

FICTION

Fiction writer, internationally known filmmaker, critical theorist, Alexander Kluge is perhaps postwar Germany's most prolific and diverse intellectual. With this translation of *Learning Processes with a Deadly Outcome*, a novella first published in German in 1973, one of Kluge's most important literary works becomes available to an English-speaking audience for the first time. Written in a quasi-documentary style, this fascinating hybrid work combines science fiction with modernist forms of montage and reportage to describe a future in which Earth has been almost totally destroyed following the catastrophic Black War. The planet's remaining inhabitants have been driven underground or into space where the struggle to establish a new society rages on.

Whether describing the scene in China where the devastated landscape is reconstructed according to old paintings, or in the galactic realm of the Starway where giant, turf-battling, corporate colonizing forces exploit the universe's resources, Kluge tells his tale by inventing various forms of "evidence" that satirize the discourses of administrative bureaucracy, the law, military security, and the media. He gives us some of his most bizarre and hilarious characters in this peculiar world in which the remains of the past are mixed with the most advanced elements of the future. The cast includes highly specialized women workers who have adapted to the massive gravitational field of their heavy-metal planets, a commander with a lethal foot-fungus, and ex-Nazi space pioneers who, in their lonely exile from the conflagrations on earth, spend their time carving enormous facsimiles of operatic sheet music in the forests of uninhabited planets.

With parody and humor, Kluge shows how the survivors of Armageddon attempt to learn the art of civilization and, despite the disaster they have suffered, how they set out to reproduce at new sites a caricature of a classic and fascistic feudal capitalism.

ALEXANDER KLUGE published his first collection of stories, *Lebensläufe*, in 1962. His other fiction includes a novel, *Schlachtbeschreibung*, and several collections of stories, including *Lernprozesse mit tödlichem Ausgang*, from which the current novella was taken. Among his films are *Yesterday Girl*, *The Patriot*, and the collectively made *Germany in Autumn*. He has also published a number of works of critical theory, including *Public Sphere and Experience* and *History and Obstinacy*, both coauthored with Oskar Negt. **CHRISTOPHER PAVSEK** is Visiting Professor of German at Swarthmore College.

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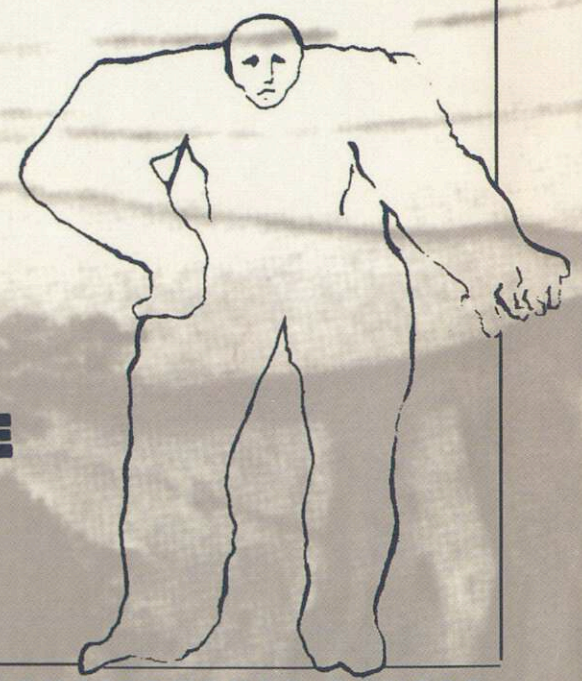
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LEARNING PROCESSES WITH A DEADLY OUTCOME KLUGE

Duke

LEARNING
PROCESSES
WITH A
DEADLY
OUTCOME



TRANSLATED BY CHRISTOPHER PAVSEK

ALEXANDER KLUGE

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**ALEXANDER
KLUGE**

Translated by Christopher Pavsek

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INTRODUCTION

Alexander Kluge's novella *Lernprozesse mit tödlichem Ausgang* was originally published by Suhrkamp in 1973 as part of a larger collection of stories by the same title, the remainder of which Duke University Press hopes to publish at a future date. The translation of this fascinating story comes at a moment of increasing interest in Kluge's extremely diverse body of work, as marked by the dedication of two special issues of academic journals to his work, a touring retrospective of his films, and the publication of the English translation of *Public Sphere and Experience*,¹ the first major work of critical theory that Kluge coauthored with Oskar Negt in 1972. Kluge is known both in Germany and the United States primarily for his films and his theory, crafted in the tradition of the Frankfurt School. Though he has received almost every major German literary prize, it can still be said of him in Germany (and even more so in the United States) that "among the well-known German writers Kluge is the least well known."² I hope that the publication of *Learning Processes with a Deadly Outcome* will contribute to a more well-rounded reception of Kluge's vast and varied cultural production.

Kluge was born on February 14, 1932, in Halberstadt, subsequently part of East Germany, and was educated after the war as a lawyer, with minors in church music and history. Dissatisfied with his legal

¹ See *October* 46 (Fall 1988) and *New German Critique* 49 (Winter 1990). Also Alexander Kluge and Oskar Negt, *Public Sphere and Experience*, trans. Peter Labanyi, Jamie Daniel, and Assenka Oksiloff (Minneapolis: U. Minnesota Press, 1993).

² Hans Magnus Enzensberger, "Ein herzloser Schriftsteller," *Der Spiegel*, no. 1 (January 2, 1978): 81-83.

career, Kluge began writing the stories that were collected in his first book, *Case Histories* (*Lebensläufe*, 1962), during an internship on the set of Fritz Lang's *Der Tiger von Eschnapur*. In 1960 he directed his first film, the twelve-minute experimental documentary on Nazi architecture entitled *Brutality in Stone* (*Brutalität in Stein*). Since then, he has directed or worked on more than two dozen shorts and features. His first feature film *Yesterday Girl* (*Abschied von gestern*, 1966)—which put the Young German film on the international map by winning the Silver Lion at the Venice Film Festival—was followed by *Artists in the Big Top: Perplexed* (*Artisten in der Zirkuskuppel: Ratlos*, 1967) and *The Patriot* (*Die Patrioten*, 1979). In the mid-eighties Kluge turned to television production, and he now produces shows for several private channels in Germany. His literary works include the massive “documentary” novel *The Battle* (*Schlachtbeschreibung*), first published in 1964 and subsequently revised and expanded several times. His critical theory includes *Public Sphere and Experience*, as well as *History and Obstinacy* (*Geschichte und Eigensinn*, 1981) and *Proportions of the Political* (*Massverhältnisse des Politischen*, 1992), both of which were also written with Oskar Negt. In addition, since the famous Oberhausen Manifesto of February 1962, when an upstart group of young German filmmakers declared the “Opa’s Kino” of the postwar period dead, Kluge has been a central figure in the political struggle to secure an alternative film culture in Germany.

All of Kluge’s work can be characterized by what Miriam Hansen has called its “disciplinary promiscuity,” or the tendency to stray in both content and form from the traditional bounds of specific genres. His fiction is no exception: the reader of *Learning Processes with a Deadly Outcome* will be struck by the filmic elements in the text (montage, images, etc.), and Kluge’s language crosses a number of discourses, presenting several difficulties for the translator.

The language of the original is often quite stiff, as it imitates and mocks the quasi-technical languages of bureaucracy, Nazism, juridical and corporate administrative apparatuses of political economy and false professionalism: Kluge refers, for example, not to military

“prisons” (*Gefängnis*) but to “penal institutions” (*Strafvollstreckungsanstalten*). Kluge often uses such language in situations where one would not normally expect it: so, for example, one finds the highly conceptual language of political economy infiltrating informal conversations amongst friends, indicating how far the everyday world has become rationalized and administered. I have tried to maintain the arid and icy tone of the original language while making it readable.

Two terms warrant special discussion here. The German word *Arbeitskraft*, used extensively throughout *Learning Processes with a Deadly Outcome*, has at least two meanings, and both are significant in Kluge’s story. On the one hand, it can be translated as *worker*, as an individual who labors. In this sense it has more abstract or administrative overtones than the other German word for worker, *Arbeiter*. The other possible rendering is the traditional Marxist term *labor power*, which refers to the capacity of humans to perform labor (a worker is a bearer of labor power) and is the commodity that a worker exchanges on the market for a wage. Thus the reference to workers as *Arbeitskräfte* (the German plural) has the effect of reducing their existence as human beings to their relatively abstract status as providers of the labor power necessary for the production of value. Most often I have translated *Arbeitskraft* as *worker*, but one should have both meanings in mind when one reads the word.

