls Vienna of the Gay Apocalypse. See Broch's *Hugo von Hofmannsthal and his Time*.

psychological world of modernity.⁶² In his youth, however, Broch was excluded as much from the *Gymnasium* and the University as he was from the world of German, Christian *Kultur*. Broch found his way intellectually through the Jewish popular culture of the newspapers and through the cafes, as well as through German religious tradition, secularized modernism, and scientific positivism. Indeed, Broch's conversion to Catholicism, his early attraction to Schonpenhauer and Nietzsche, and his ethical system based on Plato and Kant suggested his honest and deeply held attraction to a pan-German tradition of ethics.

This pan-Germanism was not, however, political in its nature. Broch's first novel was set in Germany and addressed German topics. In fact, of all Broch's novels only *The Spell* was set, vaguely, in an Austrian milieu, and that was obviously not a Viennese one; nor was it an Austrian-centered theme. Its focus on mass hysteria dealt specifically with the role and myth of the *Führer* figure and not with the mass hysterical events of street violence, national identity, or corporatism--the political manifestation of Austrian mass politics. Broch's Viennese world was heterogeneous socially, religiously, and intellectually. The relationship between his complex world and the development of his political theories are the focus my investigation. In particular, I focus on two under-explored aspects of Broch's youth: 1) The relationship between Broch's education and his philosophical eclecticism. 2) The relationship between Broch's sexual development and the development of his ego-

⁶² See Steven Beller, *Vienna and the Jews, 1867-1938: A Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989) and Marsha Rozenbilt, *The Jews of Vienna, 1867-1914: Assimilation and Identity* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1988).

centered social theories. The historical context of Broch's early development in Vienna allows us to understand more completely the initial impulses of Broch's political thought and to clarify the social and cultural forces at work in the intellectual milieu of Vienna 1900. I argue that Broch's personal experiences and his intellectual production suggested in the Viennese context a broader range of intellectual activity than previously considered. I argue that Broch's attraction to Kant and his rejection of Viennese positivism reflected an intellectual milieu that did not limit engaged thinkers to the choices of either scientific materialism or German idealism.

In general, the discussion of Viennese intellectual history has assumed that the well-defined German tradition of idealism (Hegel), historicism, romanticism, and nationalism was rejected by a Viennese tradition of scientific positivism, conservatism, and Empire. David Luft has argued that Austrian intellectual history itself, outside of Vienna 1900, has been subsumed by essentialized, German paradigms.⁶³ Within this broadened intellectual milieu, I trace Broch's formulation of an ethically based political theory and thus open up to investigation the notion of a complex Austrian tradition, which was transferred to the United States in 1930s.

Additionally, I expand on some aspects of Beller's and Janik's characterization by demonstrating that Broch's critical modernist stance did not neatly fit the exclusive

⁶³ See David S. Luft, private conversation on his forthcoming book. Malachi Hacothen suggests a historical paradigm similar to Luft's as dominant in the discussion of Viennese context: "Catholic, scholastic, Leibnizian traditions that regarded the universe as a rational order and language as reflecting a universal logic survived in Austria long after Kant's Copernican revolution had decimated them in Germany. ... An Anglo-Austrian analytic axis emerged, empirical in its method, realist (anti-idealist) in epistemology, respectful of natural science and pretheoretical common sense, and concerned with logical analysis." Malachi H. Hacothen, *Karl Popper—The Formative Years, 1902-1945: Politics and Philosophy in Interwar Vienna* (London: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 55. Though Hacothen goes on to expand that very context to include in a more varied cadre of liberal thinkers.

community of alienated thinkers, who are described as Late Enlightenment, Jewish, and University-trained. While one cannot deny the importance of Jewish identity to Broch's experience or to the experience of a large percentage of Viennese thinkers, the recent claim that *fin-de-siècle* modernist thought is at its basis an "internal Jewish debate"⁶⁴ establishes too narrow a framework for the process of intellectual development at the turn of the century. From the perspective of the 21st Century, Judaism is so ubiquitous within the milieu that the historian can easily conceive of it as the fundamental element of modernist thought. Such clarity, however, can also produce too circumscribed a conception of the actual historical process.⁶⁵

The label and the values connected with modernism in this context are overly unified. As recent studies of race in Latin America have shown, monolithic and *post facto* categories of identity or thought belie the multiplicity of influences and differences that were available to historical actors.⁶⁶ In the case of Broch that means recognizing that in evaluating the tenets of modernity, he had access to both Jewish and non-Jewish intellectual traditions and that he chose for his discussion of modernity models and exemplars that were particularly Germanic and Christian. This included the high degree of influence from German philosophy of history, Kantianism, and degeneration theory.

⁶⁴ Allan Janik, "Vienna 1900 Revisited, Paradigms and Problems" in *Rethinking Vienna 1900*, 45.

⁶⁵ Such connections between Jewishness and modernity are still today the centerpiece of anti-Semitic claims that the Jew represents the evils of the modern world.

⁶⁶ See Rachel O'Toole, "Inventing Difference: Africas, Indians, and the Antecedents of 'Race' in Colonial Peru," Doctoral Dissertation, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, 2001.

By observing Hermann Broch's Viennese development, we see that his Jewish identity, which the critical modernist school defines as a communal identity, was not always central, but often overridden by other influences at various times. The importance of individual autonomy in Broch's value theory, for instance, reflected Platonic and Kantian tendencies. Broch saw ethical action as an individual experience, one open to Jew or gentile, and the impulse to partake in value production was a deep and turbulent interaction with the process of modernity, defined in Broch's work as a fracturing of the individual in the face of the rapid expansion of scientific and technological knowledge. Broch saw history as a process of cognitive assimilation, the individual ego struggling to compartmentalize a new worldview either into an old system of values (leading to hypertrophy of that system) or into a new value system—often resulting in the need to mediate between the old and new. As Broch stated, the Jew was the most visible participant of assimilation and, thus, the embodiment of modernity, “The really modern, the most ‘advanced’ man *kat' exochen*.”⁶⁷ What is ubiquitous in this context is not Jewishness, but assimilation. In the context of Jewish assimilation in *fin-de-siècle* Vienna, the tension between his Jewish identity and various avenues for intellectual development shaped Broch's *Weltanschauung*. Thus, a careful examination of the relationship between his mature thought and various aspects of Broch's development aid us in constructing a more nuanced view of the period. Modernism in Vienna, even when critical, was a varied and multivalent phenomenon that was carefully crafted not just from assimilated

⁶⁷ Hermann Broch, *The Sleepwalkers*, translated by Willa and Edwin Muir (New York: Vintage Books, 1996), 526.

Jewish culture, but from a combination of German idealism, Austrian positivism, degenerative theory, and the Catholic Baroque. Most importantly for Broch's political theory, however, it was a critique nurtured in a tradition of democracy connected to both Austro-Marxism and classical liberalism.⁶⁸

The basic aim of Broch's criticism was to balance totality and individualism. Broch was well aware of his oddities, but he did not use any sense of separateness to define his own identity or his worldview. External political and cultural considerations did not translate into the intellectual realm. In the case of Broch, he did not design his epistemology or his value system around a cultural identity, and he did not conceive of it in ethnic, religious, or nationalist guises. Broch's value system was, in the end, humanist; it was enlightened. As Hacoen states, "The progressive intelligentsia represented a group that, to emancipate itself from its own ethnicity, needed to dissolve all ethnicity and recover universal humanity."⁶⁹ In the context of Hacoen's book, the "universal notion of the humanity," was Marxist in nature. In Broch's case, I argue that it was not Marxism, but a Kantian-based idea of self-cognition.

Beyond the discussion of Viennese modernism, I examine the legacy of Broch's political thought during his American exile (1938-1951). This examination allows my dissertation to extend the influence of Broch's Viennese historical context

⁶⁸ The recent shifts of focus in Austrian studies by Allan Janik, and other scholars such as David Luft and Chandak Sengoopta, are a large reason for the direction and focus of my study of Broch. See Luft, *Eros and Inwardness* and Chandak Sengoopta, *Otto Weininger, Sex, Science and Self in Imperial Vienna* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000).

⁶⁹ It must be acknowledged that Hacoen sets his discussion in the context of Jewish assimilation.

and his attraction to Kant. However, my focus is not simply on clarifying Broch's Viennese milieu, but on tracing the implication of Broch's Kantian based ethics within the context of the rise of fascism in Europe and the rise of American power in the post-War world. I argue that Broch's political theory demonstrated the ambiguity of European intellectual assimilation within the United States during the Second World War; in particular, his work showed a high degree of uncertainty in the European mind concerning the potential for the United States to promote liberty and democracy at home and abroad. Within this discussion, I also suggest the relevance of Broch's Kantian based social theory to the development of social movements in the United States, especially the civil rights movement.

In addressing Broch's position within the intellectual migration of the 1930s and 1940s, I argue that the continuity of Broch's political and ethical thought from Vienna to the United States challenges the received notion of the German migration as a fusion of German idealism with Anglo-Saxon empiricism. When Broch arrived in the United States, he found and contributed to an established debate on the meaning of liberalism and democracy. Furthermore, Broch's engagement in the political activism of New York and New England contradicts the well-established notion that his intellectual migration should be conceived strictly in terms of failure and tragedy. Broch's experience demonstrates how his background in Viennese critical modernism, with its liberal basis, paved the way for integration with American debates on liberalism.

In Broch's later thought the experience of the Holocaust was vastly important. Though his thought remained Christian and Platonic, his need for his ethical theory to have pragmatic impact and his concern for the danger of totalitarian destruction of human dignity tied his thought not simply to a cultural critique and aesthetic theory, but to a political program. It led Broch to reject literature as a pragmatic means for infusing society with a value system founded on the absolute overcoming of death. He believed that it would be in the realm of epistemology—logically founded—that the absolute would resurface in Western thought.

Steven Aschheim pointed to the prophetic importance of Broch's first novel, *The Sleepwalkers*, when he called it an exploration of the "relationship between anti-Semitism, indifference and genocide."⁷⁰ Broch's importance in many ways lies in his constant push to examine the relationships among anti-Semitism, indifference, and acts of mass hysteria (genocide, pogroms, lynchings, etc). From his earliest works on the disintegration of values to his direct discussion of National Socialism to his anti-fascist political activity to his unfinished Magnus Opus on mass hysteria, Broch's intellectual life has been about the destruction and the reconstruction of a viable value system for Western Civilization in the modern world.

Throughout the dissertation, I have interwoven aspects of Broch's intellectual theories with his personal experiences. I have chosen the personal aspects of Broch's life (familial dynamics, education, sexual relationships), because they stood out as fundamental to Broch's intellectual development, particularly his ethical and political

⁷⁰ Steven E. Aschheim, *Culture and Catastrophe: German and Jewish Confrontations with National Socialism and Other Crises* (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 90.

theories, and because they were influences that have been under-explored. I have been careful not to idealize these categories, and in all the chapters I have set out the larger historical context in which they operate. By doing so, I emphasize that the categories were often related aspects of larger issues, as well as the impetus for much of Broch's intellectual theory. Broch himself was often unaware of their existence or interaction. What makes a person remarkable is difficult to explain. In the case of Hermann Broch, there was and is little unanimous agreement about his intellectual legacy. Even his character has been variously understood—described as heroic, tragic, and quixotic. His fiction was received as the next Joyce, nominated for the Nobel Prize, and condemned as self-indulgent, boring, and unreadable. His personal relationships were marked by passion, loyalty, and commitment, as well as egoism, arrogance, and self-indulgence. His family relationships were marked by court cases, divorces, separation, and misunderstanding, his sexual relationships by affairs, over-heated passions, and life-long (though sporadic) commitment. This dissertation will not be able to explain what makes a person remarkable, but it will remark on the what, how, and the why of Hermann Broch's intellectual odyssey—from Vienna to Killingworth, Connecticut. It is a story, whose narrative says as much about the possibilities of thought during the first half of the twentieth century as it does about a man and his intellect.

Chapter Two

Total Democracy:

Broch's Critique of Democracy in the United States, 1939-1951

“Only little is achieved by proving the inoffensiveness of the Jew, however uninteresting he might be, but a lot can be gained by making uninteresting anti-Semitism per se.”

Hermann Broch

On January 27, 1944, Hermann Broch became a citizen of the United States.⁷¹

It was a pragmatic acknowledgement of the trust he put in the United States as the last bastion against the spread of fascism. Throughout his exile, Broch studied the American system of democracy and found it both admirable and flawed. It was admirable in its fundamental principles of human equality and freedom; it was flawed in its one-sided approach to regulating democratic life. American democracy was not total. From Broch's perspective American democracy rested on the commitment of its citizens to curtail governmental abuse. It did not, however, have any mechanism to curtail the abuse of individuals by other individuals.

Broch's democratic theory was driven by the basic assumption that open societies are founded on the freedom and the sanctity of the individual as a source for

⁷¹ Paul Michael Lützel, *Hermann Broch: A Biography*, translated by Janice Furness (London: Quartet Books, 1987), 302.

value production.⁷² Fundamentally, Broch's political thought turned around one central idea, a "Law for the Protection of Human Dignity," which ran through all of Broch's political activities from the mid 1930s until his death in 1951. The concept involved, on the one hand, a detailed theory of knowledge and, on the other, a formal law for the inviolability of human life. His theory of knowledge provided a phenomenological picture of the ego as a separate and eternal sphere *vis-à-vis* the external world of the non-ego. The ego in its separateness from the world (and thus from any relationship to death) could serve as a production center for values that were transcendent in terms of the temporal states such as fear and panic; the ego could produce an absolute, transcendent, and universal human essence. Broch called this the "earthly absolute." The epistemological basis for the "earthly absolute" occupies the majority of Broch's writing in his *Theory of Mass Hysteria*.⁷³ The legal formulation for the protection of human dignity also had more pragmatic implications and underlay his work on democracy and human rights. In this chapter, I look at Broch's pragmatic theory of Total Democracy and his critique of American democratic ideals. These ideas form the basic outline of Broch's anti-fascist theory, and, in the chapters that follow, I will explore the relationship between this exilic democratic theory and Broch's Viennese upbringing.

In the last decade of Broch's life politics played a more significant part in his thought than either literature or cultural criticism—although the cornerstone of his

⁷² This was the basic assumption behind Broch's theory on human rights as well.

⁷³ See Hermann Broch, *Massenwahntheorie*, KW 12.

early thought, ethics, did not change. His work from the late 1930s and 1940s was by and large political. He still wrote novels and engaged in literary debates, but his central work from the time of his exile in 1938 until his death in 1951 was a work on mass psychology. The work was never completed or published in his lifetime.⁷⁴ By the final year of his life, Broch had even begun to express feelings of impotence and irrelevance about this work. In 1942, when Broch began to focus heavily on his *Theory of Mass Hysteria*, he was coming to the end of his second great literary work, *The Death of Virgil*. The work was initially scheduled for publication in 1943, but was delayed until 1945 because the necessary subscription orders had not been filled.⁷⁵ The foreseeable conclusion of his literary masterpiece presented Broch with the need for a new intellectual outlet. The necessity for change, however, was not simply boredom caused by years of literary effort; it was the result a new intellectual awareness. Like Adorno, Broch saw the moral disconnect of writing poetry in the midst of social and political disintegration. In describing the condition of his *Virgil* manuscript to a friend, Broch indicated this sentiment: “But I leave it [*Virgil*] as it stands now, for, I feel, in these times you have no right to dwell forever on a work which—in spite of the truth it may contain—is much too far away from the actual misery of this world. It would be immoral, or at least not far from immoral.”⁷⁶

⁷⁴ Paul Michael Lützeler has edited and published much of what would have been Broch’s *Mass Hysteria Theory (Massenwahntheorie)*. The edition, however, still bears the marks of the fragmentary state in which Broch left it. See Introduction.

⁷⁵ Paul Michael Lützeler, *Hermann Broch: A Biography*, translated by Janice Furness (London: Quartet Books, 1987), 202.

⁷⁶ Letter from Broch to Willa Muir, March 17, 1940. *KW* 13/2, 190.

Broch, throughout the 1940s, remained concerned about the reception of the novel; its conclusion, however, clearly represented a shift in intellectual focus.

Broch's political theory from the 1940s marked the culmination of a lifetime's engagement in Western theories of culture and society. His political theory did not replace his early efforts in literature and cultural criticism as much as fulfilled the concerns found in these early writings. Broch's theories on the dangers of aestheticism in European culture and the notion of a "value vacuum" in the maintenance of political and ethical standards underlay much of his later works on human rights and democracy. The ease with which Broch shifted from areas such as literature to epistemology or to politics reflected in many ways his lack of specialization in any academic field, a result of his technological education in Vienna. Broch was educated as a textile engineer and a businessman; he did not attend *Gymnasium* or complete a degree at University. Broch came to the fields of literature, philosophy, politics, and even mathematics through self study. And while his autodidacticism contributed to his wide-ranging intellect, it also contributed heavily to the lack of focus and clarity in his work.

Because all of Broch's thought was concerned with the destruction of values, it is difficult to divide his works into hermetically separate categories, such as literary, philosophical, psychological, or cultural critical. It is particularly difficult when we attempt to focus on the political aspects of his writing. In terms of published work, Broch's articles that address political issues stretch from 1918 to 1950.⁷⁷ Thus, in

⁷⁷ Broch published many short articles on the cultural situation of Europe from 1909 to 1918, and, although these works indirectly address the political situation, they do not constitute directly political

terms of our investigation of Broch's political thought, we must first create some parameters and limits in terms of his extant writings. Following Broch's death in 1951, his manuscripts, letters, and *Nachlass* were given to the special collections at the Beinecke Library, Yale University. The task of collecting and assembling his papers fell to his wife Anne Marie Meier-Graefe Broch, as well as Hannah Arendt, Robert Pick, and Erich von Kahler. From 1951 to 1959, the Rhein-Verlag, Zürich published Broch's collected works in ten volumes.⁷⁸ Over the last several decades, the work of Paul Michael Lützeler has helped to close the gap between Broch's theories and the reading public and has made the job of Broch scholars much easier.⁷⁹

It is in many ways easier to identify the centrality of politics to Broch's thought than it is to locate the central works of his political theory. This problem exists for the most part because of the fragmentary nature of the works. Broch's entire corpus consists of approximately 3000-book length pages, the majority of which were not published in his lifetime and a great deal of which exists in incomplete form. The

works. For this reason my dates reflect the publication of "*Die Strasse 1918*" (in *Die Rettung* 1/3, December 20, 1918) and the publication of "*Trotzdem: Humane Politik*" (in *Neue Rundschau* 61/1, 1950).

⁷⁸ Hermann Broch, *Gesammelte Werke*, edited by Erich Kahler [et al.] (Zürich: Rhein Verlag, 1932-61): vol. 1, *Gedichte*; vol. 2, *Die Schlafwandler, eine Romantrilogie. Der Erste Roman: "1888 - Pasenow oder die Romantik."* *Der Zweite Roman: "1903 - 1918 - Huguenavou oder die Sachlichkeit"*; vol. 3, *Der Tod des Vergil*; vol. 4, *Der Versucher, Roman*; vol. 5, *Die Schuldlosen, Roman in elf Erzählungen*; vol. 6, *Dichten und Erkennen; Essays (1)*; vol. 7, *Erkennen und Handeln; Essays (2)*; vol. 8, *Briefe von 1929 bis 1951*; vol. 9, *Massenpsychologie; Schriften aus dem Nachlass*; vol. 10, *Die unbekannte Grösse und frühe Schriften mit den Briefen an Willa Muir*.

⁷⁹ See introduction for a discussion of Lützeler's redaction of Broch's work. Lützeler's 13-volume, commentated collection presents the current Broch scholar with an accessible reference for his entire *oeuvre*. The collection, however, is not without its limits in terms of the historical context of Broch's thought. The greatest hurdle, which the collection cannot completely overcome, is the erratic nature of the materials and of Broch's writing. One could assume, mistakenly, from Lützeler's collection that Broch composed his political work in a unified way. This was not the case.

two key theoretical works on politics, *Mass Hysteria Theory* and *Mass Psychology*, for instance, are extant only as fragments. The unfinished character of Broch's political writings has contributed to the lack of scholarly attention and public awareness of its claims. Nevertheless, a good body of scholarly investigations now exists surrounding Broch's political work. Scholars such as Paul Michael Lützeler, Anton Pelinka, Hartmut Jäckel, Wendlin Schmidt-Dengler, and Monika Klinger have provided good analysis of Broch as a political thinker and his general view on democracy and human rights.⁸⁰ Nevertheless, the scholarly interest in Broch as a *Staatstheoretiker* is relatively limited in comparison to his literary theory or his philosophy.

Politics and Exile

The inherent danger of being an intellectual and a Jew in post-*Anschluss* Austria became immediately clear to Hermann Broch on 13 March 1938. Only one day after Hitler invaded Austria, Broch was arrested by the members of the local National Socialist party and imprisoned in a provincial jail.⁸¹ After two weeks, officials released him and sent him to Vienna, where his movements were restricted.

⁸⁰ The two most direct examinations of Broch's political works are Paul Michael Lützeler, *Hermann Broch, Ethik und Politik* (Munich: Winkler Verlag, 1973) and Monika Klinger, *Hermann Broch und die Demokratie* (Berlin: Duncker und Humblot, 1994). See also Hartmut Jäckel, "Hermann Broch and Politics" and Joseph Strelka, "Politics and the Human Condition: Broch's Model of a Mass Psychology," in *Hermann Broch: Literature, Philosophy, Politics*, edited by Stephen D. Dowden (Columbia, SC: Camden House, 1988), and Almund Greiter and Anton Pelinka, "Hermann Broch als Demokratietheoretiker," in *Hermann Broch und Seine Zeit*, edited by Richard Thieberger (Bern: Peter Lang, 1980), 24-36.

⁸¹ Broch was arrested on suspicions of being a political radical and not for being a Jew.

Over the next several months, he worked to secure papers for emigration.⁸² He left Vienna on 20 July 1938, and he never returned, spending the last twelve years of his life in exile in the United States.⁸³ Thus, Hermann Broch joined the growing numbers of European Jews, socialists, artists, and intellectuals, who in fleeing fascist terror came to the United States in what H. Stuart Hughes famously described as a “sea change” in western intellectual history.⁸⁴

In the United States, Broch’s intellectual self-perception shifted. His central identity in Vienna had been as a novelist, though he considered himself a mathematician by nature. During his exile, he conceived of himself as political thinker. Following his escape from Vienna, Broch spent several months in Scotland with Willa and Edwin Muir,⁸⁵ the translators of his novel *The Sleepwalkers*. He eventually obtained an US visa and sailed from England aboard the TSS *Statendam* (Holland-America Line);⁸⁶ he arrived in New York City on 9 October 1938 with 600

⁸² Because of her age and her fear of financial uncertainty, Broch’s mother hesitated to emigrate with him; she remained in Vienna. In 1942, Nazi officials arrested her, and she died later that year in Theresienstadt concentration camp. See Michael Lützeler’s biography of Hermann Broch for a detailed account of these months and Broch’s desperate attempts to leave Austria. Lützeler, *A Biography*, 155-66.

⁸³ See Broch’s letter to Emmy Ferand (Scotland, 17.8.38) for Broch’s own discussion of the events surrounding his emigration.

⁸⁴ H. Stuart Hughes, *The Sea Change*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), reprinted in *Between Commitment and Disillusion* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1987). For a general discussion of immigration, see Laura Fermi, *Illustrious Immigrants: The Intellectual Migration from Europe, 1930-1941* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971 2nd Edition), 3.

⁸⁵ The Muirs lived at 20 Queens Garden, St. Andrews, Fife, Scotland. For a description of Broch’s life during his stay in England and Scotland see his letters to Ruth Norden, Anne Marie Meier-Graefe, and Emmy Ferand in Hermann Broch, *KW* 13/2.

⁸⁶ In a letter to Ea von Allesch (28.9.38), Broch mistakenly describes the ship as Swedish, *KW* 13/2, 34. See also Michael Lützeler footnote 4 to the letter, *KW* 13/2, 36.

dollars in his pocket.⁸⁷ Like most of the intellectual refugees from Europe, Broch viewed his arrival in the United States as both a deliverance and a misfortune.

Although survival remained Broch's primary concern during his initial years of exile, he, nevertheless, understood how fortunate he had been to escape Europe.

In exile, Broch joined a small community of European intellectuals who arrived in the United States without work, family, or a plan for the future.⁸⁸ This generation of intellectuals, however, would not endure the years of exile in silence or isolation. The migration did not represent the destruction of European culture and the taking up of American. It meant the creation of a new intellectual climate in the United States, a climate enlivened by the arrival of European scientific and social scientific thought. In one of the fundamental intellectual histories of the migration,

The Sea Change, H. Stuart Hughes demonstrated the importance of this generation to

⁸⁷Lützel, *A Biography*, 173-4.

⁸⁸ Austrian émigrés have often been subsumed under the story of German emigration, and, in reality, all Austrian émigrés from 1938 onward were, in fact, German. For Americans, both today and in the 1930s and 1940s, the differences were minimal. Germans and Austrians used the same language, though they spoke with noticeably different accents, noticeable even in English; culturally and intellectually, they referred to the same broad Germanic idiom, and they recognized and were recognized by the separation between the old world and the new—in short they were all Europeans. In the scholarship on refugee intellectuals, however, scholars do distinguish between some important aspects of German and Austrian. On the simplest level, most scholars acknowledge the difference in country of origin. In the primary materials, this is not always as simple a job as it sounds. For Austrian can have multiple meanings, referring at once to the Habsburg Empire, or to one half of that Empire, or to the post-1919 Republic. After 1938, Austria no longer existed, having been annexed to Germany. Even where technical questions of origin can be clarified, the question of how an émigré identifies himself or herself cannot.

This being said, the term Austrian, when applied in the strictest sense to the post-1919 Austrian Republic, has in the secondary literature been set apart in several key areas of thought: Psychoanalysis, Vienna Circle Positivism, and the Austrian school of Economics. In these areas, scholars have identified a distinct enough school of thought within the Austrian context to permit a separation from the German context. The distinctions made for psychoanalysis and economics, I argue, can also be made in Broch's case for political theory. Broch's attack on fascism and his evaluation of the United States as the new world leader are packaged in an ethical value system developed in his context of Austrian assimilation and Viennese education—to be discussed in later chapters.

the development of both sciences and social sciences in the United States. Hughes' story, however, was limited in scope and in its focus on universities and on the upper echelons of power in the United States. Because of this focus, Hughes' book overlooked the contribution to American culture of artists, writers, and creative minds, whose exile experience appeared to be a failure.⁸⁹ Broch's own son reflected the atmosphere of tragedy surrounding many of the artistic émigrés when he described his father's death as a long, drawn-out suicide.⁹⁰ Broch's exile was also, however, the story of active participation in the intellectual community of New York and New England, as well as active participation in the intellectual tidal surge of problem solving in regard to fascism, modernism, and the future of liberal-democracy in both the United States and Europe.

Broch's political theory, in fact, demonstrated a vastly different story of European intellectual integration. Although Broch was, like the members of the Frankfurt School, highly critical of US culture, especially in terms of its race relations, he was at the same time much more assimilationist; he embraced the United States and

⁸⁹ H. Stuart Hughes, *The Sea Change* (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), reprinted in *Between Commitment and Disillusion* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1987), 28.

⁹⁰ H. F. Broch de Rothermann, *Liebe Frau Strigl: A Memoir of Hermann Broch by his Son*, translated by John Hargraves (New Haven, CT: The Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, 2001), 2-3. The memoir is in reality a letter written to a "student or scholar" identified in the letter as Frau Stigl. The letter provides some of the most intimate and detailed descriptions of Broch's personal-emotional world. While this letter is invaluable to the discussion of Broch's youth and his private life, it is also problematic both in its tone and its telos. The letter was written less than two years after Broch's death and resembles in many ways an *in memoriam* more than a historical reconstruction. As editor and translator of the Yale edition of the letter, John Hargraves indicates this position "The son was still mourning the loss of his father at that time, and his response was more a rambling essay than an organized biographical sketch" (p. vii). Even with these reservations in mind, however, the primary document makes a valuable contribution to our understanding of Broch's world; the descriptions of environment and personalities is especially fruitful and are much affected by the psychoanalytical or overly emotional tone that pervades Broch de Rothermann's direct discussion of his father.

its fundamental principles of freedom and equality as the starting point for reeducating Europe on how to build and maintain a free society. The challenge from Broch's perspective was not to survive a period of separation and await his return to European society but to engage the battle against fascist from an American perspective. He grafted his Viennese notion of civic humanism onto the United States tradition of negative rights. In his examination, Broch also warned of an uneasy similarity between the United States and National Socialism; he equated the role of "success" within the American Dream with the fascist promotion of victory in both its nationalistic and racist guises. Broch embraced his deliverance as an opportunity to educate the remnants of the liberal tradition on the dangers of Europe's slide into mass hysteria.

During the last 12 years of his life, all of which he spent in the United States, Broch worked on literary, political, cultural critical, and epistemological themes. His primary focus, however, was his work on mass psychology. It was a massive treatise on the source and solution for mass hysteria in the modern age. Broch saw this work, which was never finished or published in this lifetime, as a moral duty. He thought he could epistemologically diagnose and cure the breakdown of values and the resulting outbreaks of mass hysteria, a project explicitly promoting democracy over fascism. "The fight against Mass Hysteria, the enlistment of man into an open system of humanity is the task of democracy."⁹¹ Broch wanted to prevent the metamorphosis of "community" into "the mass." Such a metamorphosis included both the loss of

⁹¹ *KW* 12, 63.

rationality (commitment to universal values of equality and humane conduct) and the loss of positive irrationality (aspects of humanity like friendship, camaraderie, and love). The fear of death and danger of insecurity prompted communities to abandon individual decision making. It led people to support blindly leaders who in the fascist context organized the fear of the crowd into a political platform based on the rejection of humane treatment. For Broch, the solution was to educate the individual about his irrational capacities.

The exploration of these factors in the development of Broch's theories on fascism and democracy opens angles on the formulation and history of the mass society debates within the United States exile community of 1940s. H. Stuart Hughes and Martin Jay have exposed the important role of thinkers like Franz Neumann, Theodor Adorno, and Max Horkheimer, as well as the influence of social science institutions like the Frankfurt School.⁹² Broch's engagement in these issues demonstrated a unique European approach to the questions of totalitarianism and fascism; it was an approach that rejected both Marxism and capitalism as holistic solutions to the value vacuum of the modern world. Broch, in fact, rejected socio-economic factors as the primary factors for understanding mass hysteria.⁹³ As Almund Greiter and Anton Pelinka point out, this fact differentiated Broch from thinkers like Adorno and Horkheimer; for "Broch's approach (to the question of mass

⁹² See Martin Jay, *The Dialectical Imagination: A History of the Frankfurt School and the Institute of Social Research, 1923-50* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1973) and *Permanent Exiles: Essays on the Intellectual Migration from Germany to America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985).

⁹³ See Almund Greiter and Anton Pelinka, "Hermann Broch als Demokratietheoretiker," in *Hermann Broch und Seine Zeit*, edited by Richard Thieberger (Bern: Peter Lang, 1980), 25.

hysteria) is the individual. All mass phenomena are explainable through processes, which take place in the individual. Moments of socialization, both primary and secondary, are to a large extent excluded from his analysis.”⁹⁴ Broch saw the problem as existing in the ego, that is, psychologically, and he wanted to formulate his solution in the realm of cognition.

Broch defined the fascist value system as one in which the adherents to the system give up their individual freedom in exchange for material security, such a value system is hypertrophic, that is, a system in which social crisis causes irrational commitment to the system and results in mass aberrations, such as mob violence. Only by recognizing and overcoming two traditions in American democracy that tended toward the hypertrophic value system of fascism could the United States fulfill its function as defender of Western liberal democracy. The two traditions that Broch addressed were both connected to the modern phenomenon of mass politics. The first was the rise of fascist demonology, or the singling out of a communal enemy, a devil, whose activities and even existence in a society was viewed as a threat to the values of the majority. For Broch, both the Jew in European society and the African-American in the United States offered a minority identity that could play the role of devil and in a period of crisis fall victim to the need for exorcism. In both cases, the majority value system attempted to stabilize its feeling of panic. The second tradition related to the social value system underlying democracy. In the case of the United State, this meant the emphasis on victory or success. Broch believed that too great an emphasis on

⁹⁴ Greiter and Pelinka, 25.

material success contributed to the devaluation of individual freedom and the dignity of human life. In his critique of mass society and of United States culture, Broch acknowledged a unique and sustained tradition of freedom in the United States, but he also emphasized the lopsided nature of its democratic tradition.

In Broch's view, Total Democracy should not be based solely in classical American notions of liberalism, negative rights, and governmental checks. His concept of democracy went beyond the relationship between citizen and state. In Broch's mind, American liberalism's ultimate goal was complete individualism—no restrictions on action (the pursuit of happiness). He regarded such unchecked individualism as the basis for fascism. For no matter how much the individual strove for complete separation from others, the nature of the world is that humans need other humans.⁹⁵ The combination of the ego's striving for independence with the external necessity for others creates the necessity for enslavement. That is, slaves are required to build a communal infrastructure in which the individual can progress. A democratic system that defined individual success as its goal also carried the seeds for psychologically insecurity, that is, the seeds for mass hysteria.

Unlike other European theories on democracy in United States, such as Tocqueville, Broch did not see the issue at hand as whether equality and freedom could be sustained; he saw the issue more pragmatically—could the individual first of all be protected from violence and insecurity. In Broch's concept of Total Democracy the individual's pursuit of happiness had to be guaranteed by a secure space in which

⁹⁵ See Hannah Arendt, *Men in Dark Times*, 135-36.

each individual could explore not simply material gain but also universal ethical values. Tocquevillean critiques concerning the watering down of individual talents or the pacification of national spirit were of little concern to Broch. He saw all political action and all social action (including religion) as locked in “the world’s commotion and bustle”⁹⁶ and unable to transcend earthly limitation of time, i.e., they were actions infused with the knowledge of the inevitability of death. Death prompted feelings of insecurity, and insecurity prompted psychological enslavement. When such psychological insecurity unites with cultural or economic insecurity the individual abandons his/her pursuit of freedom and searches for stability in the mass.

Starting with his work on a joint US and European project, *The City of Man*,⁹⁷ Broch began to explain more fully the process of enslavement (*Versklavung*), by which Broch meant not simply imprisonment or forced labor but economic, political, and ideological repression of human freedom and dignity.⁹⁸ In his contribution to *The City of Man* Broch described the relationship between freedom, slavery, and economics. “A return to slavery—in a modern version of it, more thoroughgoing and widespread than history has ever known before—is the general trend of this age. The origins of the evil are both moral and economic, and so must be the treatment. From

⁹⁶ Hermann Broch, “Die mythische Erbschaft,” quoted in Hannah Arendt, *Men in Dark Times*, 136.

⁹⁷ *The City of Man: A Declaration on World Democracy* (New York: The Viking Press, 1940). Signatures included Thomas Mann, Lewis Mumford, Reinhold Niebur, G. A. Borgese, Hermann Broch, Herbert Agar, Frank Aydellotte, Van Wyck Brooks, Ada L. Comstock, William Yandell Elliott, Dorothy Canfield Fisher, Christian Gauss, Oscar Jászi, Alvin Johnson, Hans Kohn, William Allan Neilson, and Gaetano Salvemini.

⁹⁸ See also Broch’s discussion of enslavement in “Democracy in an Age of Enslavement (*Die Demokratie im Zeitalter der Versklavung*),” *KW* 11, 110-91.

the economic point of view, the workman is bought by the totalitarian state for a minimum of sustenance and security, the counterpart of which is the loss of everything else, and first of all of liberty.”⁹⁹ The freeing of the individual would involve more than a declaration of his or her inherent freedom, but also an active policy for the protection of his or her material and psychic condition.

In an unpublished article, he states: “The world is moved by *Realpolitik* ... everybody has to look after his own interests, and the man who doesn’t want to become enslaved himself, must try to enslave others; eat so as not be eaten. We must admit that enslavement will be or is already the genuine form of our modern industrial society.”¹⁰⁰ As a defense against the irrational impulse to view the world as a man eat man affair (in Broch’s eyes this meant placing political man below the realm of humanity), Broch put forth his concept of Total Democracy.

Broch’s use of the term “total” to modify democracy, as well as his references to a democratic “dictatorship,” struck many observers at the time as problematic and even authoritarian.¹⁰¹ He, however, consciously contrasted a humane democratic totality to an inhumane fascist totality. In his American exile, Broch repeatedly stressed the thin line that divided most democracies from fascism.¹⁰² Democracy

⁹⁹ *City of Man*, 88.

¹⁰⁰ Broch continues “All this is only sound and logical, it is sound *Realpolitik*, and Hitler is [its] most honest, most clever exponent.” (Hermann Broch Archive. Yale Collection of German Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library).

¹⁰¹ Hermann Broch Archive. Yale Collection of German Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

¹⁰² In this instance, Broch uses the term hypertrophy to indicate the exclusion of competing values due to an irrational glorification of the dominant value system. Fascism accomplished this extreme

differentiated itself by its spirituality and its moral outlook, that is, democracy preferred open value systems. Nevertheless, democracy had to remain vigilant, because freedom as an absolute value was often the tool of fascist value systems. “A democratic totality always, up to some degree, is liable to the danger of a hypertrophy of theories, namely, to the danger of a specifically democratic ‘theology.’ ... By persecuting the crime of ‘undemocratic conduct’ the way practically would be paved for any act of sadism.”¹⁰³ A European thinker like Broch, educated in the nineteenth century, still had the example of the French Revolution clearly in mind.¹⁰⁴

In an open value system there was no attempt to impose community defined absolutes. For Broch, values defined by a communal set of standards were merely attempts at securing a goal—they were an attempt at conquest or victory. In a democracy, the value system was design to foster individual awareness of an absolute human value, not communal.¹⁰⁵ “It would, however, be fallacious to call the democratic totalitarianism ... an imitation and its super-gratification aped ones. In fact, fascisms are caricatures of the true totality of values—exactly as their dynamics are nothing but a cartoon of the genuine functional process. ... If a Total Democracy

nationalism or racism; democratic values are not exempt from such hypertrophy; if it loses its moral foundation.

¹⁰³ Hermann Broch Archive. Yale Collection of German Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

¹⁰⁴ Broch often justifies the very acts of sadism, whose dangers he acknowledges here. As Broch says immediately after this line, “Apparently, such evil consequences are unavoidable, and even more so since democracy is in a state of war.” Hermann Broch Archive. Yale Collection of German Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

¹⁰⁵ An idea that distances Broch’s thought from both the French Revolutionaries and Jean Jacques Rousseau. Hermann Broch Archive. Yale Collection of German Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

were content with a simple aping of the super-gratifications of the fascist methods, it would not last, indeed.” The difference between fascist totality and Total Democracy for Broch was that Total Democracy builds on the idea of creating communities for the promotion of ethical values and the avoidance of human suffering. Total Democracy should pursue the moral goal of the victory of good over evil (or what Broch calls the “victory over the idea of victory”). Thus, fascism was separate because it based its formation of community on the idea and the reality of human suffering. It entailed the creation of an outsider, who deserves and requires punishment, and the creation of a value system that is strictly external and material. Since humans are not strictly external, material beings, fascism cannot create a truly total community or absolute ethical system.¹⁰⁶ Broch’s point in the end was to prove that fascism lacks totality.

Broch set his theory of democracy within a historical philosophy that was highly influenced by nineteenth-century historicism, and he argued that questions of democracy in his contemporary world were understandable only as a continuum of the democratic tradition in the West since the eighteenth century.¹⁰⁷ Through the crucible of revolution, American and French, the foundational theories of state and citizenship had been forged. Broch referred to these foundational theories as “regulative

¹⁰⁶ Broch’s anti-Marxist stance can be easily detected here. Broch, though educated in Vienna, the heart of logical positivism and scientific materialism, was strongly influenced by German Idealism and the Classical Humanism tradition. His Philosophy of History is very much nineteenth-century, Hegelian and thus Marxist. But he rejects both the materialism of Marxism and the exterminationist rhetoric of its ideology.

¹⁰⁷ See Chapter One for a detailed discussion of Broch’s philosophy of history and the influence of nineteenth-century German historicism.

principles.” The operation of democracy was based on a tension between the regulative principles (created through a revolution and the throwing off of oppression) and the government as the organ by which democracy is administered and protected. In the historical philosophy of Broch, democracy in the West remained fragile because of its novelty.¹⁰⁸ Both the American and the French Revolutions occurred during a period of historical transition from the hypertrophy of the Late Middle Ages (the breakdown of the stable and absolute system of values under the Universal Church) to a period of secular stability. Whereas the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance were periods of hypertrophy marked by mass hysteria in the form of witch trials and internecine struggles within Christianity, the nineteenth century would become a period of general political stability and rising democracy. This meant in Broch’s system that European and American foundations for democracy were at once revolutionary and stabilizing. Much of the strength of democracy in the United States was in fact its continued revolutionary distrust of the government as a force for oppression. Such democratic awareness or defensiveness exposed, however, a democratic fatalism—a lack of awareness of any other dangers (outside of governmental abuse) to democracy, e.g. racial conflict, economic disparity, or xenophobia.

Democracy was not exempt from mass hysteria; it was, however, a form of social organization historically conditioned to promote ideas of freedom and equality.

¹⁰⁸ England which, “having almost forgotten her revolutionary origins ... every governmental spokesman, conservative or liberal, with his election becomes the object of real confidence. For every Englishman knows that the governmental power will be used in defense of the regulative principles on which the British way of life is based” (Hermann Broch Archive. Yale Collection of German Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library).

In terms of regulative principles of democratic societies, Broch supported, as Almund Greiter and Anton Pelinka state, the principles of “freedom, equality, justice, and humanity. Principles established in the idea of human rights. ... Human rights, which are developing pacifically, are in the first instance the human rights of liberal democracies; human rights, which guaranteed the freedom of the individual from the state. Broch postulated, however, an expansion of the tradition of liberal Natural Law.”¹⁰⁹ For Broch, these rights were set within an abstract relationship of citizen and state and not in a concrete relationship of individual humans. Clearly, Germany had failed in its attempts to balance democratic regulative principles and the abstract power of the state. The failures of the Weimar Republic and the First Austrian Republic were their attempts to regulate society by controlling the relationship between citizen and state. In the United States, owing to its youth, the relationship between citizen and state was controlled by the distrust of the government. Broch uses the example of the Weimar Republic’s “Law for the Protection of the Republic” to demonstrate the weakness of democracies that focus too much on regulating government and citizens and not enough on creating individual security.¹¹⁰

“Democracy ... cannot safeguard its own existence by means of an abstract ‘Law for the Protection of the Republic’ ... If there is a concrete danger for democracy, it must be encountered by concrete means.”¹¹¹ Broch’s point was that in regard to democracy,

¹⁰⁹ Almund Greiter and Anton Pelinka, 31.

¹¹⁰ Passed by Reichstag in 1922 in response to the murder of Walter Rathenau.

¹¹¹ Hermann Broch Archive. Yale Collection of German Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

as well as the international protection of human rights, the legal protection of democracy must depend on the legal regulation of “concrete partners.”

In the United States, the same danger of “democratic fatalism” existed, for the founding fathers had set out the relationship between citizen and state; they did not, however, set out the relationship between citizen and citizen—in the context of the eighteenth century, they felt it unnecessary.

The Founding Fathers of the United States had such a fear of tyranny that they felt obliged to embody their anti-tyrannical principles into the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights, laws whose sole purpose is to protect the citizens against encroachment of the government; the basic principles of every-day civic life were so natural and self-evident to them—they felt them to be the very substance of life and democracy—that no one conceived their incorporation into a written law might be necessary, in order to protect state against encroachment on the part of the citizen or the citizen himself against evil conduct of his fellow citizen. It sufficed them if the regulative principles were effective as a negative source of law.¹¹²

After his experiences with National Socialism and his witnessing the racial tensions within the United States, Broch questioned whether the basic principles governing citizen interaction in daily life were self-evident any longer.¹¹³ Broch’s concerns were manifested in his investigations of fascist tendencies in American democracy and in his push to expand the regulative principles of democracy to include duty as well as freedom.

¹¹² Hermann Broch Archive. Yale Collection of German Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

¹¹³ Even today the battles over the interpretation of the 14th Amendment amongst various members of the Supreme Court and between constitutional scholars demonstrate that issue is still far from self-evident.

Democracy, Civil Rights, and Civil Duties

On January 27, 1944, Hermann Broch became a citizen of the United States.¹¹⁴ It was a pragmatic acknowledgement of the trust he put in the United States as the last bastion against the spread of fascism. Throughout his exile, Broch examined in detail the ideology of democracy in the United States. He found its ideological goals both admirable and flawed. It was admirable in its fundamental principles of human equality and freedom; it was flawed in its one-sided approach to regulating democratic life, that is, American democracy focused on the power of individual freedom and not on the duty of individuals towards society and fellow citizens. From Broch's perspective, American democracy rested on the commitment of its citizens to curtail governmental abuse. It did not, however, have any mechanism to curtail the abuse of individuals by other individuals. American democracy was not total.

Broch's democratic theory was driven by the basic assumption that open societies are founded on the freedom and the sanctity of the individual as a source for value production.¹¹⁵ Fundamentally, Broch's political thought turned around one central idea, a "Law for the Protection of Human Dignity," which ran through all of Broch's political activities from the mid 1930s until his death in 1951. The concept involved, on the one hand, a detailed theory of knowledge and on the other a formal law for the inviolability of human life. His theory of knowledge provided a

¹¹⁴ Paul Michael Lützeler, *Hermann Broch: A Biography*, translated by Janice Furness (London: Quartet Books, 1987), 302.

¹¹⁵ This was the basic assumption behind Broch's theory on human rights as well.

phenomenological picture of the ego as a separate and eternal sphere *vis-à-vis* the external world of the non-ego. The ego in its separateness from the world (and thus from any relationship to death) could serve as a production center for values that were transcendent in terms of the temporal states such as fear and panic; the ego could produce an absolute, transcendent, and universal human essence. Broch called this the “earthly absolute.” The epistemological basis for the “earthly absolute” occupies the majority of Broch’s writing in his *Theory of Mass Hysteria*.¹¹⁶ The legal formulation for the protection of human dignity also had more pragmatic implications and underlay his work on democracy and human rights. These ideas form the basic outline of Broch’s anti-fascist theory.

Furthermore, Broch felt that the solution to the political, social, and, ethical problems of the modern world required scientific understanding of epistemology and ethics on the individual level. Ethics operated in society through value systems, which can be organized and manipulated by governments and political parties; yet, these values-systems were established and grounded in the mind and activities of the individual. It was with the individual that Broch started, and from there he hoped to establish laws for value systems that would withstand the hypertrophic forces of historical changes and, thus, withstand the onset of mass hysterical events. While in exile in the United States, Broch’s concern for explaining the source of mass hysteria directed his thought toward more straightforward political involvement. His critique on democracy and racism in the United States developed out of this shift in focus.

¹¹⁶ See Hermann Broch, *Massenwahntheorie*, KW 12.

Broch observed in Europe that the National Socialists had bet their political triumph on the idea that the German people, panicked by the insecurity of economic depression and national defeat, no longer saw freedom as a social value. They promoted, instead, materially measured values such as security and glory. The protection of such values became connected to abstract conceptions such as nation or blood, leaving some members of the society, both citizen and non-citizen, exposed to attack. The central value for fascism became “victory,” and the ritual of victory depended not only on the creation of success, but also on the creation of an opponent. Broch referred to the opponent in religious terms as the devil in the system.¹¹⁷ Fascism also relied upon a system of magical justice, that is, justice which corresponds to the irrational fears of the dominant society. The identification of demonology and the return to magical justice are crucial to a significant portion of Broch’s definition of fascism, and he openly identified such an ideology in the tradition of the American Dream and American racism.¹¹⁸

Broch’s concerns about American race relations took a more central position in his fascist theory as the tensions turned into outright instances of mass hysteria, such as the Detroit Riots of 1943. From the early 1940s onward, the racial make-up of Detroit changed rapidly as the war industry ramped up and turned the city into the

¹¹⁷ Broch, who worked very closely with Hannah Arendt during his American exile, developed a theory on the use and necessity of an opponent for the fascist system. The theory was very close to Arendt’s notion of “the other.”