The other term in question is *Sinn*, as in *Sinnentzug* (*withdrawal of meaning*). *Sinn* can be translated as *meaning*, but also as *sense*, as in the *sense* of a sentence or as in the human senses and sensuality. Thus *Sinnentzug* refers as much to the disappearance of meaning from social relations as to the decline of sensuality and the withering of human senses brought about by processes of modernization. Finally, for the English publication of *Learning Processes with a Deadly Outcome*, the dates of the major events in the narrative have been shifted thirty years into the future. Thus, the inaugural catastrophe of the Black War occurs in 2011, whereas in the German edition it occurred in 1981. This change has been made with the approval of the author.

I would like to thank Norbert Schurer for suggestions and assistance in preparing this translation. The following translations were also used for brief quotations from the works of Kant: in chapter 2, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, in *Kant's Political Writings*, ed. and trans. Hans Reiss (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), pp. 155–56; in chapter 3, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. Mary Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

Christopher Pavsek

**LEARNING
PROCESSES
WITH A
DEADLY
OUTCOME**

Unbezwingliche Sehnsucht
—dumpfes Begleitgefühl . . .
Unconquerable longing
—vague attendant feeling . . .

PREFACE

"How can the Black War last four years if the Earth was completely destroyed on the very first day?" This question from the legal theorist Ferdi Schein (owner of two dwarf suns) in the spring of 2102 showed the experts Dorfmann, Zwicki, von Ungern-Sternberg, and Boltzmann that the young man was unenlightened. They did not want to take him along on the trip they had planned, which was supposed to be their last. It wasn't a question of the ballast of historical knowledge, which would have settled this matter easily—it sufficed that his lack of knowledge showed them he was not one of their kind.¹

But now, in 2102, **against the direction of the movement of history,** it was **more than ever** a matter of survival.²

¹ Zwicki: You could not have characterized this war, which lasted only 1 day, as having a duration of one day, because then its consequences would not have been adequately described. This war, as such, never ended. "These four years therefore designate a minimum." Dorfmann: In portraying these events one is faced with a difficulty of terminology.

² On the key word *unconquerable longing*. The later space pioneer Franz Zwicki in February 1972, barracks of the Intelligence Service, Bunker Compound Idaho: "The understanding of reality of our master class and its expression of life may consist of thousands of self-deceptions, deceptions of others and lies, but it rests upon an *unconquerable longing*, which all of us have known since the rise of our class [eighteenth century]. This longing has two consequences: firstly, the will to survive at any cost, and secondly, the will to disappear—to be completely consumed by other classes, by nature, by the universe. This longing, even if it appears only in distorted and confused form, is the principal weapon of our class, which enables it to achieve eternal life, and which is its armament for the conquest of the

Six months later, having been launched into the orbit of an unexplored red sun in the Dawn Sector, without a chance of returning to the other survivors and without sufficient reason to push on any further—see below, chapter 4, pp. 103–4—they found themselves in the position of having to confront their own history. They no longer had any other object for appropriation. As if by a magic spell, future and present seemed blown away.

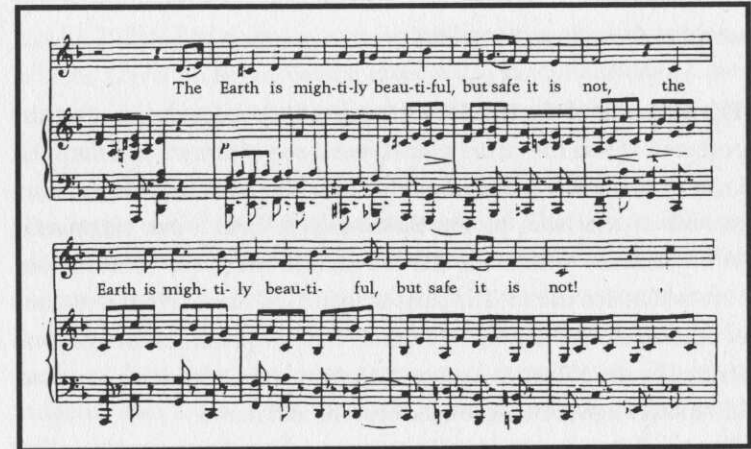
As a report by experts who have themselves experienced all of this, this retelling of events is by its very nature full of gaps. We are writing in the year 2103.

— universe." The scholar Eilers answered him: "You're very wrong: no class lives forever. On the contrary!" Franz Zwicky answered his friend (his former classmate): "Nonetheless, I would advise the opponents of our class to worry not only about themselves, but about us as well. In terms of epistemological theory we are nothing, but corporeally we are still alive. As a *materialist* I must point out that the *unconquerable longing* of which I spoke earlier is concealed within our bodies and consequently eludes a purely scientific refutation." Dorfmann (to Eilers): "Can you agree with that?" Eilers later left the circle of friends by means of an automobile accident.

On the key word *vague attendant feeling*: A. Dorfmann, in retrospective observation, boxed-in in an iron berth outfitted as a writing cubicle on the space platform, from the *viewpoint of the year 2103*: "Humans are far more interested metaphysicians than they commonly admit today. A *vague attendant feeling* for their peculiar cosmic situation seldom leaves them. Death, the minuteness of the entire earth, the uncertainty of the ego illusion, the senselessness of existence which becomes more insistent with the passing years . . ."

And so on, and so on, said Zwicky. I've heard all that already. Dorfmann: But the attendant feeling is only vague if we apply too much acumen. Zwicky: We have to let that go completely.

CHAPTER 1 THE LOSS OF THE PLANET



On the Consequences and Prevention of War, ed. C. F. von Weizsäcker (Munich, 1970) p. 19: "Theorists of strategic deterrence and escalation must proceed from the assumption that the actions of both sides are sufficiently 'rational.' In this sense, it is rational to sacrifice the smaller good for the greater good or for the avoidance of the greater evil. In extreme situations, however, psychological forces enter the scene that change the hierarchy of values. The entire phenomenon of war, which has traversed human history since time immemorial, would be impossible without the inherent changeover in every human being from an instinct for self-preservation to the belief that 'life is not the greatest of all goods.' To quote another saying, whoever can bring himself to prefer to 'live free or die' acts rationally in the sense of his new values while, from the

standpoint of the strategy of deterrence, he commits an irrational act. Moreover, experience teaches that precisely this apparent irrationality often pays off. Switzerland presumably owes its survival during the Second World War to its manifest readiness to go down fighting, if necessary (and in its downfall to take the Gotthard Tunnel along with it); the failure of the strategy of escalation against North Vietnam is a current example. . . . If peace is preserved, America may be the first amongst the world powers for a long time to come; without nuclear war it cannot become the leader of the world and guarantor of 'peace.'"

The outbreak of the Black War (2011–2015). A few hours after the outbreak of war *the entire planet was a sea of craters and flame*. A layer of flame 800 meters high lay over the Atlantic, which began to boil at the level of the Bermudas. A tidal wave originating in movements within the Earth's mantle (triggered by numerous bombs) flooded islands and parts of mainland Asia. "What remained of China perished during this time." In the Apennines, magma was ignited by the effects of weaponry from outside, producing a twelve-kilometer-high glowing tongue of stone and flame!

The American president had not appeared in public since his third reelection. It may be that he attempted to save himself in the war. He is presumed to have died with his staff in Madagascar.

General Ozil reports. In my military career (WW II, India, Black Africa) I have unfortunately been witness to numerous panics. Regrettably, this surpassed all previous panics. These men were no longer soldiers, but rather *poor creatures who had suddenly gone mad*. When they recognized me, they undertook a murder attempt directed against me. On the banks of the dried-up Thames, where several of the half-insane soldiers conducted themselves in an undisciplined manner, there were screams for water and so forth.

On the Isle of Wight I found the 18th Brigade, the "White Lances," descended from the 1st Uhlan Regiment. The proximity of the Gulf Stream (if one can still refer to that water-filled gully by that name)

had brought forth *favorable winds* that restricted the contamination of the island to a minimum. Their desperation resulted from the lack of all contact with other regiments, so that the soldiers suddenly questioned the point of living on alone. If we look at things in context, we have to concede that militarily—and for that matter in every other respect—we *were not prepared for a situation of this kind*. We were also unable to reach the bunkers in the north of Scotland, where surviving members of the General Staff, from whom we could have received orders, were presumed to be. In Lancaster, the *Rough Riders* had abandoned their bunkers in makeshift vehicles, but the Lewellyn River, having exceeded in its dimensions *all conceptions of what was natural*, soon put an end to their attempted escape.

The tragic end of the British prime minister. Through an **indiscretion**, mention was made of the catastrophe, and in an **inexplicable** reaction, the crews of the warships had killed the fleet commanders. It later turned out that these mass murders, directed against the ranks of leadership, had also spread to the mainland. The prime minister had escaped the massacre since he was no longer in his office. He was awaiting the arrival of his closest colleagues. He sat in an underground officers' hall with the illuminated signs on the four walls—his eyes tired in their retaining sinews, barely any strength left in his shoulders, his nervous system completely overtaxed.