¹¹⁸ Broch maintained a keen interest in the question of race in the United States throughout his exile. He even took active steps to support the protection of rights of African Americans; an examination of Broch’s banking record revealed that he made regular contributions to NAACP throughout his exile. Hermann Broch Archive. Yale Collection of German Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

“arsenal of American democracy.” African-Americans in large numbers migrated from the south to work in the defense factories. The demographic shift was part of a larger migration (“The Great Migration”) of African-Americans from the South to the North between the First World War and the end of the Second World War.¹¹⁹ On in June 1943 the growing tensions between white and blacks, competing for housing in the rapid migration of workers to the city, led to clashes in the streets of Detroit. Fueled by rumors of black mothers and babies being thrown from bridges and white women being raped and murdered, groups of whites and black attacked bystanders and polices for almost two days. In the end, President Roosevelt had to send in federal troops to restore order. All tolled, 34 people were killed and almost 2,000 arrested. The event exposed for Broch the depth of the racial divide, as well as the danger of mass hysteria within American society.¹²⁰

Broch used the event as a moment for considering the future of American democracy.¹²¹ As blood and hatred swept across Detroit, Broch weighed these events against the claims of equality and freedom in the United States. He suggested two polemical readings of the events: “There are many people, who contend that America always had her lynchings, her assaults on labor and other unpleasant events, full of violence and corruption, and that, nevertheless, America remained the best democracy

¹¹⁹ See *Black America: Geographic Perspective*, edited by Robert T. Ernst and Lawrence Hugg (Garden City, NY: Anchor Press, 1976).

¹²⁰ See Capeci, Dominic J. Jr. and Martha Wilkerson, *Layered Violence: The Detroit Riots of 1943* (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 1991).

¹²¹ The discussion of the Detroit Riots is found in an unpublished manuscript (in English) attached to a pamphlet on “The Law for the Protection of Human Dignity” (Hermann Broch Archive. Yale Collection of German Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library).

on earth. Don't worry, they say, therefore, about the happenings in Detroit." In contradiction, "there are others, who say that ... America will now have to pay for century-old sins against her basic democratic principles: to them, the happenings in Detroit are a symptom for an American repetition of the European development leading to fascism, are symptoms for the crumbling of democratic liberty, equality and fraternity, symptoms for the uprising of fascist intolerance and race hatred and the [victory] of the primitive right of the stronger."¹²² Broch rejected the complacency of the first attitude, and he engaged the second attitude not as a reality but as a more than possible future for the United States.

The racial attack on minority groups was the most dangerous political manifestation of fascist ideology. Its violent tendencies not only endangered the immediate lives of local minorities, but they also undercut the essential dignity of human life and reinforced a value system based on victory and violence. Influenced by the historicism of the nineteenth century, Broch portrayed the magical justice of fascism as a re-paganization of the modern world. Throughout history, civilizations had taken up the cause of humanity and fought to replace magical justice with humane justice.¹²³ In its encounter with modernity, however, Europe turned its back on

¹²² Hermann Broch Archive. Yale Collection of German Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

¹²³ Broch claimed that the earliest notions of such a humane goal can be seen in the story of Abraham's substitution of a ram for Isaac. In terms of politics, democracy amounted to a similar re-humanizing and unpaganizing of the world, i.e., respecting God's separation between paganism and humaneness. For this reason, Broch calls upon democracy to end capital punishment. The modern world's attempts at compromise with savagery in the form of new methods of execution and its removal from the public eye had not ended the anti-humanity implied in the antinomian notion of justice that calls for an eye for an eye. Democracy must embrace humanness without compromise, and, even though Broch concedes that, during a time of war, such measures cannot be taken, he calls for a resolution that would ensure the

humane justice. The “Enlightened” invention of the guillotine highlighted the corruption of humanity by the false security of the technology and its ability to minimize suffering. Celerity and cleanliness in murder did not change the ultimate outcome, death. Democracy must embrace humanness without compromise, and the state can prove its humaneness only by overcoming the negativism of death-warrants and by convincing the masses of the inviolability of all human life. It must be made clear that no human soul, however vile, shall be excluded from that right, and none placed so high—not even in representing the state commonwealth—as to arrogate the power of breaking this supreme democratic principle of human dignity.¹²⁴

In both National Socialist propaganda against Jews and American racism, the ideas of justice came to mean the sustainability of the majority community, which came to be identified by its shared value system. The problem was obvious to Broch, both anti-Semitism and racism resulted from the creation of a value system that was closed, that is, a system whose values no longer promoted a universal value applicable to all members of a society. A value system becomes closed at the point when a crisis exposes its failure to secure an acceptable level of material and psychic security. A healthy society requires the presence of a central value system through which society can make available channels for the pursuit of maximum levels of material and emotional security. This is the democratic regulative principle of the “pursuit of

abolition of the death penalty in the future. Such a resolution would become the centerpiece of the democratic propaganda and tied directly to the peace aims of the democratic nations.

¹²⁴ Hermann Broch Archive. Yale Collection of German Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

happiness.” The complete autonomy of the central value system, however, will initiate a stage of crisis or the closing of the system. In a state of complete autonomy the logic of the system will “hypertrophy,” that is, its logic will lose contact with the actual functioning of reality and begin to promote values that are not applicable to the material world in which the value system is supposed to operate. Broch used the historical example of witch trials to demonstrate such “hypertrophica.” When a dominant value system, such as Christianity, promotes the truth that witches exist, the application of that truth to reality can and will result in the development of a mass aberration, such as the witch trials.

For the German nation, any claim to a democratic tradition was made illegitimate by the economic depressions and national humiliation following the First World War. The volkish religion of National Socialism and its creation of the devil in the form of the Jew marked the ultimate realization of such a violently hypertrophied closed system. In the United States, the hypertrophy of the democratic tradition began with the defeat of the Confederate states and the reconstruction of the South; the economic and social insecurity produced just such a hypertrophy, a fact the seen in passing of the anti-black legislation and the expansion of lynching and Ku Klux Klan activity. In both cases, the demonology and an irrational impulse to victory were sparked by social panic.

The national-socialist propaganda ... is geared for stirring up anti-Semitism. Together with its extensions (as, for example, negrophobia), anti-Semitism is the very ‘carrier’ of contagion, the very contagion itself of the fascist lunacy—and this is the datum that has to direct the democratic fight against mass delusion and its propaganda.

Certainly, as soon as the belief in the god of victory is smashed, the belief in his counterpart, the devil, is bound to collapse, too.¹²⁵

Broch implies here that opposition to fascism in the United States must be seen as something more than a confrontation between political and nationalist ideologies; it must also become manifest in the protection of minority rights and the universal value of human equality. While Broch's political, and even his literary, works call for pragmatic solutions to mass hysteria, such as the development of institutions for the protection of human life from individual murders, from state-sponsored murder (including the death penalty), from mob violence (such as lynchings and pogroms), and eventually from economic and nutritional deprivation. A crucial step in this direction was the eradication of demonology in the fascist value system.

The religious and humanist impulse in Broch's call for the protection of human life foreshadowed the claims and goals of the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s. To date, the connection between Broch and these later political movements has been obscured by Broch's marginalization within the historiography. The study of his political theory, however, suggests that Broch, even as a dilettante political theorist and a novelist, presaged an important intellectual development of the American mind—a development that took place in churches and in the counter-culture worlds of American youth, not in the universities or in the halls of government.

Though Broch found historical examples of the hypertrophy of the American democratic tradition in its racism, especially in the political and cultural institutions of

¹²⁵ Hermann Broch Archive. Yale Collection of German Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

the southern United States, he saw the greater danger in the expansion of the fascist demonology to the arena of national politics and foreign policy. In this arena, the figure of the African-American slave would not serve as an effective devil. As the hypertrophy of American values moved beyond the regional issues of blood purity, issues of political and economic relationships would rise to the fore. In this process, the centrality of success in the American democratic tradition took on more importance. The expansion of the demonology of the African-American would, in the historical context of fascism versus democracy (or communism versus democracy), be moved to the sidelines. In other historical contexts, e.g., the relationship of American democracy to the Third World, such demonology would still play a significant role. The Jew, however, remained the key figure for the historical conflict of democracy and fascism even in the American context.

Broch was at times less than optimistic about the United States' willingness to take up the role of defender of democracy and freedom. Broch states in an untitled manuscript from the late 1930s:

The unemployed were approached with slogans denouncing the existing "plutocracy," for the middle class a picture of a future anti-Communist order was envisaged, an order promising an increased volume of business; Pacificists were won over with slogans about "Europe's internal affairs" which do not concern America; Communists were trapped with semi-Socialist slogans. In any event, the attempt was made, whenever possible, to denounce World Jewry as plutocratic, Communistic, war-mongering, reactionary, revolutionary—in short as World Enemy Number One. This propaganda, operating on a large scale, is very successful, and every convert means one step toward the complete subjugation of humanity and human liberty. This is how it worked in Europe, and there is no reason to

believe that the American people will react differently.
 Man protests against barbarism only until he has become
 used to it.¹²⁶

He doubted whether its democratic foundations still valued human dignity over material security, and he doubted whether the indifference of distance could be overcome. Broch saw such indifference present even in the exile community of Europeans—even European Jews.

The [Europeans] whose physical, psychic, and, above all, economic existence has not been directly affected and, then, victimized ...they are helpless; the right moment for defense is gone. But let us complete the gloomy picture by adding the undeniable fact that even those who, suffering bodily themselves, went through the apocalyptic horrors of today's Europe, as soon as they have reached ... apparently safe shores, immediately join again the bulk of *indifferents* and do not belong any more to the class of the directly "injured."¹²⁷

For the United States to serve as defender of Western civilization, it had to see beyond the prospects of "accepting a victorious Germany as a financially sound buyer."¹²⁸

Policies of isolation and appeasement within Europe and the United States brought such a prospect into question. The policies reflected a greater concern for territorial integrity than for human suffering. The war was a "logical inconsequence"; it only took place when Hitler's seizures of territories became too egregious. The obligation to defend territory "proved strong enough to achieve what no act of barbarism, no

¹²⁶ Hermann Broch Archive. Yale Collection of German Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

¹²⁷ Hermann Broch Archive. Yale Collection of German Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

¹²⁸ Hermann Broch Archive. Yale Collection of German Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

provocation, no breach of treaties, no abuse of ideological values had been able to achieve.”¹²⁹ The object lesson of earlier European appeasement was not for Broch a simple call to arms, but a more fundamental call to reconsider the foundations of democracy. “Whether the American people will be able to lift themselves out of the morass of such fatal conservatism, depends on their ability to find their way back to the spiritual values inherent in their traditions.”¹³⁰ The only way fascism would be turned back would be by a spirited effort that came from a defense of humanity and not a defense of territory. This was especially the case for the United States, whose territorial isolation distanced them from the menace of Hitler. In point of fact, the United States did not see the Second World War as an ethical war until after Pearl Harbor.¹³¹

The moral superiority of democracy over fascism was for Broch a “given fact.” The difference between the “god of victory” in National Socialism and the success of the American Dream is one of hypertrophy. In contrast to the continual evolution of the open system is the dogma of the closed system. The closed system makes claims to the infinite and the absolute, but only through dogmatic ‘theologies,’ whose force becomes the basis for the claims to justice and normal behavior within a social group.

¹²⁹ Hermann Broch Archive. Yale Collection of German Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

¹³⁰ Hermann Broch Archive. Yale Collection of German Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

¹³¹ The reality that historical hindsight is not 20/20 helps to cover over the necessity of Broch’s call for a spiritual war in the defense of truth and human dignity. After 9/11, similar arguments surfaced concerning the contemporary fate of democratic thought—when democracy as an institution responsible for truth was subsumed under the call for a democracy as a means of security for the American way of life.

An open system is marked by lack of absolute values; open systems “endeavor to attain the desired absolute validity through the unrestricted development and expansion of the system. The ‘open system’ is aware of the infinity of the world; it, therefore, knows that absolute validity is an infinitely distant goal, and not a final state concretely to attain.”¹³² Broch saw this as the intention behind the pursuit of happiness.

It was Broch’s belief that we must understand the difference between open and closed value systems on the individual level, what he calls in Freudian terms normal and abnormal systems, because the psychosis or neurosis of the individual when reflected into the group value system results in periods of mass aberrations (ritual killings, world wars, and genocide). Such aberrations were generally directed at one group, who became the “enemy” or the bringer of death and insecurity. From the development of these models of personal and group value systems, Broch applied an historical perspective. The combination of value system modeling and history allowed Broch to predicate the cycles of aberrations and to construct historical models of value disintegration and hypertrophy (the two instances where mass aberrations develop).

Broch saw modernity as a period of disintegration, which was open to mass aberration. The solution, thus, was also historical. The examination of periods of conversion, from a closed central value system (or from a period lacking a central value system) to open central value system, will provide a model for the conversion process. In this vein, Broch chose the historical example of Christian conversion, and

¹³² Hermann Broch Archive. Yale Collection of German Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

from that example set up a model for modern democratic conversion, that is, a method by which mass hysteria could be contained within an open value system that allowed for the release of sadistic impulses through sublimated release mechanisms. Through this process minority groups, who were often subject to persecutions as “the enemy” of the dominant value system, would be protected.

To Broch, the ultimate danger of the closed system was the point at which the closed system’s absolute theology no longer explained or ordered the world of reality. At this point, the closed system had only two choices: die or carry through its dogma by force, i.e., hypertrophy. In the end, all of Broch’s political work drove towards the goal of identifying and overcoming hypertrophic value systems such as fascism. Conceiving of fascism as a modern paganism, Broch called for a conversion to democracy. In place of the closed system, Broch promoted an open, democratic system of value.

The fight against this aberration [Fascism], the return of man into the open system of humanitarianism, is the task of democracy. It is a fight against the magic ideology of victory, a fight for the idea of “human justice”; and this is why the democratic mission must be regarded as the continuation of the Christian one, though on a secular, scientific, and especially psychological, basis. And the pattern that can be applied to all religious conversions may, obviously, well be applied to their secular continuation, too.¹³³

¹³³ Hermann Broch Archive. Yale Collection of German Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

The ultimate goal for Broch was the establishment of constitutions and laws that were based on an open value system whose underlying central value was protecting the dignity of human life.

Broch's concern was to convince individuals that values other than materialistic ones should be the basis for democracy. In Europe, he saw no solution; fascism was too deeply entrenched, and the Nazis had been very effective in alienating any prophets of a "counter-crusade" by identifying them as alien in race and character: Jewish and highbrow. Nor, in Broch's mind, could we wait for this solution; appeasement and isolationism meant the surrender of human dignity by the democratic world. In the United States, the effects of a general disintegration of values presented a roadblock to such a counter-crusade; the United States, having lost its ethical or religious foundation for democracy, that is, a community-centered democracy, embraced the foundational principle of business. Business, however, was simply material and thus could not produce a social value system.¹³⁴

Paradoxically, however, Broch was also enthusiastic about American democracy, because he saw its origins as deeply connected to the issues of spirituality, morality, and human dignity. Out of this dichotomy, Broch promoted humanist democracy over a materialist democracy. His theory envisioned two main paths for the United States in the 1940s. The first was the path of humane democracy. It was a

¹³⁴ Broch developed his political theory by expanding his aesthetic value theory to the world of politics. In his aesthetic system, art is judged on the basis of whether it can provoke an ethical response in the viewer. Art that cannot provoke such a response is empty of value or is kitsch. Fascism was, for Broch, the political kitsch of twentieth century. In the United States, and after the rise of the Third Reich, Broch recognized that his theory on the disintegration of values could be applied not only to art, but also to the political context of his time.

path that required the United States to take the lead in the battle against totalitarianism. The second path was much darker, one that would in the end bring the United States under the sway of fascism. This second path was characterized by a commitment to material success. Both choices that Broch saw for the United States derived from a dual tradition of democracy in America. The first tradition, which was the oldest, developed out of the religious communalism of the early settlers.¹³⁵ These communities contained a spiritual and social communion that “stood godfather to modern democracy”;¹³⁶ it was a tradition that “by virtue of its ethical and religious tinge, demanded an attitude of obligation to the community which was truly political.”¹³⁷ The second was derivative of the first, but focused directly on the idea of success—the notion of the American Dream. Democracy created access for individual activity and individual success, defined mainly in economic terms. The American Dream “required the community to release the individual from all ethical obligations. . . the radical economic liberalism . . . meant nothing but the undisturbed pursuit of business.”¹³⁸ Broch took American politics at its word: The business of America was business. Democracy was, here, characterized by a commitment to isolationism and to strict capitalistic profit motives. He states:

¹³⁵ Paradoxically, Broch also argues that American individualism and its political independence (what he terms anarchism) developed out its early religious communities.

¹³⁶ Hermann Broch Archive. Yale Collection of German Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

¹³⁷ Hermann Broch Archive. Yale Collection of German Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

¹³⁸ Hermann Broch Archive. Yale Collection of German Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

The country's miraculous security, its inexhaustible natural resources, the unlimited opportunities for work for its skyrocketing population—all these facilitated the growth of a purely commercial political attitude able to do without any political content to such an extent that the two major parties today can hardly be distinguished from each other in their ideas and program.¹³⁹

Within this tradition, American democracy constructed a rigid system of empty (or purely rhetorical) watchwords like pacifism, anti-imperialism, and protection of civil liberties and commercial pursuits. And, according to Broch, a “democracy that has become rigid has lost its power of resistance.” The American “self-made man” has created the unpolitical herd. In Broch's discussion of the comparative racism, it was the second tradition that he examined and criticized. For, both fascist ideology and the American Dream contained the same underlying value, that is, “the idea of victory.”¹⁴⁰ Thus, Broch's political theory was a call for overcoming the American moral ambiguity of the American tradition, the call for a “victory over victory.”

Democracy, like any other institution of civilization had to be supported by a fundamental value. In the case of democracy that value was originally freedom.¹⁴¹ By the early 1930s, however, it was obvious to Broch that democratic freedom had lost its redemptive power. Broch claimed that value systems became visible in society

¹³⁹ Hermann Broch Archive. Yale Collection of German Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

¹⁴⁰ Hermann Broch Archive. Yale Collection of German Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

¹⁴¹ In Broch's early political writing (from 1919-1920), where he argued for a democratic post-War government, it was his fear of the potential loss of individual freedom under the influence of mass hysteria or in the face of Soviet Communism that compelled him toward a democratic solution. See his article from 1919, “Konstitutionelle Diktatur als demokratisches Rätssystem,” in *KW*, 11-23.

through ritual, but the modern world had seen a fundamental change in the expression and location of ritual. Since the Reformation and the Enlightenment, ritual had become steadily more private or less institutional. The modern world preached a religion without God; but, the secularization of the modern world had not ended the basic human need for ritual—it had only killed its major symbols. In this atmosphere of value disintegration, both capitalism and fascism had raised a new god to the center of their rituals. It was the god of success: “a Machiavellianism of success that entered, without exception, all the other spheres of value as well. In the end the old chivalrousness of the military ritual was displaced by the wretched ritualization of success.”¹⁴² Broch’s discussion of fascism questioned how long American democratic tradition can remain open and free under the central value of materialism.

Hermann Broch’s appeal to the American people in the 1940s was an appeal to recognize the choices before them, to recognize that fascism was already attempting to turn the United States away from its position as leader of a free, democratic world. Broch did not see National Socialism as the culmination of a German tradition, but rather as the turning away from a civilized German tradition. The destruction of people and cities clearly signified that culture had lost its redemptive value.¹⁴³ What

¹⁴²Hermann Broch Archive. Yale Collection of German Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library. The letter of Esch to Frau Hugenuau in the final section of Broch’s novel, *The Sleepwalkers*, vividly portrays this value vacuum, here as an example of the capitalistic Machiavellianism. Esch, rapist and murder, calmly asserts his right to an equitable settlement of his affairs with the Hugenuau family, a right seemingly undeniably protected by value of commerce and legal contracts.

¹⁴³ Broch offered this idea in the form of a question hinting at some degree of pessimism and ambiguity towards the ultimate good in humanity: “Do the intrinsic human values—provided that they still exist—offer sufficient justification for the appeal to defend these values against the assault of the dictators?” (Hermann Broch Archive. Yale Collection of German Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library). It is a position very similar to Sigmund Freud in *Civilization and its Discontents*.

was needed was a means by which the individual could reconnect to these ethical sources. For Broch, it was a matter of individual responsibility: “democratic conviction means democratic responsibility, and only in such personal responsibility can one find the will to defend democratic freedom.”¹⁴⁴ In a sense, Broch was arguing for a crisis of democracy in Europe, similar to a crisis of liberalism, but the root of this crisis was not liberalism’s inability to come to terms with massification of politics, its restrictive franchise, and its concern for class preservation; it was the loss of democratic personal responsibility stemming from the disintegration of values. Democracy had become a matter of fact, there was no engaged relationship to its functioning. Citizens no longer asked where their personal responsibilities began or the Government’s ended.

Broch viewed European democracy as a failure, and he saw little hope in the democratic tradition that developed in the U. S. during the nineteenth century—the democratic tradition implied in the American Dream. He, however, found hope in the notion of a new American Dream, conceived around the ancient notions of reason and truth and constructed by a new generation of Americans, what Broch terms the American youth.

The great hope here is directed toward ... overcoming of Pragmatism which can be regarded as the perfect expression of the non-political manner of thought in the last few decades. ... It becomes the unbound duty of anyone concerned with the future of humanity to address his own efforts to this youth among which the will to believe in truth, to believe in political sacrifice and responsibility is

¹⁴⁴ Hermann Broch Archive. Yale Collection of German Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

again taking shape. What youth wants, what it needs and strives for, is the restoration of the democratic idea, in its platonic reasoning as well as realistic program.¹⁴⁵

What Broch foreshadowed here is the counter-culture movement of 1960s. The importance of the youth and the separation of a younger generation from the material values of their parents were Broch's solution to the growing threat of fascist thought in America. Even though Broch died before the Beat Generation created a truly visible culture and well before the rise of the counter-culture movement of the 1960s, the intellectual similarities between his critique on American democracy in the 1930s and 1940s and demonstrate that the intellectual emigration of the inter-war years brought more to the United States than simply a positivistic scientific windfall and a theoretical basis for new social science. They brought the possibility of conceiving of a society where religious thought and the idea of love (here Platonic in its truest sense) formed the fundamental social value.¹⁴⁶ Broch was not alone in this development. Herbert Marcuse and Karl Popper also promoted similar notions of conceptualizing Western society outside of a strict democratic/communist dichotomy or a strict democratic/totalitarian one.

Broch's solutions, however, were not simple calls for "love thy neighbor." His theory of mass hysteria was based on the epistemological notion that a transcendent

¹⁴⁵ Hermann Broch Archive. Yale Collection of German Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

¹⁴⁶ Paul Michael Lützeler makes a similar argument for the importance of Broch's political thought and its relationship to later movements, such as Amnesty International. See "Introduction: Broch, Our Contemporary" and "Visionaries in Exile: Broch's Cooperation with G. A. Borgese and Hannah Arendt" in *Hermann Broch Visionary in Exile: The 2001 Yale Symposium*, edited by Paul Michael Lützeler (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2001) 1-10 and 67-88.

and universal value could be accessible—an earthly absolute, around which the conversion process would turn. Since access to such an earthly absolute was through the cognitive process, the central position of the individual in Broch's democratic theory is a *sine quo non*. This translated in pragmatic terms to the creation of a new regulative principle based not just on the negative rights tradition of the United States, but also on the notion of an enforceable duty, in which all citizens would be forced to ensure their access to full development (ego-expansion) by enforcement of a law for the protection of human life and dignity. The enforcement would by necessity be backed up by force.¹⁴⁷ This was Total Democracy.

Throughout this chapter, I have discussed how Broch's political theory, based on the notion of a totalizing value system, confronted problems of racism and anti-Semitism in a democratic polity. Broch argued that only in a democracy would the totalizing value system be open and designed to promote individual freedom. Totalitarianism, on the other hand, used its value system to close off individual freedom. The central method of such a closing off, or as Broch stated a hypertrophy of the logic of the social value system, was the identification of a demonic force within the society—a force against which all political and cultural energy could be turned. Such demonology was historically expressed through the lynching of African Americans and the systematic murder of European Jews.

Broch's political writings from his exile allow us a European view of American democracy. Since the time of de Tocqueville, American democracy has

¹⁴⁷ See Almund Greiter and Anton Pelinka, 25.

been an object of both admiration and criticism for European intellectuals. The sharpness of such criticism has reached its greatest degree over the last few decades of the “American Century” and the first years of the twenty-first century. Hermann Broch, who came to America as an exile in 1938, provided another opportunity to examine the European perspective on democracy. Broch’s observations on American democracy formed only a part of his political theory, which on a separate front would strive for the construction of an international, democratic structure, which could serve as the bulwark against the expansion of fascism. Broch’s political theory, which was both utopian and practical, promoted a notion of cosmopolitan democracy based on the protection of human life. It was a theory that looked beyond national borders, and obviously reflected Broch’s experience of Jewish assimilation in turn of the century Vienna. Broch provided a critique and a plan for the future of democracy in the United States that suggested ties between the German speaking émigré and later manifestations of American political resistance; for this reason, the reevaluation of both Broch’s work and his position in the intellectual migration of the inter-War years is important.

The earliest interpretations of Broch and his work from this period saw both as marginal—an evaluation that was based on a sense of failure and tragedy. In the last several years. Recently, however, Hermann Broch’s exile in the United States has undergone substantial reevaluations by scholars, who have come to see Broch’s thought as a window into the intellectual tenor of 1930s and 1940s United States. They have come to see the surprisingly pertinent nature of Broch’s social and aesthetic

thought to contemporary American culture.¹⁴⁸ I have addressed in a similar vein the “visionary” nature of Hermann Broch’s political theory of fascism. The result, in terms of intellectual history, is that we gain a fuller view of intellectual confrontation with fascism in the United States. In so doing, we find that the role of religious and creative thought to the conceptualization of American democracy provided an alternate perspective for the functioning of the United States in a liberal democratic West. It demonstrates that this alternative view had European connections, if not roots. It suggests a connection between the intellectual worlds of 1940s Jewish Immigration with both the counter-culture movement and the religious-based civil rights movement of the 1960s. The dismissal of such alternative views of democracy was a direct result of political shifts that followed 1945 and the development of the Cold War.

In this chapter, there was also an opportunity to expand on the present historiography in regard to the intellectual legacy of the war émigré, e.g., moving beyond the limitations of scientific and social scientific émigré influence in H. Stuart Hughes’ seminal work *The Sea Change*. The approach to émigré studies of 1930s follows closely the pattern of Hughes’ work; as Broch made obvious, such a pattern is problematic in that it conceives of the significance of this migration in terms of academic or elite influence. Studies on migration rely on rankings and lists of great thinkers to bolster their investigation into the changing milieu of American intellectualism. The dominant position of scientists and academics is the most obvious

¹⁴⁸ See Hermann Broch, *Visionary in Exile: The 2001 Yale Symposium*.

example. The need to move the historiography beyond these parameters is two-fold: first, it allows for a more expansive and complete understanding of the intellectual world of 1930s and 1940s. Second, it exposes the historical roots of resistance to American democracy that is defined strictly by materialistic values. Hermann Broch's investigation into fascism was only one step in this direction. In the following chapter, I extend Broch's democracy theories from its American context to his theories on internationalism.

Chapter Three

Humane Politics:

Broch's Theory on Human Rights and International Education, 1937-1949

Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world,

Whereas disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people,

Whereas it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law,

Whereas it is essential to promote the development of friendly relations between nations,

Whereas the peoples of the United Nations have in the Charter reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,

Whereas Member States have pledged themselves to achieve, in co-operation with the United Nations, the promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms,

Whereas a common understanding of these rights and freedoms is of the greatest importance for the full realization of this pledge,

Now, Therefore THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY proclaims
THIS UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS
as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all

nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance, both among the peoples of Member States themselves and among the peoples of territories under their jurisdiction.¹⁴⁹

United Nations Resolution 217, Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

“The masses always prefer the yoke of slavery to that of uncertainty.”

Hermann Broch

While in exile in the United States, Broch’s concern for explaining the source of mass hysteria directed his thought toward more straightforward political involvement. His critique on democracy and racism in the United States developed out of this shift in focus.¹⁵⁰ It was, however, in the field of human rights that he was most openly political. Starting before his exile, Broch began to call for the establishment of international institutions to protect humans from the violence of both private individuals and the state. Broch began, that is, to apply his value theory to the task of ending totalitarianism. The adaptation and proclamation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (resolution 217) by the United Nations on December 10, 1948 mirrored and in some ways fulfilled Hermann Broch’s political efforts over the

¹⁴⁹ The full text of the Resolution 217 can be found at the United Nations website: <http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html>. For a concise summary of the origin and development of the League of Nations from its founding 1919 to Broch’s declaration in 1937 see Monika Klingler, *Broch und Die Demokratie* (Berlin: Duncker und Humblot, 1994), 67-84.

¹⁵⁰ See Chapter 2.

last decade and a half of his life.¹⁵¹ In other ways, however, the resolution was simply a decorative acknowledgement of the central ethical issue of modernity: protection of human life and dignity. It was a clear sign that since Auschwitz the world had recognized the dangers facing civilization. Broch, however, had since the late 1930s argued for an international organization for enforcing the legal protection of human rights.¹⁵² He argued for an organization with much greater teeth, wanting this organization to have plenary authority *vis-à-vis* national borders.¹⁵³ Furthermore, his political goals went well beyond the organizational or geo-political levels.

Broch felt that the solution to the political, social, and, ethical problems of the modern world required scientific understanding of epistemology and ethics on the individual level. Ethics operated in society through value systems, which can be organized and manipulated by governments and political parties; yet, these values-systems were established and grounded in the mind and activities of the individual. It was with the individual that Broch started, and from there he hoped to establish laws for value systems that would withstand the hypertrophic forces of historical changes and, thus, withstand the onset of mass hysterical events. In this chapter, I introduce the political basis for Broch's evaluation of the individual. I examine how Broch's

¹⁵¹ Broch watched the development of the United Nations very closely; he drafted in 1945 on a pamphlet on the issue of an "International Bill of Rights and Responsibilities," which, as Michael Lützelers states, worked its way to the desks of Robert Jackson (America's lead prosecutor in Nuremberg) and Eleanor Roosevelt. See Paul Michael Lützelers, *Hermann Broch, A Biography*, translated by Janice Furness (London: Quartet Books, 1987), 237.

¹⁵² Broch referred to the League of Nations in these writings, but he recognized that by 1937 that organization was moribund. His writing from the 1940s referred instead to a "new" League of Nations. For Broch's works on internationalism, see Hermann Broch, *Kommentierte Werkausgabe 12: Politische Schriften*, edited by Paul Michael Lützelers (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1978), 195-277.

¹⁵³ A power the United Nations lacked in 1948 and today.

cultural and ethical influences from his youth were transferred to political concerns in the context of his exile, particularly his concerns for human rights and internationalism. I address first the historical context of Broch's political activities from the mid 1930s until his death in 1951, and secondly Broch's proposals for the protection of individual human life.

Broch turned to more direct political action in the early 1930s. During this period, Broch's effort at addressing the disintegration of European values through the prism of aesthetics reached its apex. In 1932, Broch published *The Sleepwalkers*. With this work and its critical acclaim, he established his primary mature identity—modernist novelist. The idea of Broch as a modernist writer would have been in the early 1920s anathema to his familial identity. He had been from the early 1910s until 1927 the head of his family textile factory just outside of Vienna. Although, he used his nights and limited free time to engage in the literary and intellectual world of the Viennese Café scene, he was outwardly a bourgeois businessman. In 1925 that all changed. At the age of forty, Broch enrolled at the University of Vienna, where he studied psychology and mathematics, and it became clear to Broch that the notion of a double life as student/salon visitor and manufacturer was untenable. Broch could not find enough hours in the day both to attend classes at the University and to direct the Teesdorf's factory.¹⁵⁴ By 1927, he had completed the sell of the factory, and after establishing a pension for his parents, settling alimony with his wife, and paying the remaining board members, Broch walked away from his life as businessman and

¹⁵⁴ See 13 Feb 1926 letter to his son, in Hermann Broch Archive. Yale Collection of German Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

manufacturer. It was a life designed by his father and reflective of his father's values. From this point further Broch would place his own intellectual concerns in front of those of his family.¹⁵⁵

Over the almost twenty years of the Austrian First Republic, Broch occupied himself with his value theory (a work lost in his flight from Austria) and his literary compositions. Under the First Republic, Broch, in fact, saw literature as the key means for the expression of his ethical and political thought. "Europe in 1928 was under the influence of high political tension, which would not allow decade long solutions. Whatever solutions were to be had, had to be shorter and more direct than philosophy could provide. Ethical impact is to a large degree sought in the activity of enlightenment, for such activity poetry is a far better means than science."¹⁵⁶ *The Sleepwalkers* was Broch first attempt at using poetry and literature to make an "ethical impact." Although the novel received critical acclaim, its impact was stifled by the rise of Hitler in 1933; the ideological control of German thought, restricted access to the broadest German audience.

¹⁵⁵ The decision did not come without consequences for Broch, both emotionally and financially; as Broch's son explained, "My grandfather responded to these efforts with bitterness and ingratitude . . . 'I should never have let the boy run it his way: he was never interested in it in the first place,' etc. . . . Thus a bitter struggle about money ensued, which raged unabated until 1936. Each member of the family retained an attorney to his claims against all the others. . . . Hermann's share was frozen by his alimony obligations to my mother and a pension I had arranged, so that he was left, as before, with only a fractional share of my grandparents' portion of the money. . . . It must be said that he suffered enormously from all the dissension, which was mainly directed at him. A pattern which would characterize his life was emerging, one which was largely his own fault: all those he loved and felt close to would circle around him, in conflict with one another, but fighting through him, implacably grinding him down, the more they sensed his weakness, defenselessness, but also his sense of responsibility" (H. F. Broch de Rothermann, *Dear Mrs. Strigl*, 35-36).

¹⁵⁶ Hermann Broch, "Autobiographie als Arbeitsprogramm," in *Psychische Selbstbiographie*, edited by Paul Michael Lützel (Frankfurt am Main, 1999), 96-7.

In *The Sleepwalkers*, Broch brought together art and value theory in order to open European eyes to its growing value vacuum. Even in the face of a constricting German audience he felt that his poetic, philosophical approach was the best vehicle to convey his message. “An avalanche of essays followed the publication of the novel. They appear to be of a totally apolitical nature. Broch’s position in these essays (as in *The Sleepwalkers*) remains adamantly idealistic, in the sense that he takes the turbulence of the age to be due to a spiritual vacuum and metaphysical anguish, and not primarily to political or economic havoc. . . . Broch believed that demagogues would no longer present a challenge if the spiritual disorientation of the era could be rectified.”¹⁵⁷

In the years immediately after *The Sleepwalkers*, Broch wrote two more novels, *The Unknown Quality* and *The Spell*. The first novel, composed in 1932, expressed the tension between the emotional and rational aspects of the human mind through the family life and love life of an overly rational mathematician. In the story, the mathematician struggles with his feelings for a young student and the death of his brother. The novel was a watered down discussion of the value-theory underlying *The Sleepwalkers*, Broch wrote a screenplay from the novel as well, but it was never filmed. *The Spell*, composed in 1934,¹⁵⁸ signaled a shift in Broch’s thought in that it is much more directly political in its theme and plot. *The Spell* centered on an event of political mass psychosis, the ritual murder of a teenage girl, in a small Alpine town.

¹⁵⁷ Ernestine Sclant, *Hermann Broch* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1978), 69.

¹⁵⁸ The novel, written during the early to middle 1930s, was never completed; it was published posthumously but based on a third party redaction of multiple versions of the story.

The narrator is a disillusioned doctor, trying to find philosophical understanding through a return to nature; Mother Grissom is the archetype of the Magna Mater representing the spiritual connection to nature, and Marius Ratti, the stranger, represents the *Führer* archetype, who rallies the town around a false myth and eventually leads them to carry out the murder of Ratti's teenage wife. Although Broch did not provide any solutions to the political dangers of mass politics, he acknowledged in *The Spell* his own awareness of its pervasive danger to society.

In addition to *The Spell*, Broch began work on a short story, *The Homecoming*. The short story would eventually expand into Broch's second great novel, *The Death of Virgil*. In both *The Homecoming* and *The Death of Virgil*, Broch attempted to give artistic expression to the overcoming of the European value vacuum. *The Death of Virgil*, in particular, served as Broch's last artistic attempt to provide an allegory for modernity's confrontation and overcoming of death. In 1932, Broch produced his first explicitly political article in well over a decade ("*Pamphlet gegen die Hochschätzung des Menschen*"), and in 1937, he directly engaged the political issues of fascism with his "League of Nations Resolution." Thus, from the culmination of his first literary work in 1932, Broch's literary interest turned more and more political. The obvious exception to this pattern is Broch's *The Death of Virgil*. Broch began the novel in 1934 and did not complete it until 1943. The novel is a prose/poetry exploration of the poet Virgil's last day alive. It explores the poet's fever induced, delirious journey into his own ego and his confrontation with death. The novel did address the relationship between art and society and even the tensions between friendship and duty, but it

clearly lacked a political aim. Nevertheless, as discussed earlier, even *The Death of Virgil* indicated a shift in Broch's early claim for the ethical efficacy of art. The novel, in fact, revealed Broch's increasing belief in the ineffectiveness of the word to elaborate on the ethical demands of contemporary Europe. Michael Lützel uses the term "negative aestheticism" to describe this shift in Broch's aesthetic outlook. In a purposefully ironic manner, Broch reformulated his early aesthetic solutions as anti-aesthetic or as an overcoming of what he diagnosed as an ethically empty art. Lützel argues for Broch's disillusionment with the power of the art and literature, claiming that *The Death of Virgil* was, in fact, Broch's homage to negative aesthetics. "His *Virgil* novel returns to the literary medium, but primarily in order to expose its helplessness, its limits and ethical faults."¹⁵⁹ The thrust of the modernist, aesthetic movement lacked significant connection to the center of ethical activity, which to Broch was the individual. "If we want to have anything left to hope for, we have to scale down our hopes to the smallest proportion, and that is the rescue of the Individual from utter enslavement."¹⁶⁰ The Kantian call to break out of our self-imposed immaturity could not be articulated through aesthetics, which were trapped by pure expressionism or lost in a search for the mythic and the expansive. Broch wanted to reinforce the importance of the ego in the creation of social ties.

Although Broch returned to novel writing at the end of his life, mostly out of financial reasons, he, nevertheless, had envisioned the *Death of Virgil* as his final

¹⁵⁹ Lützel, "The Avant-Garde in Crisis," 26.

¹⁶⁰ Letter from Broch to Hubertus Prinz zu Löwenstein, April 22, 1940, *KW* 13/2, 202.

attempt at producing a value system via literary means. The *Death of Virgil* was a poetic expression of the central focus of modern values—understanding death. The diminution of the ego and the fear and neurosis connected with such diminution¹⁶¹ were for Broch the greatest obstacle for the creation of an open value system in Western society. Broch used his work on Mass Hysteria to fill the gap left by literature, and thus it is only in his political writings that one can discern the full force of Broch's attempts at reanimating ethics as a legitimate force in modern society.

In the years 1933/34, I had to learn that this was hopeless undertaking: Hitler's taking over had confronted the whole of Europe with an Either/Or. If there still should be any ethical effects at all, they could be attained only immediate participation in politics; devious ways were not permitted any longer, they showed themselves more and more to be loopholes for those who did not want to leave their ivory towers. Therefore, in 1935, I discontinued my exoteric poetry, which was addressed to the public, in order to devote myself instead to practical politics. . . . all of the sudden death had come palpably near us all, who lived as it were on the edge of the concentration camp, that the metaphysical argument with him could no longer be delayed.¹⁶²

It was clear from Broch's letters that he no longer felt that creative writing contained enough pragmatic influence in the modern Europe. The timing corresponded to the rise in fascist involvement in Austrian politics from Italy and Germany. But, most importantly, it corresponded to the complete collapse of the Social Democratic party in Austria. From March 1933 until February 1934, the Austrian Chancellor Dollfuss

¹⁶¹ For Broch, death was the ultimate diminution of the ego.

¹⁶² Hermann Broch Archive. Yale Collection of German Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

instituted a corporatist government in Austria and outlawed the Social Democratic party.¹⁶³

Art by itself could not build a new “civic humanism,” which Broch now saw as the task of politics. For politics was a humanist activity: “The source of all politics is man; politics are operated by, for, and often against man. In order to be able to speak about politics, one must have a conception of humans; otherwise one speaks about empty mechanics.”¹⁶⁴ It was not until Broch’s historical context collided with his personal misfortune that the definition of the ethical absolute took on a clear and pragmatic meaning. As an expression of politics, Broch’s ethical goal was in the end a humanistic goal based on the Platonic notion of ideal types. As Ernestine Schlant writes in regards to Broch’s formula for the reintegration of values, “A ‘central value’ . . . should infuse each individual endeavor with directives and a goal, and contribute to a reintegration of values. Instead of pursuing the ‘laws of the I’ for their own sake, exploration should occur in the service of a common, humanistic goal: the preservation of human dignity and human life, anchored in a constitutional framework and protected by law.”¹⁶⁵ In his political work, Broch equated this humanistic goal with the protection of human rights.

¹⁶³ In February 1934, the *Schutzbund*, the military wing of the Social Democrats, fought with government troops throughout Austria. Their defeat by the *Heimwehr* and the execution of many of their leaders signaled the end of democratic politics in Austria and the beginning of Austro-fascism. See Barbara Jelavich, *Modern Austria: Empire and Republic, 1815-1986* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 192-208.

¹⁶⁴ *KW* 12, 458.

¹⁶⁵ Ernestine Schlant, 24-5.

Only with the protection of the individual can the pursuit of the ethical be sustained—ethics being an individual pursuit. Broch would expand the definition of individual pursuit to a political sense by focusing on the idea of the unbound intellectual, the individual thinker who pursues ethical goals without regard to nation, party, or ideology. His theory on mass hysteria was at its base a system for freeing the individual from the distortions of crowd psychology, whose irrational impulses block the individual value construction. Broch used his work on mass hysteria to fill the gap left by literature, and thus it was only in his political writings that one can discern the full force of Broch's attempt at reanimating ethics as a legitimate force in modern society.

Politics, however, were dominated by irrational forces that feed off the fear and insecurity caused by economic depression and mass politics. Political action, in such a situation, was incapable of engendering any absolute value. Politics were destined to remain mired in the search for external expressions of security. The majority of Broch's intellectual energy during his exile was devoted to understanding the epistemological and psychological barriers to a secure human society. His conclusion, what he called the earthly absolute, was that human, individual life must be protected and secured. In the first two sections of his *Mass Psychology*, Broch works out the epistemology of human knowledge in terms of its very relationship to death.

Death played the central role in the psychology of fear underlying mass hysteria. In the last years of his life, Broch believed the key to creating open value

systems (value systems that are capable of sustaining paradigm shifts in knowledge or historical changes¹⁶⁶ and avoiding mass hysterical events) was the scientific demonstration of the “earthly absolute.” It was a theory of knowledge dependent on Kant and Husserl for its basic understanding of the ego as a space for cognitive activity.¹⁶⁷ Like Sartre, also influenced by Husserlian Phenomenology, Broch envisioned a separation between what Sartre called nothingness and the self, and what Broch called the ego and the non-ego. The ego was the cognitive space, actually conceived of a void or a nothingness. The non-ego was the world of human experience. Thus, Broch could talk about the “expansion of the ego” and the “diminution of the ego” as activities of the individual that linked the cognitive space of the ego to the external world of the non-ego. It was in the activities of the ego as it interacted with the world of the non-ego that moments of mass hysteria arose (through ecstasy or panic).

If one could cognitively isolate the ego, the individual could separate itself from death. As Broch stated, the ego was “completely incapable of imagining its own death.”¹⁶⁸ Death, fear, starvation, and desire reflected relative evaluations of the material world of the non-ego. If the ego could separate its cognitive activities from such influences, it could separate it from death. Broch referred to the process of

¹⁶⁶ Broch saw historical movement as a pendulum.

¹⁶⁷ For a detailed discussion of Broch’s “Theory of Knowledge” see Hannah Arendt’s introduction to *Hermann Broch Gesammelte Werk: Erkennen und Handeln*, vol. 2 (Zürich: Rhein Verlag, 1955) and her collection of essays in *Men in Dark Times* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1968), 111-152.

¹⁶⁸ Hermann Broch, “Werttheoretische Bemerkungen,” as quoted by Hannah Arendt in *Men in Dark Times*, 132.

negating death as the abrogation of time, by which he meant the individual could make value judgments from the “Loneliness of the I,” a place out of time and excluded from the secular concerns of avoiding death (for the cognitive ego was unaware of mortality). Arendt described the earthly absolute as “abolishing in life the consciousness of death, liberating life, as long as it lives, from death, so that life goes on as if it were eternal.”¹⁶⁹ The advantage of value production in the deathless sphere of the individual was that it removed the psychological basis for mass hysterical actions, that is, actions that flow from the “twilight consciousness” of individuals seeking a release from fear and insecurity. From Broch’s perspective, there was no external, worldly source of value that was not tainted by the fear of death and thus open to hysterical or hypertrophical action. Proceeding from the belief that the ego was a source for open value systems, Broch’s political writings of the late 1930s until his death in 1951 equated the protection of individual human life with the protection of open value systems and ethical judgements devoid of the fear of death.

In 1937, Broch wrote his “League of Nations Resolution.”¹⁷⁰ It announced the connection of his critique of western values and aesthetics with his observations on the dangers of modern technological war. Broch clearly saw the two areas as distinct until the late 1930s. The First World War was in Broch’s words only the first fruits of the totalitarianism.¹⁷¹ The resolution consisted of seven points, which presented a

¹⁶⁹ Hannah Arendt, 141.

¹⁷⁰ *KW* 12, 195-232.

¹⁷¹ The World War, already itself the fruit of the pseudo-absolutist phantom, a terrible fruit, but nevertheless, it was still a relatively harmless preparation stage, it is separate from the actual insanity which incites it. ... clearly the imperialistic foreign policy of individual states and their holy egoism has

justification for the League of Nations as well as direct proposals for creating international institutions for the protection of individual human life and dignity, and a specific office for propaganda. This office would serve as a bulwark to the spread of fascist propaganda and provide a platform for spreading the ideas of peace and democracy. Broch's resolution also called for the strengthening of international law, especially in regard to the jurisdiction of the League of Nations. Broch wanted the League to claim final authority, regardless of national borders, in case of human rights violations. Broch presented in the resolution the justification for such an international body, and he presented key signatories to the proposal. The resolution was, as Broch himself described, an expression of his realization of the need for pragmatic protection of human life. Structurally, the resolution consisted of a general description of the historical need for an international legal body, along with seven key principles. The protection of the individual human life and dignity was the central concern. Broch also addressed, however, the relationship of domestic and international law, the problem of mass hysteria, and the unchecked use of state power.

“The League of Nations Resolution,” which was never published, was a key moment in Broch's turn to pragmatic politics, though it had little impact on the political situation in Austria or Europe. The League simply lacked any international influence, the United States had turned its back on the League directly following the First World and Japan and Germany had left the League in the early 1930s.