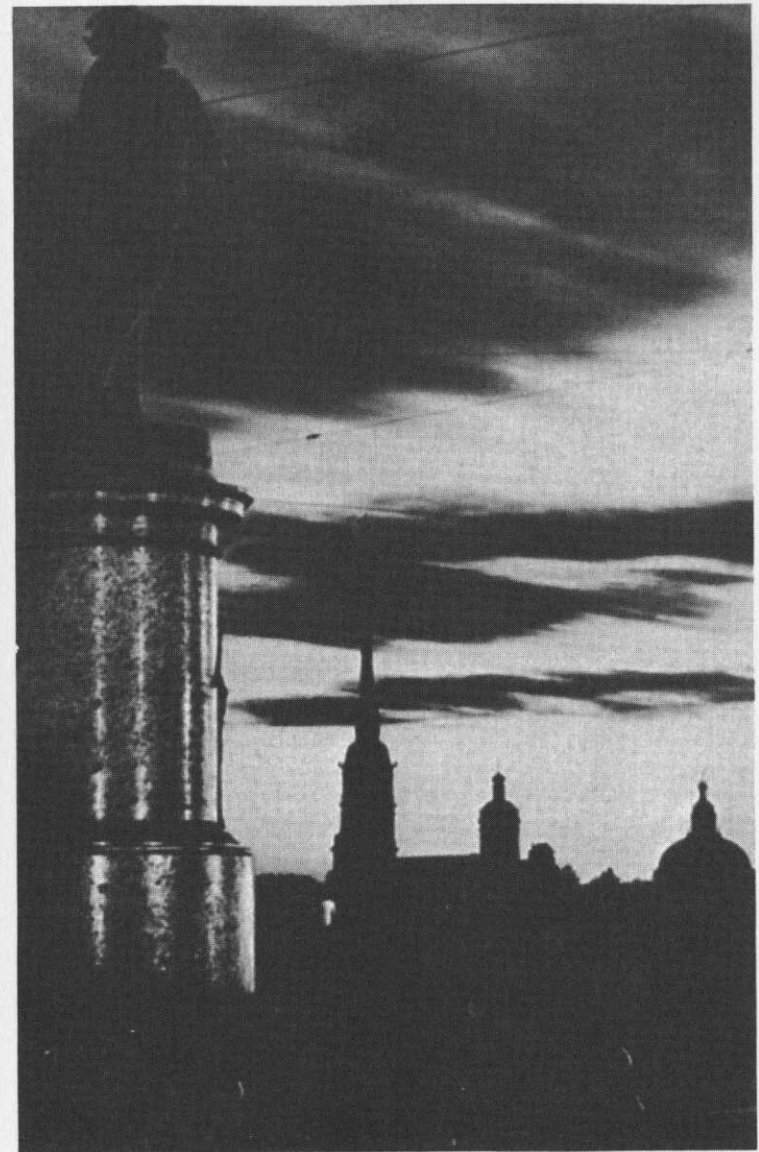
Later, his wife was brought in. A representative from the Department of Public Relations had thought "at the last moment" to bring the couple together. She still had *entrepreneurial spirit*, got the tired group moving. She took one look at the bunker, most likely in a false assessment of the danger, insisted on getting her husband out of there, where he was obviously wasting away. She would not listen to reason. She exchanged words with the youthful chief of

command, who tried to argue with her, and then arranged for the transport of her husband to a country estate. She loved this man, although he possessed none of the qualities she wished for. Having arrived at the estate, she first took him out into the fresh air. During the walk, the prime minister caught sight of the long, distended, violet discoloration of the clouds in the south. Afterward, the woman wanted to bathe him and bring him to bed, but the prime minister insisted that they remain in the garden and **watch the catastrophe**. She did not want to oppose his will and stayed by him, massaged his forehead at the hairline just once, and otherwise restrained herself completely. A few people, a few officers somewhat further back—whom the prime minister, having taken his wife's arm, wanted to see—saw the event first. They were transfixed with surprise and curiosity. A dense, low-hanging, brownish-green cloud, whose upper border, which reflected the sun's rays, appeared yellowish.

Dorfmann, in the year 2103: *Indiscretion*, when a part of the Atlantic is disappearing right before their very eyes? The waters on which the British fleet was sailing were flowing westward, toward a gaping hole, weren't they? Zwicky: Let us give our report first. Boltzmann: The seamen obviously saw that. Everything played itself out in a matter of a few hours. They began to doubt the news reports, but the true facts of the matter were still secret. Then suddenly something confidentially leaked out. Dorfmann: And it was never ascertained how such an indiscretion could occur?

The ship from the lost homeland. On January 16, 2011, a half-destroyed spaceship from the Earth forces appeared **to the west of Mars**. The occupants had been shot to pieces.

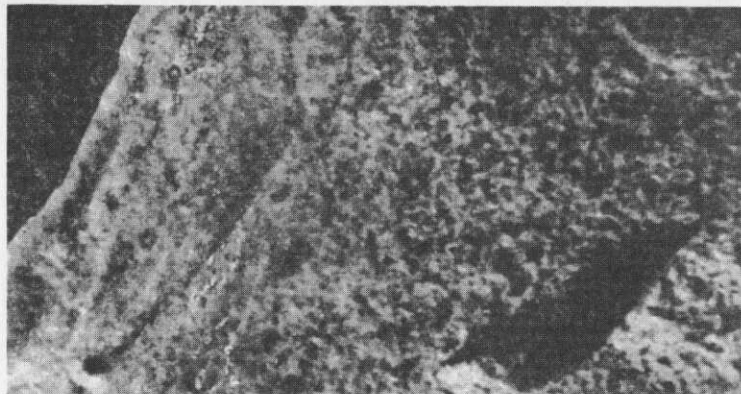
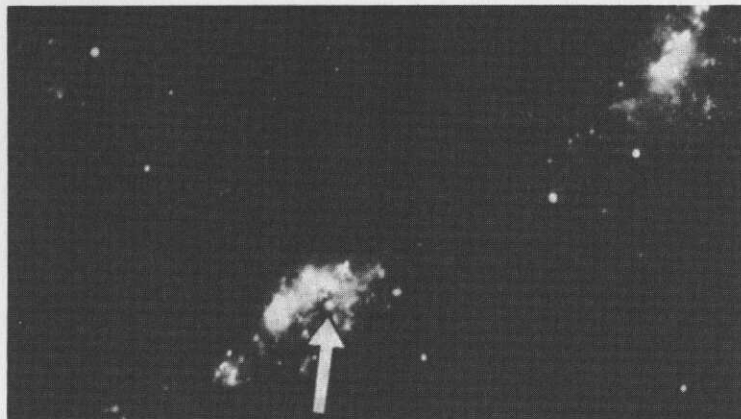
Exploratory instruments, which were scanning the Earth from stations on Mars, gave the following picture: the planet was covered by a *nuclear fire*. *The interior of the Earth spilled onto the surface*. Parts of the Atlantic disappeared into a *maw*. A few hours later the



"Dense, low-hanging brownish-green cloud, with yellow upper border."

Earth broke up into a number of fissured parts, held together by their common gravity. "It was no longer a sphere, it was two elongated clumps of rubble." The upper atmosphere of the eastern part consists of stone and ice fragments, which form a rapidly rotating belt around the "Earth" at a height of 2,000 m. An exploratory probe, operated by remote control from the Mars Institute for Extragalactic Research, is sent down. After penetrating the **ring of rubble**, it emits no more signals.

Photo of the ring of rubble taken with the NGC 4762 process.



Portion of the deformed crust of the Earth, to the west of Havana.
Taken from a height of 2,200 km.

Dorfmann: The ring of rubble has to be there still. Zwicki: Maybe Havana isn't on the eastern fragment, but on the western part, which has no rubble ring? Dorfmann: Isn't there a contradiction here, since a ring of rubble couldn't possibly rotate around an "elongated clump"? The clump was not round. Zwicki: I also think it's improbable that the clump would have formed corners. The rubble ring would have to bump into the mass somewhere. Boltzmann: Personally, I didn't see that. But the rubble could have been rotating around the long axis of this perhaps more rod-shaped entity.—Boltzmann: One should also note that although the reports do rely on precise observations, the observations were perhaps differently made. Zwicki: The circumstances were rather obscure. At the time one could not immediately comprehend everything in the usual, orderly manner. Dorfmann: Moreover, there are four of us. Each of us sees these things somewhat differently.

The remains of humankind after the catastrophe: the Mars Zone.

In January, 2011, only certain units were located on the planet Mars: the fleet's judicial bureau,¹ the fleet hospital,² the Central Institute for Extra-galactic Research,³ customs troops, the furlough resort for

¹ Six departments: (1) philosophy of law; (2) court martial proceedings, insofar as no other particular jurisdictions are indicated; (3) library and archive; (4) complete collection of ordinances, laws and guidelines, editorial offices of the *Yearbook of Legal Regulations*; (5) legal history; special research center for family and inheritance law in the overall district of the fleet, special focus on interplanetary family and inheritance law; (6) assigned: station of the secret military police.

² Consisting of two departments: (1) surgical center for major brain operations, (2) veterinary research and treatment center—all remaining types of medical treatment for the fleet personnel were under the jurisdiction of the now-destroyed Moon Base.

³ One departmental head, 2 deputies, 104 researchers. Areas of responsibility: astrophysical and radioastronomic research of the most remote star clusters, to the extent that Earth institutes were not responsible for the research.

the Immanuel Kant Institute,⁴ and a transport school.⁵ Aside from these personnel, all fleet divisions of the Earth forces had departed a few days earlier in order to take up combat positions in the vicinity of the Earth and the moon.

Helmut Heuber's Rescue

Twelve hours earlier: Earth, near Freiburg, January 15, 2011. Helmut Heuber, 46 years old, a gardener from Wirtswweiler near Freiburg,⁶ a dark-haired, athletic type, with short, stocky legs and unusually hairy thighs. Even the hair on the nape of his neck grows in unusual quantity down his back.⁷ But nature organized in this physical form cannot compare to the natural forces that will reshape this landscape in a few hours.

Trapped in a stream of refugees attempting to cross the Vogesen, Heuber has tried to escape his fate since the early morning hours. In Nancy, Heuber (who at 7 in the morning had still been tending his strawberries, which flourished beneath glass at a constant temperature of 34 degrees; clouds forming over the Vogesen), together with 11 farmers who have a bulldozer at their disposal, breaks through

4 Attached to this furlough resort there was a recreation center for employees of the Immanuel Kant Institute who had been brought here from the Earth to convalesce in total peace.

5 One departmental head, 6 instructors, 126 pilots and freight transporters, some of them students.

6 A few kilometers along the arterial road from Freiburg to the Höllental.

7 Zwicky: How do you know all this so precisely, Dorfmann? Dorfmann: It's necessary to give the report a little flesh and blood. I am basing my report on information I received from Heuber. Zwicky: And your memory works so well? Dorfmann: Of course it's possible that I'm mistaken. Zwicky: That's just what I'm implying. You see, you couldn't have gotten any reports about Heuber's physique. Dorfmann: Why not? Zwicky: Because according to the reports that I have received, no significant remains whatsoever of Heuber's body arrived on Mars. Dorfmann: And you don't consider the ability to speak significant? Zwicky: Could he still speak then? Dorfmann: Of course. Zwicky: Then I have to agree with you. Dorfmann: Now I'm beginning to have doubts. Of course, after the fact, Heuber could have been boasting madly about his body. Maybe he was really small? Zwicky: I can't believe that. The account isn't particularly positive.

barriers surrounding a landing strip. From the side of the space freighters the guards defend the ships with automatic pistols against the advancing human masses. After overcoming this resistance, Heuber and the farmers take off (other people have also forced their way on board). **They reach the orbit of Mars.** Since they do not know the password they are **shot to pieces** by the customs patrol ships from the Mars base.

Call from Mars Coordinator Pätzold, Mars Research Center, to the director of the Mars customs troops: Have you gone nuts? You've blown a ship from Earth to smithereens.

Chief of Service, Mars Customs: They refused to give the password. Pätzold: If this happens again I'll have you arrested.

For hours no further ships came. No news from the Earth or the moon.

Attempts were still being made to **keep the actual numbers on the losses smaller than they were.** To do this the teams of the Mars administration were following the *Guidelines for Emergencies* from the now-destroyed government of the Earth. According to these guidelines, everyone, including the "most severely wounded," is "to be saved" by the overburdened medical teams. The **ship from the homeland** was likewise not given up as a total loss; rather, a new vehicle was constructed around the remains of the ship's motor.

The "reconstructed" occupants consisted of parts of thorax, a piece of tibia that remained attached to the sternum. Of the faces, in one case, parts of the chin and, in another, even pieces of the forehead were preserved. The brains hung in a little bag off to the side, next to a piece of shoulder or elbow joint. These people from the old homeland—still somehow evidencing circulation and attached to life-support machinery—could not express themselves, since they had neither fingers nor mouths. They were also unable to raise any **claims for compensation**, as Helmut Heuber, who could at least still speak, was later able to do for his lost property (two strawberry and

vegetable farms). All that could help the totally “disabled” persons from the Earth were the maneuverings of the **Mars lawyer Treitschke**. He had been working for a long time to establish the legal status of a subject—and thus claims for compensation against the Mars administration (as the sole legal successor to the Earth government)—based on the condition of these surgical patients, who hung in large transparent bags on the wall of a temperature-controlled room and said nothing. He subsequently procured certain payments in installments, which he was however unable to transfer to the possession of his clients, since they had no fingers.

From heavens high, is where I hale,
and bring to you a happy tale.
Consider well: the time is near,
when the Earth's no longer here.
Happy are they, who on that day
are still alive and still unscathed.

Head of the Fleet Judicial Bureau, Mars, informs the director of the Transport School of the “discovery” of the half-destroyed ship from Earth

Space Admiral Hinnercke, head of the Fleet Judicial Bureau, Mars:⁸

It's likely nothing more will follow, what do you think?

Director of the Transport School: You mean **that was the last ship to reach us from the homeland?**

Hinnercke: Obviously. There's nothing there anymore.

Director of the Transport School: That means, in practical terms, that you are assuming the troops at the front were completely destroyed. That's serious.

Hinnercke: But that's not the worst of it. We can also consider the residents of the Earth, billions of our fellow citizens, to have melted away.

⁸ Hinnercke, the later founder of galactic law, was a specialist in criminal justice and the philosophy of law, and completed an apprenticeship with the Galactic Police.

Director of the Transport School: Aha. And that's certain?

Conditions on Mars are peaceful. A dust storm obscures the surface of the planet from any direct observation. That gives the occupying army on Mars a chance. **The planet Mars must be regarded by all impartial observers as “destroyed.”** Chief Coordinator Pätzold, a Mars researcher with no military training, bets on this. He forbids all use of radios. Pätzold's strategy, to do absolutely nothing as long as the conditions remain unclear, is unbearable to the *men of Mars*. Space Admiral Hinnercke dispatches a raiding party of the military police, which is subordinate to the Fleet Judicial Bureau, to Pätzold. They transport the scholar to a bunker in the south of Mars—disappeared.

A question of status: Are the remnants of humanity on the planet Mars still really human beings?

Hinnercke: Listen, my dear Dennerlein, I am now the Mars coordinator.

Dennerlein, chief of the Surgical Center and authorized representative of the Transport School, the customs troops, Mars institutes, etc.: That's exactly why I'm coming to you. Pätzold is the Mars coordinator.

Hinnercke: Not since this morning. I've taken it over. Let's shelve that question for a moment. Somehow we have to take stock.

Dennerlein: Is it certain then that we are all that remains of humanity?

Hinnercke: Our colleagues from the Extragalactic Institute swear that aside from us there can be no other survivors.

Dennerlein: And you're sure about this? We've sometimes been able to make some wonderful stuff from a knee joint or a hip bone—just think of the accident during maneuvers in 2010!

Hinnercke: Nothing. Our colleagues have instruments with which they “precisely” observe the distant galaxies. **They can find a postage stamp on the surface of the Earth.** There is nothing left there capable of living.

Dennerlein: Then can we still grant ourselves the title of "humanity"?
Hinnercke: I am asking *you*. Several legal questions depend on the answer, among them the question of sovereignty. Our colleague from the furlough resort of the Immanuel Kant Institute—they're all convalescents, but still able to think—believes that after the downfall of human society, as he puts it, and without human history—all of which has now perished—we can no longer even call ourselves human beings. I think he's using the wrong terminology. He believes that we're not even cannibals or Neanderthals, but Nothing.⁹
Dennerlein: And can't you arrest the man or somehow convince him otherwise? That is, after all, a very dangerous thesis. If the individual units on Mars adopt it for themselves, I can't imagine what will happen.

Hinnercke: I knew I could take you into my confidence, my dear Dennerlein. He denies flat out that we are humans. Certain things depend on this. For example all judicial matters, which after all comprise the entire field for my institute's work. If I deliver him to the surgical center, can you give him an injection so that he might be terminated? In addition to this practical crisis we cannot afford such an impractical theory, can we?