Chamberlain's declaration of “peace in our time” in 1938 was the final manifestation

allowed this the Machiavellian justification to ignore treaties, to go back on one's word, and to partake in any act of violence (*KW* 11, 214).

of the impotence of internationalism in the face of fascism and rising Nazi Germany.

As Broch said of the resolution:

During the years 1936/37, I was in correspondence with a number of important European personalities, in order to draw up a collective statement, which would have been brought before League of Nations. The political development of 1937 forced us to give up the project; it had become senseless. In opposition to the opinion of many of my friends, I did not publish the League of Nations work. Such enterprises are bound up in the moment of their conception; after that they lose their impact and sink to the level of utopian, wishful thinking. As it turns out, my refusal to publish was a stroke of luck for me: if it had been published, then I would have surely never left the Nazi prison, where I was held for several weeks.¹⁷²

The increasing anti-socialism and anti-Semitism of the late Austrian First Republic had sparked Broch's political engagement. By 1938 the historical context of fascism had overwhelmed him in a personal sense and prompted him to put his energies into the support of human rights.

The basis of Broch's theory of human rights was the legal system. Although, he had diagnosed the disintegration of European values through epistemology, and he had employed aesthetics as a vehicle for both expressing and correcting the destruction of social values, with the rise of fascism Broch turned to legal protections as the first step in reinventing an absolute value system for western civilization. The legal protection of human rights was an ethical calling, and its efficacy rested on the notions of religious interpretations of human value, or in the American context Natural Law theory. "The penal law is the backbone of every society's morals. If the morals

¹⁷² See footnote 3, *KW* 11, 237.

of a society would be coherently self evident for every society member, i.e. for every citizen, penal law would be become superfluous. On the other hand penal law was and is always able to create morals. As the Nazis decided to create their own specific morals (or rather non-morals) of racism, they invented the Nuremberg laws.” For western democracies, especially in Europe, key assumptions about freedom and equality had been set aside. These assumptions still existed outside the legal system in religious systems, in historical documents like the Rights of Man and Citizen or the Declaration of the Independence. They remained outside the constitutional and legal structure of the western society; thus, their ethical import went the way of religious moral import in the world of modern secularization.

The process was three-fold for Broch; first, he sought to establish to a legitimate, non-national, source of authority *vis a vis* the security of individual human life. He specifically rejected the autonomy of individual states as it pertained to human life. Broch felt that the authority (*Herrschaft*)¹⁷³ of individual states too often in the modern world oppressed minority opinion as an expression of majority rights. Even if the League of Nations is conceived at a fundamental level as a peace organization, that role extended by necessity into the domestic arena of human rights. “The league of nations is of the opinion that, in questions pertaining to human dignity, it does not have to recognize internal state autonomy, because in those cases it concerns fundamental moral opinions, whose universality must also be expressed in internal state legislation: every disruption of such universality means the danger of

¹⁷³ The German term implies a sense of dominance not found in the English word authority and more closely equivalent to the Latin term *potestas*—the power to rule.

war.”¹⁷⁴ Secondly, Broch sought to educate or indoctrinate the public (here he often meant the masses or the crowd in the same sense as Le Bon, Ortega y Gasset, or Freud did) about the inherent link between democracy and freedom. Broch characterized this education platform as democratic propaganda. Thirdly, Broch sought the introduction into the national legal codes of universal statements concerning inviolability of human rights. From 1938 onward, the Declaration of Independence strongly influenced Broch’s formulations for integrity of the individual.

Throughout Broch’s exile in the United States he furthered his interest in American notions of civil rights, especially the relationship of the theoretical rights to practical laws. Broch played an active role in the composition of *The City of Man*, published in 1940 under the leadership of G. A. Borgese. *The City of Man* represented the collaboration of American and European intellectuals on the issue of “World Democracy” and the creation of new political and economic policies in the United States.

In general, Broch developed his ideas on human rights around a growing notion of a Bill of Duties or Responsibilities to augment the American constitutional notion of a Bill of Rights and the United Nations International Bill of Rights. At the heart of Broch’s development of a Bill of Duties was the problem of enforcement of a Bill of Rights. In the context of international politics, the League of Nations and from 1945 onward the United Nations could proclaim the existence of a bill of human rights; they could not, however, effectively enforce such a legal stance. The United

¹⁷⁴ “Völkerbund-Resolution,” *KW* 11, 199.

Nations policy of non-intervention in domestic affairs assured the lack of enforcement.

“A country which fails to carry out the provisions of the Bill of Rights within its own borders will be able to do so with impunity, except where such actions and attitudes conflict with the interests of other countries: for example when its intolerance and persecution force masses of refugees across the borders, or when the disdain of human dignity lead to armament and acts of aggression against other countries. Then and then only will it have to reckon with counter-aggression by the union of nations.”¹⁷⁵

Broch’s touchstone for the problem of international versus national autonomy was Europe of the 1930s and 1940s. His sketch of refugee or rogue government militarization was also Europe, yet his concerns for the limits of an International Bill of Rights and the potential geo-political fallout echo the central problems of internationalism today, especially in regard to the Third World.

Broch’s formulations of these problems and his solutions to these problems (Bill of Responsibility) matured over the middle and late 1940s, as he took an active role in the movement toward internationalism (highlighted by San Francisco Conference on International Organization).¹⁷⁶ Following the conclusion of the war and the formation of the United Nations, Broch turned his attention directly to the

¹⁷⁵ Hermann Broch Archive. Yale Collection of German Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library. See also *KW* 11, 243-4.

¹⁷⁶ The concern for international protection of minority groups and individual human life, as well as issues of peace, security, and proliferation of arms took a pragmatic turn starting in the early 1940s. In August 1941, President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill set down a series of principles for international cooperation, known as Atlantic Charter. In January of 1942, the Allied nations signed the “Declaration of United Nations,” and over next several years meetings held at Dumbarton Oaks in Washington, D.C. brought together the US, the UK, the USSR, and China to establish the “aims, structure and functioning of a world organization.” The United Nations assembled for the first time in April of 1945 in San Francisco. Within three years, on December 10, 1948, the United Nations issued their Universal Declaration of Human Rights (<http://www.un.org>).

problem of international enforcement for a “Law for the Protection of Human Dignity.” The issue turned on the notion of resolving what Broch described as an “antinomy” in post-War internationalist movement: a contradiction between declaration of human freedom and the policy of non-invention. Because any declaration of human rights would be vacuous without the power to secure them, and because the security of human rights relied on the political and military decisions of individual nations within their borders, the clear policy of non-invention in order to avoid war guaranteed that violation of human rights would go unchecked. The idea of protecting human dignity as a source for ethical reinvention of western values would remain a Utopian goal as long as this antimony was not resolved.

The implementation of an international bill of rights rested on bringing its utopian vision into reality. Broch set forth three fundamental areas for consideration:

- 1) Can the concept of Human Rights be universally accepted as an international dissertatum? And could a universal legal statement be created that would withstand the domestic reinterpretation?
- 2) Could any legal formula for the protection of human rights work in an atmosphere of separate states?
- 3) Could any “Union of Nations” possess the necessity power to act against exceptional cases of the human rights abuses without impinging on actual or theoretical ideas of domestic sovereignty, and do so without the evoking war?

If the antinomy between the “dictates of humanity” and the “the recognition of sovereignty” could not be overcome, then any international bill of rights would remain impractical and utopian. Nevertheless, Broch saw the United Nations idea of a Bill of Rights as a necessary first step. In fact, he saw the

internationalist movement as one that had to proceed with small steps; a radical calls for World Democracy or the end of nationalistic ideologies would be unrealistic in the international atmosphere of the post-War. Victory in war had, in fact, increased the role of nationalism in the West. Any steps away from nationalism would have to be advanced within the realm of the individual and in the arena of intellectuals. For pragmatic political change, internationalism must be more measured.

With this in mind, Broch drafted his treatise “Remarks on the Utopia of an ‘International Bill of Rights and Responsibilities,’”¹⁷⁷ written sometime in 1945 or 1946 and sent to Eleanor Roosevelt and the UN Commission for Human Rights in the middle of 1946.¹⁷⁸ Broch envisioned this treatise as a second step in the process of resolving the antimony between the protection of human rights and the maintenance of national sovereignty. Broch presented a program for resolving the antinomy, and it was a program that would change the “Utopias of yesterday” into “tomorrow’s realities.”¹⁷⁹ The solution was the establishment of a universal criminal code for the prosecution of any individual who violates human rights, including individual serving as national officials. “Mankind has always solved its apparent antinomies by discovering or inventing a unifying third principle, and in the present case it can be maintained that this third principle can be perceived in the criminal code, in criminal law as an institution. ... Today, the morality of the world demands that trial and

¹⁷⁷ “Bemerkungen zur Utopie einer ‘International Bill of Rights and of Responsibilites,’” *KW* 11, 243-77.

¹⁷⁸ See footnote 3, *KW* 11, 276-7.

¹⁷⁹ *KW* 11, 245.

punishment of war criminals at the hands of an international tribunal, and from this demand to the desire for an international criminal code, in which the new world-morality is codified, the road is short.”¹⁸⁰ Broch did not simply want, post-facto tribunals, he wanted the establishment of a clear cut criminal code backed by juridical system, both on the national and international level. In fact, Broch’s central idea was that issues of criminal actions against human rights would be adjudicated on the domestic level, only reaching the international level in exceptional cases. The creation of a criminal code for human rights, what he called the “Law for the Protection of Human Dignity,” would function not only as a means for policing the international arena, but would in a psychological and legal fashion function as a means for controlling the development of mass hysterical events within national borders. Broch’s “Bill of Human Responsibilities” put together psychology, education, and law as a bulwark to political activities, just as much psychological and pedagogical, of fascist governments such as the National Socialist.

At its roots, Broch theory was a psychological one. He admitted that international organizations lacked political will to supplant their national interest to international one—world democracy was for the time being a utopian idea. He realized as well that legal barriers against human rights violations were easily overturned or reinterpreted to facilitate murder and torture.¹⁸¹ What could be

¹⁸⁰ *KW* 11, 247.

¹⁸¹ “Whether a Bill of Rights is of international or merely of national scope, a government acting in bad faith can easily turn it into a meaningless scrap of paper by various devices, or by ignoring it completely. Laws are easily circumvented and such violations pass virtually unnoticed since they are not officially decreed by the government but happen incidentally, so to speak, with the sanction of regional or local authorities. In Germany with the blessing of petty officials, this brand of Fascism went

accomplished was the psychological redirection of the public toward what Broch called “good faith.” Broch’s discussion of human rights was itself heavily laden with religious terminology: “Oppression is an integral part of political and economic life. Thus, one can not hope to achieve the ideal *Civita Dei* simply by abolishing the present causes of Oppression as it manifests itself in modern society. ... The complete body of Human Rights is not a codified entity and never can be completely codified. Rather is it to be defined as an ethical attitude which draws its strongest support from the traditions of great religions of the World.”¹⁸²

A process very similar to the role the Federal Civil Rights laws played in the America South in the 1950s and 1960s. The parallels are not coincidental, when Broch arrived in the United States the fundamental historical event in the American memory was not the rising tide of fascism; it was not even World War One. It was the Civil War and the process of Reconstruction. In this milieu, a European provided a much different point of reference and pursued a much different focus. On December 7, 1941 these difference were overcome (at least temporarily) as the United States took on the role of the dominant world power. In Broch’s initial exile, however, questions of human dignity and human rights operated in a context of American Civil War and not in the context of European disintegration of values. What we see with Broch is how the Kantian solution to the European context was extended and applied to the

on virtually under the eyes of the still functioning Reichstag and the still more or less democratic government, and none of the liberal parties was strong enough to fight against this diffuse state of affairs” (*KW* 11, 255).

¹⁸² Hermann Broch Archive. Yale Collection of German Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

American context of race relations and civil disorder. Although this shift held only a portion of Broch's attention (he remained connected to and concerned about European friends, about Germany's future, and about the European idea of civilization he knew before exile), the new context fostered a critique on American democracy and the dangers of fascism, as well as an awareness that the United States must play the leading role in salvation of a Enlightened, European worldview. And throughout Broch's political theory on human rights and democracy the problem of racial mass hysteria and the stability of American democracy was conceived in relations to Lincoln and slavery. Broch brought with him to the United States a clear humanist politics, but the development of his psychological solution bears the marks of his American context, especially the issue of race relations.

Broch's political engagement during the First World War was limited to a specific Viennese context. Although his critical, intellectual engagement with Marxism brought him into contact with Pan-European political theory, his political concerns remained either local or undeveloped. Nevertheless, in the 1930s and 40s, the First World War played a central role in Broch's human rights work, especially his discussion of the League of Nations. Woodrow Wilson's 14 Points plan served in some sense as a model for Broch's internationalism; it was, however, more a point of departure than a source of imitation. Broch took away from the peace negotiations at Versailles the historical lessons of Wilson's failure, and from there he attempted to construct a more thorough system of internationalism. The Versailles Conference

exposed to Broch the limits of Wilson's idealism.¹⁸³ In face of French and English desires to return to a pre-War political system based on the notion of a concert or a balance of power maintained through pacts and alliances, Wilson pushed through a plan for internationalism based on the idea of freedom. Though Wilson's cult of personality seemed to the win the day in Paris, it eventually lost the struggle for refashioning the European (and World) political system. Wilson's failure was a limited theory of freedom in the face of aggressive European *Realpolitik*. Broch's solutions expanded Wilson's idealism in terms of its theory of freedom. By doing so, Broch believed an international system for the maintenance of human rights could be victorious. Broch described this process as the turning of utopia into reality.

The limits of Wilson's plan were that he argued for the protection of only certain freedoms. What Broch called "freedoms of," that is, freedom of speech and religion. Wilson trusted in an almost spiritual spread of democracy through the inherent human desire for freedom.

Woodrow Wilson's concept of peace was based on his confidence in the common man. Although he saw the danger of war which lies in perpetuating the diversity of existing, independent states, and while, furthermore, he had to consent to an increase in their number on the principle of self determination, he thought he would succeed in banishing the possibility of wars, by entrusting all political responsibility everywhere to the common man and to his love of peace and freedom. . . . human freedom was the source from which the security of the world, the security of man was to flow.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸³ It is not a coincidence that both Wilson and Broch were in terms of their ethics Kantian. Where Broch thought Wilson had failed was not in his idealism or Kantian goals of a categorical imperative, but in his political understanding of how idealistic politics and *Realpolitik* coexisted in the 1919.

¹⁸⁴ *KW* 11, 249. The balance of security with freedom is even today an open debate in terms of internationalism and the US foreign policy.

Wilson's theory of freedom had no mechanism for addressing the problem of security. In world marked not only by insecurity in terms of destroyed infrastructure, ruined economies, and open civil wars on the streets of Germany, Austria, and Hungary, but also in terms of religious and intellectual traditions, appeals to the spiritual and magical allure of democracy and freedom rang hollow. Wilson's panacea of world democracy and national self-determination failed even to find an audience in the heart of democratic constitutionalism, the United States.¹⁸⁵

In place of Wilson's spiritual democracy, Broch turned to Franklin Roosevelt's more balanced approach of four freedoms: "freedoms of" and "freedoms from."¹⁸⁶ Freedom of speech and religion remained central to any notion of democracy, but in terms of internationalism, the freedoms from, that is, "freedom from fear" and "freedom from want" were equally as important.¹⁸⁷ Broch saw these freedoms as the source for security and as a counter option to Clemenceau's policy of security through a "balance of power" (*Machtausbalancierung*).¹⁸⁸ "The actual Freedoms 'from' have in essence little to do with 'freedom' albeit a good deal with security: Freedom from

¹⁸⁵ The United States refused to sign the treaty of Versailles and to accept the Wilson's 14 Points Plan and the League of Nations. The United States end its participation in the WWI through joint congressional resolution in July of 1921.

¹⁸⁶ President Roosevelt announced the idea of the Four Freedoms in a congressional address on January 6, 1941. In response to the idea of Roosevelt's Four Freedoms Broch stated, "Although the Four Freedoms are not so precise as Wilson's Fourteen Points they have nevertheless evoked strong hopes among the peoples of the world and therefore the idealistic promises given in the declaration cannot be bypassed completely by the coming Peace Conference." Hermann Broch Archive, Beinecke Library, Yale University, unpublished.

¹⁸⁷ *KW* 11, 249. Broch uses English through his text when referring to these Freedoms.

¹⁸⁸ *KW* 11, 249.

Want is nothing else than economic security, while Freedom from Fear is simply the security procured by peace.”¹⁸⁹ “The addition of Freedom from Want is particularly characteristic of the change that has taken place since 1918: the masses of the people want economic security, above all, and to them Freedom from Want is undoubtedly the most important. In other words, today, instead of the one-sided dependence of security on freedom, the interdependence of both is stipulated.”¹⁹⁰ Broch saw clearly that insecurity, especially economic want, would override any desire for democratic reform.¹⁹¹ It is on that point that Broch’s theory of individual value production and his internationalism most clearly coincide.

From the time of his League of Nation Resolutions (1937) to his work on an international law for the protection of human rights (post-War), Broch struggled to move the League of Nations from an idealistic organ of internationalism to a pragmatic one. In his arguments for the “Four Freedoms,” Broch thought he had found the path to do so. “Freedoms of” served as the sign of a nation’s or a people’s “recognition of human dignity and its inviolability,”¹⁹² they received concrete expression in documents like the Declaration of Independence and the Charter of the League of Nations. Such expressions are a first step in the protection of human rights. On their own, however, they provided no practical means for ending violations of human rights. Even tying

¹⁸⁹ Hermann Broch Archive, Beinecke Library, Yale University, unpublished.

¹⁹⁰ *KW* 11, 249-50.

¹⁹¹ “The masses always prefer the yoke of slavery to that of uncertainty” (Hermann Broch Archive, Yale Collection of German Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library).

¹⁹² *KW* 11, 250.

them to pure expression of military power did not guarantee protection, it simply guaranteed war. As Broch stated in his 1937 resolution, the danger of blatant use of power in internationalism contradicted the peace mission of any international organization, and thus left internationalism in a position where it chose peace over human rights. To correct this either/or situation, Broch wanted to create a legal system that addressed the idealism of human dignity, expressed in the “Freedoms of,” while at the same time addressing the practical issue of security, expressed in the “Freedoms from.”

As opposed to freedoms of, which were contained in the Declaration of Independence and The Bill of Rights, freedoms from found their expression in political treaties or bills of responsibilities. Broch wanted an international body that did more than promote peace and democracy; it also had to have its hand in areas of material interest: “agreements about territorial frontiers, spheres of influence, trusteeships, armament limitations, raw material distribution, [and] joint currencies.”¹⁹³ Such an organization would need to serve as arbitrator and guarantor of these material agreements. Thus, they would have to set up diplomatic and military wings in order to enforce such freedoms. Broch felt that the “freedoms from” more deeply linked nations in international relationships. Material relationships implied a two way relationship, and in the case of a violation of such a relationship it would entail damage on both sides. Thus, it would guarantee that all nations connected to any agreement would be motivated to take up its preservation. Material interest would be a greater

¹⁹³ *KW* 11, 250-1.

motivation than moral interest.¹⁹⁴ Broch hoped that the addition of freedoms based around the idea of material security (a bill of duties) would back up freedoms concerned with human dignity (a bill of rights).

Expansion of freedoms, however, did not on its own guarantee the protection of human rights or human life. Clearly, situations where nations honor their international treaties and ignore internal questions of human rights would arise; situations where questions of national sovereignty trump international obligations would arise, and almost certainly intervention would lead to war. Broch's expansion of the idea of freedom allowed for greater international linkage and leverage in international relations, but it did not fundamentally change the equation stated earlier:

internationalism was a choice of either peace or human rights. For many, the question stops right here, it is a clear indictment of the impotency of internationalism in a nationalistic world.¹⁹⁵ For Broch, however, such a moral position was untenable. He formulated a political solution to this conflict by pursuing a psychological solution to the attack on democracy. His psychological solution would encompass several areas: legal foundations for protections of human rights, active democratic propaganda, and an international university system. Through a combination of these institutions and activities Broch hoped to redress the "psychological dilemma of democracy."¹⁹⁶ The problem and solution was at the level of mass psychology (see Chapter Two). If

¹⁹⁴ Broch did not completely foresee the limits of material interest vis-à-vis the West and the growing Third World. The current political struggle for democracy in the Middle East does, however, tend to support Broch's contention here.

¹⁹⁵ Hannah Arendt can be counted as among this group.

¹⁹⁶ *KW* 11, 253.

internationalism was to work it was depend on the “good faith” of nations—which to Broch came only from a strong democratic tradition that honored human dignity as a natural right. Broch, however, no longer had any confidence in the efficacy of democratic traditions of natural rights, certainly not in Europe, and perhaps not even in the United States.¹⁹⁷

Broch sought through his theory on mass hysteria first to understand the source of mass psychosis (this was an epistemological and psychological study), and then to apply that knowledge to the conflict between democracy and totalitarianism in modern world—this was the second half of Broch’s work on Mass Hysteria. Much of Broch’s political theory then was developed as part of his work on Mass Hysteria, though I have chosen to limit my discussion of Broch’s active politics to his attempts to apply solutions to his historical context in terms of internationalism and American democracy.

The “indecenty” (*schlechte Gesinnung*) of an individual nation had to be corrected and directed towards democracy and human rights.

It follows that since no adequate protection for the International Bill of Rights can be expected of the union of nations, its arbitration procedure and its armed forces, the fulfillment is left entirely to the “decency” (*guten Willen*) of the individual government or rather its population. Everything depends on a whether such a proper disposition (*guter Wille*) can be aroused and strengthened sufficiently to maintain itself against the evil of fascist power (*den schlechten der fascistischen Kräfte*), and to help bring about their downfall. It is a task for mass psychology, more concretely one for mass pedagogy.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁷ See Chapter Six.

¹⁹⁸ *KW* 11, 255-6.

After establishing the scope of the freedoms involved and basis of internationalism through both a bill of rights and a bill of duties, the crucial step in taking Wilson's idealism and turning it into reality depended on changing the individual minds of the people. Broch's first pragmatic step towards changing minds was a legal one. The legal system served both a purely formal function (defining legal or illegal behavior) and an education function. Social justice transmitted social morality. "The criminal code is the rational expression of the irrational trends which form the moral tradition of the nation. And the continual development of its laws safeguards the continuity of this tradition, becoming the pedagogical instrument by means of which generation after generation is brought up under the same moral code."¹⁹⁹ Written law and a public judiciary packaged the unconscious and inherited fashions of communal tradition into a rational system of proper behavior.²⁰⁰

What Broch proposed was to add to the formal law code of a democratic society a law that protected the legal system itself. It was a defense against the misappropriation of a central organ for social education—the law.²⁰¹ For Broch, since the overthrow of Imperial rule and Old Regime, all states are abstractions, defined by their legal code. A bill of rights in the legal code would theoretically protect an

¹⁹⁹ *KW* 11, 256.

²⁰⁰ One sees here in the combination of religion, tradition, and order—the conservative nature of Broch's mind.

²⁰¹ Almud Greiter and Anton Pelinka describe this aspect of Broch's human rights theory as expression of its taboo-phase: "Democracy enters its Taboo-Phase, its central values are protected by Prohibitions." See "Hermann Broch als Demokratietheoretiker," in *Hermann Broch und Seine Zeit*, edited by Richard Thieberger (Bern: Peter Lang, 1980), 31.

individual person from the abuse of the state. In Fascist governments, as the National Socialist demonstrated, however, the idea of the state and of citizenship can be redefined. The result is that people who were once citizens are now aliens or enemies of the state. The state can grant itself immunity *vis a vis* civil liberties as long as that immunity relates to the protection of the citizenry. To offset the fluid nature of citizenship Broch proposed a law that trumped any action of the abstract state. It was a law aimed directly at the individuals. One person, and a person is always a person regard of whether he or she is an official of the state, could not violate the rights of another person. “Full personal responsibility in all walks of life is a vital demand of democracy, one that calls for fulfillment to the letter, since otherwise the body politic becomes corrupt, thus nullifying everything democracy has achieved, and finally democracy itself.”²⁰² Any person in a democratic state has a bill of rights that cannot be violated, but they also have a bill of duties that they must maintain—the fundamental duty being a duty to protect the sanctity of all lives within the state—to not uphold that duty is to make oneself liable to the penal code.²⁰³

²⁰² *KW* 11, 261.

²⁰³ Paul Michael Lützel points out in his book, *Hermann Brochs Kosmopolitismus: Europa, Menschenrechte, Universität* (Vienna: Picus Verlag, 2002), that Mary Robinson, chairperson for the UN Commission on Human Rights, employs today the same ideas that Broch put forth on rights and duties, 46.

Broch called this law, “The Law for the Protection of Human Dignity.”²⁰⁴

Broch conceived of this law in terms of the domestic situation of European countries—countries with some democratic traditions. He thought, however, that the law must be applied universally across the globe. In order to make this possible, especially within countries where democratic or secular judiciaries were not present, he proposed the establishment of an international law court at The Hague. The international court would be responsible for the hearing the case, but execution of the courts ruling would revert to the nation where the violation occurred. Thus, Broch has returned to his fundamental dilemma: to sustain international cooperation in the maintenance of human rights, Broch is reliant on the forceable cooperation of the nation in violation. If the nation refuses, force or intervention will be necessary, again risking peace in pursuit of human rights. Broch cannot rely on the “decency” of nations with strong commitment to national sovereignty and with little established tradition in the area of natural rights. Before Broch’s “Law for the Protection of Human Dignity” can be applied internationally it has to foster the roots of democracy on a national level.

As Hannah Arendt would later argue, Broch’s theory for an international bill of rights and duties seemed inexplicitly locked in the Utopian belief in the spread of

²⁰⁴ The proposed wording of the law, which provided only for the purpose of *fixer les idées*: Article 1: Whoever by spoken or written word, or by actions or other means assaults the moral equality of human persons (citizens and non-citizens), thus holding up to contempt or defamation a group of persons either collectively or individually, not for legal, but for biological or religious or other ideologically defined reasons; or whoever excludes such groups from exercising their legal rights as citizens (especially the right to the pursuit of happiness); or whoever prevents such a group from performing their civic duties; or exposes them to the hatred of their fellow citizens or incites the latter against them, commits a ‘crime against human dignity’—regardless of whether such an attempt was successful or not—and is liable to punishment. Article 2: Immunity of office, whether legislative, executive or judicial, shall not exempt from the consequences of any violations of this Law (*KW* 11, 262).

democracy. In the conclusion, I will pursue further Arendt's critique and Broch's utopianism. For now, however, Broch was not yet finished with his efforts to turn a Utopian idea into reality. He pursued, at the same time as his theories on an international law code, efforts for the promotion (or propagandization) of democracy.²⁰⁵ Towards this end, Broch formulated a theory on the importance of international education.

The necessary definition of legal responsibility of individuals toward human rights took the issue out of the political realm. If the question of addressing human rights is political, it becomes bogged down by the various forces operating within the political power system, forces often unconnected to the issues at hand. As a question of judiciary violation, the political issues are off set by the legal clarity of right and wrong, as opposed to the ideologically messy notions of right and wrong in the politics.

Connected to Broch's efforts on the international bill of responsibilities was Broch's plan for an international system of educational reform. Again, the psychological importance of Broch's political theory was clear. In 1944, Broch extended his call for educating Europe on democracy. In a pamphlet from 1946, Broch described the threefold purpose of a series of new education institutions in the United States: 1) secure employment for European scientists and thinkers, 2) to bring European scientific methods into the American academy, 3) to establish an intellectual

²⁰⁵ His ultimate solution of an "earthly absolute" will be discussed in the conclusion.

foundation for the fight against Fascism.²⁰⁶ By 1945, the first two issues had become superfluous—the American scientific community had integrated both European methods and European scientists to a large degree, and those scientists who did not integrate would be returning to Europe very soon. It was the third, an intellectual foundation for the fight for Fascism that continued to need attention. The pressing issue in Broch's mind was the rebuilding of the scientific community in Central Europe. To do so, Broch argued that the exile institutions, established through American Universities such as New School for Social Research and Princeton University, needed to break free from a purely American point of view. The rebuilding of Europe needed to be on a democratic basis, and the rebuilding of the central European university system would be a key aspect of the reeducation of Europe.

Broch wanted to bring science to the service of any new international organization for peace. He felt education, especially an education system that instilled democratic ideals and applied its knowledge to humane projects, was as central to the maintenance of peace as military force or economic institutions. “For any future peace organization an international university is barely less important as an international bank.”²⁰⁷ The university, however, had to be directed at the same internationalist issues (peace, human rights, and democracy) as were any legal,

²⁰⁶ See *KW* 11, 414 ff. In the accompanying footnotes, the editor, Paul Michael Lützeler, summarizes the specific institutions Broch had in mind at the time of composition: The New School for Social Research in New York, in particular its new Graduate Faculty made up of exile thinkers. The graduate program became known as “The University in Exile.”

²⁰⁷ *KW* 11, 416.

military, or economic activities. To understand Broch's position here, one must understand Broch's view on knowledge or science (*Wissenschaft*).

Science was the modern expression of what Broch called *Weltgeistes* or world spirit. By this Broch meant the collective mental efforts of humanity applied to the construction of social values and relationships. Broch's understanding of science (*Wissenschaft*) was quite wide; it could include medicine and technological sciences, but also humanistic science from anthropology to philosophy, with psychology and history being especially important.²⁰⁸ Such a "complete university system" (*Voll-Universität*) would differ from the "research institute model" of the exile organizations. Broch found the university model more conducive to cooperative work. "On the one hand, university work is generally more alive than a pure research institute, and on the other hand it is better geared to train a new generation for cooperation in establishing world peace."²⁰⁹ The university setting would lessen the impact of an ideologically driven core.

Furthermore, the international university would represent something novel—a new foundation for the practice and teaching of science (a *Neuaufbau* or a new scientific Organon).²¹⁰ Science was to be directed toward a general theory of humanity, "Humanity has become a task for exact science."²¹¹ By this, Broch meant

²⁰⁸ Though Broch acknowledged that medicine and technological science might find institutional homes outside of his "International University."

²⁰⁹ *KW* 11, 416.

²¹⁰ See *KW* 11, 418-9.

²¹¹ Hermann Broch Archive. Yale Collection of German Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

that science must unite around the goal of understanding the cause of human motivation. The present condition of modernity was one in which man could not guarantee human freedom through the liberal notion of natural law, because the religious basis of that law had been removed. It was a situation where man without the guidance of an absolute force in education and politics turned to social institutions to migrate the irrational forces like panic.

Broch felt that values conceived absolutely played very a small role in the life of most individuals, in their place concrete institutional forces shaped their existence:

Man had to create institutions to safeguard his concrete interests on earth and to make group life possible. These institutions, once created, having absorbed the values and ideals, began to use these for themselves, so that in the end, the institutions established absolute authority over their creators. While man wants peace, the political institutions he made want war. Man seeks truth, but the spiritual institutions he made chain the truth with dogmas to maintain themselves.²¹²

In short, humans had since the Enlightenment put themselves between a rock and a hard place. Democracy and freedom was based on the ideas of natural rights, that is, on the idea that humans were created in the image of God. Broch referred to this concept as being a “wholly humane person.” With the secularization of the western mind in the nineteenth century the basis for human rights, humans as the image of God, was removed. But as the early twentieth century had shown, modern society was

²¹² Hermann Broch Archive. Yale Collection of German Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

not able to replace the “wholly humane person” with the “perfect citizen.”²¹³ The foundational principles of freedom and equality had given way under the pressure of *Realpolitik*, interest politics, and economic security. Broch’s offered his “Law for the Protection of Human Dignity” as bulwark to the tendency of democracy to set freedom in front the inviolability of humanness. In this work, one sees the blatant example of Broch’s continued commitment to humanism and the Enlightenment.

His proposal for an “International Academy,” was another step in the process of reestablishing an absolute source for human motivation. Mass hysteria, which resulted from “rational causes which the individual misinterprets or entirely ignores,” could be corrected, if science could explain the process of human motivation and rational choice. Broch envisioned an academy in which science worked toward an established humanist goal as opposed to specialized fields of knowledge operating independent of each other. “Science itself is constantly bound to fight the curbing of truth by every institutionalism, and also, if not primarily, its own institutionality. By liberating mankind from this institutional prison, science frees itself.”²¹⁴ He proposed three essential categories of investigation: “1) knowledge of the basic qualities of human nature, 2) knowledge of human development, and 3) knowledge of the present condition of man and his social institutions.”²¹⁵ The fields of “biology, physiology,

²¹³ Hermann Broch Archive. Yale Collection of German Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

²¹⁴ Hermann Broch Archive. Yale Collection of German Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

²¹⁵ Hermann Broch Archive. Yale Collection of German Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

medical psychology and psychiatry, especially primitive psychology and psychological anthropology, and ethnology, as well as religion,” could be applied to the first category. For the second category, the historical study of “human institutions” was needed. In the third category, psychology and social scientific fields would be applied.

The irony in Broch’s conception of a more democratic and open exchange of ideas through the university structure was that Broch, in fact, saw the purpose of the university to be clearly ideological. Structurally, Broch wanted the university open, that is, he wanted students to have access to a wide variety of academic subjects (*Fächer*), and he wanted those subjects to be approached in a unified way. Science needed to be studied “in its entirety and not only through individual branches.”²¹⁶ The openness and the breadth of study, however, had an obvious political aim: to place psychological and historical knowledge at the disposal of democratic governments. Broch’s university plan mirrored his ideas on human rights; the key force against the violation of human rights and for the destruction of fascism was understanding and use of mass psychology.²¹⁷ As with this critique of American Democracy, the key concept here was the idea of totality: Total Democracy and Total Science.

Broch felt that democracy was something that needed to be learned and to be reinforced through culture.

²¹⁶ *KW* 11, 416.

²¹⁷ “The rapid rise of Fascism and Dictatorships demonstrates that in policy management psychological events are of decisive importance—events, which Fascism without exception have ingeniously used, but which democracies have almost completely ignored” (*KW* 11, 416).

If, then, it can be shown that what is true of mathematics is also true, must also be true, of methods of extra-mathematical disciplines, such all-pervading methodological homogeneity would not only disclose the starting point of a coming ... unification of all science, all knowledge of science and its branches, but it would also furnish the strongest possible evidence supporting the assumption of a homogeneous structure of all that may be called human thought. With that, the whole complex reverts into the ethical. For if the homogeneity of human thought can thus be manifested in performance of a strict and sober analysis of science, it becomes not only permissible but an undeniable, and logical, duty to draw the further conclusions from this given fact. And these conclusions doubtlessly would amount to a secularization of the divinely borne natural law. Truly none could be too wicked to remain potentially a bearer of the human spirit, and none too exalted to have to remember such human dignity of the other's. But this, nothing else, is humanity—of science as well as democracy.²¹⁸

Although Broch's theories on human rights and internationalism never prompted any direct government action, his ideas are still promoted by NGOs and international organizations such as Amnesty International. In examining Broch's critique on democracy in the United States and his effort for international protection of human rights, one overcovers an important European contribution to the theory of democracy: critical humanism. By tracing Broch's connections and promotion of a critical humanist view, we expand the geneology of humanism and internationalism in the expansion of democracy. The results help to disentangle the biases surrounding humanism and the Enlightenment—biases that treat rationality, individual autonomy, and belief in progress as conservative or reactionary values. These ideas were in the

²¹⁸ Hermann Broch Archive. Yale Collection of German Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

late 1980s coopted by neo-Conservative thought in the United States to promote the spread of liberal democracy. In Broch, however, we observed that a sustained commitment to nineteenth-century ideas like humanism and the Enlightenment provide a more complex view of how democracy can and should function, and not simply a rubber stamp for idealistic visions of freedom and United States-led democracy. In the following chapters, I will examine the source of Broch's democratic theory in order to expose more fully the Viennese roots of his critical humanism.

Chapter Four

Metropolis of Kitsch:

Assimilation, Empire, and World War—Historical Context of Vienna 1886-1919

The ultimate meaning of poverty masked by wealth became clearer in Vienna, in Vienna's spirited swan song, than in any other place or time. A minimum of ethical values was to be masked by a maximum of aesthetic values, which themselves no longer existed. They could no longer exist, because an aesthetic value that does not spring from an ethical foundation is its own opposite—kitsch. And as the metropolis of kitsch, Vienna also became the metropolis of value vacuum of the epoch.²¹⁹

Hermann Broch (1948)

In the 1960s, Carl Schorske awakened the world to the prominent role of Vienna in the creation of modernity and in the process of defining modernity.²²⁰ Hermann Broch, however, had lived through the process more than half a century earlier. In *fin-de-siècle* Vienna, Broch's youth and his educational experience initiated an engagement with the question of modernity that culminated in 1948 with his work of cultural criticism, *Hugo von Hofmannsthal and his Time*. In this book, we get the

²¹⁹ Hermann Broch, *Hugo von Hofmannsthal and his Time*, edited and translated by Michael P. Steinberg (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 81.

²²⁰ For the best summary of Carl Schorske's ideas, see his *Fin de Siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture* (New York: Vintage Books, 1981, originally Knopf Inc., 1980).

first detailed dissection of the ethically vacuous world of Vienna, which Schorske later described in his own work.

The Viennese setting of Broch's youth and his education placed him within the one of the major birthplaces for the aesthetic, cultural, and political modernism. In this chapter, I examine the historical milieu of turn of the century Vienna in conjunction with the individual experience of Broch in order to set out the influences on Broch's later political thought. I will trace the trajectory of Broch's own theories on the crisis of modernity—from his early connections to his *Lebensphilosophie*, to his aesthetic value system, to his critiques of socialism and democracy. In the end, Broch's familial and educational experiences combined with an eclectic philosophical training to produce a political theory that embraced the progressive values of the Late-Enlightenment Vienna (cosmopolitanism and rationality)²²¹ but rejected the strict positivism and capitalist individualism of such liberalism. Broch questioned the whether rationality and science, when divorced from metaphysics and oblivious to irrationality, could address the challenge of constructing social values in the modern world. Throughout my discussion, the Viennese intellectual context of a contestation between scientific materialism and philosophical irrationalism frames Broch's thought;²²² in such a context one can identify the limits of Broch's thought: anti-positivism and anti-idealism.

²²¹ See See Malachi Hacoheh's *Karl Popper: The Formative Years, 1902-1945* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 22-53.

²²² For a discussion of this tension see David Luft, *Eros and Inwardness* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), chapter 1.

Broch's humanist political theory was not simply the Enlightenment revisited or an expression of classical liberal thought. His humanism drew upon the irrational aspects of human experience, and it rejected the materialism at the heart of laissez faire economic policy. "The true democrat does not fight for a certain type of economy alone, he simply fights for the humanitarian principles of democracy, and he opposes with all his might the threat of enslavement and terror."²²³ His political theory focused on the rational, autonomous individual, but sought a fuller exploration of human experience—both rational and spiritual. Broch's anti-liberal²²⁴ critique on modernity was typical of the generation of 1905 in its humanism and its focus on the creation of value in society through a confrontation with death. His thought from his earliest period reflected an eclectic relationship between European thought and his Viennese, Jewish thought, especially as reflected in the idea of critical modernism. Broch's key relationships intellectually were Plato, Kant, a vaguely founded idea of *Lebensphilosophie*, and a linguistic, positivistic philosophy reflective of his Viennese milieu. Broch's strongest intellectual critique was one of value disintegration—the lost of an absolute value for moderating the relationship of relative values, that is, the death of God destroyed the notion of Christianity, the Church, or God as the overarching force that kept the businessman, the warrior, the artist, and the statesman from putting forth their own particular value as supreme.

²²³ Hermann Broch Archive. Yale Collection of German Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

²²⁴ I.e., his rejection of the decadence of his own assimilated class.

Broch's family life and education were key factors in setting him on the path towards his critique of modernity and his ethical theory. Understanding his early education (personal and intellectual) opens up a more complete view of Broch the thinker, and it helps to explain Broch's later commitment to human rights and ethical duty, in a way that a more focused examination of Broch's philosophical thought does not. These discussions help to fill out the picture of Broch's intellectual maturity by moving beyond his philosophical development, and they also help to explain Broch's later commitment to human rights and ethical duty in his exilic political theory.

It is important to provide a clear definition of my use of the term modernity and modern. In terms of European intellectual history, the centrality of modernity to the discussion of early twentieth-century thought cannot be deny or ignored. It was, in fact, the fundamental question for intellectuals in both Europe and the United States. What each historical agent, however, understood as modern, and what the contemporary reader understands as modern are rarely the same. My use of the term modern refers first to Broch's historical position within the modern age, that is, the historical period from the Renaissance to the twentieth century. In part, this model fits into the basic assumptions of the historical profession, but it also reflects the historical assumptions of Broch himself, who conceived of the Middles Ages as epistemologically and socially separate from his own historical epoch.

Nevertheless, the general definition of modern gives way in my discussion of Vienna to a more limited period that centers on the nineteenth century. The debates that occupied philosophers, political theorists, artists, and writers in Vienna at the turn

of the century developed from the questions of social organization initiated by the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars. The concept of the long nineteenth century (dating from the French Revolution to the First World War) provides a helpful historical periodization in terms of the intellectual influences at play in Broch's youth: expanded suffrage (mass politics), secularization, colonialism/imperialism (the white man's burden), nationalism, scientific progress (Newton to Darwin to Einstein), industrialization and technological advance. The nineteenth century also takes center stage in my discussion because of the specific set of intellectual traditions that Broch inherited. The intellectual preoccupation by many in the nineteenth century with historicism (as part of the expansion of nationalism), positivism, and industrialization were all factors in the formation of Broch's thought. In the context of the multinational Habsburg Empire, two other earlier intellectual traditions sustained their influence: cosmopolitanism and assimilation.

Within this general historical period—the modern age—the term modernity is still problematic and suggested multiple meanings. My discussion of modernity is not meant to engage questions of modernism (in an aesthetic or technological sense) or post-modernism (in a linguistic or social science sense). My use of the term modernity refers specifically to a nineteenth century context, and it is tied to questions about the progress of Western Civilization that a majority of nineteenth-century intellectuals had raised. In short, could humane society progress in tandem with modern technological and economic shifts?

We simply have to declare that during the nineteenth century the democratic principles of humaneness have lost,

if not their objective validity, yet certainly a portion of their self-evidence. In cantonal polities from which democracy sprang, all matters, even in perilous situations, could clearly be surveyed by every inhabitant; each knew his individual and economic wants, and likewise those of his polity; and so he dwelt in an ethical sureness which enabled him to express freely both his moral and psychic needs. Nothing of that holds true as regards the inhabitant of our large modern cities of a technological epoch; to a large measure he has lost the living contact with the community in which he lives; the gigantic machinery of state, which represents his community, functions like an uncanny, independent and strange being that hardly obeys his so-called masters; the overcrowded modern cities, studded and struck with technology, very cages of modern life, are full of inexplicable technical and economic threats. City dwellers have lost the concept of human principles; too much inhumanity, too much instability surrounds them; they have slipped into ethical uncertainty.²²⁵

These questions, though expressed in the debates over *avant garde* art, technology, and linguistic or positivistic questions of philosophy, should not be separated into individual fields of inquiry. Modernity in my discussion must be considered as a whole; it was the universal questioning of the Western Tradition and its future. Was the West progressing towards a utopian end of history or was it sliding towards its own destruction?

In terms of Broch, he saw modernity as a hypertrophy (an overabundance) of identity; in the modern age, group and individual identities centered on an exclusive character trait, and they set themselves off from other traits and identities. Thus, modernity isolated and excluded the individual and the group from experiencing universal, common human traits, such as rationality, irrationality, human rights, and,

²²⁵ Hermann Broch, *Psychische Selbstbiographie*, edited by Paul Michael Lützeler (Frankfurt, Suhrkamp Verlag, 1999), 110-1.

most importantly, death. For Broch, modern identity was overly exclusive—even in religion, modern humans chose between strict interpretation of scripture and the sensual contact of mysticism. In a paradoxical sense, modernity broke down universal human experience through the increased possibility of experiences. Rationality served as the catalyst to this walling off of identities into competing, autonomous value systems: “Like strangers they exist side by side, an economic value system of ‘good business’ next to an aesthetic one of *l’art pour l’art*, a military code of values side by side with a technical or an athletic one, each autonomous, each ‘in and for itself,’ each ‘unfettered’ in its autonomy.”²²⁶ Broch described the creation of modern autonomous value systems as a “gigantic Machiavellianism,” that is, an unfolding of a radical, instrumental rationality.

In his eleven-part discursive, “The Disintegration of Values,” from the third book of the *The Sleepwalkers*, Broch summarizes the extension of radical rationality into the construction of European values.

The logic of the army demands ... that all military resources be exploited ... resulting, if necessary, in the extermination of peoples, the demolition of cathedrals, the bombardment of hospitals ...

The logic of the business man demands that all commercial resources be exploited ...

The logic of the painter demands the principles of painting shall be followed to their conclusions ...

The logic of the bourgeois climber demands that the watchword ‘enrichissez-vous’ shall be followed ...

In this fashion, in this absolute devotion to logical rigour, the Western world has won its achievements,—and with the same thoroughness ... must it eventually advance *ad*

²²⁶ Broch, *The Sleepwalkers*, 448.

absurdum: war is war, *l'art pour l'art*, in politics there's no room for compunction, business is business,—all these signify the same thing, all these appertain to the same aggressive and radical spirit, informed by ... that lack of consideration for consequences, that ruthless logic directed on the object and the object alone ... this is the style that characterizes our age.²²⁷

Broch goes on to explore how Europe failed to offset this hypertrophic commitment to rationality; how the opposing commitment to a valueless irrationality²²⁸ proved unable to satisfy the spiritual needs of man, who was now face to face with the infinite. The death of God²²⁹ removed from man, once created in God's image, any sense of accessibility to the infinite. The crisis of Machiavellian rationality was an inescapable characteristic of modernity.

But man, who was once the image of God, the mirror of a universal value created by himself, has fallen from his former estate: he may still ask himself what is this superimposed logic that has perverted his life; yet he is driven out into the horror of the infinite, and, no matter how he may yearn to return to the fold of faith, he is helplessly caught in the mechanism of the autonomous value systems, and can do nothing but submit himself to the particular value that has become his profession, he can do nothing but become a function of that value—a specialist.²³⁰

²²⁷ Broch, *The Sleepwalkers*, 445-6.

²²⁸ Seen in both Romanticism's and conservatism's turn to an idealized past.

²²⁹ Broch describes the death of God as thought daring "to take the step from monotheism into the abstract, and God, the personal God made visible in the finite infinity of the Trinity, became an entity whose name could no longer be spoken and whose image could no longer be fashioned, an entity that ascended into the infinite neutrality of the Absolute and there was lost to sight in the dread vastness of Being, no longer immanent but beyond the reach of man." *The Sleepwalkers*, 447.

²³⁰ Broch, *The Sleepwalkers*, 448.

With a historicist outlook, Broch saw the difference between the historical epoch of the Middle Ages and the Modern Age as the difference between an open value system (one that maintains an absolute source for individual and group value construction) and a closed or hypertrophied system (one that elevates multiple, competing sources for value construction). Of course, Broch's overly simplistic understanding of the Middle Ages revealed a weakness of nineteenth century historical thought; but it helped to define his view of the modern age as psychically conflicted and embattled.