Dennerlein: Absolutely right. You see, my surgical center is practical—and you can believe me that we're the most specialized unit around, there's nothing we can't somehow patch together—give me a couple of cells and I'll make you at least a piece of finger from them—but what should we do now? We have the capacity for about

⁹ At a later point in time, the director of the Transport School expressed his opinion on the matter: "From the standpoint of a practitioner, I have to support our colleague at the furlough resort of the IKI. You cannot complete a shipment designated for a 'where to' if you cannot clearly define the 'where from.' If we come from Nothing, I cannot see how we would ever leave there again. One cannot start from Nothing, if I may express it philosophically."

The original opinion of the representative of the IKI can only be reconstructed—according to information provided by Zwicky—from lecture notes that were left behind. According to these, the *social contract*, which represents the foundation of all of human society, would be canceled in the case of the destruction of the planet.

2,000 neurological operations per week. After the drop-off in patients from Earth and in the number of wounded, we can reckon on eight to twelve cases in the next 20 years. We're as good as superfluous. However, we have to somehow make use of our specialized knowledge. We have to keep in practice. Believe me, after a little while your fingers get completely stiff. You have to think of it as you would in the case of a highly trained pianist.

Hinnercke: Our problem is quite similar. We've saved the complete Fleet Judicial Bureau, but we can't expect legal cases from the fleet any more. We'll be happy if we can even legitimize the **continued existence of the law**. Since there are so few of us—and no punitive expeditions would come from the Central Government if everything did fall apart here—we could in the end get along even without the law. I have to deploy the Secret Military Police in completely different circumstances than before, in any case. So we could establish a repressive regime right away!

Dennerlein: We are alone, after all. In your opinion, then, is there anything to the assertions by our colleague from the IKI? I have to admit, the remnants of "man" that we retrieved from the shot-up ship from the homeland really aren't human beings in the narrower sense.

Hinnercke: But that's no reason to overdo it.

Dennerlein: You mean then, that physiologically we lack nothing?

Hinnercke: At most, the demise of human society—if you would even want to use such a grand term (it seems to me, as I have said, to be more of a specialized philosophical term)—concerns only **our institutes**.

Dennerlein: Yes. Although you often find yourself in moods. I often feel all in pieces.

Hinnercke: But that was always the case. To be honest, you can never gather your senses like you have to.

Dennerlein: And furthermore, the institutes here on Mars lie around like rubble. The one doesn't match the other.

Hinnercke: Well observed. You could say it this way: previously, all

of this rubble was held together by an overarching relationship to the **homeland**. That was a whole.

Dennerlein: Not that I wish to appear philosophical, but one cannot be certain whether the homeland (or the fleet) really comprised a whole or whether it was, for its own part simply a massive collection of individual pieces.

Hinnercke: But the impression was that one was dealing with something whole.

Dennerlein: We're getting nowhere like this.

Hinnercke: Right, even if the homeland was nothing real—it kept us going.

(sings)

The heavens, boundless in their span,
are my beloved homeland.
Happy who, wheresoe'er he roam,
Always stands on the soil of home.

Dennerlein: I really don't know what you mean by *homeland*, but if it means that my institute can continue working, I will gladly accept the concept.

Hinnercke: Something of the innumerable values that have defined our lives must have survived if we can sit here so content. So long as one single human being remains, the entire program of humanity is contained within him.¹⁰ I'll have our colleagues from the furlough resort of the IKI brought to your clinic.

Dennerlein: We'll find something to keep them there. Maybe you could take a few shots at them or wound them a little. I believe I'm older than you. I think it proper, at this opportunity, to suggest we call each other by our first names.

They emptied a glass of cognac. A few days later, Hinnercke con-

¹⁰ Hinnercke in his "Treatise," op. cit., p. 17: "This is the deeper meaning of the Latin expression 'ad unum omnes,' as Julius Caesar writes in *The Gallic War*, about a battle in which only one man survived. Translated literally, the quote can mean: 'They died, including the last man.' But then no one would have been able to report on the war. It would not have been certain that everyone died. Therefore the proper translation must read: 'They all died, except for the one who brought the news.' Otherwise the event could not be established as an exact fact."

cluded that this conversation and the subsequent treatment of the convalescents from the furlough resort constituted a threat to further developments. **A new homeland cannot be founded on injustice. He had Dennerlein arrested.** The fleet veterinarian, Dr. Dalquen, who knew nothing of the security measures that had been taken during the first hours, succeeded Dennerlein as director of the fleet hospital.

"All that remains is to conquer new territory for humanity; no other planet, however, can really replace the homeland."¹¹



"We already lost our homeland in Stalingrad"

From January 10, 1943, onward, the Russians forced the units gathered on the west front of the encircled area around Stalingrad back toward the city. After the loss of the Pitomnik and Gumrak airfields, it was only a matter of days before this area would be broken up into several smaller ones and the 6th Army would be trapped. In the Wolfsschanze Command Headquarters in East Prussia, Chief of Staff Zeitzler had himself served the hunger rations of the troops at Stalingrad in protest against the actual situation.

¹¹ A poem that Hinnercke later had engraved over the *Portal* of the Palace of Justice on the planet Douglas shows that he could not have been entirely without feeling in his practice: "In the early morning / From the thin cakes at breakfast / I first broke a crumb for myself. / I also drank a mug full of wine. / And presently I reach for the tender lute. / My poor homeland / When will I see you again. / My poor homeland."

In the ice desert outside of Stalingrad, the Red Army was advancing. On their tanks they had mounted loudspeakers hooked up to gramophones that were attached to the vehicles with strong rubber straps. With recorded music and enormous flapping flags, the soldiers stormed over the snowfields and ditches to prevent the exhausted German defenders from digging in anywhere.

The short-legged Stefan Boltzmann had eaten a meal, looked at his toes, which were destroyed by foot fungus, and (still in the Balka Bunker) packed his feet back into rags and boots, and now, since six in the morning, had been pressing his fat behind on his motorcycle. Having eaten something, he was afraid he would take a shot in the belly while he was still digesting, which was deadly on a full intestine—on the other hand he was just as afraid of hunger or an empty stomach and gut spoiling his evening. He had no opinion as to whether it was better if time passed slowly or quickly. His headlights surveyed the frozen mud path that the motorcycle was traveling. That morning von Ungern-Sternberg¹² had said: "The battle is lost."

¹² *The son of Lieutenant General Ramon von Ungern-Sternberg by an illegitimate marriage with a Mongolian princess.*

Few people, while still in full possession of their faculties, receive the chance to shed their past and—supplied with reserves of past experience—begin a new life, fully without history. *General Ramon von Ungern-Sternberg*, pale face, long red mustache, czarist officer from the region around Riga, removed his officer's epaulettes in 1917, "when everything was over anyway." In Urga, in Mongolia, he founded the First Asian Cavalry division, which then immediately invaded Red Russia. He wore silk robes and considered himself to be the reincarnation of Genghis Khan. He had "Reds" butchered, to the extent he could recognize what a Red was. He planned to occupy Riga, Warsaw, Berlin, and Paris with his army.



Ramon von Ungern Sternberg,
father of the first lieutenant.

During Christmas in the icy cauldron of Stalingrad, they once again firmly believed in the homeland—each of them concentrated on a different imaginary stretch of his soul that for him meant "homeland" and "Christmas."

Even after the great offensive by the Russians on January 10, 1943, First Lieutenant von Ungern-Sternberg was still waiting for Hitler to be flown into the encircled area. **If he had his headquarters there, the army would have no choice but to hang on and win.**