For Broch, modernity had created a relative system of values, in which individual value systems warred with other individual systems. Broch held up the intellectual and value system unity of the Middle Ages as an historical example of how society could be unified around a controlling absolute value. Broch was not, however, a reactionary thinker, and he did not think in anti-modern terms about the return of a lost golden age, nor did he put forth a program for Catholic (or Christian revival).²³¹ He did, however, for his entire life hold to the idea of reestablishing an absolute value system in Western Europe. His project was strongly Christian and Platonic in its appeal to overcoming an earthly, death-centered view of human value—that is, a value system based on an earthly fear of death. Broch's approach to his value theory shifted throughout his life in terms of genre. For the majority of his life, Broch approached the issue through the lens of aestheticism, and his theory of kitsch was certainly one of the best discussions of the relationship between art and social values

²³¹ Karl Menges, in fact, argues for the religious focus of Broch thought, see pp. 151.

from the first half of the twentieth century.²³² But this early value theory reflected an intellectual development in which the First World War was the dominant influence. By the 1930s, Broch began to question whether literature was capable of addressing the political needs of Europe.

In his exile, Broch completed in his typically incomplete manner his rejection of literature and the arts as the means for reestablishing the absolute. He turned more and more towards the end of his life to a scientific, logical basis for establishing this absolute. What was necessary was for the individual, the ego in a Kantian sense, to use cognition as a means for creating an idea of the timelessness, the infinite, the absolute. For Broch, this meant an overcoming of death—the ultimate non-value; value came from the individual ego's ability to project on the nothingness of death a timelessness of cognition, that is, an ability to separate out the external timeliness of the world from the individual consciousness. It was a perception of the world as objectified and of ethics as humanistic. In terms of epistemology, Broch remained constant in his belief that ethical choice in the end was an individual centered activity, but the activity could not longer be relegated simply to the language of art. In Broch's later thought the influence of the post-War reaction to death and modernity, characteristic of the generation of 1905, was clear, as was the influence of Edmund Husserl. Coming from the world of Viennese scientific materialism, Broch was most influenced by thinkers such as Kant and Husserl. In the end, he saw the world as an objectification of the ego-nucleus. The ego was the only source for creation of value.

²³² Hermann Broch, "Das Böse im Wertsystem der Kunst," in *KW* 9/2, 119-57.

The preceding discussion of Broch's conception of modernity reflected Broch's mature, Viennese period, that is, his writings from late 1920s and early 1930s. In this mature period, Broch's ethical and political concerns were prominent, but in his earlier writings, especially his works from before the First World War, Broch's criticism reflected a youthful engagement with the Viennese milieu of the turn of the century. It was a milieu that Carl Schorske forever tied to the development of modernism.²³³ Schorske's investigations from the 1960s onward established a historical paradigm for understanding the cultural and intellectual development of Vienna that argued for a retreat from the social into the private. From the architecture of *Jugendstil* to the *avant garde* art of the Secessionists to Freud's exploration of the psyche to radical politics of nationalism and anti-Semitism, Vienna served as the "breeding ground"²³⁴ for the archetypal modern man. "Traditional liberal culture had centered upon rational man, whose scientific domination of nature and whose moral control of himself were expected to create the good society. In our century, rational man has had to give place to that richer but more dangerous and mercurial creature, psychological man."²³⁵ Schorske's thesis is that modernism represented a break with the past: "critical reformulations or subversive transformations of their [*fin-de-siècle* modernist artists] traditions that their own society perceived as radically new if not

²³³ See Carl Schorske, *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture* (New York: Vintage Books, 1981, originally Knopf, 1980).

²³⁴ Schorske, xviii.

²³⁵ Schorske, 4.

indeed revolutionary.”²³⁶ Viennese modernism marked the breakdown of the arrogant claims of the nineteenth century in terms of progressive historical and epistemological unity.

Broch would seem at first glance to be a perfect candidate for pushing Carl Schorske’s notions of turn of the century Vienna modernist culture into the next generation of Viennese thinkers.²³⁷ In fact, Broch’s critique of the epoch in *Hugo von Hofmannsthal and his Time* was the basic foundation for the discussion of the period (even for Schorske’s discussion), providing the key terms with which we label the era—gay apocalypse, disintegration of value, and the value vacuum.²³⁸ Schorske argues that “not only Vienna’s finest writers, but its painters and psychologists, even its art historians, were preoccupied with the problem of the nature of the individual in

²³⁶ Schorske, xxvi.

²³⁷ Schorske claimed that in the “garden of the aesthete” modern man was born. Broch, born in 1886, fell chronologically into this era, but intellectually Broch came a generation after the world Schorske describes. Schorske characterizes a group of Viennese intellectuals rebelling against an impotent political world, but as a member of the generation of 1905 Broch is rebelling against the general lack of values in Europe after the War. Broch came from a generation that came to intellectual maturity around 1914. This group of intellectuals was not only influenced by the experience of the war, but they carried that influence into the interwar years and into the Second World War. Many of thinkers, like Broch, also carried their experience into exile.

Schorske’s generation is closer chronologically to the generation H. Stuart Hughes calls the generation of 1890. Hughes, however, examines a pan-European set of thinkers, and he finds, unlike Schorske, that this generation demonstrated a recommitment to rationality. Hughes sees a reconditioning of the Enlightenment commitment to rationalism in the post-Kant and neo-idealist milieu of the late 19th Century. This does not mean, however, that Broch rejected the intellectual world in which he was raised for a more pan-European view point. Broch’s ethical commitment to Platonic and Kantian absolutes in the realm of values looked very different from the methodology of the social scientists within Hughes’ study and is what separated his allegiance to enlightened rationalism from theirs.

²³⁸ Schorske does not make this connection in his work. He refers twice to Broch’s work in the context of Hofmannsthal’s life and assimilation; in terms of Viennese culture or politics, he mentions Broch’s use of the “gelatin democracy” one time in connection to Lueger’s tenure as major (Schorske, 136). Nevertheless, Broch’s characterization of *fin de siècle* Vienna corresponds very closely to Schorske’s.

a disintegrating society”;²³⁹ this is certainly true for Broch, who addressed the problem of disintegration more explicitly than any other writer from Vienna. It is less clear, however, that Broch demonstrated the radical nature of Schorske’s revolt of the sons against the father. Broch’s attack on aestheticism, especially his earliest articles from the 1920s, and his fascination with Kant did not demonstrate an explosive rejection of the liberal inheritance of the nineteenth century rather a remodeling of the basic ideas of the epoch through the creation of a new and more lasting value system. This required the expansion of the rational individual into the psychological realm. As both both Schorske and David Luft demonstrated was characteristic of “Young Vienna” at the turn of the century,²⁴⁰ but it did not require the rejection of political action or a completely “new view of man.”²⁴¹

Furthermore, Schorske saw the participants in the breakdown of traditional culture as revolutionaries—rebels turning their creative energies away from the social or universal arenas of engagement toward private and individual ones. With Hermann Broch, we see an intellectual who diagnosed the crisis of modernity along the same lines as Schorske, but Broch attempted to move beyond his diagnosis of a disintegration of traditional values and to establish a new set of universal values. In so doing, he did not reject the traditions of the nineteenth century or the Enlightenment;

²³⁹ Schorske, 4.

²⁴⁰ Schorske, *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna*; David S. Luft, *Robert Musil and the Crisis of European Culture, 1880-1942* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1980); William J. McGrath, *Dionysian Art and Populist Politics* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1974); and Allan Janik and Stephen Toulmin, *Wittgenstein’s Vienna* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1973).

²⁴¹ Schorske, 4.

in fact, he embraced many of its key aspects: historicism, universalism, and Kant. Broch then grafted onto these aspects of his thought some of the very intellectual innovations that Schorske tied to the development of a-historical modernism: psychoanalysis and Nietzschean cultural criticism.

In fact, Broch's thought clearly showed that to characterize the intellectual milieu of *fin de siècle* Vienna as a withdrawal into and expansion of the garden of the aesthete is overly limiting, and it lessens the importance of the Broch's Viennese education.²⁴² Furthermore, Schorske's claim that twentieth-century academic criticism developed out of the ahistorical culture of turn of the century Vienna does not seem to apply to Broch's cultural criticism and political thought. "Historical change not only forces upon the individual a search for a new identity but also imposes upon whole social groups the task of revising or replacing defunct belief systems. The attempt to shake off the shackles of history has paradoxically speeded up the processes of history, for indifference to any relationship with the past liberates the imagination to proliferate new forms and new constructs. Thus complex changes appear where once continuity reigned."²⁴³ Broch, however, saw in his criticism of the fragmentary nature of modernism its very cure. In terms of Schorske's thesis, this makes Broch an even more important and interesting figure; for even as a very late member of the Austrian intellectual milieu that Schorske investigates, Broch supported

²⁴² See Malachi Hacoen *Karl Popper: The Formative Years, 1902-1945* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000) for a similar argument about limitations of Schorske's thesis in relation to Karl Popper.

²⁴³ Schorske, xviii.

the general diagnosis of a disintegration of values, but then he spent his entire life working towards the reintegration of the values on a universalist model. As one looks at the process of Broch's intellectual program, one sees that the basis for most of Broch's ideas did not come from negative involvement with the twentieth century's destructive, decadent forces; instead, the process developed from collaboration with the cultural and intellectual fonts of the 19th century. Additionally, Broch's conception for a universalist model was planted firmly in the nineteenth-century notion of history and historical development as an active participant in the creation and maintenance of culture.

My interest in exploring the ties between *fin-de-siècle* Viennese society and Broch's political thought is part of the growing interest in political theory within Austrian intellectual and cultural history. Over the last decade, the works of scholars, such as Steve Beller and Allan Janik, have shown the need to enlarge our understanding of Viennese politics.²⁴⁴ Through the notion of "critical modernism," that is, the idea that thinkers and artist actively took part in the key social and political questions of Vienna through a criticism of its cultural and aesthetic foundations, these scholars have helped to overcome the limitation of earlier works such as Carl Schorske and William Johnston. Schorske's work has had the effect of polarizing political activities and groups, while excluding artists and thinkers from the political arena. Johnston's book, *The Austrian Mind*, attempts to expand the definition of an

²⁴⁴ *Rethinking Vienna 1900*, edited by Steven Beller (New York: Berghahn Books, 2001).

intellectual's social participation.²⁴⁵ In his discussion, however, it becomes evident that the notion of social embeddedness outside of direct political action is presented as either utopian or destructive. Johnston, thus, questions the social efficacy of the turn of century Austrian intellectual tradition *en masse*. Broch is doubly implicated in both historical works by his historical context and his Hofmannsthal study.²⁴⁶ In this work, Broch paints a picture of a disengaged, dispirited society:

Viennese frivolity maintained that peculiar note which set it apart from any other major city: the note of nonaggression, the note of its utterly mixed-up lightheartedness, amiability, and *Gemütlichkeit* (coziness). No doubt there was a measure of wisdom in all this—*Gemütlichkeit* and wisdom blossom in close proximity, the wisdom of a soul that senses demise and accepts it. Nevertheless, it was operetta wisdom, and under the shadow of the approaching demise it became spirited and developed into Vienna's gay apocalypse.²⁴⁷

Broch's condemnation and seeming rejection of Vienna as a "metropolis of kitsch" did not, however, correspond to the entirety of the intellectual world in which he lived. It was within the world of Hofmannsthal that Broch studied, worked, and lived, and

²⁴⁵ "Some Marxists pontificate that to be worthwhile a thinker must be engagé; anyone else may be dismissed as "decadent" or "aesthetic" or "irrational." ... What counts is whether the motive for opting out is ideological, as in the case of Nietzsche or Kraus, or purely disinterested, as in the careers of countless Austrian literati and theorists. However justified it may be to evaluate a publicist by his flair for mobilizing society to change, such a criterion can only caricature someone who spurns politics. Because Austria ... abounded with such adamantly apolitical figures, it is indispensable to segregate Marxist sociology of engagé intellectuals from the more inclusive sociology of thinkers." William M. Johnston, *The Austrian Mind: An Intellectual and Social History, 1848-1938* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), 4.

²⁴⁶ Johnston opens and closes his book with references to Broch's *Hofmannsthal*. Like Carl Schorske in *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna*, Johnston supports the notion of Vienna as a city of the detached, ethically vacuous aesthete through Broch's concepts of the Gay Apocalypse and the value vacuum.

²⁴⁷ Hermann Broch, *Hugo von Hofmannsthal and his Time*, translated with introduction by Michael P. Steinberg (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 78.

within this world he found the impetus not only for his critique, but also for his ameliorative political theories.²⁴⁸

Recently, scholars, such as Malachi Hacoen, David Luft, and Chandak Seengopta, have exposed the importance of the wider world of Viennese intellectuals and given a clearer picture of how such interaction led to a mixing of both the rational and the irrational—not simply a rejection of one for the other.²⁴⁹ Broch’s theoretical formulations, even from his youth, reveal just such a conflict between the intellectual and emotional aspects of the human mind. It was a situation that became further complicated by the interactions among his educational development, his familial relationships, and his path to assimilation. Broch saw a rational, legal order in the past, and he hoped to transplant such an order into the chaos of the present. In order to accomplish this, he turned to Kant, to historicism, and a liberal tradition of an individual, rational actor.²⁵⁰ The point is most of the literature on Vienna 1900, including Schorske and some of Broch’s own work, has left us a mainly negative

²⁴⁸ This is not to say that Schorske ignores the ways in which these artists and thinkers joined politics and aesthetics. Schorske’s essay, “Politics and the Psyche: Schnitzler and Hofmannsthal,” acknowledges to a great degree the political awareness of Vienna 1900, (Schorske, chapter 1, 3-23). As he says of Hofmannsthal, “Engagement in life, Hofmannsthal felt, demands the capacity to resolve, to will. This capacity implies commitment to the irrational, in which alone resolution and will are grounded. Thus affirmation of the instinctual reopened for the aesthete the door to the life of action and society” (Schorske, 19). In this essay, and in his essay “Politics in a New Key,” the mixing of politics and aesthetics was clear. Yet, the overarching pattern was still one of withdrawal and rebellion. Whether it was the withdrawal of Schnitzler and Young Vienna into “autumnal pessimism” and decadence; or it was the tragic rejection of liberal rationality with Hofmannsthal’s aristocratic “politics of grace.” The choices left to the artist or intellectual were either apathy or political tragedy.

²⁴⁹ In many ways, this shift in focus represents a temporal shift from *fin-de-siècle* Vienna to First World War and interwar Vienna.

²⁵⁰ “Traditional liberal culture had centered upon rational man, whose scientific domination of nature and whose moral control of himself were expected to create the good society. In our century, rational man has had to give place to that richer but more dangerous and mercurial creature, psychological man” (Schorske, 4).

picture of decadence and aestheticism. Broch's own experience shows that the Vienna of cafes and theatres in the early twentieth century was far more politically interesting and significant than these studies suggest.

As A. H. Perez points out Broch's political thought was a development of his confrontation with pluralism in Vienna, and it should be seen as a "reintegration of the individual and society and the reestablishment of harmony between man and nature."²⁵¹ Furthermore, Broch conceived of his role in terms of democracy and social action. "There was yet a third way open to perceptive Austrian minds of the period: redeem the self by redeeming society. This option should be understood in the Neo-Freudian sense of humanizing politics and social life by ameliorating its evils and accommodating and canalizing the irrational forces in man."²⁵² Perez, in effect, recognized a political activism operating within a Schorskean paradigm of internal, psychological politics, and he explored that shift in Broch through his investigation of Broch's Freudian influences. Perez, however, argued that Broch, like Schorske's Hofmannsthal, viewed the irrational side of politics through the lens of instinctual unity, that is, through the traditional values of the Austrian aristocracy: *Schlamperei* and the Baroque.

Perez argued that Broch was influenced by the Austrian Baroque in that the idea of wholeness and catholicity was implied in the authoritarian push for religious

²⁵¹ Arvid Henry Perez, "The Disintegration of Values: A Social and Intellectual Study of the Austrian Philosopher-Novelist Hermann Broch, 1890-1930" (Dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1970), 19.

²⁵² Perez, 16

and governmental hegemony. There was a cosmopolitanism implied in the Baroque period as well, from its lack of national identity and from the multinational identities of its rulers. Perez claimed that Austria, in opposition to Germany, developed a religious, cosmopolitan cultural identity, whereas Germany developed a nationalistic, individualistic, and revolutionary one. “Viennese theatricality, in all of its political, social, and cultural ramifications, was but the outer foliage of an organic view of the universe that was at root religious....In Austria, right down to the beginning of the nineteenth century—past the Enlightenment, therefore—there was a persistent identification of aristocratic rule with a cosmic vision which was the cosmic vision of the Counter-Reformation.”²⁵³ Indeed, Perez captures an important characteristic of Broch, that is, the degree to which Broch was enmeshed in the aristocratic mores of bourgeois, assimilated Vienna at the turn of the century.²⁵⁴ Broch’s activism, however, was still a critical activism and not a reactionary flight. He sought in Catholicism and the Baroque, not a recoverable past, but a stable, jumping off point towards a new future. In the end, neither Catholicism nor the Baroque provided Broch with a path for reintegration of modern values.

William Johnston’s book also addressed the Viennese tradition of *Schlamperei* and emphasized the lack of political engagement among intellectuals of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Many of Broch’s key ideas (the diminution of the ego, the understanding of death, theoretical socialism), developed out of the

²⁵³ Perez, 28.

²⁵⁴ To be discussed below.

aristocratic culture, which Johnston so well described. But, Broch's engagement in that world was not straightforward, and the result was certainly not Broch's dissolution into aristocratic culture—the limits for Jewish assimilation checked any possibility of that. His adaptation of aristocratic mores were present, but not dominant, especially in regard to his intellectual development. Broch demonstrated that the multivalent avenues for expression in turn of the century Vienna allowed for multivalent forms of identities, forcing our understanding of the period to center not on universal trends, but on the groupings of possibilities. We can at best understand the limits of intellectual expression, and from there one can examine the individual construction derived from this assortment of cultural building blocks. Viennese intellectual history was not so simple as the story of the “gay apocalypse” and those who evaded it, those who embraced it, or those who transcended it; we can see in Hermann Broch, the source of the term, that no one completely accepted nor transcended the influences of modernity in Vienna 1900.

It was a process of juggling identities and influences. Schorske, Johnston, and Perez all point out the influence of the Austrian aristocracy on the rising middle class and assimilated Jewish cultures.²⁵⁵ In terms of Broch, however, the social and intellectual milieu they describe did not take into account the role of rationality, especially Kantian ethics, in Broch's political views. Broch's cosmopolitanism and his religiosity were connected to the tradition of the Austrian Baroque. His

²⁵⁵ See Luft, *Robert Musil*, 10. “The fate of the German-speaking haute bourgeoisie became so tied to the traditional order, in the face of nationalism and industrial mass society, that in the political debacles between 1890 and 1918 the failures of liberalism and of the Habsburg Monarchy were virtually indistinguishable.”

assimilation, his marriage, and his conversion to Catholicism tied him closer to a tradition of the Counter-Reformation and catholicity; and even though Broch did not become a conservative thinker—wishing to replace secularization with religious conversion; his historical view of the Middle Ages as a period of wholeness was the direct outcome of his Baroque experience in Vienna. Yet, Broch in his political theory did not follow in the steps of Hofmannsthal; he did not evade the value crisis of his own society, and he did not reflect Schorske's pictures of vacuousness and tragedy.²⁵⁶

The significant point is that Broch's metaphysical impulse was Baroque—the Baroque being the “belief in the compatibility of things spiritual and sensual”²⁵⁷—but, his worldview transcended the Baroque. The key reason for this change was the distinctive nature of the late nineteenth-century Viennese intellectual world. Several decades earlier, in the mid-nineteenth century, Vienna was a world in which liberalism and rationality dominated the intellectual sphere and, in fact, reached new extremes in its development of positivism. It was also a world influenced by German Humanism (the role of education and *Bildung*) and strongly resistant to German idealism. As the dominant position of the liberals went into crisis in the late nineteenth century, the resistance to German idealism was severely weakened. The political results of the

²⁵⁶ David Luft makes a similar claim about the detached, searching nature of Viennese political thought within Central European thought of Broch's generation. “Setting out from the uncertainty of knowledge and the inadequacy of every form of dogmatism, the thinkers of this generation were conscious of the fragility and brevity of human civilization. Although they often moved to broader sociological and ideological analysis after World War I, their fundamental impulse was psychological, ethical, and aesthetic, focused on the inner crisis of their culture. Confronted with the decline of the old historical cosmologies of progress, they sought to reawaken the positive value of the unconscious, sexuality, and dream-life.” Luft, *Robert Musil*, 17.

²⁵⁷ Pererz, 31-2.

crisis of liberalism only added to the intellectual appeal of the German nationalism and hastened the isolation of enlightened cosmopolitan thinkers of the nineteenth century, as well as the younger generation of thinkers who were attempting to overcome the exclusion of the spirit and the ego from Viennese positivism.

In Austria, the generation of 1905 addressed the crisis of modernity in an intellectual milieu dominated by a pervasive sense of decay within important intellectual traditions—the baroque, liberalism, and the arts. It was a situation only worsened by the fact that the generation of 1905 was caught unawares by the development of new political forces (fascism, ethnic nationalism), which filled the social, cultural, and intellectual value vacuum left by the fall of the aristocracy and the liberals who were so closely tied to them. The failed attempt of some intellectuals to fill the vacuum with aestheticism perhaps opened the door to the rise of fascism; it must be acknowledged, however, that rationality and commitment to the liberal tradition also failed. This may say as much about the strength of fascism as it does about the weakness of Viennese modernism.

In any case, Hermann Broch fostered a curative political theory out of the decay—he challenged the pervasiveness of death underlying these intellectual traditions and with renewed commitment to reason, the individual, and universal values set out to recreate the sense of social unity that marked the Middle Ages. The Romantic notion of death—what Johnston calls the “Baroque reverence for death,”—did fit Broch’s definition and focus on death.²⁵⁸ Even Broch’s novel *The Death of*

²⁵⁸ Johnston points out the morbid fascination of the Austrian aristocracy with the idea of death: “Exaggerated reverence for the dead encouraged indifference to the living. ... The collector’s zeal of the

Virgil, which is a story centered on death in an individual and universal sense, did not represent the choice of death over life or the idea of death as a value in and of itself. For Broch, death served life in a way that created value in the individual's existence and did not simply serve a goal, an escape, or a release. In this sense, Johnston's characterization of the Viennese intellectual tradition is unable to account for Broch. And since Broch does not appear in Johnston's work as one of the few thinkers to transcend their own milieu (such as Freud or Kraus), an assessment with which I wholly agree, then one is left only to question the characterization. Both Schorske and Johnston built their discussion of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Austrian intellectual history on the vocabulary and the characterization of Hermann Broch; regardless of whether they did this consciously, Broch's thought underwrites both of their structures, and yet Broch served to undercut both of their characterizations.

Overall, the centrality of the question of modernity is clear in the scholarship of Vienna 1900. The continued importance of Schorske's work for the field is a testament to the importance of the questions that Schorske raised concerning the decline of liberal, imperial, and aristocratic ideologies and concomitant rise of nationalism, specialization, and subjectivity. Schoske's work opened the artistic world of Vienna to the academy in the United States, and his theories inspired a series of cultural and intellectual history throughout the 1970s and 1980s. Recently, scholars have used Schorske's work as point of critical departure, questioning his

Biedermeier, the historicizing architecture of the Ringstrasse, the idyll of the operetta offered respite from life by substituting timeless communion with past or imagined utopias. ...Fascinated by decay, these unemployed sons of the upper and middle classes carried Baroque reverence for death to unheard-of extremes. To them death promised release from ennui; in a world gone stale, it alone remained a mighty unknown" (Johnston, 168-9).

characterization of liberalism and modernism. In terms of modernism, two of Schorske's key claims should be questioned: first, that modernism functioned in the Viennese context in opposition to social engagement, and secondly, that modernism necessitated a rejection of the past—an a-historical approach to life or aesthetics. In terms of social engagement, many scholars since the mid-1990s have worked to demonstrate that modernism functioned in the Viennese context in a critical manner, i.e., intellectuals addressed the historical context that Schorske provides not with withdrawal but with social activism through art.²⁵⁹ With Hermann Broch, we find an effort at intellectual engagement through historical investigation.

Johnston suggests that to understand a thinker's engagement in society requires both a "micro-sociology of the persons and institutions that trained him and then a macro-sociology of Viennese proclivities that at once attracted and repelled him."²⁶⁰ The struggle of Hermann Broch to discover and cultivate outlets for his ethical value system was a story of contestation on both the micro- and macro-levels. The history of this contestation is the cornerstone to understanding both the experiential and the epistemological composition of his political theory, which represented an important part of Broch's real, heartfelt attempt at engaging in the issues of social degeneration and the destruction of human dignity. Since the fragmentary nature of Broch's political texts and the utopian elements within his theory can lead one to dismiss

²⁵⁹ See *Rethinking Vienna 1900*. Many of the scholars from this volume: Allan Janik, Scott Spector, and Malachi Hacoen have addressed this issue in monograph form as well, some extending the discussion beyond Vienna to other parts of the Habsburg Empire.

²⁶⁰ Here Johnston is referring specifically to Freud (Johnston, 3).

prematurely Broch's pragmatic engagement in such social questions, the importance of laying out clearly the historical context to Broch's intellectual career is evident. In order to understand Broch's conceptions of democracy and mass society, we must begin with the relationships among his historical context, his personal life, and his intellectual concerns. Only an historical examination of Broch's life and his work will allow for a balanced evaluation of his thought and his legacy. In the discussion below, such connections are considered.

Broch and Jewish Vienna

Broch was born on November 1, 1886, and his father Josef Broch had a very different vision for Broch's future than modernist novelist and intellectual. It was the life of an engineer and textile manufacturer—an approach to life that found value in the support of the Empire and collection of money. Josef Broch (1852-1933) immigrated to Vienna and worked his way up from an office assistant to a successful textile speculator. He tied his business speculations to the ever present need for military uniforms within the Habsburg Army and quickly amassed capital—a fact that deepened the political and ideological links between Josef Broch and the monarchy. After little more than a decade in Vienna, Josef Broch was considered the “most successful textile speculator in the Habsburg Empire.”²⁶¹

On October 25, 1885, Josef Broch expanded his economic and social standing in Vienna through his marriage to Johanna Schnabel, the daughter of another émigré

²⁶¹ Wolfgang Rothe, “Der junge Broch,” in *Neue Deutsche Hefte* 7 (1960), 780.

Jewish merchant. Her father, Hermann Schnabel, however, had immigrated to Vienna a generation before Josef. The Schnabel family was already financially established and well integrated into the Viennese merchant class. Hermann Broch's son describes the Schnabel family's social status as one of "'making eyes' at the gentry, keeping trotting and racing horses and cultivating a special kind of anti-Semitism peculiar to Austria, best exemplified by old Moritz Rothschild's statement: 'There are Jews and there are Yids.'"²⁶² The marriage to Johanna Schnabel not only furthered Josef Broch's social connections to the upper middle class, but it also expanded his economic fortune through new business relations with his in-laws.²⁶³

At Hermann's birth, Josef and Johanna Broch were secure members of the growing Jewish middle class. Entrance into this class, however, was not without sacrifice. That sacrifice was assimilation. Hermann Broch later described the cost of Jewish assimilation in his *Hugo von Hofmannsthal and his Time*, when the formerly hidden dangers were well known:

Without much deliberation or regret, these immigrants left behind their tightly defined village and provincial lives, and they did so with an even lighter heart in the thought that this time they too would take along with them their tightly defined yet rich and introverted individual culture, which they had carried with them during centuries of wandering from land to land. They did not consider that this time it would have to be different: tolerance is intolerant and demands assimilation.²⁶⁴

²⁶² H. F. Broch de Rothermann, *Liebe Frau Strigl: A Memoir of Hermann Broch by his Son*, translated by John Hargraves (New Haven, CT: The Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, 2001), 4.

²⁶³ Paul Michael Lützel, *Hermann Broch: A Biography*, translated by Janice Furness (London: Quartet Books, 1987), 6. By the mid-1920s the Broad of the Teesdorf Spinning Factory (operated by the Brochs) was almost exclusively held by the Broch and Schnabel families.

²⁶⁴ Broch, *Hofmannsthal*, 83.

The cost of assimilation, which Broch describes here, was not, however, as applicable to his father Josef as it was to most other Jewish immigrants (or even to Hermann Broch himself). For Josef Broch assimilation was strictly an economic process. Although he never converted from Judaism, Josef Broch was an active member of the synagogue only on major holy days.²⁶⁵ He did not choose the path of assimilation common to most upper middle class Jews at the time: *Besitz und Kultur*. Instead, Josef Broch trusted in a social position defined exclusively by *Besitz* or money. Assimilation meant acquisition of money and business interest. The way to become a citizen was to earn money and support the monarchy. This path, however, turned out not to be as smooth as either Broch or his father imagined.

For Hermann Broch assimilation was a much more complicated process—complicated by both his choices (Catholic conversion and marriage to an aristocrat) and his failures (divorce and economic collapse). As Michael Lützeler has argued, “Perhaps Josef Broch was far-seeing and showed sound sense in smoothing his son’s path to respect and security via the proven way of money and possessions instead of through public opinion’s attitude to the arts and sciences—an attitude which we have seen can swing from one extreme to the other.”²⁶⁶ The path to assimilation in Vienna

²⁶⁵ “Early on my grandfather [Josef Broch] , probably rebelling against this [strict Orthodox Judaism], renounced Judaism almost completely” (H. F. Broch de Rothermann, *Liebe Frau Strigl*, 3-4).

²⁶⁶ Lützeler, *A Biography*, 13.

was not always well marked and not always monolithic. As Jacques Le Rider has argued, Jewish identity in *fin-de-siècle* Vienna suffered from a crisis of multiplicity.²⁶⁷

Jewish history in Vienna was one marked by both success and tragedy. Three times in Viennese history, anti-Semitism led to the expulsion of the Jews. The first time was in 1421, when a pogrom led to the execution, expulsion, or forced conversion of the entire population. In *Lessingplatz* today, a plaque, written in Latin and celebrating the event, still remains. By the middle of the seventeenth century, the Viennese court allowed the re-establishment of a small and highly relegated community of Jews just across from the Danube (*Leopoldstadt*). This small community of “tolerated” Jews (only 500 families) was highly important for the financial operations of the court. By 1670, however, the obvious success of the trans-Danube community increased anti-Semitic feeling, and Leopold I had the community expelled. The destruction of the Jewish community this time was short lived because of the financial vacuum of their absence. In 1693, Leopold reopened Vienna to the Jews, though an even smaller community and with more restrictions on movement and heavy taxes.²⁶⁸

²⁶⁷ “The case of the assimilated Jew is more complex, for here a single individual combines, on the one hand, the non-Jew with his identity pathology and, on the other, the Jew with his forgotten Judaism and the Jewishness of his actual experience, in short, the ‘imaginary Jew.’” Jacques Le Rider, *Modernity and Crises of Identity: Culture and Society in fin-de-siècle Vienna*, translated by Rosemary Morris (Continuum Books, 1993), 6.

²⁶⁸ Robert Kann, *A History of the Habsburg Empire, 1526-1918* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974).

The Enlightened reforms of the Josephist Era (1780-1790) initially provided greater legal freedom to the Jews within the Habsburg Empire.²⁶⁹ These freedoms, however, were very limited, and, when combined with the conservative, Catholic nature of the Metternich era and the Emperors Francis I and Ferdinand I, the *Vormärz* era (pre-1848) reflected a very ambiguous period of Jewish acceptance in Viennese society. Overall, during the period between the Josephist Reforms and the 1848 Revolutions, Austria was far behind most of Europe in terms of Jewish emancipation. What developments did take place, took place in the realm of the wealthy banker and merchant class Jews, including an advancement of the German culture (*Bildung*) as the central tool for Jewish assimilation. It was not, however, until the rise of liberal constitutionalism following 1848 and its gaining ascendancy in the 1860s that a broad avenue for immigration, as well as economic and social integration opened for Jews.²⁷⁰

The nature of Jewish participation and assimilation in Vienna over the course of the remainder of the nineteenth century demonstrated the influence of two key factors: one, the legacy of *Vormärz* Jewish advancements in the guise of the *Hofjuden* (wealthy, Germanic, and assimilationist); two, the political relationship between the Monarchy and the rising liberal parties. The preponderance of assimilationist

²⁶⁹ 1781 Tolerance Act and the subsequent 1782 Patent of Tolerance removed many of legal restrictions surrounding schooling, apprenticeship, and freedom of movement for the Jews. See Berkeley, pp. 30-1. Berkeley also makes clear that some of the Josephist Reforms (the requirement of military service, the adaptation of German last names, and abolition of rabbinical courts) had the effect of forcing assimilation on the Jews of the Empire, a fact that served to alienate the provincial Jewish population.

²⁷⁰ From 1781 until 1938, the Jews of Vienna experienced increasing emancipation, but, with the annexation of Austria by Germany in 1938, the Jewish community of Vienna was once again destroyed, either by forced migration or removal to labor and death camps.

ideology within the Jewish merchant class, to which Josef Broch belonged, can be attributed to the presumed class affinity between Moravian and Bohemian Jewish immigrants and the *Vormärz Hoffjuden*. The connection between the Jewish middle class and liberalism on the other hand was the result of political developments in the middle years of the nineteenth century. As Malachi Hacoheh states: “The Austrian *Staatsgedanke* offered a patriotism the underlying rationale of which was not ethnonational but multinational, making Jewish participation unproblematic. It gave Jews an opportunity missing elsewhere for negotiating Jewish and national identity, and this became crucial once rifts opened between them and the Germans.”²⁷¹ The legacy of such cosmopolitanism was still visible in the post-Anschluss world of Viennese exiles, including Karl Popper and Hermann Broch.

By the mid-century, Habsburg political control both within and outside the Empire had entered a period of crisis. The external political relationship to Prussia and the internal relationship to the Hungarian territories provided two of the main sources for the erosion of Habsburg power from the mid-eighteenth century until its dissolution in 1918. Even before Maria Teresa’s succession in 1740 and as early as the Pragmatic Sanction of 1713,²⁷² the Habsburg monarchy ceded the Hungarians increased political status in exchange for internal support.

²⁷¹ Hacoheh, 49. Steven Beller also acknowledges the close relationship between liberalism, the Enlightenment and Jewish assimilation, “The Fortunes of the Jewish emancipation were intimately bound up with those of the political expression of the Enlightenment: liberalism” (*Vienna 1900*, 122).

²⁷² The Pragmatic Sanction is part of a complicated history of royal succession and the division of hereditary lands within the Habsburg family. In this case, it is important because it allows for female succession to the crown in the case of the extinction of all male lines. The dispute of the legality of female succession opened the way to the War of Austrian Succession in 1740.

Externally, the Austrians engaged Prussia in a battle for hegemony of the German lands of Europe.²⁷³ As the nineteenth century progressed, the formation of a German nation to replace the loose coalition of kingdoms and states became more and more a central question for the region, bringing back the question of Habsburg dominance. There were two main political solutions offered: the *Grössdeutsch* Solution and the *Kleindeutsch* Solution. The *Grössdeutsch* (large German) solution imagined a national German state under the leadership of the Habsburgs. It would unite all the German-speaking peoples of Central Europe under Austria, the traditional symbol of German power in the region.

The *Kleindeutsch* (small Germany) solution imagined union of the Northern and Western areas of Germany under the currently dominant German Kingdom of Prussia. Although the Habsburgs, as Holy Roman Emperors from the fifteenth to the nineteenth centuries, had a strong claim to the position of German Hegemon in terms of history and territory, the military and economic successes of the Prussian state had given the Prussians a pragmatic political edge. Additionally, the multinational nature of the Habsburg Empire (where Germans though politically dominant were in most parts of the Empire a numerical minority) made the small German solution much more appealing to the non-Austrian German states.

²⁷³ The War of Austrian Succession (1740-48) and the Seven Years War (1756-63) cost Austria the northern territory of Silesia and began a shift in power within Central Europe. The French Revolution and Napoleon would preempt this struggle somewhat, and, in fact, in the post-Napoleonic world Austria was able to reassert its position of dominance within the German Confederation. Austrian dominance, however, was more illusory than real.

When in the spring of 1848 a series of liberal revolutions spread across Europe,²⁷⁴ and the presence of Jews among the leading figures in the 1848 movements demonstrated that the March Revolutions represented a liberal program that had already created close ties to the growing Jewish community in Vienna. The Revolutions further pressured the structure of the Habsburg Empire and brought the question of German unity to the fore. In the Frankfurt Parliament, which convened in May 1848 and ended in March of 1849, the revolutionary delegates voted for the formation of a new German state that excluded Austria. The Crown for the new state was offered to the Prussian King Frederick William IV.²⁷⁵ The Parliament's decision to pursue the *Kleindeutsch* solution never materialized, because by 1849 the liberal revolutions throughout Europe had been overturned and the democratic governments driven out of power. The exclusion of Austria, however, set the stage for the next big conflict between the two German powers.²⁷⁶

²⁷⁴ In March of 1848, the enthusiasm and passion of the liberal revolution in Paris had reached the Austrian capital, where demonstrations and violence drove the court from Vienna (similar revolutions took place in Budapest) and eventually forced the abdication of Francis I. The conservative, Catholic power of the Metternich Era was threatened by a populist revolution that called for increased suffrage and greater economic and political freedom for the growing middle class. For several weeks following the uprising, the revolutionaries achieved impressive results. By October of 1848, however, the revolution came to a sudden and deadly end. The Imperial army entered Vienna and put down the revolutionaries, many of whom were killed in the fighting or later executed. In 1849, the army advanced to the Hungarian capital and ended the revolution there. The revolutions were not without its effects, however. Even when the monarchy reestablished control, it did so under a new monarch, Franz Joseph I, whose recognition of the new political forces of the bourgeoisie would over the next several decades become obvious; it would become especially obvious as external military defeats weakened his international position.

²⁷⁵ Frederick refused the Crown because a popularly elected body offered it. After the defeat of the revolutionary movement, however, Frederick put forth his own plan for German unity based very closely on that of the Frankfurt Parliament.

²⁷⁶ This conflict came in 1866 with the Seven Weeks War. Under prompting by Prussian Chancellor Bismarck, Austria and Prussia went to war over the administration of the German territory of Schleswig-Holstein. Prussia's victory was decisive and shocking. Following their defeat at

The exclusion of Austria from Germany also increased the internal problems of the Empire. German had been since Joseph II the official language of the Empire, and German culture the leading focus within the university, the bureaucracy, and the Court. The lack of any role in the establishment of a proper German state within Europe lengthened the divide within the Habsburg lands between German or German assimilated subjects and the non-Germans.²⁷⁷ German *Bildung* polarized a large portion of the Empire's population between those who saw the German direction of the Empire as chauvinistic and detrimental to Imperial unity (the Magyars, the Czechs, the Ruthenians, the Poles, the Slovenes, etc) and those who pushed for a union of the Germanic lands of the Empire with the new German state (German nationalists). In this polarized political atmosphere, the liberals, not seeing any contradiction between their ideology of individual freedom and nationalism, turned towards the latter. They set aside their revolutionary, democratic positions and moved towards one of *Realpolitik* and aristocratic support.

By 1850, the monarchy had reestablished conservative control of the Empire, but the revolution was not without its effects on remaining liberals. The new

Königgrätz,²⁷⁶ the Austrians were excluded from the affairs of German Confederation, renamed the North German Confederation, and from the eventual formation of Germany (1871) under Prussian leadership. Hitler's annexation [Anschluss] of Austria in 1938 marked the conclusion of the organization of Germanic lands within Europe, though Bismarck had long settled the question of hegemony in the mid-nineteenth century.

²⁷⁷ The loss of German hegemony, and the loss of Italy in 1859, added to the internal pressure of the monarchy as well. The most significant aspect of which was their relationship to Magyars in Hungary. In 1867 the monarchy and the Hungarians established a compromise (*Ausgleich*) that established the Kingdom of Hungary as an independent state. The kingdom still remained connected to the Habsburg court, but outside of foreign affairs, military operations, and currency, it was separate and autonomous from the other lands of the empire, which from 1867 were referred to as Cisleithania or Austria). The political needs of the monarchy, in the midst of its loss of Germanic hegemony (1866) and the splitting of the Empire (1867).

monarch, Franz Joseph I, recognized the new political forces of the bourgeoisie, and his policy over the next decades, especially as external military defeats weakened his international position, created a space for liberal, political advancement. The liberal parties in Vienna grew up around the remnants of the 1848 Revolutions, and their basic makeup was parliamentary, middle class, and German.

The political upheavals of the Empire had particular repercussions in Vienna and for young Josef Broch on his arrival in Vienna in the mid-1860s. The weakened position of Austria as a German power and the political effects of that weakness in terms of the Crown's internal power provided liberals with the opportunity for political advancement through cooperation with the monarchy. In hindsight, Josef Broch's worldview, his chosen path of assimilation (money and monarchy) offered some shelter from the disillusionment of failed cosmopolitanism. It could not, however, offer any shelter from the terror of National Socialism. And it did not, in the end, offer Hermann Broch a model for his own worldview; though it did instill a sense of duty in Broch that occupied a majority of his energies for the first two-thirds of his life.²⁷⁸

At Broch's birth, then, both the Empire and the city of Vienna were in transition. The demographic shifts in Vienna over the middle decades of the nineteenth century turned Vienna into a vastly different city, both in population size and population makeup. In size, Vienna grew from a city of several hundred thousand

²⁷⁸ To be discussed in detail below, Broch's sense of duty was born from a contestation between Broch's attempts to live the life of his father's choosing, while simultaneously pursuing his own desires to be a thinker and artist. Broch would eventually translate the series of approvals and disappointments that marked his life into a theory of potency and impotence.

to a city of over one million between 1848 and 1900. The source of this immigration was diverse, Jewish immigration represented over 20% of this growth. The Jewish population grew from several thousand to over forty thousand during this same period, eventually representing 10% of the overall population. The Jewish population in 1847 was only a couple of thousand in Vienna, but 1910 it was over 175,000. Although the general size of the Viennese population was increasing as well, from 400,000 to almost 2 million, the percentage of increase of Jews to Gentiles during this period was from under 2 % to almost 9%.²⁷⁹

Until the nineteenth century, Vienna's Jewish population was contained in the 2nd district (across the Danube canal from the city center). By the time of Broch's birth, however, the wealthier Jewish citizens had moved into either the 1st or 9th districts. The expansion of the Jewish population accompanied a major refashioning of the city. In the middle decades of the nineteenth century, the monarchy approved a rebuilding plan designed to modernize the city's appearance and to incorporate the inner city with the outer districts. Until this point, a medieval wall and a large military glacis separated the city center from the outer districts; Vienna had appeared and functioned as medieval city. The main thrust of the rebuilding program was the creation of a grand, circular boulevard, the *Ringstrasse*, which served as the main thoroughfare for moving around the city. The building program also reflected the changing political makeup of the city; as Carl Schorske points out, the construction of the Parliament building, city hall, the citizen's theatre, and the University along the

²⁷⁹ See Marsha Rozenbilt, *The Jews of Vienna, 1867-1914: Assimilation and Identity* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1983), 16-18.

Ringstrasse mirrored the growing influence of the middle class in Viennese politics and commerce.²⁸⁰ Transformation in Vienna was a particularly visible operation.

In his youth Broch lived in several homes in the 1st and 9th districts; his main home was on Gonzagagasse in the 1st district. These districts held the centers for shopping and business and were the location of University and the *Börse*. It was a world of status and materialism that contrasted greatly with the lower class districts such as Leopoldstadt or Florisdorf. Even though Broch's status as a Jew continued to exclude him from complete integration in upper class Viennese society, his youth still reflected a degree of affluence that, as Brigitte Hamann points out, made a strong impact on the unemployed and impoverished members of the city, members such as Adolf Hitler.²⁸¹

In this world, difference, including the tension between Jew and Gentile, was sustained and perpetuated by socially constructed methods of exclusion. These methods included settlement patterns, economic and religious practices, and education. Even the process of assimilation reinforced the patterns of exclusion. The work of Marsha Rozenbilt and Steven Beller demonstrate that the process of assimilation in Vienna at the turn of the century was by and large partial and incomplete. Jewish integration, even among wealthy, liberal, secular Jews, never overcame a visible sense of exclusion. Assimilated Jewish settlement patterns, burial

²⁸⁰ This is most clearly seen in the neo-classical architectural allusions to ancient republicanism. See Schorske, 24-115.

²⁸¹ Brigitte Hamann, *Hitler's Vienna : a dictator's apprenticeship*, translated by Thomas Thornton (New York : Oxford University Press), 1999.

practices, and educational paths could reflect a modern, even Christian, worldview, but Jews pursued these activities in the community of other Jews. “Jews institutionalized their separateness and created forums for publicizing Jewish identity in Vienna.”²⁸² In her book, Rozenbilt sets out and overturns the myth of total assimilation. She demonstrates through her examination of birth, marriage, and tax records that the Jews of Vienna certainly assimilated into the bourgeois, urban mores of nineteenth-century Vienna, but that such acculturation did not mean total assimilation or disappearance of their Jewish, group identity.

The work of Steven Beller and others has carried the issue of exclusion in Vienna even further. Beller has argued that the incomplete nature of assimilation created the intellectual world of *fin-de-siècle* Viennese modernism. The culture of Vienna 1900 was an expression of Jewish exclusivity, paradoxically, formed from the integrative process of assimilation. The modernist culture was an outsider’s culture created as an arena for tolerance and inclusion, but populated only by those denied access to German culture along traditional lines. Beller describes this modernist culture as critical, that is, marked by an ethical and intellectual engagement with society through its “emphasis on education, on the ethical side of life, and on individual responsibility.”²⁸³ For Rozenbilt and Beller, the social history of Viennese Jews meant a dogged commitment to the tools of assimilations and a simultaneous

²⁸² Rozenbilt, 9.

²⁸³ Steven Beller, “What is Austrian about Austrian Culture?” in *Weltanschauungen des Wiener Fin de Siècle 1900/2000: Festgabe für Kurt Rudolf Fischer zum achtzigsten Geburtstag*, edited by Gertraud Diem-Wille, Ludwig Nagl, and Friedrich Stadler (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2002) 35.

creation of an exclusively Jewish culture. In both cases, however, their arguments rely on universalized patterns of Jewish life. Broch, however, cut against these universalized patterns in many ways, and his experience forces us to consider an expanded source for the creation of the ethically based critical modernist culture.

In terms of assimilation, Broch was an exceptional case. Broch both intermarried and converted from Judaism, and, even though he developed into an important intellectual, he did not attend *Gymnasium*. All of these events marked Broch as statistically exceptional—less than one percent of Jews per annum converted in the first decade of the twentieth century²⁸⁴ and the intermarriage rate below 10% for pre-War Vienna.²⁸⁵ Moreover, on the surface, Broch's assimilation looked total and purposeful; yet, Broch provided no clear evidence that assimilation was a central aspect of his maturation. He made no claims about rejecting his Judaism out of a desire for social acceptance. The reality was that Broch's assimilation was not complete, and he never seemed to have wanted it to be or suspected it was. His Jewish identity and the abstract idea of the Jew as the exemplar of modernity informed his intellectual work from his adolescence to his exile.²⁸⁶ For Broch, assimilation operated within a larger context of an identity crisis based on familial and intellectual forces.²⁸⁷

²⁸⁴ Rozenbilt, 132.

²⁸⁵ Rozenbilt, 128.

²⁸⁶ Even if this were not the case, anti-Semitic politics under Lueger would have forced his Jewishness back on him.

²⁸⁷ Broch came to realize that in a pragmatic politic sense, however, it was his Jewishness that was the *sine quo non* of his social existence. Nevertheless, Broch continued to present the Jew not as unique in

Whatever the impetus for Broch's conversion and intermarriage, the result of assimilation was a key factor for Broch's later political theory. At the foundation of Broch's political theory was a desire for security of the individual. Broch's Total Democracy was based on the legal regulation of citizen interaction, i.e., punishing citizens who use violence or intimidation against fellow citizens. In Broch's mind democratic societies offered the most humane and ethical principles for allowing the individual the freedom and autonomy to act or negotiate their social world. The dream of a lone ego secured and empowered to pursue its own happiness reflect the emotional striving of a young man attempting to fashion an individual identity in the midst of being a Jew in a Christian Empire and a repressed son in the oppressive world of his father. In the end, Broch was more successful in charting his own freedom *vis-à-vis* his Jewishness than he was *vis-à-vis* his father.