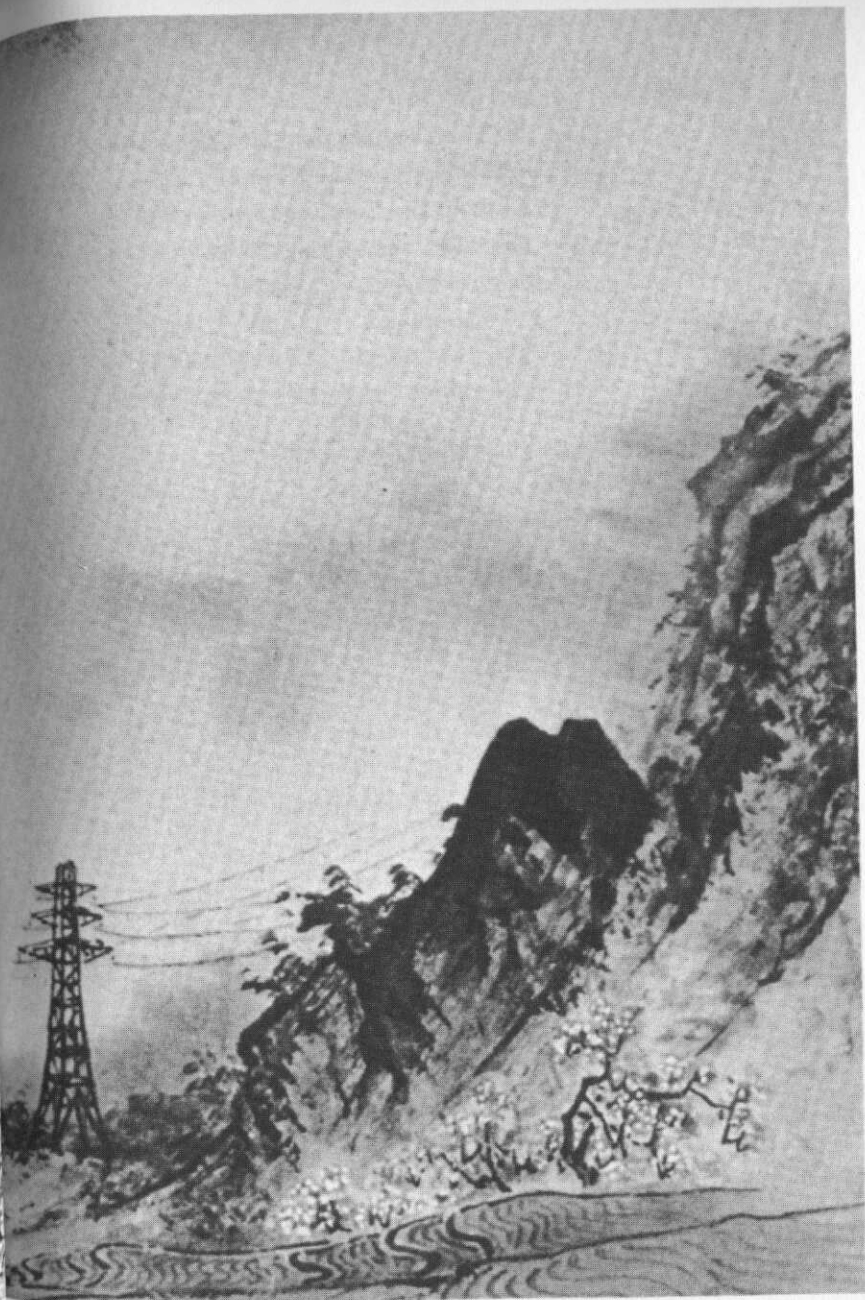
Destroyed aircraft on the Gumrak airfield near Stalingrad. Hitler wanted to land here even at the very end, amidst a hailstorm of shrapnel, in order to force a change of fortune after all.

On January 30, 1943, four officers of the Greater German Army: Zwicki, Boltzmann, von Ungern-Sternberg, and A. Dorfmann, were leaving Stalingrad over the mined ice of the Volga. The officers intended to head east, where the Russians were keeping least watch, to somehow break out of this misery on foot in the direction of China.

The ice did not form a smooth surface. The soldiers had bound stockings around their boots in order to step more lightly. **They arrived in China at the beginning of spring.**



"They arrived in China at the beginning of spring."



Either I am not an "I" at all, because I have things to do—or I have nothing to do, and then I fall apart into several "I's" and would like to lead several lives. Either I am alone with myself, and I have the whole around me, am many. Or I am in society, and then I am alone with that part in me that finds itself here in society—the rest would like to leave.

Spring 1943. The four ragged figures who were picked up in a valley in the Lan Shan Mountains in April 1943 identified themselves as Boltzmann, Zwicki, Dorfmann, and von Ungern-Sternberg. The Kuomintang commander in the district headquarters, to whom they were brought for interrogation, did not believe anything these four men (who could not make themselves understood) had to say. He tore their identification papers to shreds. To obtain better confessions, he had them prophylactically abused. Everything in Zwicki, Dorfmann, von Ungern-Sternberg, Boltzmann was yearning to be **expressed**. They wanted to escape these abuses. They didn't even bring an embroidered swastika or Sovereign Eagle with them, because they are wearing nomads' clothing from the earlier stages of their flight. **They point out their white skin.** But it has yellowed in the spring sun.

April 1946. Von Ungern-Sternberg, who has learned some broken Chinese, is working as the slave¹³ of a Kuomintang provincial general. His job: to interrogate prisoners. He has dragged his friends along to his work. "We believe in nothing any longer. We have given up our language, our history, our uniform, all hope (including the hope for the farms in the East that Hitler had promised us)." Zwicki: Whether we will still be ourselves after this is something we don't know.

¹³ A person who, though the owner of the commodity of labor power, does not have proprietorship over it.

October 1946. A prisoner, who has just been tortured, is making *hate-filled statements* against Dorfmann, the director of interrogations. Dorfmann has these statements translated. The prisoner tries to spit on him. What is he saying? Dorfmann screams at the interpreter. Zwicki (sharply): Be quiet. It's important in our role to react like a machine, like a nothing.

Zwicki: Dorfmann, you have to treat the prisoner **properly**.

Dorfmann: It would be proper to chop his arm half off.

Zwicki (excited now): We do this because we absolutely must, because it's normal here, but by no means will we reinforce these methods by adding something to it ourselves. This standpoint is in accordance with our safety.

Dorfmann (obediently): Yes.

Zwicki: If those whom we are interrogating today as prisoners are tomorrow's victors, no one can reproach us for not having **foreseen** such a thing.

A few hours later, the object of this short dispute, the prisoner, is shot to death. In the meantime the interpreter has finished his translation. The prisoner had attempted to *classify* the strangers *historically*. Dorfmann would have liked to dictate an answer to the interpreter, in order to convince the prisoner that he had fallen victim to a grotesque misestimation.



Stefan Boltzmann



A. Dorfmann, von Ungern-Sternberg Jr.



Franz Zwicki

Dorfmann: In his historical classification the prisoner completely missed the mark.¹⁴

In the afternoon, Boltzmann showed up with a batch of new prisoners. Dorfmann brought the interrogation around to the questions that had concerned him since the morning: to what extent would the prisoners think that they, the *slaves* of the provincial general, were *bourgeois*. At first the prisoners would not answer. After a bit of torture, one of them explained: perhaps you are not bourgeois, but you wear the characteristic mask of a bourgeois—you act like bourgeois; otherwise you wouldn't torture us. Dorfmann and Zwicky (as if with one voice): We have no interest in torturing you. We'll stop immediately if it can be reconciled with our safety. The prisoner (wide awake): You have to risk something, you'd quickly find safety. Dorfmann (to Zwicky): We have to keep our senses. It's not a noble attitude, but if only because we can't rely on the translator, it's impossible to continue this risky conversation.¹⁵ Everything within them fought against their being killed, just as this batch of prisoners, who were dying for their China, would be mowed down by the

¹⁴ Even as they pen their account of these incidents, the four friends can still get excited by their "enemy's" misestimation. Zwicky: Our history lay behind us after all. We were neither "bourgeois slaves," nor "lackeys of the bourgeoisie," nor "infamous bourgeois," nor "bourgeois bootlickers." Von Ungern-Sternberg: How do these expressions even get to the Chinese provinces? Zwicky: There was a contradiction, for we were either lackeys or bourgeois; the prisoner would have had to decide between the two possibilities. Dorfmann: In 1933, when we were 11 years old and "began to think," we were not bourgeois, we were National Socialists. Zwicky: And we left this quality behind in Stalingrad. It was unjust to pin this historical classification on us, when we're sitting here in China, *far away from the history we grew up in*.

Dorfmann: But by the time we had realized this, it was too late to clear up the mistake, since the prisoner had already been shot. I would have liked to set the record straight.

¹⁵ Boltzmann, looking back from the standpoint of the year 2103: We couldn't get mixed up in these Chinese affairs. Zwicky: We wouldn't be alive today if we had taken risks back then. Boltzmann: No one wants to die if he has never lived. As long as our life has no meaning we can only give it one: that it last forever. Zwicky: And now we have practically achieved just that.

guards late that afternoon. Amongst them were some important theoreticians, as Zwicky later found out.¹⁶

Autumn 1949. As experts in the American Intelligence Service. As the fronts of the armies of the Kuomintang collapsed, Zwicky, Dorfmann, Boltzmann, and von Ungern-Sternberg were able to flee to Hong Kong. There they quickly worked their way upward in the ranks of the American Intelligence Service.

Hochgurgl/Tyrol,
January 1978

Boltzmann, while being slowly borne forward on a ski lift, is observing interesting mist formations at the end of the glacier. Otherwise the skies are radiant and sunny. **A short while later, a helicopter lands near Boltzmann and carries the expert to a bunker compound in Idaho.**¹⁷ When Boltzmann arrives, the dangerous situation has passed. No war broke out, although—according to the predictions of the Intelligence Service—it looked like one would.