Assimilation impacted Broch as a manifestation of modernity. It was to Broch another aspect of the fragmentation of modernity. Jacques Le Rider and Robert Halsall have examined the present of an identity crisis in turn of the century Vienna. Halsall's has examined the idea of a crisis specifically in Broch, which manifested itself around the necessity of assimilation. Halsall further argues that Broch produced out of his identity crisis a theory of autonomy. Clearly, Broch's search for the absolute source of ethical action supports Halsall's claims.²⁸⁸ The development of an

of his oppression, but simply exceptional in terms of his historical position at the forefront of modernity.

²⁸⁸ See Le Rider, *Modernity and Crises of Identity*, and Robert Halsall, *The Problem of Autonomy in the Works of the Hermann Broch*, (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2000).

ethically founded intellectual milieu in Vienna was, in the case of Broch, as much a result of his assimilation as it was of his intellectual encounter with the Catholic Baroque or multinationalism. By the turn of the century, and especially under the growth of Red Vienna, messiness of Austrian identity is equally as messy as Jewish. Broch was part of a messy tradition of Baroque, liberal, assimilated Judaism, and German idealism. The confusion of Broch's own sense of identity is important to understanding his approach to his value system and political theory.

The fact that Broch's mother came from an established upper middle class family, that Joseph Broch had designed a life for his sons outside of Vienna, and that Hermann Broch did not attend *Gymnasium*, all played into the actual depth of Broch's own assimilation. As Rozenbilt argues the *Gymnasium* did as much to foster an anti-assimilationist view as an assimilationist one. "It was the graduates of *Gymnasium* and university who created the political and intellectual movements which rejected the dominant assimilationist mentality of the Viennese Jewish community in the early twentieth century. Students, mostly at the university, first formulated Zionism and diaspora Jewish nationalism which challenged the nineteenth-century Jewish quest for assimilation."²⁸⁹ Broch entered the intellectual world from the side door, and his

²⁸⁹ Rozenbilt, 125. Rozenbilt further argues that the city of Vienna itself, while serving as the locus for assimilation did as much to promote Jewish exclusion: "The urban environment facilitated their rapid transformation, and for the most part they became typical Viennese burghers, but by no means did the urban setting lead to total assimilation and the end of Jewish group identity. On the contrary, in Vienna, Jews created patterns of economic and social behavior which continued to mark them as Jews both to themselves and to the outside world. Jews experienced assimilation in the company of other Jews. By living in predominantly Jewish neighborhoods, for example, and associating mostly with each other, Jews in Vienna prevented the kind of assimilation which might have led to the dissolution of the Jewish group. Jews did assimilate, but they also devised new ways of asserting Jewish identity, including Zionism and diaspora Jewish nationalism, which both perpetuated and justified Jewish distinctiveness" (Rozenbilt, 2-3).

exclusion (and in 1925 his rejection) of the *Gymnasium* and the University lessened Broch's commitment to both the assimilationist and anti-assimilationist world of Viennese intellectualism. Broch found in the intellectual world of Vienna an oasis from his practical life of an industrialist. Even though, the world Broch did encounter at the Viennese Cafes was an extension of the critical modernist world Beller described, Broch sought in that world to negotiate not just his Jewishness, but also his Austrianness and Germanness. Broch's exclusion from the world of German *Bildung* was, thus, two-fold; it was the result on the one hand of his Judaism and, on the other, of his father's worldview. It is difficult to separate the priority of these exclusionary forces in young Broch's mind. What is clear, however, is that in both of Broch's efforts to formulate a unified intellectual identity in *fin-de-siècle* Vienna materialized as an ethical duty. In pursuing this ethical goal, Broch sought a unity for his divided psyche—divided as much by the dichotomy of an intellectual living in the world of capitalist materialism as by a Jew living in a Christian Empire. In the end, Broch applied all aspects of his jumbled identity (his Jewish tradition, his business experience, and his metaphysical impulse) to his ethical task.

Josef Broch came to Vienna during a period of rapid expansion and a high rate of assimilation among Jewish families. This was the period of liberal ascendancy. By the time of his son's birth, however, the influence of liberalism as a political force in Vienna had started to wane, and by 1890 the Christian Socialist party of Lueger had gained control of Viennese politics and would hold a position of dominance until

1914.²⁹⁰ The liberal generation was marked by individualism, economic laissez faire, and by a commitment to democratic, constitutional government. This commitment also meant commitment to bureaucracy and the Court as a vehicle for stability. Paradoxically, however, liberalism's commitment to democracy and individualism was exclusive and elitist. Inclusion in the political sphere, which was envisioned and developed during the period of liberal ascendancy, required two key requirements: *Besitz und Kultur*, a commitment to business and to a cultural and bureaucratic society based on Germanic ideals. For Jews, this meant that they would need to assimilate to the German culture of the court. The model for such assimilation was already in place in Vienna within the limited and tightly restricted community of *Vörmärz* Jews. For Hermann Broch, the ties among assimilated Jews, the rising liberal parties, and the monarchy would not prove to be a model for his own political engagement. It would, however, inundate Broch's thought with clear links between democracy and individualism. As the relationship between Broch and his father will demonstrate, Broch could reject the underlying importance of economics in such an association, while retaining the notion of the individual as force for liberation.

After 1873, the Liberal party would retain a strong foundation within Austrian politics; it would do so only through a shift in demographic focus from bourgeois to artisan/farmers and from city to countryside.²⁹¹ Within Vienna, the adherents of

²⁹⁰ "German liberalism's brief period of dominance in the Reichrat came to an end in 1879, and the prospects of liberalism dimmed still further with the emergence of the mass parties in the 1880's" Luft, (*Robert Musil*, 11).

²⁹¹ See Pieter Judson, *Exclusive Revolutionaries: Liberal Politics, Social Experience, and National Identity in the Austrian Empire, 1848-1914* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1996), as well as the discussion below.

classical nineteenth-century liberalism had, through its close ties to the monarchy and its exclusionary (anti-democratic) political platform, isolated itself. The economic collapse of 1873 and its continuation in the following decade isolated the progressive forces even more. In terms of cultural and intellectual developments, the generational revolt between the fathers (liberals of the *Gründerzeit*) and their sons still expresses convincingly the increasing irrelevance of progressive forces within both Vienna and the Habsburg Empire (though not necessarily the Liberal Party).

Broch thus came of age in a Viennese political climate marked by transition and a growing tone of anti-Semitism. Broch's relationship to liberalism (its intellectual legacy) was, unsurprisingly, also conflicted. It is clear that the direct political platform of the Liberals did not dominate Broch's thought; nevertheless, key aspects of Viennese liberalism did, i.e., the importance of the individual rational actor (the unbound man) and a standard concern for the protection of minority right in a free society. In terms of social status and behavior, Broch also reflect a close connection to the dominant liberal class—the *haute bourgeoisie*. Even if his father had rejected assimilation along the lines of *Besitz und Kultur*, Broch's earlier life style, his apartment furnishings, his dress, and cultured manners tied him more closely to the high bourgeois world than to his father's business-oriented lifestyle.²⁹²

²⁹² The marriage pattern within Broch's family, both his own marriage and the marriage of his father, also deepened Broch's connection to Liberal Vienna, while at the same time adding more isolated, fragmentary pieces to the puzzle that made up his social existence. His father's marriage to Jewish aristocracy, spilt between urban business Jewish family and older more established Jewish families who were imitating more fully the aristocratic rural life. Broch's marriage into a Hungarian, gentile (Catholic) aristocratic family places Broch on the opposite side of the liberal/aristocratic bound. This furthers the fragmentary nature of Broch's development, while placing him deeper within the liberal tradition. "Galician Jews ... may have been more devoted than Bohemian, Moravian, Hungarian, or

In a sense, Broch took from the liberal tradition in Vienna everything that his father had left untouched. Hermann Broch chose *Kultur* and Josef Broch chose *Besitz*. Broch's father was clearly a member of the Jewish merchant class of the late 19th century, a class defined by its liberalism and its conservative attachment to the Monarchy; he was not, however, a typical member of the assimilated liberal Jewish class. It is within the realm of culture that Josef Broch deviated from the familiar picture of the assimilated Jew.²⁹³ Josef Broch's natural inclination was toward stability and money; Hermann Broch's natural inclination was toward culture and refinement. This did not exclude Hermann from enjoying the trapping of his privileged economic position;²⁹⁴ he did so, however, from an aristocratic stance in which he differentiated money from lifestyle. Broch, himself, makes this difference clear in an open letter from 1920 entitled *Die Strasse*, where he states: "Possessions possess me, not at all" (*Keinerlei Besitz besitzt mich*).²⁹⁵

The eclectic nature of liberalism's influence on Broch reflected an eclecticism in the tradition itself, which grew out of the political crisis of liberalism last decades of the 19th century. In his book on Robert Musil, David Luft clearly articulates the cultural tension created by the Vienna's liberal mandarins. For Luft, the tension

native Viennese Jews to asserting their Jewish identity and living a more consciously Jewish life" (Rozenbilit, 44).

²⁹³ Rozenbilit's statistical data suggests that as an industrialist, such a lifestyle need not be considered abnormal.

²⁹⁴ Broch's lifestyle, which was the embodiment of the dandy, was a testament to his close alliance to aristocratic activities and tastes.

²⁹⁵ Hermann Broch, *KW* 13/3, 30.

underlining Vienna's intellectual milieu at the turn of the century was twofold. First, there was the tension within Liberalism; it was a political tension between the liberal's close ties to the Habsburg aristocracy, what Luft describes as "the distinctive feature in the ideological inheritance of the Austrian liberal: the social and cultural emulation of an aristocracy . . . of display, cultivated pleasures, and social grace,"²⁹⁶ and the developing political forces of nationalism and mass parties, forces developing under a liberal parliamentary inheritance. The second tension was intellectual; it was a tension between the Viennese commitment to scientific materialism and their growing attachment to philosophical irrationalism. The former being heightened by the basic function of the latter.

Indeed, the post-Kantian tradition was generally resisted by Austrian intellectuals before 1900; although Viennese liberals were proud of their German culture, they were strongly influenced by French and English traditions of liberalism and by the German classicism and humanism of Lessing, Goethe, Schiller, and Wilhelm von Humboldt rather than by the familiar figures of post-Kantian idealism. In this context, what was emphasized after 1848 was primarily the liberation of the unbound man from the interference of the state in the development of capitalism and from the authority of the Roman Catholic church in education—and the new opportunities for men of property and education to participate in a representative political process.²⁹⁷

Individualism, certainly plays a major role in Broch's thought, but for the most part this role was encapsulated in the Kantian notion of the ego. Nevertheless, the liberal

²⁹⁶ Luft, *Robert Musil*, 11.

²⁹⁷ David S. Luft, *Eros and Inwardness in Vienna: Weininger, Musil, Doderer* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003) 7.

tradition of the autonomous actor in a political sense also developed in Broch and found its expression in his political work on the role of the intellectual in post-War era.²⁹⁸

The example of Hermann Broch and his connections to the liberal, progressive traditions of the 19th century was not isolated. The work of Malachi Hacoen on Karl Popper traces out a similar cultural legacy for the progressive tradition. Much of Hacoen's *fin de siècle* Vienna is a familiar one, seen in both Schorske and Luft, *vis-à-vis* liberalism. But Hacoen highlights the progressive, reformed-minded culture of Viennese liberalism—a culture that Hacoen argues survived the late 19th century crisis of liberalism and the rise of Christian Socialism and ethnonationalism in at least a limited fashion. The eventual rise of fascism would sound the final death knell for this culture at the end of the First Republic, but not without fostering an intellectual and cultural legacy for Austrian exiles such as Karl Popper.

Hacoen is an important contribution to the way we conceive the crisis of liberalism in *fin-de-siècle* Vienna, for he suggests that the legacy of liberalism within the intellectual world of the early 20th century should not be seen simply as a failure. With both Popper and Broch, we see that aspects of the liberal tradition continued to inform political thought not only in the First Republic, but even into the exile of thinkers of the generation of 1905. That is not to say, however, that the influence was uniform and constant. Broch was not a clear and obvious member of Hacoen's

²⁹⁸ See chapter 6.

progressive, *Spätaufklärung*.²⁹⁹ Broch's Jewish identity was more complicated, his assimilation more tied to business and social standing than to Austrian-German cultural markers. Broch was not *Gymnasium* trained, he converted to Catholicism and married into an aristocrat family, and he was a businessman and a manufacturer. Furthermore, Broch's political theory rested more heavily on the balance of rationality and irrationality than did that of Karl Popper's.

Born in 1886, Hermann Broch was clearly not a representative member of Carl Schorske's liberal generation or even his generation of rebel sons. Broch's thought and his political stance did not reflect an extreme commitment to liberalism, in fact, his socialist tinted democracy and his close connections to the thought of Otto Bauer and Victor Adler, made him much more an Austrian Marxist than a liberal. He did not fit the liberal mode, neither the cosmopolitan, progressive liberal described by Hacoen or the more conservative, pro-business, pro-Monarchy brand of his father. Yet, the influence of liberalism, especially its influence within in assimilated Jewish culture must be recognized. He did develop his political thought within three key aspects of the liberal *Gründerzeit*: 1) democracy as the basis for political institutions 2) the unbound individual 3) bourgeois, assimilated lifestyle.

Broch's key influences in his youth were liberal. His father, a businessman and assimilated Jew, was dependent on the Emperor and the aristocracy as a means for legal protection and economic security (his speculations and his factory production were supported by government contracts). The close ties between the aristocracy and

²⁹⁹ Nor does Hacoen make this claim.

the Viennese Liberals made the aristocracy necessary, but the aristocracy also remained impenetrable to the haute bourgeoisie, especially the urban Jews.

Having been educated in the world of *fin-de-siècle* Vienna, Broch was a humanist, an individualist, and a democrat. He lived the assimilated life implied in his father's liberal, bourgeois world. But, politically he was limited in his choices owing to his own rejection of money and the anti-Semitic turn of the Christian Socialist and the pan-Germanists. Austro-Marxism at the turn of the century was certainly attractive to Broch on many levels. He knew, read, and admired the central intellectuals behind the movement—Bauer, Adler, etc. Austro-Marxism, however, had limits in its attractions. By the end of the First World War, these limits had led to a clear rejection of Austro-Marxism because of Broch's rejection of Marxist materialism and its exterminationalist rhetoric *vis-à-vis* the middle class.³⁰⁰ Broch lived in the world of the High Bürgertum, but he rejected any mainstream political viewpoint. On some level this may seem to indicate that Broch was not an engaged intellectual. But, it is clear that Broch was engaged in questions of cultural degeneracy. As Wendelin Schmidt-Dengler states in an article on “*Die Straße*,” one of Broch's earliest political tracts: “Broch appears to have sought a place equidistant from all positions, a place where no one could attack him. But only a cursory consideration would lead one to assess all the author's reactions to the events as apolitical, for especially in Broch's case, it is precisely in condemning the political so

³⁰⁰ See Paul Michael Lützeler, Hermann Broch, *Ethik und Politik: Studien zum Frühwerk und zur Romantrilogie “Die Schlafwandler”* (München: Winkler, 1973), 33-58.

ruthlessly that he reveals his keen interest.”³⁰¹ From assimilation to liberalism, Broch’s experience in turn of the century Vienna, left a lasting mark on his political and ethical approach to life. In the next two chapters, I will trace out the other influences in Broch’s Viennese context that contributed to his humanistic approach to politics and democracy: his familial relationships and psychological development.

³⁰¹ Wendelin Schmidt-Dengler, “‘Kurzum die Hölle’: Broch’s Early Political Text ‘Die Strasse’ in *Hermann Broch, Visionary in Exile: The 2001 Yale Symposium*, edited by Paul Michael Lützeler (Rochester, NY: Camden House: 2003), 58-9.

Chapter Five

From Business Man to Intellectual:

Broch's Dual Life in Vienna, 1908-1925

Broch felt that his true intellectual calling was mathematics; however, his father's choice to limit Broch's endeavors to the world of business pushed Broch's intellectual inquiries in other directions. Thus, Broch's inquiries from his adolescence to emigration sought to explain the disintegration of values in Western society took place through self-education and journalistic engagement in the intellectual debates of German speaking Europe. Eclecticism was the result of Broch's part-time position as an intellectual, and it is not surprising that in such a situation the political implications of Broch's ethical theories remained under-developed.³⁰² Broch's intellectual work, from his earliest writing in 1908 until his separation from his family and the world of business in 1925, diagnosed modern society's ethical relativism, but his historical and personal context (especially the process of assimilation and a generally conservative outlook) prevented Broch from rejecting the very society he found so diseased. In this chapter, I explore the relationship between his assimilation into the secular world of German *Kultur* and his political, ethical engagement with European modernity.

For Broch, modernity was the over-abundance of valueless ideologies in the face of a "value vacuum," that is, a "disintegration of values" into ethical relativism.

Much of his early work defined the embodiment of such a vacuum in modern

³⁰² See Richard Brinkman, "Zu Brochs Symbolbegriff," in *Brochs theoretisches Werk*, edited by Michael Lützeler and Michael Kessler (Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1988), 35 and Ernestine Schlant, *Hermann Broch* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1978), 13-26.

culture—from aesthetics to science. In particular, Broch saw Jewish assimilation in the modern world as the quintessential example of such a hypertrophy of particular values over universal ones. His early writing suggested the weaknesses of modern political ideologies that ignored the importance of humanism, but these ideas were not translated into the active political theorizing seen in Broch’s work from the late 1930s to the end of his life. I examine the implications of Broch’s cultural criticism from 1908 to 1925 for his later attempts to found a politics of critical humanism, and I suggest why his political theory failed to mature fully during that period.

The key characteristics of modern, ethical relativism—the psychic division of responsibility and modern man’s³⁰³ angst in the face of death—also marked Broch’s individual life. In pursuing the connections between his private life and his maturing world view, I isolate the key aspects of Broch’s political humanism that he carried with him to the United States: his Jewish heritage, his marriage to a Catholic noble, his family relationships, and his technical education. Although it was only outside the context of his Viennese milieu or perhaps more appropriately after the destruction of the European world of his youth that Broch’s humanist idealism turned openly political; clearly the basis for Broch’s individual centered, humanist politics was established in Vienna.

³⁰³ Throughout the dissertation, I use the term “man” because it reflects Broch’s own thought. At times, Broch’s understanding of “man” refers to human being (when the German clearly makes this distinction through the use of Mensch over der Mann, I reflect that in my discussion). In general, however, the male gendered discussion of science, thought, epistemology, ethics, philosophy and the like implied in the term “man” are clearly present in Broch’s mind, some times explicitly stated. My use of the term “man” thus conveys the historical context, though it should not be seen as condoning it. The subject of Broch and gender will be discussed in subsequent chapters.

As I showed in the last chapter, Broch's assimilation into the Austrian *Bürgertum* was the result of his geographical and temporal location—he was born into a culture of assimilation. There were many factors that facilitated his assimilation. Most of these forces were institutional and socio-cultural, and they were also for the most part out of Broch's control. Of these forces, the most immediate and pressing were the economic and demographic shifts within the Habsburg Empire during the nineteenth century, particularly among Jewish families. These factors were addressed in the last chapter, and they formed the outline of Broch's process of assimilation. Beyond these larger forces of history, there were everyday forces impacting Broch's intellectual development and, thus, shaping his future political theory.

The most direct though least documented force was Broch's family heritage, his Jewishness. Family legend held that Broch's great grandfather “was a kind of wonder rabbi with extraordinary mathematical powers.”³⁰⁴ The esteem for learning, philology, and ethics was clearly present in Broch's family.³⁰⁵ It is clear from familial letters that even Broch's father, who openly rejected an education or lifestyle centered on these concepts, was deeply imbued with a wit and intellectual depth reflective of thoughtful cultivation. Since Josef Broch left home in his early teens and immediately entered textile trading on his arrival in Vienna, it seems that his penchant for intellectual activity was spread through cultural osmosis within the

Kultusgemeinschaft. In Hermann Broch's letters and notebooks there was repeated

³⁰⁴ Lützeler, *Hermann Broch: A Biography*, translated by Janice Furness (London: Quartet Books, 1987), 4.

³⁰⁵ Lützeler points out in his biography of Broch that he may have been, as Broch himself claimed to be, “distantly related” to the philosopher Edmund Husserl. See Lützeler page 4.

use of both Yiddish and Hebrew terminology, as well as cultural idioms that indicated the presence and power of the Jewish intellectual culture even in the businessman atmosphere of Josef Broch's home.³⁰⁶

From his letters, it was clear that Broch's knowledge of the Bible and Hebrew came not simply from absorption at home, but from his involvement in the traditions and culture of the Jewish community in Vienna. Sigurd Paul Scheichl claims that Broch's ancestry played an important role in his stylization, especially in terms of his use of humor. At times, Broch employed Yiddish and Hebrew in an ironic sense; irony was a general Viennese cultural idiom. In his personal correspondence, however, as with his editor Daniel Brody, Broch's use of both Yiddish and Hebrew was "a means of intensifying his communication with a man, with whom Broch shared a common socialization and ancestry."³⁰⁷ Scholars such as Steven Beller and George Steiner have argued that such intellectualism was a cultural trait directly connected to Judaism.³⁰⁸ Clearly, Broch's Judaism was a distinctive aspect of his mind, his family life, and the general intellectual milieu of Vienna 1900.

As often as not, however, the presence of Jewish cultural references in Broch's letters and literary work reflected not simply a connection to tradition, but also an

³⁰⁶ See Sigurd Paul Scheichl "'Nebbich noch immer Princeton Hospital,' *Jüdische Selbststilisierung in Brochs Briefen an Daniel Brody*," and Hartmut Steinecke "'Unpersönlich bin ich ein Opfer,' *Jüdische Spuren im Spätwerk Hermann Brochs*," in *Hermann Broch, Neue Studien: Festschrift für Paul Michael Lützel zum 60. Geburtstag*, edited by Michael Kessler (Stauffenburg Verlag, 2003), 362-78 and 379-94.

³⁰⁷ Sigurd Paul Scheichl, 378. Scheichl examines Broch's "Jewish Stylization" in terms of his letter exchange with Daniel Brody, who was like Broch a citizen and Jew of the Austrian Empire.

³⁰⁸ Comments by Steven Beller, German Studies Association, Fall 2004.

awareness of the fractured life of the modern, assimilated Jew. The image of the Jew became for Broch the exemplar of the cultural degeneration of the modern age. The Jew was not the sole locus of this phenomenon but its most visible expression. In terms of *anomie* or the fracturing of community, Broch stated, “The most important Jewish characteristic has become his ‘*Unbedingtheit* (unconditionality),’ which in an age of value destruction is clearly no longer justified through religion, but on the level of individual values. That makes the Jew the strange prototype of modern life.”³⁰⁹ He goes on to state:

And so it stands that the Jew, having lived through many centuries in a kind of stunted tradition, finds himself through emancipation transferred into a completely different stream of tradition, i.e., he is suddenly requested to reorder himself in this new world, which had been his father’s and his father’s father’s fiercest enemy, and which with its latent hostility, as he clearly perceives, invariably maintains its opposition to him—either he recoils in fear, therefore, before this task and builds for himself a kind of freely chosen Ghetto community, a strange hermaphroditic cross between modernity and a persistently atrophying tradition, in which everyone of the so-called Jewish characteristics awkwardly hypertrophies ever rampantly; or he plunges himself with all intensity into the foreign stream of tradition, in order to make himself, through a sort of Über-assimilation, unrecognizable to himself and his neighbors.³¹⁰

Broch’s self-conception as a prototype of modern man—fractured and psychically imbalanced—was an important source of his political and ethical theory. It helped to

³⁰⁹ Hermann Broch, *KW* 12, 399.

³¹⁰ *KW* 12, 394.

explain the dichotomy between duty and impotence that was central to Broch's diagnosis of a value vacuum in modern society.

Nevertheless, it is not enough to claim that Broch's ethical concerns were purely the result of his Jewishness. Steven Beller argues that Vienna's "critical modernist culture," in which Broch was an active participant, had Jewishness as its most exclusive characteristic.³¹¹ Broch's life both supports and questions this claim. In terms of historical context, the second half of the nineteenth century marked a shift towards the questions of irrationality and desire. In this new intellectual terrain, the tendency to chart or explain the non-rational world through a merging of philosophical tradition and personal experience was widespread: Arthur Schopenhauer and his father's suicide as one of the sources for his rejection of the will, Freud's train ride to Vienna as a source for his Oedipus Complex, Nietzsche's and Kierkegaard's relationships to their Protestant, patriarchal upbringing as a source for their rejection of contemporary Christianity.

Broch's lifelong struggle with the fear of impotence and his neurotic commitment to duty reflected his own linkage between familial tensions and his mass psychological interpretation of modern man: modern man, oscillating between a duty to his fellow citizen and a paralyzing sense of impotence, became unable to pursue an ethical life based on individual cognition. He reverted to a pre-packaged value system: art for art sake, business is business, national or racial chauvinism. From an

³¹¹ See "Introduction," in *Revisiting Vienna 1900*, edited by Steven Beller (New York: Berghahn Books, 2001). The term critical modernism means for Beller and other scholars, the presence of an artistic/intellectual cadre in Vienna 1900 that openly engaged in the problems of ethics, as opposed to escaping into the world of art.

examination of Broch's life it is evident that ethics and the notion of an unanchored modern "self" developed out of Broch's family heritage—as did the impulse for such deep immersion into the German, Western intellectual tradition. As Steven Aschheim points out, Broch's intellectual stance towards Judaism in Vienna not only tied the Jew to modernity, but implicated him or her in the destruction of modern civilization's value system.³¹² Broch's critique of modernity and ideas of impotence were not simply the result of his connection to this general European intellectual movement. It was also, on a personal level, a reflection of Broch's own psychological relationship to his father and brother—to be discussed below.

The source of impotence for modern man came from the individual and his fear of death. In modern society this fear was heightened because the old value system based on God had become "closed" (dead), and modern science had destroyed the central tenets of individual cognition; yet, advances in science did not provide solid footing for building a new, absolute source of cognition. The individual was left floundering between tradition and relativity of knowledge. For many, the breakdown of any restriction on human knowledge, the unbound potential of human questioning and scientific experiment was a positive step toward freedom. It contained a paradigmatic trust in progress. Broch, however, as early as 1908 had developed a cultural critique that questioned the unabashed commitment to progress, while at the same time condemning the culture of pleasure and valueless art that characterized the artistic world of Vienna.

³¹² Steven E. Aschheim, *Culture and Catastrophe: German and Jewish Confrontations with National Socialism and Other Crises* (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 86.

The novelty of the unconscious in the age of positivism was not an exclusively Jewish phenomenon, and, in examining the personal influence on Broch's political theory, we must consider not only his Jewish tradition, but also his relationship to the non-Jewish culture of Europe. As a Jew, Broch saw himself as the prototype for modernity; the cultural and intellectual tools he used to readdress the issues of modernity were, however, only partly an extension or expression of his Judaism. . In his notebooks from 1908, titled *Kultur 1908/1909*, Broch pursued the questions of ethics, arts, and the individual.³¹³ Here the influences were not directly Jewish. The influences of the German intellectual tradition of Lebensphilosophie, as well as that of Friedrich Nietzsche and Karl Kraus are visible. It can be concluded at a minimum that we must look beyond Broch's family heritage and examine his development in terms of specific relationships and intellectual choices.

A brief summary of such relationships and choices indicates the necessity to pursue more specifically Broch's maturation—intellectually and personally. He demonstrated a strong attraction to Hebrew language and culture at an early age. As a young man, he sought grace and harmony in Austrian Catholicism; in middle age, especially in his novel *The Death of Virgil*, he explored the implications of Platonic, Christian notions of beauty and love; at the end of his life, he displayed a greater appreciation for the role of Judaism in his *Weltanschauung*. In short, Broch connected his intellectualism to his Jewish heritage, but he also turned to Catholicism and

³¹³ For the best discussion of Broch's philosophical and aesthetic theory in his youth see Monika Ritzer, *Hermann Broch und die Kulturkrise des frühen 20. Jahrhunderts* (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzlersche Verlag, 1988), 19-54 and Paul Michael Lützeler, *Hermann Broch, Ethik und Politik: Studien zum Frühwerk und zur Romantrilogie "Die Schlafwandler"* (Munich: Winkler Verlag, 1973), 15-43.

Christian notions of agape to oppose the modern predicament of a valueless world.

Certainly Broch's relationships to Christianity and Judaism were throughout his life contradictory. His conversion to Catholicism was, for example, a somewhat unconventional choice,³¹⁴ and there is evidence to suggest a greater importance to Broch's 1909 conversion to Catholicism than social necessity alone.³¹⁵ Though the reasons for Broch's conversion are difficult to judge owing to the paucity of evidence, social necessity seemed only to touch the surface of Broch's relationship to Christianity. As Michael Lützeler points out, there was a noticeable attraction in Broch to the cult of the Virgin; furthermore, the importance of the Baroque in Habsburg culture had a strong influence on Broch's attraction to Catholicism. Broch's conversion seemed to have as much to do with internalization of Viennese German culture in his intellect and his ego than with an outward attempt at cultural or social assimilation.

Broch sought in his early attraction to Catholicism a connection to the beauty and tradition of the Baroque and Biedermeier. It was a universal, artistic justification for a socially consistent and stable world, something lacking in his interpersonal

³¹⁴ See Marsha L. Rozenbilt, *The Jews of Vienna, 1867-1914: Assimilation and Identity* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1983), 136. Rozenbilt's statistics demonstrate that about 50% of all Jewish converts in Vienna entered the Roman Catholic Faith (a surprisingly small number in the capital city of a Catholic Empire), but the majority of this 50% were female. In terms of the reasons for conversion, Rozenbilt argues that religious conviction played a limited role, "Most converts changed religion for pragmatic reasons. Conversion of reasons of personal belief may have been the exception," (136). Since I argue that there is evidence for Broch's conversion as a statement of religious belief, this is yet another example of the "exceptional" nature of Broch's assimilation process.

³¹⁵ In that same year, Broch married Franziska von Rothermann, a Catholic, Hungarian noble. But, as Michael Lützeler argued, Broch's character "inclined towards Catholicism." Lützeler suggests that the parallel between Broch's life and the pseudo-autobiographical events of his first novel, *The Sleepwalkers* provide fertile ground for exploring Broch's young worldview. I build on this suggestion throughout my chapter. See Paul Michael Lützeler, *A Biography*, 26-29.

relationships in own household and in the perpetual mobility of his family's social positioning. Catholicism provided a harmony of existence between duty and the individual experience of love. Philosophically, Platonism played this same role for Broch, uniting eternal beauty and earthly life. In an outline for a proposed novel (written in 1947), *The Victorious Defeat*,³¹⁶ Broch sketched the familial background of the novel's hero. The outline suggests an autobiographical insight to Broch's own relationship to his family and to conversion—such autobiographical allusions are visible in much of Broch's work. In this case, we must read “Jew” for “Protestant” in the last sentence:

The cult of the Virgin in Catholicism touches him suddenly, and for a moment he thinks that this sensation is the grace (about which he never had the slightest real idea). He begins to attend Catholic services, and these secret church visits are a repetition of his secret readings in the library of his parents. He doesn't know that it is a repetition, but he feels himself in the same mood, and there is also the mood of opposition against his father in it. However, it is just this parallelism which is one of the causes for the failure of his catholic experiment: he couldn't become the poet, he wished to be during his boyhood, and now he can't become the Catholic believer; instead of being a poet he is preparing himself for entering in the family business, and instead of changing religion he remains a Protestant [a Jew]³¹⁷ like his ancestors.³¹⁸

³¹⁶ Broch presented the outline to the American novelist France Colby as possible project for her. The outline is in Broch Archive at the Beinecke Library, Yale and can be found in a footnote to Broch's letter to Erich von Kahler in Hermann Broch, *KW* 13/3, 173.

³¹⁷ My addition.

³¹⁸ Hermann Broch, *KW* 13/3, 173.

The passage suggests that Broch's conversion was an honest but failed attempt to define his intellectual and spiritual world based on emotional responses to the context around him.³¹⁹ In his "Disintegration of Values,"³²⁰ Broch separated both Judaism and Protestantism from Catholicism. He separated "the Catholic harmony of values" from "absolute Protestantism which involves abasement before an abstract God." And it is the Jew who exemplifies this separation most:

The Jew, by virtue of the abstract rigour of his conception of infinity, is the really modern, the most 'advanced' man *kat' exochen*: he it is who surrenders himself with absolute radicality to whatever system of values, whatever career he has chosen; he it is who raises his profession, even though it be a means of livelihood taken up by chance, to a hitherto unknown absolute pitch; he it is who, unconditionally and ruthlessly following up his actions without reference to any other system of values, attains the highest summit of spiritual enlightenment or sinks to the most brutal absorption in material things: in good as in evil a creature of extremes—it looks as though the current of the absolute Abstract which for two thousand years has flowed through the ghettos like an almost imperceptible trickle beside the great river of life should now become the main stream; it is as if the radicality of Protestant thought had inflamed to virulence all the dread ruthlessness of abstraction which for two thousand years had been sheltered by insignificance and reduced it to its minimum, as if it had released that absolute power of indefinite extension which inheres potentially in the pure Abstract alone, released it explosively to shatter our age and transform the hitherto unregarded warden of abstract thought into the paradigmatic incarnation of our disintegrating epoch.³²¹

³¹⁹ For a discussion of Catholicism in Broch's writing see Richard Brinkmann, "On Broch's Concept of Symbol," in *Hermann Broch: Literature, Philosophy, Politics*, edited by Stephen D. Dowden (Columbia, SC: Camden Books, 1988), 202 ff.

³²⁰ Hermann Broch, *The Sleepwalkers*, translated by Willa and Edwin Muir (New York: Vintage Books, 1945), 525-529.

³²¹ *The Sleepwalkers*, 526.

Broch's critical stance toward the "neutralization of the religious experience" suggested that his early, albeit failed, attraction to Catholicism reflected an intellectual conservatism and an intellectual commitment to Austrian tradition—Catholic and Baroque.

His characterization of the psychic split caused by Judaism also reflects two extreme views of the Jew in nineteenth century Vienna, one clearly reminiscent of his father (materialistic businessman) and the other reminiscent of Broch himself (a Christian mystic). Broch came to understand his conversion as a playing of the Oedipal battle of father and son, which he believed characterized his entire relationship to his father (see below). David Luft observes a similar, spiritual impulse towards Christianity and away from Judaism in the conflicted personality of Otto Weininger.³²²

Catholicism never produced the ultimate source of value for Broch, but it exposed an essential conservatism in his thought. The problem, in the end, was that Catholicism's access to a universalizing power came only through obedience to a Church structure, which had lost its claims to value creation through the social hypertrophy of late Middle Ages—the Inquisition and the Counter-Reformation. After the failure of Catholicism, Broch's solution would have to emerge from the region of the individual. It was here that Broch's Platonism met Kant's moral philosophy.

³²² See David S. Luft, *Eros and Inwardness* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), especially Chapter 2.

Broch located the space for the modern “conversion process” in the individual ego.³²³ This time conversion would not be religious, but secular and humanistic. As we shall see, Kant was not Broch’s only guide to the ego; psychoanalysis (both in terms of Freud and Alder) also played a part. It was also in his developing Kantian thought that the basis for individual as the source of value production came. As seen from his limited political writing from the period of the First World War, Kant also played a significant role in the formation of Broch’s human centered political theory.³²⁴

In the same year as his conversion to Catholicism, Broch began his required military service. Military service was an opportunity to satisfy further the desires of Broch’s father; it would turn out, however, to be another opportunity for disappointing his father’s expectations. Broch chose to volunteer for the Third Ulan Regiment in Vienna.³²⁵ Josef Broch was highly supportive of Broch’s decision; for he, like many émigré Jews and textile industrialists, had a strong connection to the monarchy, which served as the symbol for their continued financial security.³²⁶ During the First World War, Broch’s father had another opportunity to demonstrate his patriotism by sinking a large amount of the family fortune into Austrian war bonds; such blind support for the dying monarchy nearly cost the family their factory.³²⁷

³²³ See Hermann Broch, *KW* 12, 331-455.

³²⁴ Discussed below.

³²⁵ See Paul Michael Lützeler, *A Biography*, for a discussion of why this choice was both odd and problematic for Broch, who “was hardly an embodiment of the bold brave warrior (the meaning of the Tartar word ‘Ulan’),” 27-28.

³²⁶ Lützeler, *A Biography*, 37.

³²⁷ Lützeler, *A Biography*, 35-7.

Broch's military service, which would normally have been twelve months, lasted only five months. Shortly after reporting to the cavalry division, Broch had been reassigned to an artillery division in Croatia-Slovenia. Broch did not possess the warrior mind or body required of the Ulan Cavalry division, and even in Croatia his physical weakness prematurely ended his service. He was discharged from the army on 26 October 1909 because of medical complications.³²⁸ The obvious incomparability between Broch's mentality and the military life did not, however, produce any open conflicts or public rejections of the Empire. In fact, Broch volunteered for service again in 1914, only to be rejected for medical reasons, and he served as the civilian head of an army hospital located at the family factory in Teesdorf. Nevertheless, the tension between Broch's introspective and humanistic psyche and his patriotism was quite apparent.

Broch's failure at army service indicated a mental and physical composition that would not fit into the world constructed for him by his father; this fact could only have heightened the disillusionment and anger felt by Broch's father years later, when Broch sold the family factory in order to pursue his academic interests. Further aggravating Broch's failure as a soldier was the success of his brother Fritz, who had a longer and more successful career in the Austrian air force.³²⁹ The situation led to an

³²⁸ Lützel, *A Biography*, 27-8.

³²⁹ In his description of Fritz and his military service, Hermann Broch's son paints a clear picture of the tension: "My uncle Fritz had become a lieutenant in one of the dragoon regiments at the start of the war, had been wounded in Galicia, was transferred to aviation reconnaissance, and returned home in 1918 as a dashing cavalry captain. He was treated as a hero." H. F. Broch de Rothermann, *Liebe Frau Strigl: A Memoir of Hermann Broch by his Son*, translated by John Hargraves (New Haven, CT: The Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, 2001), 28.

increased distance between the brothers, and between father and son. As his *Self Psycho-Analysis* (written in the early 1940s) demonstrated, Broch felt that there was very early in his life a clear emotional separation between both his brother and his father and himself. This relationship found expression in the first volume of *The Sleepwalkers* as well. Where the eldest son, Pasenow, continually disappoints his father, and where the younger son possesses a seemingly organic connection to the father. Broch's failure as a soldier made it more evident to him that the life he was leading and the life he felt destined for were two separate and irresolvable goals. Although Broch remained faithful to his family's wishes throughout these years, the seismic ruptures were already beginning to show. The tension was felt in childhood, expressed in his conflict over education, and exasperated by his inability to play the role set out for him by his father.

Broch's opportunities to disappoint his father and family did not end with his military failure. Just prior to his military service, Broch began to court Franziska von Rothermann.³³⁰ The relationship led to marriage in 1909 and to the birth of a son, Hermann Friedrich, in 1910. The notion of marriage was, of course, not problematic for Broch's father, but his choice of bride was. For Franziska von Rothermann was aristocratic and Catholic. Although intermarriage between Jews and Catholics was not unheard of in Vienna at this period, it was not the path of assimilation that Josef Broch had desired.³³¹ It was not a decision with which the von Rothermanns agreed either.

³³⁰ See Lützel, *A Biography*, 24-7.

³³¹ See Marsha Rozenbilt, chapter 6.

In the end, it was not a decision that pleased anyone, Hermann and Franziska included.³³²

Broch's marriage to Franziska von Rothermann reflected a youthful (and Germanic) romanticism more than a desire for simple social elevation or assimilation. It was, however, a testament to Broch's well-developed sensibilities in both dress and conversation that the union ever moved beyond the stage of courtship. As Lützeler describes, "All members of the Rothermann family soon succumbed to his diplomacy, his elegant appearance, his sensitivity, charm and modesty."³³³ The union indicated Broch's familiarity with the cultural and social world of the Habsburg aristocracy. Before his marriage to Franziska, Broch had to spend more than a year "charming" the von Rothermanns. Broch's upper middle class status allowed Broch to indulge materially in the world of haute bourgeois:

he had discovered the pleasures of wealth's externals, and in accord with his strongly developed aesthetic sense he had become quite the dandy. His tastes were always conservative—his whole life he wore only grey and black suits in winter, white and yellow linen suits in summer, and never anything but white shirts with black knit ties ... at least fifty suits and coats and the same number of shoes were carefully hung and stored in the wardrobe which was specially built for them in Teesdorf ... In his courtship days he was not just very fashionable, but also an extremely impressive figure, and it would not have required his

³³² The correspondence between Hermann and Franziska in the Broch Archive demonstrate that the attraction and emotional connection between the two was real and deep.

³³³ Lützeler, *A Biography*, 26.

collection of canes and tobacco-tins to lend him a truly aristocratic appearance.³³⁴

Pictures from the time also attest to Broch's fashionable appearance and his elegant style. It is clear from pictures of his home and apartments,³³⁵ as well as family pictures, that Broch lived in the manner of the upper middle class bourgeois (which meant aristocratic) culture of late 19th century Vienna.³³⁶ It was an identity that infused Broch's matter of dress and his social sensibility with an inherent conservatism. It is not surprising then that Broch's limited political theorizing from this period reflect a similar conservatism.

Broch's charm and social graces won over the affections of Franziska's family, and with his conversion to Catholicism,³³⁷ the last barrier to marriage was overcome. Broch's aristocratic appearance and his new faith, however, could not nullify the reality of the two families' divergent social and economic worldviews. The contrast between the business-oriented world of Josef Broch, who, although dressing and playing the part of a bourgeois gentleman, had neither the money nor social flexibility to imitate the world in which the von Rothermanns lived. "The Rothermanns were an

³³⁴ H. F. Broch de Rothermann, *Liebe Frau Strigl*, 15-6. The description of the Franziska von Rothermann and her family, which the following pages provide, comes from the memoir of Broch's son Hermann F. M. Broch de Rothermann.

³³⁵ See appendix 1 for a floor plan of Broch's home in Teesdorf, Austria. The Broch family also maintained a large apartment in Vienna.

³³⁶ See *Spiegelungen: Denkbilder zur Biographie Brochs*, edited by Karin Mack and Wolfgang Hofer, (Vienna: Sonderzahl, 1984) for pictorial biography of Broch, including photographs of letters, furniture, and personal positions, as well as family and friends. Original photographs can be seen at the Hermann Broch Archives, Yale Collection of German Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library and the Hermann Broch Museum in Teesdorf, Austria.

³³⁷ On July 16, 1909, Broch was baptized into the Catholic faith.

old 'Aryan' family from Northern Germany, having emigrated there from the Netherlands in the 16th century,"³³⁸ and they were established members of the Hungarian aristocracy. Even though their patent of nobility was very recent (1884) and connected to business activities, the marriage was not simple assimilation into Austrian haute bourgeoisie, but a vertical movement between classes. Josef Broch's marriage to Johanna Schnabel had also represented upward mobility, but of a very different type. Josef Broch moved up within the Jewish middle class, and Hermann married into higher social rank as well as wealth. In the end, it appears that both families were correct: the difference in social expectations, especially in role and use of money, eventually proved too much for the marriage. Broch de Rothermann:

In shooting season the family moved from castle to castle, in the winter they took a private train to Italy or the Riviera, and from time to time repaired to various spas and watering-holes ... The big country house at Hirm, where my mother spent her childhood, and Castle Surány near Ödenburg, where she was born, were always teeming with family, and guests from the neighboring estates ... [the banquets] seldom numbered fewer than twenty and often fifty guests, and every holiday, whether religious or personal, was an only-too-welcome occasion for extravagant, tradition-laden celebrations.³³⁹

The marriage to Franziska von Rothermann multiplied the identity crisis of Broch that assimilation had begun. Into the world of the liberal burgher, created for him by his father, Broch brought the world of the landed aristocracy.

³³⁸ H. F. Broch de Rothermann, *Liebe Frau Strigl*, 11.

³³⁹ Broch de Rothermann, *Liebe Frau Strigl*, 12-3.

As Hermann's letters to Franziska showed, their attraction was based on true affection; their personalities,³⁴⁰ however, both suffered from a romantic tinge. Neither Hermann nor Franziska foresaw the implications of the deep differences in their understanding of money and life. Hermann had valued the practicality of money in terms of his lifestyle, and he understood the meaning of money in terms of the financial world; he, nevertheless, saw no role for money in terms of fulfilling his life goals. Franziska had no less of an ambiguous relationship to money; its existence, however, held a central position in her life. Leisure, supported by money, had been the focus of her childhood and adolescence. Even though she did not emphasize the role of money in her life, its availability was never questioned. Furthermore, she had no practical conception of finances. This accounted for the paradoxical nature of Franziska Broch, which Hermann F. M. Broch de Rothermann ascribed to the entire von Rothermann family, as being simultaneously extravagant and cheap. "But for all the love of grand gesture ... [the von Rothermanns] retained a certain petit-bourgeois side, even a peasant-like rudeness by no means unusual among the Hungarian landed aristocracy. As one often sees with the very rich (who have no real sense of the value of money except when dealing with very small sums), the family revealed, along with princely generosity, an appalling niggardliness where tips or other charities not

³⁴⁰ In his memoir, Hermann F. M. Broch de Rothermann provides a brief profile of his mother: "She was undeniably a great beauty, yet in fact without a trace of vanity. She was educated at the Sacré-Coeur, and clings to this day to an orthodox religious piety. But at the same time her thinking was modern, even revolutionary; she did not hold with social conventions, which bored her, she had very much a mind of her own, but was nonetheless snobbish and arrogant ... She was and is a person completely driven by instinct and emotion, incapable of any kind of abstract thought, a mind peculiarly impervious to logic, in fact, yet possessed of great warmth and almost unlimited good humor" (Broch de Rothermann, *Liebe Frau Strigl*, 12).

prescribed by tradition were concerned.”³⁴¹ Hermann and Franziska Broch both rejected the world of business and capital, but they did so from opposing points of view in terms the cultural importance of money.

Money and intellectual pursuits for Franziska Broch were pastimes, not ethical responsibilities as they were for Broch’s father vis-à-vis the former and Broch himself vis-à-vis the latter. If anything united Broch and his wife in terms of Teesdorf, it was the disappointing and restrictive nature of their existence in the mundane Teesdorf world. The shared disappointment of Teesdorf did not, however, transfer into a shared attempt to move beyond it. Hermann focused his energies on his intellectual pursuits, and he extended his social and intellectual life into the Viennese café scene. Franziska focused her energy on a more material existence and felt more and more isolated from the Broch family’s bourgeois lifestyle. She yearned more and more for the aristocratic lifestyle of her youth—a lifestyle Broch himself had entertained in adolescence; in the end, however, Broch’s relationship to aristocratic mores was false, that is, it was an ephemeral aspect of his early assimilation. Unlike Franziska, Hermann subordinated his material desires to those of ethics and education. By the early 1920s, the difference in worldview drove Hermann and Franziska further and further apart.

Immediately after the marriage, Hermann and Franziska moved into the lower floors of the Broch family home in Teesdorf, where conflicts over money and lifestyle became a routine affair for the Brochs and their new daughter-in-law. The differences between Hermann’s and Franziska’s worldviews grew more and more intense over the

³⁴¹ Broch de Rothermann, *Liebe Frau Strigl*, 13-4.

13 years of marriage, especially as Broch withdrew from the family unit—either working at the factory or locked away in his library. On October 4, 1910 Franziska Broch gave birth to their only child, Hermann Friedrich Maria Broch (nicknamed Armand or Pitz).³⁴² Hermann Broch, as was typical for his class and the times, did not play a large role in his son’s care giving, although he did take a strong interest in his education. In his memoirs, Armand Broch (his last name is later changed to Broch de Rothermann), recalled the many visits to cafés and museums with his father, as well as hiking and touring trips. Overall, however, Broch’s relationship with his son suffered from the same problems as that of his wife, his brother, and his father. It would breakdown over the issue of money and lifestyle. Armand spent a great deal of time at his mother’s family villa, and he had acquired a taste for extravagant living. With the sale of the factory in mid-1920s, Armand “tried to get as much of the family fortune as he could for himself so that he could revel in the delights of life as a ‘young rake.’”³⁴³ His maternal uncle, Rudolph von Rothermann, eventually adopted Armand Broch; Rudolph was childless and wanted to insure an heir to his holdings, but as Armand Broch de Rothermann later admitted, the adoption also served as a “step in [his] hostile detachment from [his] father.”³⁴⁴ Following Hermann Broch’s exile to America, and especially during the last years of Broch’s life, Armand Broch made a rapprochement with his father.

³⁴² John Hargraves’ “Translator’s Preface” in Broch de Rothermann, *Liebe Frau Strigl*, vii.

³⁴³ Lützel, *A Biography*, 60.

³⁴⁴ Armand Broch de Rothermann never received the inheritance, which was in Hungary, because of the Communist Government’s seizure of the land (Broch de Rothermann, *Liebe Frau Strigl*, 41).

By the outbreak of the First World War, Hermann Broch was 32 years old, and he was in many ways a mature and independent adult—he was the active head of the Teesdorf textile factory, he was married, and he was a father. Nevertheless, he had for many years, like Kafka, been living a dual existence. He was an entrepreneur and family man by day and intellectual and writer by night. Broch's natural inclination toward the cerebral had already created conflict within and separation from the familial and very mundane world of Teesdorf and the factory. His relationship with his wife suffered from an equally deep chasm between the mental and material world; this gap, however, reflected on the one hand the class difference between Broch and his wife and on the other the clash of worldviews between Broch and his father.

The end of the marriage and the selling of the family textile factory very soon afterwards marked the end of Broch's open acceptance of the values set out for him by his family and the assimilated world of Viennese liberalism. Nevertheless, many aspects of his future political and ethical ideas, especially his attractions to a value system based on a unity of spirituality and aesthetic beauty, as well as his focus on the individual and an innate conservatism in his value construction, developed out his social and familial experiences of adolescence and earlier adulthood. Most importantly, however, these experiences ingrained a sense of responsibility. It was, however, a responsibility inherently in conflict. From the 1908 until 1925, Broch moved increasingly away from his family; the distance was perceived by his father, his wife, and his son as an avoidance of his duties. Broch's increased participation in the intellectual world of Vienna during the war years increased his desires for sexual

liberation, eventually ending his marriage.³⁴⁵ The resulting tensions produced in Broch a sense of impotence and paralysis, which only added to the already diminished self image of himself *vis-à-vis* his father and brother.

This sense of paralysis was clearly evident in Broch's first novel, *The Sleepwalkers*, written in final years of the 1920s. The main character Joachim von Pasenow acted out on the page Broch's own sense of paralysis or impotence in terms of facing the contradiction of responsibility and impotence. The final episode of Part One, *Pasenow or the Romantic*, when read autobiographically, details the familial and social tensions of Broch's youth, that is, marriage, military service, responsibility, and impotence.³⁴⁶ Joachim Pasenow, an officer in the German Army, whose story throughout the novel was one of internal rebellion against the conservative world of the army and his social class, falls victim to his impotence in the face of paradoxically conflicting ideals—sex and his wife.

Broch describes the consummation of the marriage between his protagonist Joachim and Elizabeth, his aristocratic wife. The inability of either character to communicate to the other in sexual terms pervades the scene. Elizabeth is locked in a space marked literally by the area between the bathroom and the bed, and figuratively by the space between naked and dressed.³⁴⁷ Unable to reconcile the contradiction that

³⁴⁵ Hermann and Fanziska divorced on April 13, 1923.

³⁴⁶ The autobiographical nature of *The Sleepwalkers* is quite clear, for more detailed discussion see Michael Lützeler, footnote 14 above.

³⁴⁷ The corporeal aspects of both the bathroom and the bed clearly repulse Joachim in this scene.

sex and marriage implied in his socially constricted world, Pasenow impotently retreats into the pre-packaged value system of the army.

She [Elisabeth] had moved a little to the side, and her hand, which with its befrilled wrist was all that emerged from the bedclothes, rested in his. Through his position his military coat had become disordered, the lapels falling apart left his black trousers visible, and when Joachim noticed this he hastily set things right again and covered the place. He had now drawn up his legs, and so as not to touch the sheets with his patent-leather shoes, he rested his feet in a rather constrained posture on the chair standing beside the bed. The candles flickered; first one went out, then the other. . . . They lay motionless and gazed at the ceiling of the room . . . Then Joachim had fallen asleep, and when Elisabeth noticed it she could not help smiling.³⁴⁸

Joachim to an even greater degree is trapped by an inability to understand his marriage in sexual terms (not that he is inexperienced in sexual relations, but that he cannot overcome the impulse to divide women into sexual and non-sexual categories). The memory of his former lover, Ruzena, who was a commoner and a showgirl, invades Joachim mind at the same moments, and it clarifies for both Joachim and the reader the strictness of the division.

The scene ends in failure; the marriage is not consummated, and Joachim, with Elizabeth lying next to him in only her sleeping gown, falls asleep still dressed in his military uniform. The scene communicates to the reader the oppressiveness of social categories in the world of late nineteenth century Europe, but it also communicates the oppressiveness of Broch's own social existence; Joachim's uniform functions for him as an artificially constructed value system, allowing him to withdrawal from his

³⁴⁸ *The Sleepwalkers*, 158.

humanity and his ego.³⁴⁹ In a world where values and spirituality were so clearly separated by social necessity, the result was impotence. Broch's own sense of a world out of balance found expression not just in his literature, but also in developing ethical and political thought.

It would be unjustified to read this scene or the entire novel as straightforwardly autobiographical. There were, however, parallels between Broch and the protagonist Joachim. Joachim's relationships and the life choices detailed in the first section of the novel reflected the powers at work in Hermann Broch's own maturation, especially the relationship between Broch and his father and between Broch and his wife. The novel was as a severe critique of the ethically vacuous world of late 19th century, but it also suggested the presence of a self critique of Broch and his romantic attachment to the world of his youth. In a situation where Broch's life was so characterized by pressures of responsibility to other forces, it is not surprising that in rejecting the social values of his own family, he developed his political and ethical theory around the power and autonomy of the individual to overcome the external world's threat of impotence.

Education

Hermann Broch's process of assimilation and the development of his worldview rested on another key issue beyond that of social and familial relationships: education. Josef Broch did not openly cultivate intellectual pursuits beyond those

³⁴⁹ See Monika Ritzer, *Hermann Broch und die Kulturkrise des frühen 20. Jahrhunderts* (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzlersche Verlag, 1988), 239-246.

connected to business, a fact visible in young Broch's education. This meant that another force impacting Hermann Broch's development, that is education, was for the most part out of his control. Josef Broch was a dominating and controlling father: "[Josef] held firmly to Jewish tradition in this respect only: in the family, he was the *paterfamilias*, the supreme authority and the god of wrath, and he tolerated no rebelliousness or willfulness except his own."³⁵⁰ Throughout his education and his early adulthood, Hermann Broch could only battle his father's control "with difficulty and without outward expression."³⁵¹ In Broch's youth this battle was almost entirely internal; Broch was not a rebel—his outward engagement with the world was dominated by paternal control. Questions about love, death, ethical value, and moral duty seemed to Broch's father unimportant and impractical; and thus, they found no place in Broch's education, which was for the most part highly technical. Josef Broch's plans for Hermann included vocational training followed by a career in the family textile factory—the life of an upper-class industrial burgher.³⁵² In an outline for a proposed novel, Broch projected his relationship with his father onto the hero of the work: "There was never a doubt about, that he should succeed his father in the leadership of this business. His college years in Harvard were directed to this purpose;

³⁵⁰ Broch de Rothermann, *Liebe Frau Strigl*, 5.

³⁵¹ Wolfgang Rothe, "Der junge Broch," in *Neue Deutsche Hefte* 7 (1960), 780. See also Hermann Broch, *Das Teesdorfer Tagebuch für Ea von Allesch*, edited by Paul Michael Lützel (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1995). From July of 1920 until February of 1921, Hermann Broch kept a diary, written as letter to Ea von Allesch. These letters capture better than any other document the internal/external split that Broch had created between his life within the family/family business and his life within Viennese salon scene.

³⁵² Josef Broch, in fact, bought the Teesdorf textile factor specifically for his sons; he himself was by inclination and training a trader not an industrialist.

he was studying engineering (as ordered by his father) and economics (tolerated by his father). All the other departments and especially the humanities had the sign of ‘No’; they were ‘forbidden.’”³⁵³ Instead of a classical *Gymnasium* education, which would have better prepared Broch for a career in the university or laid a foundation for his literary impulses, Broch became a textile engineer.³⁵⁴

The relationship between *Gymnasium* and the university or literary worlds was not absolute, but as Steven Beller points out it was the general rule for Jews of Broch’s class to enter *Gymnasium* and to proceed to university with the aims of pursuing a professional career. “Broch’s case ... is the exception which proves the rule. Throughout his life he held a grudge against his father for refusing to send him to the *Gymnasium*, precisely because going to the *Realschule* effectively barred his way to the university, and hence to the world of the intellect. His subsequent life story reads very much like an attempt to overcome this setback.”³⁵⁵ Josef Broch’s decision clearly stood in contrast to the majority of his class and forced the younger Broch to find extraordinary means of entering the cadres of intellectuals within the Viennese café scene and the university.

In the end, Broch’s exclusion from *Gymnasium* did not block his entrance into Europe’s intelligentsia. Arvid H. Perez provides an important critique to the

³⁵³ Hermann Broch Archive. Yale Collection of German Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

³⁵⁴ Even in the highly negative portraits of the *Gymnasium* education, which Stefan Zweig described as “monotonous, heartless, and lifeless,” the benefits of the gymnasium education in terms of preparing one for philosophical and cultural engagement are clear. See Stefan Zweig, *The World of Yesterday* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1964), 29.

³⁵⁵ *Revisiting Vienna 1900*, 49.

assumption that *Realschule* served as a bar to Broch's entrance into the "world of the intellect."³⁵⁶ He argues that a more technical education did not bar him from the world of the intellect; it, in fact, provided him with more expansive tools by which to engage the fluidity of the modern world. "The gymnasial system, one may conclude, was simply not designed to make the student aware of contemporary social, economic and political structures and processes, let alone to be critical of them; it was designed instead to uphold authority and to encourage in the student submission and adjustment to current societal norms. . . . In Broch's words, 'The gymnasium teacher of that time was at best a specialist in his discipline but not a psychologically schooled pedagogue.' These, then were school years without teachers." Broch's later rejection of the university focus on specialization supports Perez's claim.

Indeed, one has to be careful not to overstate the difference between Broch and Zweig based on *Realschule* versus *Gymnasium*. The proximity of Broch to the world centered on Gymnasium is clearly seen in Broch's letters and acquaintances. Broch language ability was also indicative of a middle class, assimilated Jew within the Habsburg Empire, that is, familiarity with the languages of culture—German, French, and the Classical world (for Broch, this meant Hebrew as well). Broch's letters demonstrate that he spoke with his father and son in a way that sounds foreign to us today, and even foreign to Austrian social classes outside of the bourgeoisie of his own time. It is not unusual to find in Broch's papers letters to his teenage son

³⁵⁶ Arvid Henry Perez, "The Disintegration of Values: A Social and Intellectual Study of the Austrian Philosopher-Novelist Hermann Broch, 1890-1930" (Doctoral Dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1971), 138-9.

discussing the value of metaphysics or phenomenology. The ubiquity of poetry, logic, or mathematics in these letters is also striking.

Broch did not, moreover, completely separate his industrial life and his technical training from his more profound concerns for knowledge. His Kafkaesque dual life demonstrated the more complex nature of the relationship among Broch's assimilation, his education, and his vocation. Moreover, in the 1940s, Broch claimed that the experiences of his time in industry were in fact useful for his later theoretical work, especially his political theory.

I had entered industrial work in 1908, and even if my interests in principle had not changed, still I had to turn them at that time to new objects. So long after the experience, I cannot regret this as much as I had done at that time, because on the one hand during these industrial tasks I gained a range of economical perceptions, which I would hardly have acquired in any other way, and on the other hand I was able to gain important insight into the relationship between industry and workers as well as into overall social mechanisms. In time, my experiences only expanded further, since during the second half of the war and in the turbulent revolutionary period following I held different official and semiofficial positions, as I was involved with the committees for "the preservation of the worker's peace," among others; as well as "the reorganization of worker's rights," and finally on "the efforts for fighting unemployment." And since Austria due to its particularly adverse circumstances represented a somewhat intensified, even if reduced picture of the total economic and social world situation, these activities, with which I was occupied at the time, were without a doubt uncommonly instructive.³⁵⁷

³⁵⁷ Hermann Broch, *Psychische Selbstbiographie*, edited by Paul Michael Lützeler (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1999), 86-7.

It is clear that even though Broch took an exceptional path in terms of his assimilation and education, and even though his adolescence and early adulthood were marked by tension and conflict, he nonetheless found his way into the intellectual milieu of Vienna 1900. It is also clear that Broch's disjunctions vis-à-vis the accepted pattern of assimilation and education demonstrated that intellectual activity and production in *fin-de-siècle* Austria was not simple or universalized.

Nevertheless, the strict control of Broch's father over Broch education and his future life did delay his intellectual maturity and infect his thought with an eclecticism born of auto-didacticism.³⁵⁸ Broch's education was from the beginning vocational. He began school in 1897 at the *k. k. Realschule* in Vienna's first district.³⁵⁹ After he received his *Matura* from *Realschule* in 1904, he began the study of textile weaving at the Upper School and Research Institute for the Textile Industry (*Höhere Lehr- und Versuchsanstalt für Textilindustrie*). Broch studied at the weaving school until 1906 and following his primary education in Vienna he entered Mülhausener technical school for spinning and weaving in Alsace. In the summer of 1907 he received his diploma in textile engineering, as well as a patent for a cotton-mixing machine, which he had developed with Heinrich Brüggemann, director of the Mülhausener school.³⁶⁰

³⁵⁸ The question of Broch's auto-didacticism and his eclecticism is central to any discussion of Broch's early work. See Schlant, 22-5.

³⁵⁹ Up until this time Broch was registered as a student at *Volkschule Werdertorgasse* but received most of his instruction at home with a private tutor.

³⁶⁰ To view a sketch of the mixing machine see Manfred Durzak, Hermann Broch in *Selbstzeugnissen und Bilddokumenten* (Hamburg: Reinbek, 1966), 29.

In the midst of his vocational education, however, Broch did manage a short-lived sojourn into the world of academic philosophy and mathematics. During the winter semester of 1904/05, Broch attended the University of Vienna as an auditor (*Gasthörer*). He attended introductory lectures by Laurenz Müllner on practical philosophy and Müllner's seminar on Aristotle, as well as Ludwig Boltzmann's principles of natural philosophy. In mathematics Broch attended two courses, algebra with Franz Mertens and elements of differentials and integrals with Wilhelm Wirtinger.³⁶¹ Broch left the University without any lasting relationships. In fact, the experience seemed to leave him disenchanted with the overly specialized and strictly scientific bent of academic study. Broch claimed years later in his *Intellectual Autobiography* that the brief period of study in philosophy and mathematics convinced him that professional philosophy was no longer equipped to answer metaphysical questions (the questions that he felt were of central importance to the modern world). His mention in the autobiography of his former teacher Ludwig Boltzmann is of particular importance. For Boltzmann was an adherent of Ernst Mach's notion of positivism and, at the time, one of the leading figures in the movement for a scientific philosophy.³⁶²

This period represented Broch's earliest encounter with one of the leading intellectual forces of turn of the century Vienna: positivism. Since it is difficult to determine whether Broch ended his studies out of frustration with the intellectual aims

³⁶¹ Rudolf Koester, *Hermann Broch* (Berlin: Colloquium, 1987), 9 and Lützel, *A Biography*, 16-7

³⁶² Boltzmann died in 1906.

of the University or because of the demands of technological schooling and the wishes of his father, one cannot gauge the impact of positivism from these early encounters. Indeed, it must be questioned whether Broch's negative recollection years afterward was completely forthright. For in 1925 Broch would return to the University and pursue philosophy and mathematics once again, this time with dreams of obtaining the doctorate. Broch's initial encounter with Academia may not have completely delegitimized institutional learning, but it certainly demonstrated to him that the business world and the world of the university could not be pursued simultaneously. And it guaranteed that Broch's earliest philosophical direction would be guided more by popular, public discussions than by structured academic ones.

By the fall of 1907, Broch had ended his extra-curricular studies in Vienna and completed his vocational education in Alsace. In October of that year, he left for a seven-week trip to the United States. The trip served as Broch's diminutive version of the "Grand Tour";³⁶³ it was the final link in his educational chain and the last step before full integration into the family firm. The choice of the United States and the central event during the trip, attendance at the "International Cotton Growers, Buyers and Spinners Convention" in Atlanta, highlighted the business oriented direction of Broch's education and his future life. Broch's own negative impression of America as a country of businessmen was thus consistent with his growing distaste for the business life.³⁶⁴

³⁶³ Lützel, *A Biography*.

³⁶⁴ Lützel, *A Biography*.

Josef Broch's decision, in 1909, to leave the world of the *Börse*³⁶⁵ and speculation and to purchase a spinning factory in Teesdorf, just south of Vienna, was directly tied to his desire to see his sons³⁶⁶ securely situated in the world of Austrian *Bürgertum*. The purchase of the factory was a major investment for the Broch family; the initial capital was close to 2 million Kronen and employed a workforce of 800,³⁶⁷ but it demonstrated his commitment to securing his sons' future. Furthermore, his decision proved, at least until the economic collapse of the late 1920s, a financially sound idea. For Hermann Broch, however, his father's decision and the actual experience of being an upper-middle class manufacturer and businessman were far from satisfactory. It was a decision that went against Hermann's natural inclinations, but one against which he was unable to rebel until the age of forty. The sense of liberation felt by Hermann Broch after finalizing the sale of family factory in 1925 is seen in his correspondence of the time; his own son also comments on the changes, both negative and positive, that Hermann's decision to abandon the world of business brought about.

My grandfather responded to these efforts with bitterness and ingratitude, and blamed the loss of the business on Hermann's crazy ideas: 'I should never have let the boy run it his way: he was never interested in it in the first place,' etc. ... It must be said that he [Hermann] suffered enormously from all the dissension, which was mainly

³⁶⁵ Austrian stock market.

³⁶⁶ Hermann's brother Fritz was born on December 17, 1889

³⁶⁷ The factory shares were divided amongst a group of shareholders from Broch's family, the Schnabel family, and other local businessmen. The work force did not reach the total of 800 employees until after the turn of the century and only through the efforts of Hermann Broch and with the aid of his wife's dowry. (Durzak, 25). See also Lützel, *A Biography*, 28-9.

directed at him. A pattern which would characterize his life was emerging, one which was largely his own fault: all those he loved and felt close to would circle around him, in conflict with one another, but fighting through him, implacably grinding him down, the more they sensed his weakness, defenselessness, but also his sense of responsibility. Nonetheless Hermann had taken a large step forward. He was rid of the factory and its obligations, so alien to his nature, and he knew what he wanted from life, what he had it in him to do. He had discovered a fundamental purpose which never left him.³⁶⁸

His fundamental purpose in life, however, had initially to be fostered in secret. His pursuit of philosophy, literature, and mathematics took place outside of the university and during whatever time Broch could steal from his managerial duties.

The relationship of Broch's education and his political theory is grounded in the contradictions of his private interests and his professional/familial demands. That is, we have to look at the auto-didactic nature of Broch's intellectual pursuits. To do this requires us to consider the influence of the university during Broch's brief period as *Gasthörer*, as well as his involvement with journalistic world of Vienna. His publications during the second decade of the twentieth century form the most instructive source of Broch's intellectual development. These works are complimented by Broch's letters from the period and his later autobiographical reflections.

On his return from the United States in 1907, the path of industrialist and further assimilation lay before Broch. There were at this time many outward signs that such a life would proceed smoothly. By 1909, Broch had converted from Judaism to

³⁶⁸ Broch de Rothermann, *Liebe Frau Stigl*, 35-6.

Catholicism, he had enlisted in the Austrian army (a cavalry regiment), he had married Franziska von Rothermann (a Hungarian aristocrat), and he had taken up the assistant director's position in the family textile factory in Teesdorf. These were clear (and outwardly successful) steps towards becoming a leading member of the liberal Burgher class. The year 1909, however, also marked a significant development towards Broch's eventual rejection of the Burgher's life. It was this year that Broch composed his first work on cultural criticism, "*Kultur 1908/1909*."³⁶⁹ Although the work was never published, it signified the beginning of Broch's active involvement in the Viennese intellectual world.

In fact, all of his work from 1908 until the First World War reflected a close engagement with questions of cultural degeneration and the loss of value producing aesthetics. With these articles Broch joined a debate that developed in Vienna between the decline of Liberal political ascendancy and the beginning of the War (1890-1914). The debate centered on the relationship between *logos* (language and reason) and value: could *logos* supply modern man with the means for explaining his existence? The answers to this debate were various but can be generalized into two key stances: scientific materialism and philosophical irrationalism.³⁷⁰ For the scientific materialist, language and reason could provide a clear explanation to our

³⁶⁹ see Broch *KW* 10/1, 11-30.

³⁷⁰ See David S. Luft, *Eros and Inwardness in Vienna: Weininger, Musil, and Doderer* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 13-44.

world. For the philosophical irrationalist, however, *logos* was an inadequate tool for clarifying the essence of man.³⁷¹

The contradictions in Broch's life between 1908-1914 demonstrated both the degree to which Broch engaged the life prepared for him by his family and growing distance between that life and his intellectual goals. It is only with the outbreak of the First World War that Broch began to acknowledge openly the conflicts between his desires and his reality. At the outbreak of the Great War, Broch volunteered for active duty but was again rejected because of his health. He spent the entire war on the home front, but he was active in the war effort, and, more importantly, he gained firsthand knowledge of the violence and destruction of war from his service as the director of a war hospital in Teesdorf. The war clarified for Broch the disintegration of European values, but it paradoxically came as source of personal liberation. Broch hinted at this liberation in an outline from the 1940s: "In the middle of these mental troubles a solution comes to him like a gift: it is the War. ... Although he thinks that he has postponed the problem [his professional career] for the duration, he sees clearly that he never will be the 'young industrial leader' that was his destiny in the eyes of his family and even in his own. But he knows, too, that this [the War] is a 'No' and not a 'Yes.'³⁷²

The truthfulness of Hannah Arendt's remark that Broch was "a poet against his will" was obvious from his work in American exile. The description is equally

³⁷¹ See Chapter 5 for further discussion.

³⁷² *KW* 13/3, 174.

accurate for Broch's life during the First World War and the early 1920s, although the intention behind Arendt's statement appears vastly different in Broch's earlier life. For Arendt, Broch's unwillingness to be a poet was tempered by his commitment to science, mathematics, and social ethics. In Broch's earlier life, the question of being a poet was one that conflicted not with his less aesthetic intellectual pursuits, but with the demands of his father and his family. The First World War paradoxically allowed a period of limited freedom, in terms of intellectual and social activities, from the responsibility of family and business. Broch's double life during the period from 1908 to 1925 period was intellectually founded on his participation in the café scene of Vienna just before and after the War. For liberal, bourgeois Vienna this was the artistic and intellectual center of the city. Vienna, even today, centers its social existence on the café.

As Carl Schorske argued, Vienna resisted the atomization of intellectuals through specialization longer than any other European city.³⁷³ In this sense, Broch's eclecticism was further reinforced by the intellectual milieu in which he operated. In the late teens and early twenties, Viennese cafés were the scene of a tremendous group of artists and thinkers, including Peter Altenberg, Alfred Polgar, Robert Musil, Adolf Loos, Egon Schiele, Oskar Kokoschka, Franz Blei, Karl Kraus, Leo Trotsky, Sigmund Freud, Karl Mannheim, Stefan Zweig, Arthur Schnitzler, and Rosa Mayreder. Even as a businessman and factory owner, Broch took full advantage of this world. He was a frequent visitor to both the Herrenhof Café and Café Central. The former is where

³⁷³ Schorske, *Fin de siècle Vienna*, xxvii.

Broch meet with Alfred Polgar and Robert Musil in a circle that formed around Franz Blei. The latter was the epicenter of the café scene, and the place where Broch would meet Ea von Allesch, with whom he had an affair throughout the 1920s.

The freedom of the café scene was, indeed, not simply intellectual, but also sexual. During the WWI, Broch initiated a pattern of multiple sexual relationships among female friends and acquaintances within his intellectual circles. The three main relationships for Broch were Edit Rényi, Milena Jesenská, and Ea von Allesch.³⁷⁴ Edit Rényi was a Hungarian poet and divorcee who lived in Vienna. Michael Lützeler points out in his biography on Broch that the relationship between Edit Rényi and Broch was important to Broch's development as a thinker well beyond the sexual or emotional attachment. For it was through Rényi that Broch met and engaged with other Hungarian thinkers of the period, including Georg Lukács, Karl Mannheim, René Spitz and Béla Balázs. Milena Jesenská was from Prague; she was married to Polak Jesenská, both active members of the Viennese café society. Broch had met the couple during one of many evenings at the Herrenhof Café, and he had a short affair with Milena during 1918 but the relationship ended upon the request of Polak.³⁷⁵

Ea von Allesch was from Vienna. Broch's son described Ea von Allesch as the archetype for "oppressive-dominant women, but long-suffering martyrs, the manipulative, professional victim type ... and combined this with a sharp intellect,

³⁷⁴ Lützeler, *Ethik und Politik*, 43.

³⁷⁵ See Lützeler, *Ethik und Politik*, 43-5.

broad learning in a number of fields ... an original sense of humor, and a quick mind. Physically she was attractive in a direct, hard-to-miss way: she had fiery red hair, slender, sylph-like figure, and that indefinable quality known as ‘chic’.”³⁷⁶ Ea von Allesch became one of the central figures in Broch’s life. She remained a part of his life from the First World War until his death in 1951.³⁷⁷ Their relationship was not a joyous and nurturing one, but it was central to Broch’s concerns and motivations throughout his life. The relationship also provides us with an interesting primary document for Broch’s youth, a diary from July 1920 until January 1921. The diary was de facto a series of love letters to Ea from the early part of their relationship. What M. Durzak describes as “Liebeslektion.”³⁷⁸ Broch’s own description of the *Tagebuch* is even more telling: “Darling, the diary then. Since a diary must be absolutely honest – it would otherwise be meaningless – I want you to have it. It is part of my belonging to you ... It will be a diary written around you.”³⁷⁹ The *Tagebuch* provides details on Broch’s business and intellectual work, “The second important topic is work.”³⁸⁰ Broch met Ea at Café Central, where she was known as the local muse. By examining a short passage from the *Tagebuch* from 8 July 1920, we can see the depth to which Broch’s mind enveloped multiple worlds. It also

³⁷⁶ Broch de Rothermann, *Liebe Frau Stigl*, 30.

³⁷⁷ After Broch’s exile, his mother occupied his former room in Allesch’s Vienna apartment. Broch remained in contact with Allesch and following the Second World War provided her with material and monetary support.

³⁷⁸ Durzak, 20.

³⁷⁹ Quoted in Lützel, *A Biography*, 56.

³⁸⁰ Quoted in Lützel, *A Biography*, 56.

demonstrates the degree to which he was able to immerse himself in the Viennese world of the café and the intelligentsia, while maintaining a full schedule as a husband and businessman:

To the office, the hair salon, the dentist, to Halm and Goldman [antiquarian], visit with Schrecker [Paul, friend and philosopher], to Gonzaga [family apartment in Vienna], then to Café Central, a visit with Fischer (painter), then to Kuppitsch [bookstore], then the Cotton union—meeting with Schwankhöffer, to you for 2 short hours, it has not gone well with you and I have since then a repeated, terrible worry about you. Something must be done, my love, sweetie.³⁸¹

In investigating Broch's marriage and early family life, one sees clearly that in spite of Broch's consistent critiques of the disintegration of values in the European society, he was, nonetheless, fully integrated in the cultural customs, dress, and social system of his class.

Hermann Broch's existence as an upper middle class Burgher was not decorative or illusionary; at the most, Broch's contrasting view of bourgeois culture and his criticism of its value-denying ethics was a reflection of incompatibility between his lived life and his individual ethical and intellectual impulse. There is much to suggest in Broch's early dress, life style, social activity, his choice of army service, and his marriage that Broch was comfortably adjusted to the bourgeois world of late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Broch's ultimate rejection was not of the bourgeois world of the Viennese café and assimilated Jewish culture; it was a rejection of the conflict and disappointment that his thoughtful, sensitive approach to

³⁸¹ Hermann Broch, *Das Teesdorfer Tagebuch für Ea von Allesch*, edited by Paul Michael Lützeler (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1995), 24.

that world created in his family and his marriage. Broch showed no real signs throughout his youth of rejecting *Besitz* for *Bildung*, but he was too thoughtful to live a life in which *Besitz* excluded *Bildung*.

Eventually, Broch's sale of the family factory and his pursuit of the artist life initiated an unforeseen break with the comforts of middle class prosperity; exile would further exacerbate Broch's lack of money. Ironically, in the end Broch did reject *Besitz* for *Bildung*. There is no need to create a teleology out of this separation; for in understanding Broch's life in Vienna, one sees that Broch's political and ethical theory was infused not with a consistent rejection of bourgeois materialism but with a constant call for the individual to pursue a sense of duty in the face of a neurotic notion of impotence. Broch's political theory in the end reflected his personal experience of failure in the eyes of his family, his heritage, his wife, and his son. As we will see below, the ultimate source of his feelings of impotence and his corresponding attempts at compensation ("super-abundance") was his early relationship to his nuclear family.

Although, Broch's life argues against the notion of disengagement or artistic escapism, both his intellectual production and his lived experience from the 1908 to 1925 can be characterized as non-political. Relative to his engaged political activism and pamphleteering of the late 1930s, Broch's early life strikes one as detached from pragmatic politics. The point here is not that Broch was disengaged or aloft, but that his notion of political activism was strikingly upper middle class Viennese in its expression. Broch conceived of politics from the point of view of a café intellectual,

he tied political action directly to aesthetics, and then set out to rectify political crises through epistemology and individualism. Inherent in this approach was a social conservatism and an assimilationist distrust of the masses. This is not to imply that Broch held a class antagonism towards the lower classes—it was, in fact, his own class that received the bulk of his social criticism.

Yet, he did express fear and anxiety over the political activity of the “Mass.” Schmidt-Dengler argues for Broch’s connection to a “central topoi of Austrian literature” from the period immediately after the war, in which the street is seen as an extension of the mob. It is dirty and dangerous place, where even the “undead” operate.³⁸² Schmidt-Dengler connects Broch to writers and artists such as Otto Dix, Karl Kraus, and Heimito von Doderer, in that all these intellectuals show deep reservations about *die Straße*: “The street is filled with the mental ill, and it is the street that causes mental illness.”³⁸³ In Broch’s later novel, *The Death of Virgil*, Broch gives us his most elaborate description of the dangers of the mob in the streets of ancient Brundisium.³⁸⁴ In 1918, however, the sentiment was already evident. “Dear Friend, it is clear that I recently fled in the face of the masses (*Volksmasse*); you know

³⁸² Wendelin Schmidt-Dengler, “‘Kurzum die Hölle’: Broch’s Early Political Text ‘Die Strasse’ in *Hermann Broch, Visionary in Exile: The 2001 Yale Symposium*, edited by Paul Michael Lützeler (Rochester, NY: Camden House: 2003), 60.

³⁸³ Schmidt-Dengler, “Broch’s Early Political Text,” 61.

³⁸⁴ In section one of the novel, the poet Virgil watches in disgust the unfolding of the mob on “Misery Street”: “this bawling, yelping, compelling male laughter had nothing in common with the female laughter of Misery Street, no, this laughter contained something worse, terror and awe, the awfulness of the matter-of-fact that did not concern itself with the human, neither with him who looked on and comprehended here from the window, nor indeed with any human being” (Hermann Broch, *The Death of Virgil*, translated by Jean Starr Untermeyer [New York: Pantheon Books, 1945, renewed Vintage International, 1972], 115).

this, but I fled not because of a particular social antipathy, but out of depression and despair.”³⁸⁵ An examination of the two specifically political articles, which Broch wrote during the period 1908 to 1925, shows that politics were never far from Broch’s mind; yet, the theoretical and the practical remained effectively separated by his overriding focus on ethics. The articles, “The Street” and “Constitutional Dictatorship as a Soviet System,” were published in Austrian journals within four months of each other.³⁸⁶

In context of the post-War Austria, Broch publicly engaged in the debate over the future of socialism in a post-War Austria.³⁸⁷ Since the death of the Emperor Franz Joseph in 1916, the imperial future of Austria-Hungary looked bleak. Emperor Karl was a weak and inexperienced heir, who had never been expected to accede to the throne. The forces of disintegration had already matured by the October of 1918, as nationalist forces began to seize control of regional territories within the Empire. On November 11, Emperor Karl renounced his constitutional rights and the following day Austria was declared a republic. The collapse of the Empire brought the Social Democrats in power—Karl Renner and Otto Bauer occupying key offices into the new government. The leading position of the Social Democrats, however, was less than

³⁸⁵ *KW* 13/1, 30.

³⁸⁶ “Die Strasse,” An open letter to Franz Blei published in Blei’s and A. P. Gütersloh journal, *Die Rettung*, vol. 1/3, 20 December 1918 (see *KW* 13/1, 3-4), and “Konstitutionelle Diktatur als demokratisches Rätssystem,” published in *Der Friede* 3/64, 11 April 1919 (see *KW* 11, 11-13).

³⁸⁷ “Both articles are direct reactions to the contemporary political events in Austria, which, before all, are characterized by the ever increasing sharpness of the polarization in the views between the political camps of the left and the right.” Monika Klinger, *Hermann Broch und die Demokratie* (Berlin: Duncker and Humblot, 1994), 38.

secure; they faced the economic problems of a destroyed country and infrastructure, the necessity to settle the peace with allies, and opposition from the radical left and the remnants of the right.³⁸⁸

Daily violence and the threat of civil war was the reality for Austria. The central issue revolved around the political role of the Worker's Councils (*Räte*) and later Soldier's Councils. Following on the example of the Bolsheviks in Russia, the *Räte* movement pushed for political control. In March of 1919, Béla Kun established a Communist government in Budapest and shortly after that Bavaria declared its own Communist state. By April, Communist party demonstrations on the streets of Vienna were routinely turning violent—buildings set on fire and both demonstrators and army units (*Volkswehr*) killed. By July of 1919, the Communist party gradually diminished in influence as Austrians showed their preference for stability over revolution. Nevertheless, in April of 1919, when Broch published his second political piece, the issue of how socialism and communism would develop in Austria was far from a settled matter. In November of 1918, as we have seen, members of both the right and left splinter groups clashed in front of parliament.³⁸⁹

In the context of political unrest, Broch provided us with his earliest political theories. In both works, Broch called for stability and an end to mass hysterical activities. Even though Broch supported some of the political aims of those involved

³⁸⁸ For the historical context of the post-War Austrian see, Charles Gulick, *Austria from Habsburg to Hitler* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1948) and John Swanson, *The remnants of the Habsburg monarchy : the shaping of modern Austria and Hungary, 1918-1922* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001).

³⁸⁹ For details see Paul Michael Lützeler, *Ethik und Politik: Studien zum Frühwerk und zur Romantrilogie "Die Schlafwandler"* (Munich: Winkler Verlag, 1973), 43-4.

in the violence, that is, he favored a social democratic view of society in which workers and business leaders both had a voice.³⁹⁰ He questioned, however, whether the political goals of either side in the street fighting could produce positive results. On the one hand, he opposed the materialism of the bourgeois classes. The democracy in an economic system of checked capitalist control equated to oppression. Broch expressed his ideological agreement with the democratic impulse of open dialogue from the working class. “I have agreed from the beginning with every kind of communist economy, as it attempts to construct a better world. Possessions possess me in no way.”³⁹¹ Furthermore, Broch argued against the danger of special interest in politics. What he called “Indulgence” (Genuß): the misuse of public trust for the advancement of a limited number of citizens. One can see in these early political tracts seeds of Broch’s later critique of democracy in the United States, where he questions of the exclusionary impulses of the ideas of the pursuit of happiness and its pragmatic equivalent the American Dream.³⁹²

On the other hand, Broch worried about the methods and ultimate results of socialism modeled on the Russian “soviet” structure. In the environment where political parties and economic parties were still driven by group think and by group interest, any notion of a democratic government was impossible. Broch, drawing on

³⁹⁰ Furthermore, Lützel argues that Broch sympathized with the Austrian popular desire to join with Germany; he did not, however, approve of Franz Werfel’s or Egon Erwin Kisch’s action (seizing of buildings) on November 12, which led to street fighting and the death of two people. Broch did not reject the enthusiasm of the political goal, but he rejected outright the occurrence of mass hysteria. Lützel, *Ethik und Politik*, 43-4.

³⁹¹ Hermann Broch, “Die Straße,” *KW* 13/1, 30.

³⁹² See Chapter 2.

the work of Austro-Marxist like Otto Bauer and Max Adler, warned of the dangers of interest politics, the oppression of the majority over the minority, and the real danger of civil war.³⁹³ The claims by many on the left that the initial task of a democratic soviet system would be to establish control and then lead Austria through a transition to democracy, Broch also found questionable.

Politics are without question inevitable. It is the final and most evil flattening of humanity. This radical evil is the necessary consequence of the morality absolutely transformed to dogma. In short it is hell. I know, you, dear friend,³⁹⁴ will say, that this is necessary tiding up process, in order to prepare the way for belief in a reawaking of knowledge around the solidarity of all things in a Metaphysical Unity. Perhaps.³⁹⁵

Broch did not trust politics carried out by the masses, and he did not believe that human dignity could be preserved in the political chaos of mass hysteria or in the forced stability of a dictatorial party. What Broch wanted was a representative democratic system, and he felt that the activities of the radical left would not bring about a democratic solution but a dictatorial one.³⁹⁶ The conservative nature of Broch

³⁹³ Broch mentions Bauer by name within his “Constitutional Dictatorship as a Democratic Soviet System,” and Michael Lützeler provides an in-depth comparison Broch’s political ideas and those of Bauer, Adler, and Karl Kautsky, see Lützeler, *Ethik und Politik*, 51-59.

³⁹⁴ Broch’s open letter was published in Franz Blei’s newspaper, *Die Rettung*. Ideologically, the paper sought to reconcile the goals of communism and the Catholic Church, and to rally both forces in opposition to the state power.³⁹⁴ The duality of the journal’s mission can be seen in its very title, *Die Rettung*, implying both the power of “saving grace” (salvation in God) and “rescue” (escape from state oppression). Blei envisioned a new form of community (*Gemeinschaft*) built on a communist economy and a shared religiosity. Blei’s communism and even his Catholicism served, what Lützeler called, his anarchist tendencies and fed his “humanist invective against politics. (*Menschliche Invektiven gegen die Politik*)” (Franz Blei, quoted in Lützeler’s *Ethik und Politik*, 45).

³⁹⁵ Hermann Broch, “Die Straße,” *KW* 13/1, 34.

³⁹⁶ See Monika Klinger, *Die Demokratie*, 41-58.

as an active bourgeois member of the Habsburg Empire can be seen in his call for slow transition, the avoidance of bloodbath and witch trails, and a democratic transition based on a commitment to law.

The influence of Kantian ethics on Broch during the same period made his democratic tendencies openly moral in their intent. “As Hermann Broch in his open letter expressly demonstrates, politics has to be value oriented.”³⁹⁷ Broch’s attack on both bourgeois and social democratic politics of interests was consistent with much of the neo-Kantian thought in Germany and Central Europe. Lützel mentions Karl Vorländer, Max Adler, and Thomas Masaryk, as examples of thinkers who both joined together politics and ethics and influenced Broch’s own thought.³⁹⁸

Broch’s political engagement in 1919 was democratic and committed to security and law. The key influences for Broch’s earliest political thought were Kant, Austro-Marxism, and a fundamental conservatism, which reflected Broch’s individual social and personal development. Broch’s notion of an ethical humanism was endangered by the breakdown of social control. In both “The Street” and “Constitutional Dictatorship as a Soviet System,” Broch stressed the need for rational and controlled action—his political solutions did not go far beyond the point of claiming that real advancement in the social and political realms took place in the context of control. The notion of security foreshadowed here Broch’s later concerns

³⁹⁷ Monika Klinger, *Die Demokratie*, 41.

³⁹⁸ See Lützel, *Ethik und Politik*, 47-51.

for the security of the individual.³⁹⁹ Yet, in the context of 1919, Broch's call for security appeared much conservative than they did in the context of post-War United States; in the American context, Broch's internationalism and his call to augment the American tradition of negative rights with an legal formula of responsibility were at a minimum left leaning.⁴⁰⁰ The change from conservative to liberal labels for Broch's political theory, however, reflected not so much a shift in Broch's focus, but a shift in context from post-World War One Austrian national politics to post-World War Two international politics.

A final attribute that can be found both in Broch's earliest political work and his later exile writings is his attack on politics as a pastime. Broch suggested in 1919 that politics too easily reflected vacuous phrases designed to win theoretical debates; yet, these empty phrases also took on real and dangerous meaning when coopted by the masses. "The Street" and "Constitutional Dictatorship as a Soviet System," were attack on the idea of politics itself. "Only cursory consideration would lead one to assess all the author's reactions to the events as apolitical, for especially in Broch's case, it is precisely in condemning the political so ruthlessly that he reveals his keen interest."⁴⁰¹ Broch, as Schmidt-Dengler demonstrates, engaged the political by elevating the political beyond the realm of the everyday. "The Street" was a work that criticized politics as a relative value system that had the potential to morph into an

³⁹⁹ See Chapter 2 and 5 on Broch's concept of a "Law for the Protection of Human Dignity."

⁴⁰⁰ See Chapter 2.

⁴⁰¹ Schmidt-Dengler, "Broch's Early Politik Text," 59.

oppressive, valueless value system.⁴⁰² Democracy as a simple political notion of freedom did not work for Broch; his conservative and spiritual character demanded a law by which to direct action. Broch remained concerned with the autonomy of the individual, but he did not assume ethics flowed directly from freedom. He saw a complex relationship among the individual, rationality, knowledge, and history. His political theory demanded that these factors remain operative in both theoretical debate and pragmatic street demonstrations. In the next chapter, we will examine in more detail how these early political ideas translated during his American exile into an active political platform that was anti-fascist, pro-democracy, internationalist, and directed towards the protection of human rights.

Hermann Broch, born in 1886, grew up in the paradoxical situation of expanding opportunity (social and economic) for Jewish émigrés and expanding political anti-Semitism in what Carl Schorske referred to as a “politics in a new key.” While material wealth and social mobility marked Broch’s youth and adolescence; his intellectual and cultural mentality reflected not only this upper middle class values, but also the eclecticism and neurosis of the outsider who penetrated into the world of the German-Austrian aristocratic circle. At the end of the first decade of the twentieth century, Broch began his earliest works on political and cultural criticism. Although professionally and emotionally controlled by his father and his familial obligations, Broch’s innate intellectual curiosity and his sense of the intellectual’s social duty

⁴⁰² Schmidt-Dengler’s discussion of the cooption of Broch’s phrase, “Politische die letzte und böseste Verflachung des Menschen (first used in “*Die Straße*,”)” demonstrates how both Franz Blei and Heimito von Doderer misemployed the phrase to express a notion of political disengagement that Broch never intended. See 62-4.

compelled him toward the Viennese world of feuilletonist cultural criticism and journalistic philosophy. At this point, the growth of anti-Semitic politics had reached a normalized aspect in Viennese society. It did not, however, side track Broch's social assimilation. In many ways, it directed Broch's assimilation and his basis of his intellectual thought towards both Social Democracy and liberalism in that it clarified the cultural spilt between Viennese politics in the form of Lueger and his Christian Socialist and the Habsburg imperialism that was becoming more and more aligned with Social Democratic notions of cosmopolitanism. The question of nationalism had yet to be completely worked out among the Social Democrats, but 1914 would pragmatically solve that issue. In the atmosphere of nationalistic and anti-Semitic politics, Broch provided us with the earliest glimpses into his political worldview. Even as he converted to Catholicism, married into the Hungarian, Christian aristocracy, and became more mired in the bürgerlich world of manufacturing and business, Broch's need to engage in the intellectual world of modern Vienna proceeded unabated.

His earliest works come from his notebooks of 1908. The aphoristic essay "Kultur 1908/1909" demonstrated clearly the influence of Nietzsche and Schopenhauer. More generally, the essay reflects Broch's participation in the intellectual challenge to nineteenth-century stability and optimism. In his early essays, the "crisis of the European mind," was linked very closely to the development of *Lebensphilosophie* and represented an intellectual challenge to the clarity of the great system builders such as Comte and Hegel and to the positivism of Marx, Mill, and

Darwin. Intellectually, the years between 1908 and 1925, reflected Broch's eclectic and journalistic education, having been denied the Gymnastic education that was a regular feature of those in Broch's Jewish, middle class cadre.

Throughout these years, Broch maintained a dual identity. In his professional and familial life, he remained identified with the landed gentry and the world of industry. In his intellectual and psychological life, he identified with the world of the Viennese café. He educated himself intellectually and sexually in this world, but remained somewhat aloof from its *Weltanschauung* because of restraints of family and the haphazard, auto-didactic development of his thought. Broch's ethical stance tended toward the margins in the form of Karl Kraus and Kantian philosophy. The opposition in Broch's dual life translated as well into his political thought. Even here, Broch remained an outsider, who never saw his role as one of taking sides. "Broch is neither a Marxist nor a bourgeois liberal nor a conservative revolutionary, but rather a representative of the party-line of an unbound critical intellectual, which put forth the task, under the present social conditions, to work towards a humanization of political relations."⁴⁰³ The ethical impulses he gathered from his experience in Vienna transferred into his political thought, and although his intellectual and social world between 1908 and 1925 remained largely apolitical, these years established the social and intellectual base for Broch's more openly political activities in the context of fascism and exile. In the next chapter, I expand on Broch's intellectual development in Vienna, as well as explore the role of Broch's psychological development.

⁴⁰³ Lützel, *Ethik und Politik*, 14.

Chapter Six

Ethical Neurosis:

Cultural Criticism in Vienna and Broch's Sexual Neurosis, 1908-1925

Indeed, the jealousy I felt toward my father and my brother almost killed me as a child. The wrongs that these two did me then, however, I cannot, on my part, do to another. For then I would be no better than these two criminals. More importantly, I dare set any woman off into a jealous rage, because there the projections back to my mother would have to be contemplated.