Boltzmann: I have the impression, Dorfmann, that you only wanted to prove how well our organization, which is the actual purpose of our work, runs.

Dorfmann: Don't be foolish, Boltzmann. You make judgments like a layman. If we can't rely on our expert's reports any longer, what are we supposed to rely on?

Bunker-Compound Idaho, Barracks of the Intelligence Service, March 2008. An investigating commission of the U.S. Senate re-

¹⁶ Zwicky: And if we had demanded further interrogations? Dorfmann: Whatever questions I could have asked them only occurred to me later. Von Ungern-Sternberg: The interpreter would probably have filed a report if we had questioned them about their theoretical knowledge instead of asking about relevant matters. Zwicky: It's also completely doubtful that they would have answered. Dorfmann: I had the impression that we would have gotten answers. These enemies thought that their situation, which at the time was hopeless, *was not hopeless*. They would have placed their hope in convincing us.

¹⁷ Code name. The bunker compound is in the proximity of Frankfurt am Main.

views the organizational structure of the Intelligence Service. They recommend a pay increase because they believe this will reinforce the interest of Intelligence Service workers in their work. Zwicky: This commission didn't penetrate the substance of the intelligence service. Money, even the entire wealth accumulated in the stock exchange has no value whatsoever *from the viewpoint of the anticipated final catastrophe*, which is, for us Intelligence Service experts, already a matter of fact (even if we cannot yet determine its time and date). **In the case of an impending world war, all that has value is a six hour advance warning and a spaceship hidden away in the woods in which we can flee the planet.**¹⁸

Bunker-Compound Idaho, December 2010. Zwicky has a village in Latin America *destroyed*, which the intelligence service had forgotten to enter on its maps.

Which is more real, **their command**, whose maps charted all real relations, or **reality outside**? Had it ever come to light that Zwicky and von Ungern-Sternberg had overlooked or forgotten to register this important village, the mistake would have cost them their jobs in the Intelligence Service. Therefore it is a purely academic question whether or not reality outside or the Intelligence Service maps

¹⁸ Dorfmann, while writing this passage: How long had you known, Zwicky, that one had to analyze the question of value from the perspective of the final outcome, the outbreak of war? Zwicky: We had known that practically since Stalingrad. Boltzmann: You're exaggerating, Herr Zwicky. We were able to acquire this method of observation, which I would like to designate "pure cognition," only after we began working as experts for the Intelligence Service. Zwicky: But the fact that we had nothing more to lose dates back to Stalingrad—only because of Stalingrad were we in the position to take a clear stand. Our employers, as mere appendages to their financial assets, never defined this so clearly, even when they themselves were experts. Boltzmann: Nevertheless, I think you're mystifying Stalingrad in retrospect. I find that dangerous. You're imagining here a history which obscures your "pure cognition." Zwicky: Now, on our little iron platform here, from which we can move neither forward nor backward, it is, in the end, all the same whether or not we're still capable of cognition. Boltzmann: I consider that to be a defeatist standpoint, Herr Zwicky!

inside have the greater quality of reality. For the two friends the maps are what is real. Zwicky: I merely brought what was outside into *accord* with the maps.

The rescue of the intelligence agents

January 15, 2011, Earth, morning. Old diehards, who, in a normal situation, would no longer have any significant future to expect—intelligence agents retire at 92—sit down at the secret directional radio in January, 2011.

Zwicky: Franz Zwicky here, chief physicist of the Intelligence Service. We're sitting here in the Central Bunker Compound in Idaho, can last maybe another four hours. Has the fighting reached Mars yet?¹⁹ Radio Station Mars: We know nothing of any fighting here. What is happening there?

Zwicky: Give me your superior.

Mars: The technical engineer?

Zwicky: No, the chief coordinator of the Mars Sector.

Mars: He left with the fleet.

Zwicky: Then his deputy.

Deputy Chief Coordinator of the Mars Sector Pätzold: Can I help you?

Zwicky: This is Zwicky, Central Bunker Compound Idaho, Secret Operations Command. I am requesting immediate information.

Pätzold: I don't know you.

Zwicky: You're nuts. Check the identity of my directional radio and give me the requested information. Have there been any reports of spacecraft entering your orbit?

Pätzold: I don't know anything about that.

Zwicky: What is your function up there then?

¹⁹ Zwicky in the year 2103: In retrospect, can anyone explain how the fighting broke out? Dorfmann: It is still completely unclear. It hadn't been calculated into any project in this particular form. Zwicky: That's why we had worked the uncertainty factor Y into all of our projections.

Pätzold: I'm a Mars researcher. I'm only standing in today for the Chief Coordinator.

Zwicky: Then get away from the radio and give me someone who can read locating devices.

Pätzold: One moment, please.

A. Dorfmann ran into the bunker room. Get out, screamed Zwicky, who was listening to the radio. In this unanticipated catastrophic situation only one intelligence agent had the chance to get an overall view of the scene.

Boltzmann, who with the help of the patrol in his charge was holding back the masses of people storming the Missouri Bridge,²⁰ reported that he could stave off the crowd for only another thirty minutes or so.

Boltzmann: They've got engineers with them. The bunkers will cause them hardly any trouble.

Zwicky: We have to get out of here.

Minutes later, Lieutenant Dagmar Hilfrich, who would be trapped in the bunker not 20 minutes later, established a radio connection to the military school on Mimas, a moon of Jupiter.²¹

Zwicky (hurried): Hello, hello.

Von Ungern-Sternberg: Von Ungern-Sternberg here, Secret Military School of the 12th Division, Secret Service Administration on the moon Mimas.

Zwicky: Good, good. What's left up there?

Von Ungern-Sternberg: What's wrong?

Zwicky: We've been engaged in battle for eight hours.

Von Ungern-Sternberg: Is everything gone?

Zwicky: Everything. Now—what have you got left?

Von Ungern-Sternberg: Mars, the moons of Jupiter, free of fighting.

Until a few minutes ago we didn't know there was a war at all.

Zwicky: Speak more concisely. Can you determine what is happening?

²⁰ Code name.

²¹ This was a secret base that was, until that point, unknown to the fleet leadership, as well as to the Mars coordination. For these reasons it managed to escape being destroyed. Von Ungern-Sternberg was sent there in advance.

Von Ungern-Sternberg: No more front troops can be observed from here. Everything has perished.

Zwicky: Exactly our impression here. The planet has to be evacuated. What's left up there? For example, Mars?

Von Ungern-Sternberg: Everything is left up here.

Zwicky: Quickly, be more precise.

Von Ungern-Sternberg: (1) special hospital, (2) fleet Judicial Bureau, (3) Mars Research Center, (4) Transport School, (5) Customs, (6) emergency vehicle repair service, (7) smaller institutes.

Zwicky: Nothing else? Talk faster.

Von Ungern-Sternberg: And you know of the escape quarters of the Intelligence Service.

Zwicky: Aha.

Von Ungern-Sternberg: Pure ruins.

Zwicky: That you can say. We'll be there in a couple hours.

A spaceship, which Zwicky has been preparing for a year, lands on a lake in the forest near the Idaho Bunker Compound. January 15, 2011, launch in the direction of Jupiter's moon Mimas.

As they arrived on Mimas, Zwicky, Boltzmann, and Dorfmann were slumped together "like wet sacks." They lay in the bunks at the base without any trace of external injury—like dead men. Von Ungern-Sternberg and the base doctor examined them. It seemed improbable that it had to do with any physiological deficiency.²²

Boltzmann (tired): We have to fit these salvaged fragments of ourselves back together again, anew.

They had the feeling of a complete loss of sense. 80 cm of space between the bunk and the ceiling, 40 cm on the sides, audio connec-

²² Zwicky in the year 2103: "It was the long years of rigid concentration on the chances for survival of this self, which had just been safely bundled off to the moon Mimas. However, this self was nonetheless entwined in a variety of ways with objects and relationships on the Earth. Another operation? Cut off what doesn't follow the movements of the age? That would have been too much at the time." Dorfmann: We could not have withstood it. So we lay there, sick.

tions to their comrades. But the coherent structure of meaning which had up till then held their personality together—the plan to escape the final catastrophe—was now untenable. In the coffin-like compartments of the secret base on Mimas, they were safe.

Zwicky: How do our faces really look? In the Intelligence Service we wore cloth masks that we could change. That gave us a certain appearance. We had to give up our real appearances after our faces were broadcast on television. Now we have to “choose.” Language, appearance, the contexts of our lives, future tasks—we have to choose all of this anew.