Hermann Broch (1942)

In the last chapter, we focused on Broch's life from the age of 23 to 40 (1908 to 1925). The period corresponded to the key events in Broch's professional and personal life (1908/9: graduation from school, military service, marriage, and Catholic conversion; 1925: his return to university and his separation from the family business). Over this period, Broch suffered through an identity crisis in which pressures from cultural assimilation, from a contentious relationship with his family, and from the juggling of personas (businessman, Burgher, intellectual, and artist) taxed both his psyche and his personal relationships. Nevertheless, the intellectual foundations of Broch's thought solidified during this same period, and the result for his later political theory was profound. As discussed in the previous chapter, during this time Broch was by and large non-political. His intellectual energy was directed toward cultural criticism and aesthetics. Underlying his criticism, however, was an ethical focus that

remained central to Broch's thought throughout his life and in exile expanded into political theory. As he moved intellectually from periods of epistemological, literary, mathematical or political interest, he always set out from the point of view of the ethical and the cognitive activity of the individual.

In this chapter, I examine two key influences on Broch's ethical individualism: his auto-didacticism in terms of philosophy and metaphysics and his own analysis of his childhood. In both cases, the importance of the individual as the locus for value production is clear. Broch's own discussion of his emotional and sexual development highlights the existence of a split within the individual between the cognitive realm of the ego and the practical realm of the non-ego. If the individual fails to maintain a separation between these realms, value production and the value system that results become misdirected, or in Broch's terminology "hypertrophical." Broch's ethical individualism served as the foundation for his later anti-fascist political theory, for he attributed fascism's rise in the 1920s and 1930s to its ability to exploit just such a breakdown in the individual psyche.

Broch posited an innate relationship between history, values, and the individual. "History is composed of values, since life can be comprehended only in the category of value—yet these values cannot be introduced into reality as absolutes, but can only be thought of in reference to an ethically-motivated value-positing subject."⁴⁰⁴ Broch rejected, however, the relativism implied in a historical philosophy founded on pure individualism. He did not see the world as a collection of unrelated,

⁴⁰⁴ Broch, *The Sleepwalkers*, 562.

self-sustaining entities. He saw history and humanity as unified. To maintain the tension between individual autonomy and human solidarity, he turned to Plato and then to Kant.

Broch built into his philosophy of history a notion of the world as a plurality of value products, “a product of products,” with its inherent hierarchies and relative organizations. History represented the interaction of a social value system and the individual cognitive process. Rationality continually imposed change on the system through advancement in knowledge (“progress”). Rationality, however, continually threatened the system with new knowledge, for any changes that affected the social expression of the system exposed the individual to irrational fear. Broch termed this process “twilight consciousness.” It was the point in history where the individual became estranged from the cognitive world of the ego; thus, he or she is left to find value in the non-ego—in the world at large. In this sense, Broch saw two key movements in history: one was progressive and linear (the Platonic march toward rationality or *logos*—this was an absolute movement); the other was cyclical and relative: advances in knowledge overturn the systemic stasis of an epoch; value systems hypertrophy and close down; periods of chaos lead to the reconstitution of stasis based on a new value system).⁴⁰⁵ Cyclical movement represented the battle of relativism within a value system, while the linear progress represented the “immanent validity of the Logos.”

⁴⁰⁵ Broch’s later political theory is directed towards reducing the violence and destruction characterized by periods of hypertrophy.

Even though the logical advance of history must be arrested time and again whenever it reaches the limits of infinity inherent in its metaphysical construction, and though the Platonic view of the world must time and again make way for a positivistic examination of data, yet the reality of the Platonic idea remains invincible, for with every access of Positivism it merely touches its mother earth again to rise anew, upborne by the pathos of experience.⁴⁰⁶

With a cyclical vision of epistemological and social stability, Broch envisioned historical epochs as symbolic expression of the Platonic Idea (totality), and periods of social unrest as transitional moments. Modernity was just such a moment. In the end, history was the story of the linear movement toward totality. Whereas the individual value production simply reflected the style of an epoch—its *Zeitgeist*, totality came from the process of pursuing “the ethical imperative.” History as an unfolding of individual value production was thus “conditioned by Logos.” Broch went on to argue that “the value-positing subject can be imagined only in the isolation of its selfhood, in that inevitable, complete, and Platonic isolation ... and whose compulsion it is to state all activity in terms of logical plausibility.”⁴⁰⁷ The progressive source for the course of history was logic, “the world is a product of the intelligible Self.”⁴⁰⁸

For Broch, the individual and ethics were the source for political action. The autonomous individual, through the ego’s ability to isolate itself from the restraints of irrational fear, expanded the cognitive boundaries of his or her own historical epoch. In this sense, Broch saw history as progressive: a continual movement towards

⁴⁰⁶ Broch, *The Sleepwalkers*, 563.

⁴⁰⁷ Broch, *The Sleepwalkers*, 562.

⁴⁰⁸ Broch, *The Sleepwalkers*, 563.

absolute knowledge by successive cognitive advances.⁴⁰⁹ Moreover, Broch linked scientific knowledge with value systems. value systems remained stable as long as advancements in knowledge did not challenge too severely the basis for human institutions. At some point, however, knowledge would advance beyond the limits of the value system, initiating a historical shift not simply in science but in society. In such cases, value must be reconceived; this process took place on the individual level. The paradox of history was, however, that the source of both knowledge and value, the individual, became endangered during these shifts as well. The danger came from irrationality, insecurity, and fear. While there are multiple external expressions of insecurity that correspond to the historical circumstances of the age, the ultimate source of irrationality was fear of death.

Broch's philosophy of history, his value theory, and later his political theory were based on the ultimate problem of death. It was in Vienna of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that Broch embraced the relationship between death and modernity. Broch immersed himself in an intellectual tradition obsessed with the individual and his or her relationship to death. His philosophy of history showed the influence of Arthur Schopenhauer, Otto Weininger, and Sigmund Freud.⁴¹⁰ All three thinkers are examples of how one combines science and ego-based psychology to develop programs for the advancement of the human condition. All three thinkers are

⁴⁰⁹ This view is an indication of the legacy that the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries left on the generation of 1905.

⁴¹⁰ Schopenhauer's *The World as Will and Representation*, Weininger's *On the Last Things and Sex and Character*, and multiple volumes of Freud appear in Broch's Vienna library.

fundamentally pessimistic in their assessments of the modern world. For Freud and Weininger, the obvious relationship between individual irrational forces and politics contributed to a political outlook based mainly on the relationship between sexuality and social structures. Broch would rely heavily on their notions for his political theory, but he would rely more heavily on Schopenhauer for his political solution. Although, Michael Lützeler claims that the influence of Schopenhauer on Broch is brief and limited to his youth, the importance of Schopenhauer was neither limited nor brief. The notion of diminution of the ego developed directly out of Schopenhauer and served as the centerpiece for Broch's political solution to fascism. Broch's political thought became a fusion of Freud, Weininger, and Schopenhauer, and it demonstrated how the lack of specialization in nineteenth-century thought allowed Broch to pursue a political theory based on humanism—the individual as the source of value. Broch's lack of specialization also left him on the margins of social and political thought by the middle of the twentieth century. The conception of Broch as tragic, quixotic, and unsuccessful developed out of the anti-modern foundations of his thought.

Because Broch first addressed this question outside of the University, his initial encounter reflected an indebtedness to dilettante or *cause celebre* philosophers such as Houston S. Chamberlain and Otto Weininger, as well as a strong attraction to the ubiquitous themes of decadence and degeneration, prevalent throughout Europe and characteristic of the *fin-de-siècle* moment. The aphoristic tone of Broch's "Kultur 1908/1909" and its Dionysian vocabulary is reminiscent of Nietzsche. Broch's

repeated references to the death and senility of civilization indicates the influence of Nietzsche, Schopenhauer, and Karl Kraus; it also provides the first hints of Broch's historical philosophy, which he developed during and after the First World War. It is a philosophy of history reminiscent of Polybius, Machiavelli, and Vico, and similar to Splenger's ideas on historical cycles,⁴¹¹ as well as Nietzsche's concept of the eternal return. The connection between civilization and sexuality or ecstasy further demonstrated a familiarity with the work of Arthur Schopenhauer and Otto Weininger.

It was through the Innsbruck's journal, *Der Brenner*, that Broch became directly active in a critical approach to modern culture. The journal was edited by Ludwig von Ficker, and it had a close connection to both Ludwig Wittgenstein and Karl Kraus. As Lützeler remarked, Broch became aware of the journal through a posting by Kraus in his journal *Die Fackel*.⁴¹² In 1913, Ficker invited Broch to participate in a panel discussion on Karl Kraus; the panelist included among others Thomas Mann, Peter Altenberg, Georg Trakl, Adolf Loos, Stefan Zweig, Wiily Haas, Franz Werfel, and Oskar Kokoschka.⁴¹³ Through its association with Kraus and other writers such as Rainer Maria Rilke and Theodor Haecker, as well as a generous gift by Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Der Brenner* was a powerful source for contemporary criticism and intellectual debate on the issue of modernism and modernity. Broch published

⁴¹¹ Broch's philosophy was not, however, organicist in the sense of Splenger; it was based on the shifting relationship of human value systems to the expansion of human knowledge.

⁴¹² See footnote 1, Hermann Broch, *KW* 13/1, 11.

⁴¹³ For a complete discussion of the panel and Broch's relationship to *Der Brenner* see Lützeler, *A Biography*, 33-35, as well as the correspondence between Broch and Ficker, *KW* 13/1, 11-30.

several articles in *Der Brenner* from the 1913 to 1915, as well as one poem.⁴¹⁴ Broch's relationship to the journal waned after the outbreak of the war and with Broch's growing preference for Kant over Nietzsche.

Broch's early involvement with journalistic cultural criticism, especially his connections to anti-modernism, degenerationism, or Life Philosophy, was not a permanent aspect of his later thought. Nevertheless, the experience of these years opened Broch's thought to the importance of the ethical; in this sense, Karl Kraus played a particularly important role. From the ethical impulse of newspapers and cafes, Broch turned to Kant, and from Kant Broch's later political concerns for the individual would develop.

If one takes a wide view of Broch's development as cultural and social critic, then it is clear that that he frequently was obligated—at least early on—to the dominant philosophical currents. The first unpublished aphorisms and essays of the young Broch from the period before the First World War back to 1912 demonstrate the influence of Life philosophy, a general Schopenhaurian pessimism, and the initial borrowings from the cultural criticism of Karl Kraus. Then, around 1913, the crucial engagement with the Kantian ethics took place, first mediated by Chamberlain's book on Kant, a book directed at a popular audience; in the following years Broch deepened his knowledge with Kant's own books and through an engagement with representatives neo-kantianism and Austro-Marxism. Like many Viennese man of letters from his generation, Broch owed much, to Karl Kraus' crucial society-critical impulses.⁴¹⁵

⁴¹⁴ Critical essays included "Philistrosität, Realismus, Idealismus der Kunst," *KW* 9/1, 13-26; "Antwort auf eine Rundfrage über Karl Kraus," *KW* 9/1, 32-3; "Ethik. Unter Hinweis auf H. St. Chamberlains Buch 'Immanuel Kant,'" *KW* 10/1, 243-8. Additionally, he published one poem, "Mathematisches Mysterium," *KW* 8, 13.

⁴¹⁵ Lützel, *Ethik und Politik*, 12-3.

Ethics would remain the central concern of Broch's thought from 1908 onward; the sources for his ethical outlook were, however, not formal training, but late nights in his study, newspapers, and cafes.

Two more figures who played influential roles in Broch's ethical individualism were Kant and Husserl. It was through Edmund Husserl's *Phenomenology* that Broch developed an epistemological structure for his ethical individualism. Broch employed the basic Husserlian notion of cognition as an exchange between the conscious (the realm of the ego) and the Life-World (the realm of the non-ego). As importantly, Broch pursued Husserl's goal of connecting subjectivity in the individual ego to a universal law of human epistemology. In Broch's case, however, the epistemological absolute was necessary not simply for an understanding of language and logic (the strict goals of analytical philosophy) but also for establishing a universal ethical impulse.⁴¹⁶ Broch's epistemology was designed to prove the existence of an ethical absolute, so that from there political and social value systems could be conditioned to reflect those absolute values. It was not until the late 1940s that Broch finally developed his ethical absolute. His work on mass hysteria was, in fact, the explanation of that absolute, and the last third of that work laid out the political implication of his theory on ethical individualism.

⁴¹⁶ The limits and the exactitude of language as a vehicle for discussing science and society occupied many of the great thinkers of turn-of-the-century Vienna, such as Wittgenstein and the logical positivists. See Janik and Toulmin, *Wittgenstein's Vienna*.

Broch's linking of ethics, politics, and the individual also came from his relationship to neo-Kantianism and Austro-Marxism.⁴¹⁷ Broch's attraction to Kant began in the second decade of the twentieth century. It was through Kant that Broch developed his idea on the role of cognition and its relationship to ethical actions. Through Kant, Broch built upon both the individual, Kant's notion of a "loneliness of the I" as a space for cognition and morality, and the absolute, Kant's categorical imperative.⁴¹⁸ Broch's Kantianism, however, bore the marks of his auto-didacticism; it led Broch to conceive of Kant in a specifically political context. The fact that Broch filtered Kant through neo-Kantianism, especially the neo-Kantianism of Austro-Marxism helped to explain Broch's close connection between an ethical absolute and democracy.⁴¹⁹ Max Adler was a key figure in this respect.⁴²⁰ In Broch's earliest political essays from 1918-19, the critique of politics as a tool of relative ethics, employed by both the right and the left equally, followed closely Adler's own theory on socialism and ethics. "The similarity between the two thinkers is striking"; Lützelers goes on to point out the influence of the Austro-Marxist, Adler, in terms of Broch's philosophy of history: "Both argue for an ... ethical theory of history, which

⁴¹⁷ See Lützelers, *Ethik und Politik*, 51-8.

⁴¹⁸ See Ernestine Schlant, *Hermann Broch* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1978).

⁴¹⁹ See Janik and Toulmin, *Wittgenstein's Vienna* for a discussion of the relationship between neo-Kantianism and Austro-Marxism.

⁴²⁰ Broch reviewed two of Adler's books, *Marx als Denker* and *Engels als Denker*, and his library contained a copy of Adler's collected essays. See Klaus Amann and Helmut Grote, *Die "Wiener Bibliothek" Hermann Brochs: Kommentiertes Verzeichnis des rekonstruierten Bestandes* (Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 1990), 5.

sets as its goal an ethically perfect, human community.”⁴²¹ In neo-Kantian terms, history was an outgrowth of ethics and epistemology. Yet, Broch did not see history itself as an absolute idea—he explicitly rejected Hegel’s world spirit for its “all embracing absoluteness.”⁴²²

Ernestine Schlant argues that the importance of Broch’s later political-philosophical writings are grounded in ‘a frame of reference’ that develops from his intellectual relationship to several key thinkers: Plato, Kant, Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche;⁴²³ more importantly, however, his relationship to these thinkers is mainly moderated by secondary, contemporary intellectuals, especially Otto Weininger, Houston Stewart Chamberlain, and Karl Kraus. The omnipresence of these writers in the journals and cafes of Vienna 1900 had a particular influence on Broch, whose initial encounters with philosophy and cultural criticism came through self study and newspapers. Broch’s interaction with the books and articles of these intellectuals accounted for the elevated position that Life Philosophy (*Lebensphilosophie*) played in Broch’s earliest value theory. The history of Life Philosophy is checkered, and its relationship to the National Socialism and Germanic Volkish ideology color most references to it with images of racism and reactionary politics. For Broch, however, the issues involved in Life Philosophy were the central intellectual questions

⁴²¹ Lützel, *Politik und Ethik*, 50. Lützel differentiates Broch and Adler in terms of methodology, and here Lützel argues for the influence of a prominent neo-Kantian in terms of methodology, i.e. Hans Vaihinger.

⁴²² *KW* 12.

⁴²³ Ernestine Schlant, *Hermann Broch* (Boston, 1978).

occupying the leading figures of Vienna: was Europe degenerating, could language serve to unite humanity (aesthetically, racially and/or nationally), and was modern progress, i.e., political enfranchisement, scientific positivism, and technological development, beneficial to society? For Viennese thinkers of the first two decades of the twentieth century, the three most influential texts, which addressed these issues, were Houston Stewart Chamberlain's *The Foundations of the Nineteenth Century*, Oswald Spengler's *The Decline of the West*, and Otto Weininger's *Sex and Character*. All three of these works are filtered through Schopenhauer's and Nietzsche's philosophical irrationalism, and joined to a tradition of neo-Kantianism.⁴²⁴

Schlant specifies that Broch's early philosophical development was based on influences of Nietzsche and Spengler in terms of raising the importance of contemporary events in the development of his thought and his program of ethical individualism.⁴²⁵ The necessity of the "loneliness of the I" in Broch's ethical formulations arose from his view of recent historical developments surrounding the process of disintegration; the process of disintegration itself was not set in motion by the discovery of the ethical task—the process was tied in Broch's mind to the cyclical view of history found in Spengler. Broch's approach to philosophy can be understood as a response to his environment, both personally (including his educational process)

⁴²⁴ "In Wittgenstein's Vienna, everyone in the educated world discussed philosophy and regarded the central issues in post-Kantian thought as bearing directly on his own interests, whether artistic or scientific, legal or political. Far from being the specialized concern of an autonomous and self-contained discipline, philosophy for them was multifaceted and interrelated with all other aspects of contemporary culture" (Janik and Toulmin, 26).

⁴²⁵ Schlant, *Hermann Broch*.

and culturally/socially—the importance of the ideas of decadence and its accompanying books: Spengler, Chamberlain, and Weininger. Michael Lützeler argues that Life Philosophy plays an intense, but brief role in the overall thought of Broch.⁴²⁶ Schlant argues that Broch’s auto-didactic philosophical education infused his thought with a life long eclecticism.⁴²⁷ Yet, what still needs to be highlighted about Broch’s early thought is its relationship to his later political theory—and in terms of that, it was Broch’s eclectic fusion of his own sexuality, his assimilation, and his auto-didactic compression of Plato, Kant, and Freud within the fulcrum of a Viennese crisis of culture. The result for his later discussion of mass hysteria was a reliance on the individual ego as the source of value construction, the emphasis on social obligation, the danger of an irrational fear of death to political action, as well as the return of a positivistic dream of universality fueled by a constant battle between feelings of impotence and overcompensation.

Even at its more mature expression, from the early 1930s, Broch’s philosophy of history echoed the intellectual concerns that he developed in his adolescence and early adulthood. The process by which Broch reached his ethical positions, moreover, did not only indicate an attraction to Plato and Kant; it suggested, as well, the combination of intellectual and personal struggles from the period 1908 to 1925.⁴²⁸ The contestation between the intellectual world of the university and journalistic world

⁴²⁶ Lützeler, *Politik und Ethik*.

⁴²⁷ Schlant, *Hermann Broch*.

⁴²⁸ In some cases even earlier, that is, experiences from Broch’s childhood.

of Viennese intellectual milieu played a significant role, and the position of Broch, as outsider to both worlds, provides a powerful view into the issues at stake; and, more importantly, Broch's solutions to the tension between scientific materialism and philosophical irrationalism, between specialization and dilettantism expand our understanding of the possibilities of political thought and engagement in turn-of-the-century and inter-War Austria.

Broch's earliest intellectual endeavors reflected his historical context in terms of key trends in European intellectual history as well. His critique of Victorian society, with its blind belief in the absolute knowledge of science, was part of a larger movement towards non-rational views of the world. For many, epistemology, philosophy, and even science based on a strictly rationalist or positivistic foundation proved wanting towards the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries. The Newtonian worldview, not necessarily Newton's worldview, came under attack from Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, symbolism, and the decadent aesthetes, not to mention science itself in the guise of relativity and quantum mechanics. In Vienna, Carl Schorske tied this general intellectual movement to the political alienation of the sons of the *Gründerzeit* liberals (1850-1870).⁴²⁹ The story was one of political impotence, psychological alienation, and artistic escapism.

Broch's earliest engagement in this milieu and the crisis it represented fits well the picture painted by both Schorske and Ernestine Schlant. In fact, Broch's earliest vehicle for balancing the breakdown of absolute faith in knowledge was to turn

⁴²⁹ See Chapter 1.

towards vitalism. Because of his education and the dilettante nature of his philosophical training, it is not surprising to see Broch turn towards a Life Philosophy worldview. The influence of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche is obvious in the tone and vocabulary of Broch's early notebooks from 1908-1909, as well as his first published works from 1913. Beyond these German thinkers, the Austrian context provided important role models for Broch's earliest critique: H. S. Chamberlain, Otto Weininger, and most especially Karl Kraus. Broch's attraction to Life Philosophy, however, could not sustain the ethical and rational bend of his own mind. The nihilism, as well as racism and nationalism, of the Life Philosophy did not match Broch's fundamental humanistic political stance.⁴³⁰ Thus, even during his sustained critique of bourgeois culture from 1908 to 1925, Broch noticeably turned from Kraus and Chamberlain to Plato and Kant.

In the context of a growing attraction to the irrational, the technical nature of Broch's education was an important factor in his ethical outlook. As discussed above, Broch's father's decision to educate his son in engineering in the place of humanities not only exacerbated Broch's assimilation into German culture, it also stressed the relationship between him and his father. Most importantly, however, Broch's education reinforced the importance of the pragmatic and the scientific in terms of his epistemological methodology. Broch's mind was that of an engineer more than that of a poet. Broch's period as an auditor (1904-05) and his university study after 1925 focused on mathematics and philosophy, which in the context of Vienna in the 1920s

⁴³⁰ Lützeler, *Ethik und Politik*.

meant a scientific philosophy and not on literature or humanities. Thus, Broch's eclecticism was further fed by the ambivalence between his attraction to the logical rigor of a mathematical language and the inability of the Viennese scientific community to provide any insight into metaphysics. Even Broch's attraction to mathematics demonstrated an ambivalent approach to positivism. As Arvid Perez argues, "The systematic, Pythagorean quality of mathematics is the third and perhaps most significant aspect of the discipline that appealed to Broch. He loved the mystery of the absolute, the infinite, and the all-encompassing; and tautology is the fundamental principle of mathematics."⁴³¹ Mathematics was the religious spirit that was central to Broch's mind.

If Hannah Arendt was correct in her characterization of Broch as a poet in spite of himself, it had as much to do with his disappointment in science as with his attractions to literature. In an autobiographical work written in the early 1940s, Broch described the tension between science and metaphysics, and he explicitly tied the separation of a priori knowledge from scientific method to the creation of ethical relativism, and thus political inaction: "When, in 1904, I began to attend the University of Vienna to study mathematics and philosophy, I was—like many others—bewildered and disappointed to learn that I was not entitled to pose any of the

⁴³¹ Arvid H. Perez, "The Disintegration of Values: A Social and Intellectual Study of the Austrian Philosopher-Novelist Hermann Broch, 1890-1930" (Doctoral Dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1971), 142. Perez also argues that Broch's education and his later business experiences are a central factor in Broch's ability to move beyond the "adverse influences of the Viennese milieu," by which, Perez meant the valueless kitsch and aestheticism of Vienna's "Gay Apocalypse." Broch's technical education provided Broch with the "scientific knowledge which set him apart from the average Viennese litterateur and prepared him for the contemporary world as no other could have done." See 132 and 136.

metaphysical questions then weighing on my mind; I was told that there was no hope for any answer to these questions.”⁴³² The autobiography outlined the philosophical restructuring of the university in the initial decades of the twentieth century. Broch described the period as one in which German idealism came under attack from multiple fronts. The most significant attack came from Vienna, especially with the figures Ernst Mach and Ludwig Boltzmann, Broch’s own teacher, in the guise of empiricism. Other attacks, however, were also prevalent:

the reorganization of logic began, psychology began to turn toward plain reality, and even though in Germany a counter-movement to preserve the endangered classic philosophy of apriori, set in the form of a neo-Kantian, neo-Hegelian, neo-Friesian schools, there was advanced within the framework of these schools, almost subconsciously, a far-reaching kind of ‘scientific positivism’; in other words, everything was aimed at unearthing Platonic interpretations and analyses of the amazing new findings in the field of science.

By the end of the 1920s, Ludwig Wittgenstein and logical positivism had an even greater impact on the separation of metaphysics and logic. Philosophy had willingly become the handmaiden to science.

With Broch’s earliest articles and his brief period of study at the University, Broch joined the debate that centered on the relationship between scientific materialism and philosophical irrationalism.⁴³³ For the scientific materialist, language and reason were the source for understanding existence. For the philosophical

⁴³² Broch, “*Autobiographie als Arbeitsprogramm*” in *KW* 10/2, 195-206.

⁴³³ See Luft, “Introduction,” in *Robert Musil*.

irrationalist, however, reason and science alone could not bring to light the source for truth.

The clearest example of this split between scientific materialism and philosophical irrationalism was demonstrated paradoxically in the person of Ludwig Wittgenstein. As Janik and Toulmin show, Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* was simultaneously a proof for the existence of a logically perfect language and also the denial of the applicability of that language to the question of ethical value. "The right method of philosophy would be this: To say nothing except what can be said, *i.e.* the propositions of natural science, *i.e.* something that has nothing to do with philosophy."⁴³⁴ Wittgenstein's work provided a roadmap for scientists and philosophers comfortable with a humanly bound world, a world in which, "The facts in logical space are the world."⁴³⁵ Yet, it also reflected the dissatisfaction of others who wanted to connect with the inexpressible, "There is indeed the inexpressible. This *shows* itself; it is the mystical."⁴³⁶ For Janik and Toulmin, Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* symbolized the central intellectual debate of Wittgenstein's Vienna (which was also Broch's Vienna)—what is the source of value in human life?

Broch's displeasure with limits of philosophy in terms of the irrational and the absolute was clear from a 1918 letter: "Philosophy has become a science, which needs above all scientific officials; it is a job like any other, in which one must simply

⁴³⁴ Wittgenstein, *Tractatus* 6.53.

⁴³⁵ Wittgenstein, *Tractatus* 1.13

⁴³⁶ Wittgenstein, *Tractatus* 6.522

classify themselves, even the director of philosophy does not require a spiritual spark. Where, therefore, is the drive for knowledge?"⁴³⁷ The contrast between Broch's success in Technical School and his disillusion and rejection of the University demonstrated two key aspects of his mind: 1) the inescapability of a rational, scientific facet to his thought, and 2) an overriding spiritual, humanistic *telos* to his thought. It is easy to see, therefore, why erraticism characterized Broch's career. In his Vienna milieu, his eclecticism was driven by his dual life and manifested in a division of energy among technological/business, mathematical, and literary efforts.

Although Broch has been criticized for his inconsistency, Broch himself embraced the diverse inclinations of his thought, especially as he pursued his theory of mass hysteria in exile: "Nobody except the amateur can be an expert on all branches of science."⁴³⁸ Though, Broch claimed he rejected the major aspects of positivistic philosophy in 1905, it seems that he was sufficiently curious about its possibilities in 1925 to return to the University and pursue it in earnest. In this second attempt at the University it is clear that Broch, after serious engagement with positivism, willingly rejected it as a basis for epistemological investigation. Having had to build his intellectual foundation through auto-didactic methods over the previous twenty years, it is little wonder that Broch's intellectual outlook was inimical to university ideas of specialization and division of knowledge. In an ironic sense, Josef Broch's attempts at keeping his son away from the uselessness of metaphysics actually guaranteed his

⁴³⁷ Letter to Ea von Allesch, *KW* 13/1, 41.

⁴³⁸ Hermann Broch Archive. Yale Collection of German Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

lifelong commitment to it. Indeed, in the arena of education, Broch's lack of university training ruled out a life of specialized knowledge, which would have compartmentalized his thought in a way that would exclude any possibility for the construction of his ethical value system, and subsequently his political theories. It is an unanswerable question, but if Broch's study of positivism had been allowed to grow at age eighteen as opposed to age forty and before his study of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, he may well have completed the often wished for dream of becoming a mathematician.

Broch's first published article did not appear until 1913;⁴³⁹ yet, all of his work from 1908 until the First World War reflected the close engagement with questions of cultural degeneration and loss of value producing aesthetics. In looking at his notebooks from 1908/9 and his first article from 1913, the influence of Broch's journalistic education is clear. The connection between civilization and sexuality demonstrated a familiarity with the work of Otto Weininger, a characteristic of Broch's writing that remained even in his mature years. It is clear from Broch's early references to Otto Weininger and the auto-didactic nature of Broch's philosophical development that *Sex and Character* influenced Broch's conception of sexuality.⁴⁴⁰

⁴³⁹ "Philistrosität, Realismus, Idealismus der Kunst" in *Der Brenner* 3/9 (February 1, 1913), 399-415; see also *KW* 9/1, 13-26.

⁴⁴⁰ For discussions of Otto Weininger and his relationship to "Vienna 1900" see David S. Luft, *Eros and Inwardness in Vienna* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 45-88 and Chandak Sengoopta, *Otto Weininger: Sex, Science, and Self in Imperial Vienna* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000). For a discussion of Broch and Weininger, see Monika Ritzer, *Hermann Broch und die Kulturekrise im frühen 20. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1988), 55-68 and Paul Michael Lützel, "Nachwort" in Hermann Broch's *Psychische Selbstbiographie*, edited by Paul Michael Lützel (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1999), 145-169.

The influence of Weininger in terms of sexuality will be discussed below. The central attraction of Broch to Weininger is, however, Weininger's Platonic worldview.⁴⁴¹ Although it was Kant's boundaries of cognition and autonomous individual that ultimately defined Broch's ethical system during this period, it was Weininger's notion of a Platonic conception of gender relations—the isolation of the ego from the messiness of everyday sexual relationships—that link the ego and the ethical in Broch's thought.⁴⁴² “Weininger does not simply postulate the autonomy of the individual. He goes on in his more weighty work—just as in the value theory of Broch—to work out logically the necessity of freedom, in order then to make this the subject of an individual ethics.”⁴⁴³ Weininger, in fact, led Broch away from the simple minded vitalism of Life Philosophy and provided Broch with an ethical direction for his critique of positivism. Weininger's focus on the individual as the vehicle to ethical actions and his willingness to confront the role of death in defining human life form one of the earliest and longest lasting features of Broch's ethical thought. In contrast to the anti-metaphysical and spiritually vacuous approaches to the needs of the individual and the ethical demands of modern society, Weininger appeared almost heroic.⁴⁴⁴ It is, in the end, not simply Weininger's (or Nietzsche's or

⁴⁴¹ See Monika Ritzer, Chapter 2, 63-8. The influence of Weininger in terms of sexuality will be discussed below.

⁴⁴² As will be discussed below—the ethical and intellectual costs of Broch's sexual relationships will serve as a constant source of guilt and a constant excuse for his failure to complete projects.

⁴⁴³ Ritzer, 58.

⁴⁴⁴ “To such a collection (of positivistic science), Weininger, in the guise of sympathetic hero, stood opposed” (Ritzer, 58).

Schopenhauer's) work that is important, but the context of Broch's life outside of the University—his journalistic education within his surreptitiously-led second life. As David Luft says of Weininger, “The breadth of his appeal can probably be explained by his misogyny and anti-Semitism, but this does not explain his significance to Wittgenstein, Mayreder, Broch, and Musil. . . . Weininger attempted to give value to life after modern science and Nietzsche by way of Kant and a critique of modern attitudes toward sexuality and science.”⁴⁴⁵ Broch, though lacking the anti-Semitism and hiding his misogynistic tendencies in his personal and unpublished works, maintained a strikingly similar set of intellectual goals his entire life.

The centrality of Platonism for Broch was clear from his attraction to Weininger, his religious or spiritual predilections, and his constant search for an absolute source of knowledge and values. Platonism provided Broch with an ethical impulse as well. An interesting one-page document from the Broch Archive at the Beinecke provides some insight into the meaning and importance of ethics in Broch's life. The document is a *self evaluation* produced by Broch later in his American exile:

He [Broch] has one and only one aim: the knowing of reality. But for the sake of this reality he is extremely suspicious. There is for him the certainty of the ego and the certainty of the outside world, both only certain in their existence “as such” but both “unknown” and “unformed.” His duty is: to “know” and to “form,” for only out of forming springs the knowing.

He is platonic in extreme.

He tries, therefore, to embrace in all its broadness, which is [at] the same time the broadness of perception, reaching from its most rational to its most irrational border: i.e. from mathematics until

⁴⁴⁵ Luft, *Eros and Inwardness*, 46-7.

mysticism, which is the specific Platonic approach to life. He tries to push his search for reality everywhere to the limits of possibility: his rational interests are centered on the problems of the foundations of logic and mathematics; his irrational needs are pointing to the innermost phenomena of the soul.⁴⁴⁶

The influence of positivism, especially the *Wiener Kreis*,⁴⁴⁷ on Broch was very much limited by his own educational background, and by the fact that the Vienna Circle's legacy was more an international than a national phenomenon for Austria. In fact, the Vienna Circle's importance and legend was a post-exilic occurrence, a myth developed out of the exile influence in both Great Britain and the United States. As recent Viennese historians have shown, the political atmosphere of the University of Vienna during the interwar period, in particular from the defeat of the social democracy in 1934, made positivistic, anti-metaphysical philosophy the philosophy of the outsider. Furthermore, the Vienna Circle itself did not form until 1923, and after its founding enjoyed less than a decade of free and open movement. From 1934 on, the Vienna Circle was a political target; its members were unable to maintain University positions, Waismann, who had only obtained the position of second librarian within the Philosophy department lost that position in 1935. With the murder of Moritz Schlick on June 22, 1936, the Vienna Circle was functionally finished—their founder murdered, their lectures unattended and even barracked by various anti-socialist groups, adult educational facilities and programs (*Volkshochschule*) dissolved, and teaching positions at the university closed. In this context, Broch as a

⁴⁴⁶ Hermann Broch Archive. Yale Collection of German Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

⁴⁴⁷ "The Vienna Circle."

forty year old student had limited access to the group. This did not rule out the intellectual influence of neo-positivism on Broch, but it did help to clarify the context of his interaction with the movement—to be a member of the Vienna Circle meant much more than to share in the beliefs of empiricism, it meant that one took an active role in the political and cultural struggles of the University and the fate of their social democratic ideology in a way that excluded Broch’s experience in Vienna.

The early essays on cultural criticism and the sources for Broch’s participation in the cultural debates over modernity were often eclectic, and his writing demonstrated a youthful immaturity in terms of style; yet, even in these works the foundation of Broch’s intellectual life’s work (what he describes as an “*Arbeitsprogramm*”) was obvious. “What I set out to do at that time was the formation of a general phenomenology of the ‘Value.’” By value Broch meant an absolute value in the Kantian sense of the categorical imperative; Broch approached his task through:

in the Speech of Kant—the method of “the condition of possible experience,” that is: I tried to build an “ideal model,” on the logical-causal mechanics of which the “Value-Event” could be demonstrated in a simplified manner; this method of constructing a model seems to be the only one capable of theoretization (the Marxist theory is a model of an ideal “economic event,” the Freudian theory is a model of an ideal “psychic-unconscious event”), only insofar, however, and to such an extent, as the model is not dangling in air, but is being controlled and verified unceasingly on the empiric experiences of reality. Should one succeed in constructing such a model which has to be logically guaranteed—and I believe that I have succeeded—

then, [comparatively] easily, the whole phenomenology of Values will result.⁴⁴⁸

There is little doubt about what concerned Broch most in initial intellectual endeavors: Broch was an ethicist, and he would later indissolubly link ethics and politics. It was a political approach that I have termed critical humanism; it demanded that the individual play an active part in negotiating his or her relationship to society in terms of value production. The source of Broch's ethical stance was, in part, this intellectual milieu in which he operated. It was also in part the complicated sense of identity Broch developed within turn of the century Vienna. Through his youth and early adulthood, Broch was placed in situations where he was forced to challenge an external, institutionalized structure that contrasted deeply with his intellectual or spiritual impulses. In each situation Broch addressed these conflicts through individual or internal actions; in each case he lacked a stable external identity (either group or individual). The importance of "isolation" in Broch's theory of values was also present in Broch's personal life in an inverse manner. As the constrictions on Broch's external world (such as his Teesdorf life, his limited opportunities for study, and his exclusion from any religious community) grew more intrusive, the greater the feeling of impotence grew. In the face of such impotence, Broch's theoretical search for a metaphysical, but accessible, source of value grew. In the case of his life and his value theory the objective was the same. The parallels between Broch's life and his

⁴⁴⁸ Hermann Broch Archive. Yale Collection of German Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library. Broch's description of his early value theory, quoted from Broch's autobiography of 1943 ("*Autobiographie als Arbeitsprogramm*").

work did not stop at the level of external life and intellectual theory. They carried over into Broch's psychic world as well.

Broch's Sexual Development

In the early 1940s Broch wrote a series of three autobiographical works; these works discussed not only his immediate experience in United States, but also his earliest experience from Vienna, especially his sexual development. The autobiographical works when read alongside Broch's political work seem to produce a story of continuity in his worldview from Vienna to the United States: the repetition of theme and structure in terms of the central role of value theory, ideas of duty, and the irrationality of human action. Written in the 1940s, the autobiographical sketches certainly reflect his state of mind at that time. Nevertheless, I think Broch's narrative of his sexual development strengthens the argument for a deeply rooted notion of critical humanism in Broch's pre-exile period. While the texts themselves were firmly rooted in Broch's exile, the historical facts concerning his adultery and philandering, the second-hand accounts of his relationship to his father, and the familial stretches in novels from his pre-exile period all suggest a pre-exile date for his concern for the ethical importance of the individual.

Compared to the institutional role of his education, the cultural influence of his Judaism, and his historical position within a shifting economic and political world, the impact of Broch's family life appears small and insignificant. In terms of intellectual history, however, impersonal (historical) forces do not operate in a vacuum—the

emotional and psychological forces within the individual must also be given consideration.⁴⁴⁹ Broch claimed to have recognized his ego at a very early age. This recognition prompted him to ponder his connection to the outside world; it also led him to consider the role of personal and sexual relationships in establishing his ego. The result was that Broch's earliest mental development prepared him for metaphysical questions that showed remarkable similarity to questions asked by Freud, Schopenhauer, and Weininger.

One cannot investigate Broch's account of his sexual development without considering the role of psychoanalysis. Broch's awareness of psychoanalysis is clear from his letters and his philosophical work of the 1930s. Broch living in Vienna knew Freud's theory well. Broch began his own psychoanalysis in 1927 and continued it in the United States.⁴⁵⁰ Clearly psychoanalysis flavored Broch's memory of his childhood.⁴⁵¹ Broch also maintained a friendship with Alfred Adler. As Robert Rizzo argues, Broch's "Self-Psychoanalysis" demonstrates that his ethical and political impulses reflected an understanding of sexuality found in Adler's theories. Broch's lack of engagement with his family in terms of love, combined with his deep and early awareness of his own ego, led to an individual feeling of inferiority and a constant turn

⁴⁴⁹ Throughout this dissertation, I have consciously avoided essentializing these individual, psychological forces into rubrics such as Freud's Oedipal Complex. Freud for the most part functions in Broch's thought as a contemporary influence and not as an explanatory model.

⁴⁵⁰ Broch's analyst in Vienna was Hedwig Schaxel-Hoffer (see Lützeler, *A Biography*, 67) and in the United States Paul Federn (see correspondence between Broch and Federn in Hermann Broch Archive. Yale Collection of German Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library).

⁴⁵¹ See Paul Michael Lützeler's biography, as well as articles by Roberto Rizzo, Ch. Mondon, and Monika Ritzer in *Hermann Broch, Neue Studien: Festschrift für Paul Michael Lützeler zum 60. Geburtstag*, edited by Michael Kessler (Tübingen: Stauffenburg, 2003).

to overcompensation. But it was also the source of Broch's persistent democratic tendencies. Broch's individual ego was complete only in terms of its relationship to others. The key to Broch's mass hysteria theory is the axis between the individual and the group (mass, society, family). Rizzo connects this axis directly to the influence of Alfred Adler's thought, he points out that Broch's focus on his feeling of duty toward not only family, but society at large was Adlerian not just in theme, but even in its vocabulary of "over-compensation."⁴⁵²

When Broch did engage Freud, he did so not simply to take on Freud's paradigms but to branch out from Freud's focus on neurosis and sexuality. Broch's theory of the ego for instance did not rest on the division of the psyche into two key drives (Love/Death). Broch divided his model of the psyche into three specific aspects: the Core-ego (*Ich-Kern*), the Body-ego (*Körper-Ich*) and the psychological ego (*psychologisches-Ich*).⁴⁵³ Broch discussed directly his understanding of Freud's theory and his differences from it in his 1936 treatise, "Remarks on Psychoanalysis from the Perspective of Value Theory."⁴⁵⁴ Mondon's summarizes Broch's ego theory as follows, "The Ego-Source discovers its relationship to the outside world through the corporeal-Ego, while the psychological-Ego appears as a facilitator for both entities."⁴⁵⁵ In Broch's model of the mind, the influence was much more Husserlian

⁴⁵² Robert Rizzo, 565.

⁴⁵³ See *KW* 10/2, 179-83.

⁴⁵⁴ See *KW* 10/2, 173-194.

⁴⁵⁵ Monton, 517.

than psychoanalytical.⁴⁵⁶ It was a vision of human consciousness that is close to Sartre's later tripartite division of the mind into "being for itself," "being itself," and "being for others." It is not surprising that both Broch and Sartre took a humanist approach to the relationship of the human consciousness and the external world and found freedom to be closely connected to duty.

Broch's value theory demonstrated both Freud's impact on Vienna in the first of the twentieth century, as well as the limitations of his influence. Broch's central concern was to understand the psyche through reference to value theory. He underwent psychoanalysis, and he saw his own sexual relationship in Freudian terms, especially the notions of guilt and sublimation. Broch even hoped to add to the psychosexual vocabulary of analysis with his term *Amphitryonismus*.⁴⁵⁷ For Broch, however, the arena of the psyche was not limited to therapy or to the individual. One of the limits of Freudian psychology, which Broch pointed out was that it was not capable of addressing the larger social issues of the period. "Empirical psychology denotes the Ego as a place, where all psychic activity, bundled into a methodological unity, can project into the empirical world. For this reason a theory of the Structure of the Ego is necessary, a theory, which psychology by itself is not able to provide."⁴⁵⁸ For Broch, psychology was a tool of value theory.

⁴⁵⁶ Monton, 516.

⁴⁵⁷ The term referred to Broch's own sexual neurosis and was characterized by his passionate pursuit "to reform [his] partner to [an] ideal image." *Pyschische Selbstbiographie*, 17; see as well as Michael Lützeler's "Nachwort" in *Pyschische Selbstbiographie*, 167-169.

⁴⁵⁸ *KW* 10/2, 74.

Indeed, cultural criticism, mathematics, literature, even epistemology served a similar purpose to that of his psychoanalysis; they served to reconcile a spiritual, almost mystical vision of the world (in terms of both love and cosmological unity) and an isolated, frustrated experience of the world (seen in the relationship to his family and the limitations of his education).⁴⁵⁹ Broch's interaction with psychoanalysis, though important, was not the overriding force in his understanding of ethics or humanism. In fact, it is not important to prove that Broch's recollection or reconstruction of his childhood was exact. What his childhood recollections show us is that at the point where Broch began to consolidate his ethical value system around ideas of individual duty and Platonic ideals, he was also clarifying the impact that forces of impotence and over-compensation played in the individual's search for spiritual understanding.⁴⁶⁰

The stories concerning Broch's womanizing are well known in Broch scholarship. The historical evidence for Broch's failure at monogamy is vast. In his youth, Broch had several sexual encounters with household servants. During and after the First World War, Broch engaged in multiple affairs. From the time of his arrival in

⁴⁵⁹ Christine Mondon makes a similar claim in her article "Hermann Broch und die Psychoanalyse," in *Hermann Broch, Neue Studien: Festschrift für Paul Michael Lützeler zum 60. Geburtstag* (Tübingen: Stauffenburg Verlag, 2003), 512-3. "He [Broch] seeks in the image in the mirror to overcome the feeling of inferiority established in his childhood and to regain a lost identity. We have on the one hand the revolt against the standards of the paternal order, on the other hand the tendency to over compensation of the Ego. Broch tries in vain his entire life to reach the identity between his Ego and his ideal picture and this apparent, hoped for identity, he was able to reconstruct through the language."

⁴⁶⁰ Mondon warns such reductionism in her article on Broch and Freud. She makes the point that Broch's thought, especially his mass hysteria theory cannot be reduced to an expression of "the frustration experiences and the dear disappointments of the earliest childhood." Broch's own neuroses may have served as a "Muse" in his literary work, but his overall literary production was an aesthetic production.

the United States until his death, Broch began and ended a multitude of relationships with women. He carried on affairs with Jadwiga Judd, who made the journey from England to the United States with him, with the author Frances Colby Rogers, with the poet (and translator of his *Virgil* novel) Jean Starr Untermeyer, with the sculptor Irma Rothstein, with Ruth Norden, to whom his “Self-Psychoanalysis” is written, and Annemarie Meier-Graefe, whom Broch married in 1949. The relationships often ran concurrently, sometimes openly, sometimes secretly, but always passionately. Hannah Arendt, whose relationship to Broch was completely Platonic, said to him, “Let me be the exception.” Nevertheless, the facts of Broch’s sex life and even his detailed and revealing recollection of it are not evidence of a causal relationship between Broch’s sexuality and his political theory. The point here is to look at the framework in which Broch analyzed his sexuality.

The sources for Broch’s earliest years are very limited. There are documents that attest to his education and his residence, and there is photographic evidence that indicate a degree of affluence in his dress and his lifestyle. Evidence on Broch’s mental development, however, is much more limited. In fact, we must rely on memoirs from Broch and his son, in addition to juvenilia and letters, which mostly date from after 1900. The source and date of the evidence, thus, has some limitations. Regardless of these limitations, we must give consideration to Broch’s impressions of his adolescence, especially his description of his relationships to his father and brother, as well as his description of his sexual development. The parallels to his political theory are strong.

From 1941 to 1943 Hermann Broch composed the three autobiographical sketches: “Autobiography as a Program of Work” (*Autobiographie als Arbeitsprogramm*) “Self-psychoanalysis” (*Psychische Selbstbiographie*), and “An Addendum to my Self-psychoanalysis” (*Nachtrag zu meiner psychischen Selbstbiographie*). The three self-reflective texts, which remained unpublished until 1999, were, as editor Michael Lützeler points out, never conceived of as autobiographical in the general sense of the term.⁴⁶¹ They were explorations into separate aspects of Broch’s mental and emotional life. His “Self-psychoanalysis” was a personal exploration of his emotional and psychological relationships with women, and his “Autobiography as a Program of Work” was an objective exploration of his intellectual and scientific theories on society and politics. Broch never made any explicit connection between the texts and never showed any intention of publishing the works. Even Lützeler, who choose to publish the works in one volume, indicates that the works are thematically exclusive, describing Broch’s “Self-psychoanalysis” as the “extreme opposite of his ‘Autobiography as a Program of Work.’”⁴⁶² Connections among the sketches, however, can be identified. The consideration of the three works side by side provides a visual representation of the underlying unity of sexuality and epistemology in Broch’s political and ethical theory. The three texts offer tangible proof that Broch’s faith in the power of individual self-regulation was not simply a

⁴⁶¹ “Hermann Broch’s favorite form of autobiography was the letter. . . he had never written an autobiography in the classical sense.” Lützeler, *Psychische Selbstbiographie*, 145-6.

⁴⁶² Lützeler, *Psychische Selbstbiographie*, 148.

theoretical notion; furthermore, they demonstrate the degree to which Broch's early psychic development informed, in a visceral way, his theoretical work.

The link between Broch's exploration of his psychic, sexual development and the growth of his intellectual *Weltanschauung* is an important step towards understanding the intellectual development of Broch and of his milieu. Broch's decision to write autobiographical work that focused on his intellectual goals and his sexual life demonstrate this link as strongly as anything. The works show that Broch's intellectual metaphors, his literary and political goals, and his corporeal and mental touchstones were developed early in his life. And that the key historical experiences of his epoch—modernity, genocide, and world war—serve as intellectual fulcrums for the bending and repackaging of a deeply felt and unbreakable connection to the individual notions of duty and responsibility. The clarification of how the rational and the irrational united in the intellectual world of *fin-de-siècle* Vienna is at stake in Broch's thought.

“Autobiography as a Program of Work” (1941) is the longest of the three autobiographical works, twice as long as the other two works combined.⁴⁶³ In published form it is just over sixty-five pages. The text is an outline of Broch's intellectual efforts to come to terms with the problem of ethical relativism in European society during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Much of the content reflected or directly copied chapters from his work on mass psychology. Most

⁴⁶³ There are two manuscripts of this work, one in the Beinecke and one in Marbach, Germany, at the German Literary Archives.

significantly, it was an explanation of the lost of ethical value in Europe, and the results of that lost of value, World War. As he states at the opening of the work:

This is not so much an autobiography, as it is an attempt to explain the history of a problem, which by pure chance is similar to my own problem, since I—like anyone from my generation who was willing to recognize it, have always held this problem before my eyes: it is, straightforwardly speaking, the problem of the destruction of the absolute, the problem of relativity, wherein there is no absolute truth, no absolute value and therein also no absolute ethic, presently, it is the problem and phenomenon of a gigantic Machiavellianism, which has been, in a spiritual sense, developing for some fifty years and whose apocalyptic legacy we are experiencing today in reality.⁴⁶⁴

Broch's intellectual biography develops chronologically, starting with his essays on epistemology and ethics in the 1920s and moving to his literary work of the 1930s, especially *The Death of Virgil*, then his political theories of the forties, and finally his work on mass hysteria, which he was working on during the early 1940s (the time of the autobiography). In many ways, I see the autobiography as a means for clarifying the problem he was attempting to solve in his work on mass hysteria.⁴⁶⁵

Broch's "Self-psychoanalysis," (1942) is 32 single spaced, type-written pages with a 9 page addendum added the following year. Taken together, they were conceived of a letter to two women and are found in the correspondence of both

⁴⁶⁴ Broch, "Autobiographie als Arbeitsprogramm," 83.

⁴⁶⁵ As Christine Mondon states, "Although the theory of mass hysteria has its roots in the Second World War, it does not refer simply to this limited and specific historical experience, rather it investigates the psychological and sociological development of history, which is characterized by the irruption of the Mass. The Masses, which are the passive agents of history, represent the depletion of rationalism by pseudo-rational concepts of instinctual and impulse driven attitudes. Broch's proposal is to describe in an objectively perfect way these irrational and pathological features" (519).

women: Ruth Norden and Annemarie Meier-Graefe, Broch's second wife. The work is an explanation of Broch's social relationships; it explores the psychic foundations for his relationship to women, to his work, and to the world. The letter was written just before Broch restarted analysis with Paul Federn, and he hoped to prepare himself for the process by discussing a key metaphor found in all Broch's writing, the notion of isolation. While isolation and the "Loneliness of I" were important and necessary components of value production, they were on an individual level the source of Broch's neurosis. "My fear of becoming isolated is a most painful feeling of loneliness that always accompanies me."⁴⁶⁶ Broch sees the tension between a sense of duty to others (here set in realm of sexuality) and a feeling of impotence as the source of his neurosis, and he showed very little faith in being able to resolve the tension. Ultimately, he never did.⁴⁶⁷

Broch tied his opposition between sexuality and rationality to the explicit tension between his family and him. Broch portrayed the relationship in oedipal terms—in a contest for the attention/love of his mother, he battled and utterly failed against both his father and his brother.⁴⁶⁸ The failure left Broch with a feeling of inferiority and impotence.

⁴⁶⁶ *Pyschische Selbstbiographie* in Hermann Broch *Psychische Selbstbiographie*, edited by Paul Michael Lützel (Frankfurt a.M: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1999), 17.

⁴⁶⁷ Broch makes it clear in his letters from exile that his experience of psychoanalysis in Vienna was an intellectual education (bloss ein theoretisches Wissen), but not one that offered him a sense of healing or overcoming of his neuroses. Letter to Ernst Polak, March 26, 1946 quoted from Roberto Rizzo's article "Psychoanalyse eines pädagogischen Eros," in *Hermann Broch, Neue Studien*, 555.

⁴⁶⁸ "The childhood experience that stamped me as an impotent Un-man, in comparison with those two men, my father and my brother ..." "Psychische Selbstbiographie," in *Psychische Selbstbiographie*, 17.

This is the picture of a terrible feeling of inferiority. That this arose from some humiliation (*Niederlage*—defeat) in early childhood in relation to my father as well as my brother with regard to my mother’s love, must remain unquestioned. As far back as I can remember, I have regarded myself in contrast to these two men as an Un-man, as “impotent.” That I am completely impotent at base, even in the physical sense, is a perception that ineradicably accompanied me for my entire life—despite all evidence to the contrary.⁴⁶⁹

The relationship of Broch to his father, mother, and brother in his youth profoundly affected much of Broch’s future life: his physical weakness in terms of intestinal disease, as well as the accompanying hypochondria, his dysfunctional relationship to women, and his psychic imbalance in terms of guilt and obligation. Broch turned these competing psychic forces into the basis for his own personal sense of tragedy:

Furthermore, I told you that I am paying too much for everything in my earthly life: I pay too much for every relationship, I pay too much for every pleasure, I pay too much even for my work—the blanket is too short, and either the feet or the shoulders are cold. And so I have to pay with my work for my lust, with my pleasures for my human relationships, with my relations for my work, and vice versa: always a part is used for payments, and as no accountancies can work without cash, I have my additional currency in the pains of my *Bauch* [belly].⁴⁷⁰

Broch’s ability—his need—to undercut his own physicality further exposed a strong sense of impotence in his makeup. Hermann Broch was physically an imposing figure with a large framed body and strong, handsomely angular face. Broch is, however,

⁴⁶⁹ Hermann Broch, “Psychische Selbstbiographie” in Hermann Broch, *Psychische Selbstbiographie*, edited by Paul Michael Lützeler (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1999), 8.

⁴⁷⁰ Letter to Jean Untermeyer Starr in Hermann Broch Archive. Yale Collection of German Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

remembered in descriptions and pictures as physically frail, his large frame bend over so that he never reached his full height. Though an avid hiker, he is remembered in his own words and the words of others as constantly battling to free his mind from the weakness and limitation of his body.

Broch lived the last twenty years of his life on an almost constant death watch. “I find myself in one of the most miserable periods of my life—too many years behind me, and too few ahead.”⁴⁷¹ In a memoir focused on his father, H. F. Broch de Rothermann states, “In retrospect it seems that his whole life was overshadowed and defined by a frantic race with time: I can’t remember a moment when I might not hear him say, in a tortured voice, ‘No time, no time, no time!’ ... He wrote a letter to me in Austria (in English) in 1949: ‘I have no margin for life—I have but a margin for death.’”⁴⁷² He certainly acknowledged a life long neurosis that developed from his early childhood. He would further acknowledge that it played a significant role in his infidelity and his failed attempts at emotional relationships.⁴⁷³ It can be argued as well, and Broch himself implied it, that his sexual neurosis played a significant role in the formation of Broch’s intellectual pursuits.

My life is accompanied and burdened with a permanent moral conflict. ... Certainly work is for me a very positive thing, and in one way it is “pleasurable” to me; but this proceeds not only in the

⁴⁷¹ Letter to Hannah Arendt, January 22, 1947, in Hermann Broch and Hannah Arendt. *Briefwechsel 1946 bis 1951*, edited by Paul Michael Lützeler (Frankfurt am Main: Jüdischer Verlag, 1996),

⁴⁷² Broch de Rothermann, 2-3.

⁴⁷³ “It goes without saying that all this looms especially large in my relations with people. My behavior with those near me is timid and shy, and this is to be overcome only with the greatest of trouble. ... The almost physical torment that I suffered in my connection with my fellow-men has not changed since my earliest youth” (*Psychische Selbstbiographie*, 9).

form of the most difficult and bitter addiction and enslavement, it can be established only under prescribed and burdensome conditions: one of these is that the magnitude of the task that I set myself mounts beyond my strength, the other of these is that I am also not free in making my choice of tasks, that is, they were laid on me as a superimposed duty. ... this is the picture of a terrible feeling of inferiority ... As is the case with all feelings of inferiority, this also led to overcompensations: a) Assurance of masculinity through continually new love b) rejection of this sort of assurance—return of original humiliation and then a constant reversion to asceticism as a chosen form of life c) extending impotence to over compensation in family relationships d) stretching out family responsibility to every one of my human relationships, to a collective responsibility for humanity and truth.⁴⁷⁴

Broch employed his own sexual neurosis as a case study for the liberation of the ego from masochistic cycle of conquest followed by self-annihilation. Broch carried with him a sense that he constantly disappointed all those who loved him. The cycle of disappoint (the lack of emotional access to his mother, his sexual attraction to “unfit” lovers such as maids and governesses, his divorce, and his constant infidelities) followed by outburst of over-compensation (his failed attempts of living a dual life, his search for absolute knowledge, his commitment to rescue efforts during the war, and again his constant infidelities) fed a neurosis that eventually led Broch to categorize sex as ephemeral and false.

The symbolic importance of sexuality as a means for conceiving of abstract notions within the aesthetic, ideological, and ethical world of turn of the century Vienna has been demonstrated by David Luft’s recent work on Otto Weininger, Robert Musil, and Heimito von Doderer. The importance of sexuality for other

⁴⁷⁴ *Pyschische Selbstbiographie*, 7.

intellectuals of the time, such as Freud or Schnitzler, goes without saying. Through the influence of Otto Weininger and Arthur Schopenhauer, Broch applied his childhood sexual preconceptions to the realm of values and value construction. The connection between Broch's theoretical and sexual worlds tells us a great deal about the role male-gendered notions of thought, especially science, played in the Viennese world of his youth. Although, the neurotic division of love and sex was set out in his childhood household, it would later be reinforced in the Viennese world of the Café House. For, while the Café Houses were the source of Broch's sexual liberation around the time of the war, they were simultaneously the source of Broch's problematic notions of the separation of mind and body. Broch saw knowledge, mathematics, and science as pure, eternal, and ascetic, while he viewed sexual or emotional attachments as dirty and valueless (in the sense of *kitsch*). Although Broch did not explicitly tie the untidiness of physical sex to the female—in his own erotic life (as seen through his letters to various lovers) the link was clearly implied.

In his "Self-Psychoanalysis," Broch openly laid out his process of objectification of his partners. He saw his emotional relationships as sources of conflict, whose only resolution was to define the relationship through objective, rational criteria. Broch attempted in this objectification to limit the role of sex. He feared the public recognition of sexual motivation: "These go so far, for instance, that I only want to be seen in public with a tall woman, confessedly because I fear that everyone would know that I had chosen a small one only for pleasure in bed."⁴⁷⁵

⁴⁷⁵ *Psychische Selbstbiographie*, 12.

Broch, furthermore, acknowledged that he attempted to not only to control the parameters of the relationships, but even to conceive anew the nature of the object. “I plagued myself with the question why only young and lovely women should be the means of arousing potency, why not the old and ugly, yes, why should not the old man (Socrates) have the same purpose, especially as the qualities of soul and spirit have far more objective and enduring worth than the aesthetic ones.”⁴⁷⁶ Here Broch most blatantly pursued a line of logic that separates objectively male and female quantities: the separation of the ethereal realm of the mind from the earthly realm of the body. As Broch alluded to, and as I have repeated mentioned, the separation of morality and sexuality did not drive Broch to an ascetic lifestyle—his continued search to prove his potency when on unabated throughout his life. His sexual experience did not, however, change the ideal of separation. “I have functioned best in those relationships where I was successful in keeping afar the whole moral muddle, and concentrating myself on the purely erotic.”⁴⁷⁷

His search for a Platonic, eternal truth pushed him psychically towards the role of saint (it is a role, however, Broch pursued more in the fashion of a young Augustine).

Of course I know that I would pay less if I could integrate myself. And of course I know my splits. And I know their neurotic roots. (And for these reasons I restarted the analysis) But on the other hand I had the strength to

⁴⁷⁶ *Pyschische Selbstbiographie*, 14-5. He states further, “and though this has not developed in me as far as homosexuality, I have often enough let myself be chosen by old and ugly women, especially when there was a possibility of discovering in them a Socratic soul or any other spiritual quantities, or to develop in them just these qualities.”

⁴⁷⁷ *Pyschische Selbstbiographie*, 15.

sublimate the whole affair, and to transform the split into a productive search of reality. As a little boy—and that was one of the roots of my neurosis—I saw the grotesque day-dream, in which all adults were living, needless to say my parents too, and decided never to be the prey of a day dream. What people call love, friendship, etc. is the partaking in a common day dream, and since I didn't permit a day dream to myself, I couldn't share it with others. (And nobody could impose his day dreams on me.) Well, the result was that I couldn't "love," and that for all those who are unable to go under the first surface of things and are operating in their easy way with "love" etc—and also "tragic" is an easy way—I seem to be "cynical"; I can take it, for cynicism of that kind is the first step to truth and, therefore, to holiness.⁴⁷⁸

The influence of Otto Weininger is most evident here. Through both Schopenhauer and Weininger, Broch craved out from his sexual neurosis a value system in which the role of spirituality and asceticism were central. In his book, *Sex and Character*, Weininger focused his criticism on the two elements of modern society that were most responsible for its present state of degeneration: the woman and the Jew.⁴⁷⁹ In Broch's earliest work from the 1910s, Weininger's influence was limited to Broch's cultural criticism: the notions of degeneration (often expressed with sexualized vocabulary) and the role of the individual in creating value. Broch did not

⁴⁷⁸ Hermann Broch Archive. Yale Collection of German Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

⁴⁷⁹ The importance of Weininger's book for thinkers of turn-of-the-century Vienna has with few exceptions be overlooked because of its misogyny and anti-Semitism. The works of David Luft and Allan Janik, however, have provided strong arguments for reevaluating Weininger's work. Both authors have convincingly argued that Weininger's critique of modernity found a wide audience in Vienna because it provided a system of ideal types with which to discuss and understand the relationship of the individual to society. These studies do not attempt to excuse Weininger's misogyny or his anti-Semitism, but to demonstrate that Weininger was a serious thinker, whose audience was not mass political movements, but intellectuals who were intensely concerned with the health of their society.

acknowledge or employ Weininger's critique of the Jew in either his early or his later writing.

Broch picked up on Weininger's two ideal types: the prostitute and the mother. One sees this influence in Broch's work as early as *The Sleepwalkers*, and, in the early 1940s, Broch described his own system of female types:

There is no doubt that I have maintained my entire life, *cum grano salis*, the childhood schema of two ideal female types. Type NR. 1 is the "lady," thus my mother, while type NR. 2 is a compilation of all other female figures from my childhood household: the housemaids, the governesses, etc. etc. The "lady" type carries still today some traits of my mother; she is older, dark haired, with Jewish features (*Einschlag*), thereby, however, beautiful (my mother was to me as aesthetically pleasing in a subjective sense, as she was in an objective sense considered a beautiful woman), and this physical picture is, on the one hand, completed by the real psychological affectations of my mother, i.e., by pamperedness (*Verwöhntheit*), sickliness, egocentrism, insecurity, anxiety, coolness, rationality, and, on the other hand, by those traits that she never possessed but which I wished to see in her: above all, an understanding for me and the interests in life that were important for me. Next to this proper Ideal picture stands Type 2 as the pure opposite, namely as the small, curvy, blond, Aryan women, whom were at that time ruled by the elegant, slim Jewess. Now, afterwards, I see clearly, that it had been an opposition between a highly neurotic woman and multiple non neurotic women.⁴⁸⁰

The influence of Weininger is readily apparent: the categorization of women based on physical traits (though Broch does lack Weininger's biological language), which are directly tied to psychological characteristics.

⁴⁸⁰ *Psychische Selbstbiographie*, 65-6.

In “An Addendum to my Self-pyschoanalysis,” Broch specifically addresses his sexual neurosis and his division of women into two sexual types: “Type 1,” the Jewish Mother and “Type 2,” the Aryan Governess or maidservant. This short work provides the most telling details about Broch’s earliest sexual development. In it, he implies a series of sexual encounters with the servants in the family home, as well as clarifying the distance between Broch and his mother on an emotional level. He describes his “unfaithfulness” to the family in these affairs as pay back (*Rache*) for his mother’s refusal to show him the same affection she showed his father and his brother.⁴⁸¹ The affairs ended as a result of Johanna Broch dismissing the servants because of a long list of moral defects.⁴⁸² This only furthered, in Broch’s mind, the link between moral defect and physical love and reinforced the inherent tension between sex and love.

The result of Broch’s access to sex in the guise of servants and the absence of love from his mother was that Broch separated sex and love into the categories of potency and impotency. Sex became for Broch the vehicle for over coming his feeling of inferiority caused by his lack of love. Broch attempted throughout his life to keep separate the arenas of love and sex, “I have functioned best in those relationships where I was successful in keeping afar the whole moral muddle, and concentrating myself on the purely erotic.”⁴⁸³ Such division, however, seldom worked for Broch.

⁴⁸¹ *Pyschische Selbstbiographie*, 66.

⁴⁸² Broch provides an emotionally detailed description of such a house romance in his novel *The Guiltless*.

⁴⁸³ Hermann Broch Archive. Yale Collection of German Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

He found himself more often involved with women he connected to the “Type 1 female,” Jewish, dark, and tall. Broch described the Type 1 woman as a “lady” (*die Dame*), and he made a direct connection between his own mother and the “lady” type. Broch himself pointed out the obvious oedipal suggestion.⁴⁸⁴

More importantly, however, Broch developed in his theory of female types, not simply, a physical characteristic, but an accompanying moral attitude. He connected with the “Type 1” an obligatory love; it was a love that carried aesthetic pleasures as well, but the “Type 1” represented an eternal love, implicitly connected with virginity (*Keuschheit*) and Mary in Broch’s text. “Type 2” represented a strictly physical desire, Broch contrasted the virtue of the “Lady” with the “erotic delights” (*erotischen Reize*) of the maidservant. The split between sex and love corresponded to feeling of impotency and potency. While sexual arousal and satisfaction was possible in both female types, love was possible only with a “Lady.” But, since the love of a “Lady” was in Broch’s experience withheld or forbidden, desire equated to humiliation or impotency. The resulting sense of psychic insecurity transferred then into a moment of twilight consciousness, and overcompensation in the form of sexual conquest through the “type 2” women resulted.

Ideas such as love, faithfulness, and monogamy were misguided reflections. They were the foundations of closed value systems—systems created out of the shadows on the cave wall. “Since childhood, I have sensed, dreamed of and wished

⁴⁸⁴ Peter Bruce Waldeck explored the issue of incest in Broch’s literature from the 1930s and argues thematically the relationship between Broch’s novels and his personal experience cannot be separated. See *Die Kindheitsproblematik bei Hermann Broch* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1968).

for love only as an absolute possession, as an absolute belonging of one being to another ... and the human reality, which apparently does not permit of such a coupling of self to self, seemed to me simply a demonic horror that had only heightened through my own polygamy. ... It is no wonder then that in my projected world the hope of a mystical miracle grew to be that of an ‘objective’ miracle.”⁴⁸⁵ In this passage, we see the keys to Broch’s political theory, i.e., the individual in search of absolute understanding, who is driven to hysteria by the disjuncture between the subjective ideal and the reality of the world in which one lives.⁴⁸⁶ As Broch goes on to state, “this turning to the miracle is the same as the idea of the mystical rebirth.” Broch’s impotence in regard to his struggle for his mother’s affection and his potency in his sexual encounters as an adolescent created in his mind a clear division between sex and love.

The horror of not being able to reconnect these ideas left Broch with a psychic tear: on the one hand he never relinquished the image of “absolute monogamy,” it infused in Broch’s thought a constant sense of spirituality and mysticism. On the other hand, Broch could not bear his failure to bridge this divide, and he built out of the guilt or shame of that failure an overwhelming sense of duty. In a letter to Jean Starr Untermeyer, Broch emphasized the necessity of separating the corporeal world from the mental. In his letter Broch narrated on an individual level the process of the slipping into the twilight consciousness. Broch’s continued sexual relationship with

⁴⁸⁵ *Pyschische Selbstbiographie* 17-8.

⁴⁸⁶ These idea mirror Broch’s ideas on open and closed value systems.

Untermeyer and her continual demands for fidelity were seen by Broch as irrational interferences with the cognitive process in the guise of either jealous, monogamy, or lust. The result was an inability for either partner to see rationality and thus to contribute to the world. Broch characterized his problems in terms of sex and love in the same matter as the problem of mass hysteria. Monogamy for instance had become a closed value theory.

I know only one real decency in life: to leave to the other complete freedom, sexual freedom as well as every other one, to be helpful to the fellow under all circumstances, and to avoid everything which could do him harm. All this doesn't agree with a sexual hysteria, which knows only one decency: sexual faithfulness of the other one. ... Only one item more, although it is only in a loose connection with the problem: don't you see that the world is aiming for a thorough changing of its sexual morals? What can your 'faithfulness' still mean in a world in which there are whole countries in which more than 50% of the female population has been raped? Here are the true tragedies, the terrible birth pains of a new ethic, and to find out what may come out, in which direction the new salvation could show up, I am concerned with my psychology.⁴⁸⁷

The use of sex as a weapon of war or its role in the creation of an individual act of what he termed "sexual hysteria" demonstrated that Broch placed physical sexuality outside of the realm of truth and value. They were at worst an actual violation of human dignity and at best a distraction to the philosopher-king in his pursuit of truth. In both cases, the solution was the diminution of the irrational impulses and the answering of the call of duty. In Broch's own discussion of his sexuality and in his

⁴⁸⁷ Letter to Jean Starr Untermeyer (in English) (Hermann Broch Archive. Yale Collection of German Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library).

sexual experiences, Broch conceptualized his experiences in a framework that further parallels the framework of his critical humanism. The importance of totality (here a mystical notion of soul mates in place of an Platonic good), the disruptive force of irrationality (here fear of humiliation in place of fear of death), the tendency for hypertrophy (here excessive philandering in place of mass hysterical actions—in both cases, however, the rational ego slips into a “twilight consciousness”), responsibility (here seen as the duty to provide emotional or sexual satisfaction in place of the civic duty to protect fellow citizens). He perceived the tension between sex and love or duty and impotence as irresolvable.

From his *Lebensphilosophie* to *Liebensphilosophie*, Broch’s epistemology and his value theory can be tied to a clear philosophical genealogy and to a philosophical legacy of cultural criticism.⁴⁸⁸ The themes of individual psychic development, confrontation with death, and the establishment of an ethical humanitarianism were not only features of Broch’s intellectual worldview, but they were also expressions of the constraints and the demands of the world in which he lived. Through the 1920s and early 1930s, Broch explored both his personal neurosis and his humanist value theory through the medium of literature. Over the course of the 1930s, however, the political changes in Central Europe forced Broch to question the usefulness of literature as a method for educating the public. In the next chapter, we look at Broch shift from literature to human rights.

⁴⁸⁸ See Vollhardt and Ritzer.

Conclusion

Politics also demands, and even demands it more, that its philosophical theory be orientated according to facts. And the more scientifically, the more researchingly, this is done, the stronger will be the possibilities for affecting practical politics. In other words: if the intellectual worker is able to enrich politics anywhere, then it will be there where he brings a new ‘cognition of reality,’ a new ‘truth,’ ... [that] points toward the eternal ethical truths, that is in the direction of justice, human dignity and humanitarianism.⁴⁸⁹

Hermann Broch (1944)

Early on the morning of 30 May 1951, a milkman discovered Hermann Broch’s dead body. Broch had been diagnosed with *angina pectoris* in November of 1950 and had not fully recovered from his first heart attack (1 April 1951), when he suffered a fatal attack that morning. Broch’s body was found on the floor of his apartment; not far from where he lay was a half-packed suitcase, preparation for a pending trip to Europe. His death, like his life, reflected a pattern of incompleteness — the half-packed suitcase and the aborted return home symbolized neatly Broch’s final years: his exile, his itinerant life, his frenzied matter of work, and his inability to bring projects to a close.

⁴⁸⁹ Broch Archive, Beinecke Library, Yale University, unpublished.

Broch had argued in his human rights theory that the basis for natural law since the nineteenth century had been overturned, yet he felt that it could be reestablished through reference to the “earthly absolute,” that is a scientifically provable method by which the individual could overcome his or her fear of death. Since the fear of death was the central motivation for the creation of irrational actions or mass hysteria, he felt there was a scientific basis for rebuilding society on the notion of an earthly absolute.

In his political writing this would equate to external physical and social protection of the individual in order to allow internal maturation of the individual’s ego. In this sense, Broch equated ethical value simultaneously with the rational individual (balancing both rational ability and irrational impulse) and with political ideology. The problem, however, as Wittgenstein had made clear, was that human language lacked the ability to connect the two separate worlds of the metaphysical and the real.

If a man could write a book on Ethics which really was a book on Ethics, this book would, with an explosion, destroy all the other books in the world. Our words used as we use them in science, are vessels capable only of containing and conveying meaning and sense, *natural* meaning and sense. Ethics, if it is anything, is supernatural and our world will only express facts . . . I said that so far as facts and propositions are concerned there is only relative value and relative good.⁴⁹⁰

Wittgenstein’s declaration that reality consists only of relative value systems sums up neatly the positivistic development of what Broch called “empirical philosophy.”

⁴⁹⁰ Ludwig Wittgenstein, “A Lecture on Ethics,” *The Philosophical Review*, vol. 74, no. 1 (January, 1965), 7.

The logical outcome of this revelation was not lost on Broch or Wittgenstein, if human language was only able to discuss empirical facts and provide relative meanings, then there was no room left for discussion of the metaphysical. Or as Wittgenstein stated, “About that, on which one cannot speak, one must be silent.”⁴⁹¹ Broch saw the political chaos of the early twentieth century as a result of language being locked out of the ethical realm.⁴⁹² He claimed that humanity reached the absolute through the word, without the word having meaning, there cannot be transcendent value.

The word is nothing without the spirit, which can live nowhere else but in the word; whoever kills the spirit, kills the word, and whoever desecrates the word, desecrates the spirit. ... Over and over again the spirit, the absolute, slips from its grasp, time and again humanity is thrown back to their violence. ... This mute silence weighs heavily on a world that has lost language and spirit, for it has had to put its faith in power, and in murder, without which there is no power.⁴⁹³

Clearly, Broch was uneasy about the gap between the pragmatic world of politics and the ethical world of the spirit.

⁴⁹¹ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, 7. See Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Schriften*, vol. 1 (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1960). Wittgenstein and Broch were both Viennese, and both men were familiar and/or connected with the work of Ernst Mach and with the Vienna School of Positivism.

⁴⁹² Though I use Wittgenstein to demonstrate the positivistic move of modern philosophy, this should not imply that Wittgenstein welcomed this move or ignored the importance of ethics for humanity. He ends the his lecture with the following words: “Ethics so far as it springs from the desire to say something about the ultimate meaning of life, the absolute good, the absolute valuable, can be no science. What it says does not add to our knowledge in any sense. But it is a document of a tendency in the human mind which I personally cannot help respecting deeply and I would not for my life ridicule it” (“A Lecture on Ethics,” 12).

⁴⁹³ Hermann Broch, “Geist und Zeitgeist,” translated by John Hargraves in *Geist and Zeitgeist: The Spirit in an Unspiritual Age* (New York: Counterpoint, 2002), 42.

In this dissertation, I have traced Broch's engagement with this problem through his theoretical and political theory, an outgrowth of his critical humanism. I began my discussion with Broch's critique of democracy during his exile in the United States. I argued that Broch's critique of democracy from the point of view of a non-specialist made him a historically interesting figure. I attempted to rescue Broch's twelve years of exile from the sense of failure and tragedy, which was both self-imposed and a reflection of an intellectual history that defined success as having an immediate impact on the intellectual world in which one lived. Such a definition of intellectual history is not only elitist, but it is also restrictive. Broch, from the position of an outsider to both the university system and the key research institutions was able to maintain a strong commitment to his eclectic education in Vienna. He was, thus, able to maintain a strong commitment to his humanist roots.

In the chapters 2 and 3, I examined the nexus of Broch's theory of knowledge and his historical experience of exile and fascist totalitarianism. In the United States, Broch's humanist approach to questions of social ethics became more and more political in its expression. As it did, Broch did not radically alter his thought, he simply retooled his value theory for a political as opposed to an aesthetic task.

His work foreshadows the religious civil rights movement of the 1950s and the counter-culture movements of the 1960s. This is not to argue that Broch stood handmaiden to Martin Luther King, but to say that the questions, problems, and possible solutions put forth by the supporters of civil rights had been part of the

American intellectual scene from the mid-1930s and that the European émigré took an active role in that criticism.

In chapters 4 through 6, I demonstrated that Broch's political thought, especially its humanist focus, its pro-democratic viewpoint, and its concerns for the protection of individual human life, was not simply the product of an exile experience. Broch's politics were not a knee jerk reaction to the collapse of his European life. The pragmatism and the increasingly legal direction of much of his political work was, indeed, reflective of the point of view of an exile. But, the basic concern for the individual as a source of value, the belief in a democratic society balanced by freedom and responsibility, and the importance of psychology for understanding all social interaction was a product of his life in Vienna.

The ultimate source of Broch's critical humanism was the fractured social milieu from which Broch came. Following the arguments of such as Steven Beller, Allan Janik, and Scott Spector, I demonstrate that Broch's humanism was the result of an engagement with the dislocations of the modern of the world; Broch sought to diagnose and correct the relativism of his age. Broch's experience questions the degree to which Carl Schorske's ahistoricist paradigm of Vienna modernism can be read into the generation of 1905, that is, those intellectuals whose developing worldview was conditioned by the First World War. Broch's generation straddle the line between the nineteenth and the twentieth century. In their Viennese context, they acquired a great deal of nineteenth century thought—seen in Broch philosophy of

history, his neo-Kantianism, and his Enlightenment commitment to a universal humanism.

I questioned, however, to what degree we could envision Broch as exceptional in his time; I argued that Broch's life should not be understood by his exclusion from a specifically Jewish culture, or more correctly, his partial exclusion. He should be seen, instead, as fully involved, perhaps to a greater degree than most, in the character of his age. I followed Broch's own thought on this issue. Based on his own words, we have to take seriously the intellectual, emotional, and religious commitments of his early life (1908-1925). We also have to take seriously Broch's own observation that assimilation was a modern phenomenon, epitomized in the experience of the Jew but according to Broch not limited to the Jewish community. In such a situation, Broch's eclectic approach to his modern identity does not suggest exceptionalism as much as diversity. Broch struggled his entire life to juggle multiple personal and social identities. As Broch said, "A simple, human happiness is almost unknown me."⁴⁹⁴ If Broch represented an exceptionalism, it is in the degree to which he embraced the world of Vienna 1900, not in his exclusion from it. In terms of the critical modernist world described by Beller (the world of the Gymnasium, the University, and socialist politics), Broch was indeed an outsider. He nonetheless played a part in the intellectual world of the time; he took it seriously enough to critique it in *Hugo von Hofmannsthal and his Time*, and his intellectual worldview expressed the influence of many of its most significant thinkers.

⁴⁹⁴ *Pyschische Selbstbiographie*, 82.

Nevertheless, Broch's philosophical education was eclectic; it was formulated in the journalistic milieu of *fin-de-siècle* Vienna and not in the academy. Broch's father forced him into a life of an engineer and industrialist. Although Broch maintained his innate impulse to foster his literary and philosophical mind through a Kafkaesque dual life, his philosophical outlook was directed by influences well beyond the academy. First and foremost it was directed by a Viennese milieu of cultural critique focused on the problems of modernity—his earliest philosophical influences were on the one hand Plato and Kant and on the other hand Kraus, Weininger, and Nietzsche.

It was, moreover, not simply the result of his education or his intellectual fellowship. It was the result of a process of negotiation among competing sources of intellectual and cultural prominence. Broch's experiences in Vienna explain not only the source for his later political thought, they exposed the complicated nature of intellectual development at a moment when political structures in Europe were changing, education was specializing, and social positions were unstable. The instability was heightened by the limitations of cultural assimilation and the shifting political fortunes of liberalism.

Throughout this dissertation, I examined Broch not simply as a political thinker but as a person and a historical figure. In chapter one, I established the importance of the questions of Broch's experience and his thought raised in terms of how we approach the questions of life in the twentieth and the twenty-first centuries. Broch's work took seriously the role of the individual intellectual in the modern

political world, and his political theory aimed at understanding the relationship between nineteenth-century ideologies and the development of mass hysterical movements, such as fascism. As a historical figure, Broch's life opened a window to a wider and more diverse world of thought. It was a world that stretched from nineteenth-century Vienna to post-1945 America, as well as across the religious, economic, and intellectual boundaries of his society.

The tragedy of Broch's existence in the United States reflected in many ways the humanity of his character, the sense of duty toward not simply friends, but even acquaintances. There is a danger in over stating the spectacle of tragedy in Broch's life, but the sense of duty was an important characteristic of Broch that plays directly into our understanding of his political activism and his focus on political theory. Hannah Arendt, a friend, a colleague, and the editor of Broch's political essays, has particularly good insight into the motivations behind the centrality of politics in Broch's later years. In her introduction to his political essays, Arendt described the fundamental nature of Hermann Broch's intellectual drive, what Broch described as his "work program," as

a triangle whose sides can be accurately labeled:
Literature—Knowledge—Action. ... Broch approached the world with the demand ... that in his life on earth man must make the three coincide and become one. He demanded of literature that it possess the same compelling validity as science, that science summon into being the 'totality of the world' as does the work of art. ... [A]rt impregnated with knowledge and knowledge that has acquired vision, should comprehend and include all the practical, everyday activities of man.⁴⁹⁵

⁴⁹⁵ Hannah Arendt, "Introduction," *Hermann Broch Gesammelte Werke*, (Zürich: Rhein Verlag).

The statement reflects the paradox of Broch's life, the attempt to fuse metaphysically-based epistemology with practical experience.

Broch's thought stands on its own in literature, but his political thought suffers from the eclecticism of his mind, from his unstable life in exile, and from his early death. Yet, his political theory numbers over a one thousand pages, filling two of the seventeen books in his collected works; and today much of his theory retains its significance as a critique on Western, especially American, democratic value systems, and as an *Arbeitsprogramm* for the protection of human rights in the modern world. Since September 11, 2001, in fact, Broch's questions and conclusions, centered on the universalizing claims of international protection of human dignity in political and economic terms, have engendered new relevance. In the end, the contradictions between Arendt and Broch in their *Briefwechsel* illuminate a key aspect of Broch's exilic thought: That his Viennese experience of assimilation and his auto-didactic philosophical training made his political theory appear utopian and naïve in Arendt's eyes.

The correspondence between Hannah Arendt and Hermann Broch provide a better understanding of the diversity of intellectual expression, which is often hidden under the commonality of the German exile experience. For all the surface similarities and, indeed, the honest connections between Broch and Arendt, there remains a clear difference in their mentalities—a difference attributable to diverse European experiences.

In their correspondence, politics and publication take up a great of the deal of discussion. Broch admired and praised Arendt's political works. In turn, Arendt acknowledged the high degree of commitment that Broch showed to both his personal and social duties—his “saintliness.”⁴⁹⁶ In terms of particulars, the two writers confronted the most pressing political issue for émigrés of the period, i.e., totalitarianism and protection of human rights. They agreed to a large extent on the general outline of the problem: modern society remodeled on a totalitarian basis had obscured its traditional value systems, while developing new forces of oppression, especially through the use of the mass culture and the creation of an objective evil in society. Broch and Arendt agreed that the Jew served this latter purpose and that the concentration camp exemplified this new totalitarianism.

Their approaches to a solution, however, differed. The key to this difference is generational and cultural. Broch's intellectual development in *fin-de-siècle* Vienna infused his thought with a nineteenth-century tinge, i.e., a basic commitment to an absolute value source. Arendt felt that such a commitment was naïve and outdated. She stated that Broch's political theory contained a fundamental misunderstanding of the challenges in the contemporary historical situation. For Broch, the contemporary political solution entailed the confrontation with death or the overcoming of the fear of death. For Arendt, death no longer served as the ultimate evil. From an epistemological point of view Arendt respected the depth of Broch's theory—but she

⁴⁹⁶ Arendt was often critical of the degree to which Broch carried this saintliness.

saw little applicability in terms of pragmatic political solutions or accurate political analysis.

In a series of letter exchanges from the first half of 1949, the difference between Arendt and Broch over the issue of natural rights and the role of death in Western thought comes to the fore. She claimed that Broch conceived of the protection of human rights from the point of view a natural law tradition. And she rejected the efficacy of such a theory in the modern state, where a new category of humanity arose, which was “put into concentration camps by their foes and into internment camps by their friends.”⁴⁹⁷ In a letter from Arendt to Broch on June 3, 1949, Arendt clearly stated a key difference in their approaches to human rights.

[In regards to] Human Rights: Your earthly-absolute is a substantial discovery, because it is inevitably correct and necessary, under the premise, which is accepted by the entire tradition, that human rights are "innate" and as it were a component of man. I personally do not believe in this anymore, and, accordingly, I have entirely rewritten my human rights theory with all the necessary caution. But I am firmly convinced that this does not concern you in anyway; because if there is a nature right, then it can only be justified anew in the way you formulate it. Yet, it seems to me that we are on the path to emancipating ourselves from nature, just as those of the eighteenth century emancipated themselves from history, contrary to history, indeed, they formulated rights, which are inborn,— rights contrary to privileges, to customary law etc.

Arendt did not so much disagree with the theoretical claims of Broch, she simply rejected theory all together. Politics in the modern age had changed, and human rights had to be addressed on the level of social structures.

⁴⁹⁷ Hannah Arendt, “We Refugees,” 70, quoted from Elisabeth Young-Bruehl, *Hannah Arendt: For Love of the World* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1983), 152.

In his reply, Broch defend not only his theory but the pragmatic application of his theory in the guise of his “Law for the Protection of Human Dignity.” Broch felt his theory did address the relationship between institutions and the individual, even if the individual was the ultimate source for redressing the breakdown in that relationship.

In regard to human rights, however, it is certain that, from a positivistic point of view, they are non-existent, and therefore they must be regarded as non-existent, as long as one thinks in terms of the earthly, the rational, and the scientific (as one should). Every attempt at concretizing the concept of natural rights necessitates a formula based on negations ... For that very reason, I have substituted the idea of a Bill of Rights with the idea of a Bill of Duties. Nevertheless, the necessity of an absolute is present for either the establishment of obligations or the establishment of rights. But since obligations are terrestrial—unlike rights, which are conferred by God or “nature”—its absolute element must then be sought in the empirical and the concrete. It is here that the methodological parallel to physics, with its earthly absolute lies ... [T]he method is identical, because humans are neither a two-headed lion eagle or a bohemian lion, they have but one head and in this only one brain. This means that the method of recognizing is always the same and exists (more or less in Socratic fashion) in the questioning of the reality, by this method its absolute quality is successively revealed. And that, the method behaves in the same manner in the social and, therefore, ethical realm, I believe I am able to prove.

Arendt, while admiring Broch’s dedication to human rights and his epistemological theories on the ego, felt that in the end Broch’s theory on human rights was naïve and utopian. It was inherently flawed because it was based on the notion that death and natural law were the underlying keys to a humane society. For Arendt, the entire legacy of natural rights and the especially the notion that death the ultimate source for

the political tragedies of the twentieth century had been made obsolete by a new specter in western society—totalitarianism. Totalitarianism was not in Arendt account a basic reflection of the rational individual and his or her misplaced motivations. It was the result of new social forces that developed out the modern structure of society these new structures did not seek security, economic or political, and they did not seek to nullify death. They sought power, goalless and without end.

Either way, the issue here is that Broch's lack of reception was not indicative of disengagement or tragic failure or utopian dreaming. When Broch arrived in the United States, he entered into a community of intellectuals and engaged in a clearly defined debate over the future of Western Civilization, framed within issues of democracy and liberalism. Eric Voegelin echoed Arendt judgement of utopianism and naiveté. "I am afraid I cannot agree with this proposition. It rests on the assumption that for all real injustices committed against the dignity of man, there is a peaceful procedural remedy in this world. This assumption I consider erroneous."⁴⁹⁸ Voegelin's solution, however, was simply political quietism, to keep one's head down and to try and get on with life.

Arendt, however, gave Broch's efforts much consideration in spite of its utopian nature, for she saw honest contributions in his epistemological work. At the center of the disagreement was Broch's concept of the earthly absolute. For Broch, all political activity was ethical and thus individual. In some ways, Broch, like many continental intellectuals of the post-World War I era, saw the contradictions and

⁴⁹⁸ Letter to Broch from Eric Voegelin in Hermann Broch Archive. Yale Collection of German Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

limitations of the Enlightenment's commitment to positivism, especially its inability to conceive or care about metaphysical questions. But, unlike analytical philosophers, whom Broch knew quite well from his time in Vienna, he did not attempt to limit the applicability of philosophy; he, instead, attempted to locate claims of absolute knowledge in a science that could be humanistically focused. Broch searched for a way to establish ethics on an absolute foundation, thus to reconnect the Enlightenment and modern society. His turn to Kant reflected this, as did his appeals to Husserl. In short, Broch conceived an ethical contrast between the mortal, material world (the source of evil) and immortal world of the ego. In the ego, one conceived of a world without death and without end. Overcoming death was thus the key to a modern absolute value system; it was based in the ego—the individual—in human life. It was of little surprise then that the prohibition of capital punishment was the central goal of Broch's political agenda.

However, Broch's letters also indicated his lack of comprehension in terms of Arendt's overall critique. Broch's theoretical approach, whether based on a sense of earthly obligation or based on an inborn natural right, failed to address the issue of contemporary society—the organization of society and the dehumanization of social groups. In this exchange, Arendt revealed the heart of her criticism in terms of Broch's political thought, that is, she pushed Broch to pursue his epistemological work but questioned whether that epistemology can be translated into a pragmatic political theory. In the end, she concluded that it could not. Arendt saw Broch's epistemological approach as too dependent on the individual human who in the

modern totalitarian regime was effectively isolated by the dehumanizing powers of the state.

Perhaps the simplest way to put it was that Arendt, younger and less connected to the nineteenth-century European world, more emphatically cut free from the idea of an absolute value system. And, in particular, she did not see the death penalty as the key issue. As she said in a letter from 20 February 1949, “But when you accepted as self-evident that the death penalty is empirically the extreme punishment, it strikes me that the satanic nature of modern terror is such that it trumps this most extreme punishment, probably with the knowledge that humans fear pain more than death.” Arendt and Broch saw the world differently.

Broch born in 1886 was a member of the Generation of 1905, that is, individuals who came to intellectual maturity just before or during the First World War. This fact is crucial in understanding the basis for Broch’s earthly absolute as well as the basis for Arendt’s critique. Broch originally came to his political views in an atmosphere in which liberalism was contesting its own identity, and Arendt who was born in 1906 developed her worldview and her intellectual foundations during a period in which liberalism’s identity was under open attack from the radical right.

The generational difference between Broch and other European intellectual of the period may also prove significant in their different approaches to humanism. Sartre and Adorno, for instance, who both shared a general concern for humanism and totality, but who rejected explicitly the intellectual legacy of both the Enlightenment and the early twentieth century. Both thinkers turned in the end to some form of

Marxism and sought their universal humanities there. Broch saw the appeal of Marxism and understood the humanist impulse before Adorno's and Sartre's attraction to it. "Marxism was the first post-religious system of thought which seriously and practically set out to resume that knowledge-unifying function of theology so indispensable to the human spirit. It secularized it, and so showed a way out of the discomfort."⁴⁹⁹ For Broch, however, the democratic impulse and Kantianism of his Austrian legacy made Marxist humanism unappealing. If one considers the Austrian thinkers Karl Popper and Eric Voegelin, however; two thinkers who are from the same generation as Adorno and Sartre, but, like Broch, rejected Marxism, one should not beg the question of whether of national cultural trumps generational culture. And in fact, that is a question I will take up in my future research.

In my present work, I can conclude that at its heart, Broch's political theory was humanist. His value theory focused on individual human participation in the maintenance of social values and institutions. It was through the individual that values were articulated into the world; Broch's political theory developed out of his value theory centered on the legal protection of human life from all forms of violence (state and private). The foundation of his political system stretched back into his Viennese world and the political context of rising fascism. Broch did not abandon the earlier influences. He, in fact, furthered his involvement with Husserl and Kant in search of a scientific and earthly source of ethical duty—an absolute foundation for value production. He went in search of the source of a new power of conversion—a new

⁴⁹⁹ Hermann Broch Archive. Yale Collection of German Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

god, a new categorical imperative. In that same milieu, Broch found his ideas about responsibility, freedom, and the slide into the irrational (“twilight consciousness”).

The depth of Broch’s commitment to a critical humanism, to the power of the individual and the danger of hypertrophy was demonstrated by the central role it played in Broch’s self conception. The ego, the individual, the psychological basis for social structure formed the basis of Broch’s political theory. They were also the basis of his social and intellectual development in Vienna. They were basis of his emotional and sexual development. In the context of Vienna, they remained mainly apolitical; after his exile they became explicitly political, but his humanism tempered his acceptance of American democracy. Broch’s unfinished work was meant to be an ethical demand, the scientific proof that humanity contained within itself the force of its own salvation. It had already proven its ability at its own destruction. As a historical figure, scholars have tended to see Broch as idiosyncratic and exceptional. I argue, however, that his life is not a source for exploring what was exceptional in *fin-de-siècle* Vienna or post-War United States; rather his life and his thought open to us a wider field of social, cultural, and intellectual activity. With Broch, we see that intellectual life cannot be completely subsumed under titles such as Jewish, Austrian, or democratic. Temporal and geographical location or dislocation is not fully determinative of intellectual outlook. Broch’s position as an outsider within Vienna and as an exile in the United States affected the development of his thought and the impact of his work: his position outside of academia infused his work with an

eclecticism that still strikes many as naïve; yet, it also allowed Broch to develop an important critique on the dangers of specialization in the sciences.

Broch's imposed life as a textile engineer and a businessman locked him out of the university for the two thirds of his life and limited his active involvement in the cultural and political leadership of Vienna 1900; yet, his distance from that world allowed him to see Vienna from an historical perspective and to hold up Viennese values (aesthetic and social) up to the light of moral criticism. His lack of academic credentials and his poor financial situation in the United States prevented Broch from fully integrating into the world of America intelligentsia and from finishing his work on mass hysteria; yet, from his position outside of the university, the government, and research institutions Broch was able to continue his attempts at "making utopias real." As a perpetual outsider, Broch's humanism was perhaps his only access to a universal experience. Hannah Arendt and Eric Voegelin thought Broch's idea fell short of a workable solution to the disintegration of value in the modern world, it remained too closely aligned to older notions of natural law; but from a current perspective, Broch's views on Total Democracy, internationalism, and human rights suggest a broader view for democracy in the twenty-first century than the Manichean simplicity behind the dichotomy of democratic freedom and tyrannical oppression.

Nevertheless, we must still approach Broch's humanism with caution. For his humanism relies on the universal notion of human reason. His Total Democracy was a call for the forceful imposition of an epistemological conception of the human mind that is culturally constructed. The danger of hypertrophy in Broch's own system

looms large once you move outside of the confines of Broch's western worldview. Broch remained so fixated on the struggles of European ideologies that he never conceived of his theories in a context outside of the west. But, we might forgive Broch to some degree—he had already crossed more boundaries than most.

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