Boltzmann, says Zwicky—and Boltzmann also believes he remembers this—was originally stocky. Now he had long legs and was slender. Six facial operations have rendered him unidentifiable for every “enemy.” Now that the enemy is no longer an issue, this is not an adequate definition of his stature or his personality. Zwicky (jokingly): If need be, you could trim Boltzmann’s long legs, and then he’d be stocky again. No one laughs. Dorfmann: **Neither enjoy nor forbid yourself decadence, but rather think it through to its logical end.** “Gray already are my temples, my head’s become a snowy white. / Gone forever my fair childhood, my teeth are aged and brittle. / Of this sweet life I’ve but the barest trace of time left to enjoy. / Oft’, in tears, I do regret this, trembling madly, ‘fore Tartaros. / For Hades depths are wretched, vile, its path is full of suffering. / Its portals, open, beckon downward, ne’er again to open up.”

The same is true for “interests.” After Boltzmann, Zwicky, von Ungern-Sternberg, and Dorfmann, at the beginning of their employment in the Intelligence Service, had indicated their hobbies and interests on the survey of personal characteristics (Boltzmann: tank command—technology; Zwicky: physics—sailing; von Ungern-Sternberg: General Staff—mathematics; Dorfmann: education—children) they had rigorously specialized in these areas. Their original interests can no longer be determined. In this case, too, they have to “choose.” However, there is no situation in which any choice has meaning.

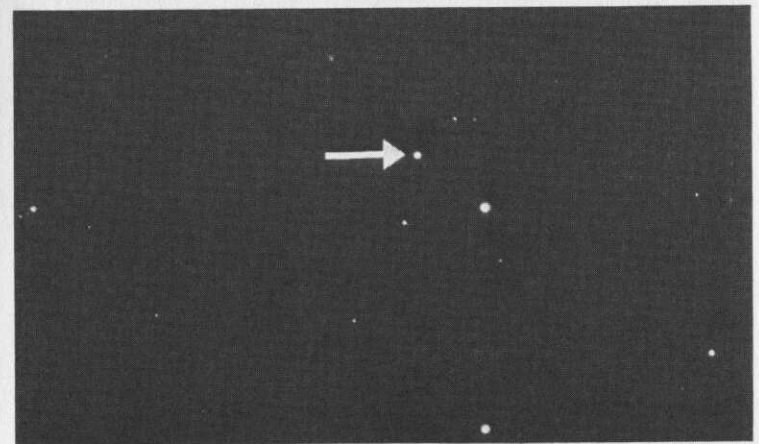
A note by Zwicky from the period of this illness: “I think therefore I am. I think, because I can disregard the fact that I am. Precisely because I am not, I think. So I **am not**. But who thinks then? Definitely not me.

No one thinks then.

“This hopeless fact is concealed because the four of us are connected by radio as we lie here in our bunks. Is there thought among us? As a solution, improbable.”

Reemergence of the coherent structure of meaning. As with every catastrophe, neither the destruction of the planet Earth nor of the fleet turned out to be *complete*. Individual warships, some seriously damaged, reached the orbits of Mars and Jupiter.

Radar on the moon Mimas reports the approach of further units of the 136th Flotilla. Boltzmann, Dorfmann, and Zwicky have received injections of pervitin. The moon Mimas is prepared to defend itself. The friends: **wide awake and unified into stable personalities by the enemy.**



Warship of the former 136th Space Torpedo Flotilla in orbit around the moon Mimas. The attack is repulsed, entailing the sacrifice of the moon’s own units.

They had now known each other for many years, and there was no crime that any of them could have committed that the others would not have unconditionally covered up. Human substance does not perish, but is condensed. To know nothing, to want nothing more—that makes them the most dangerous to ever launch a spaceship in the galaxy.

The Interview with U.S.-Myers

Comrade Representative of the Central Committee: We have released you from custody, even though you are a spy, because we have

Landscape on the surface of the Earth, now the eastern fragment of the former globe. The detail shows a region near what was formerly Shanghai.



"Of course broad sections of the Chinese population have survived the catastrophe in caves and bunkers (reaching depths of 60 km)." A representative of the Central Committee of the CPC in conversation with the former U.S. agent Myers.

no other American enemies left on this planet to whom we can grant an interview about the current situation.

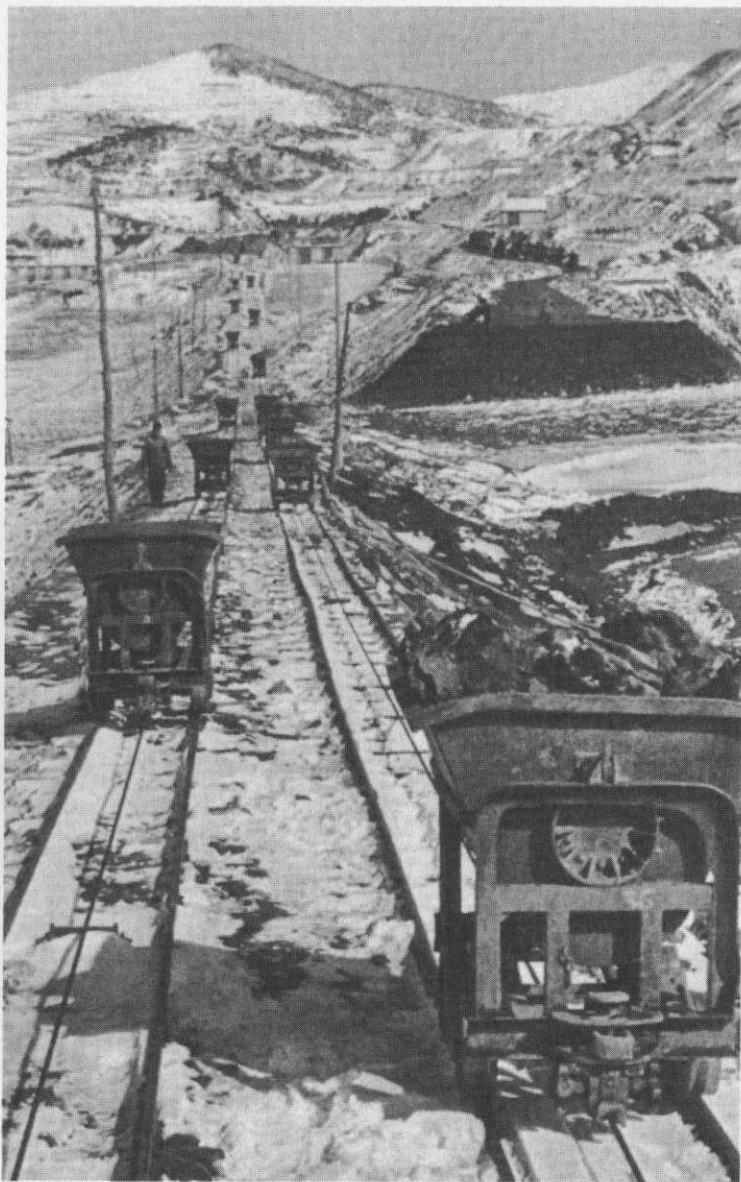
Agent Myers: I'm listening.

Lu Hsun: I am speaking on behalf of the Central Committee. Your clients have not considered that "the thought of Mao Tse-Tung presupposes a completely different metabolic relation of human beings with nature; this different relationship to nature also determines socialist production and social relations amongst people." This metabolic exchange with nature and these interpersonal relationships are founded upon a principle **opposite to the overexploitation of natural resources. But explosives, like those used by American adventurers, are the most extreme and abstract form of over-exploitation.** Consequently they can do no harm to the thought of Mao Tse-Tung.

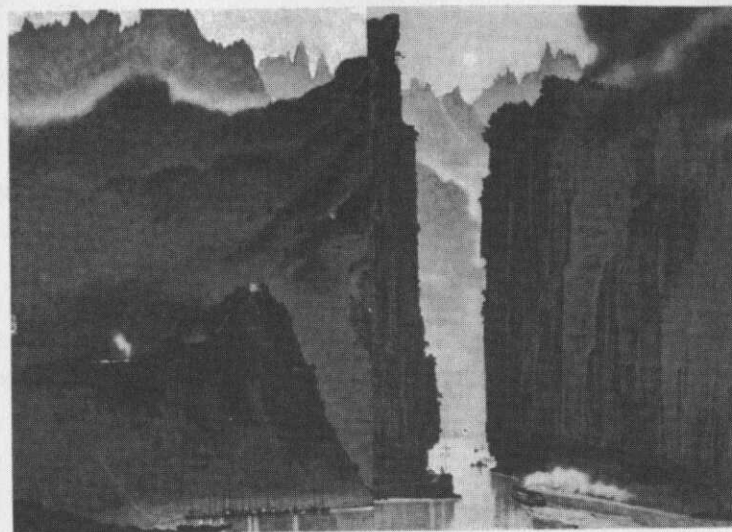
Agent Myers: I'll take note of that.

Lu Hsun: You may well be surprised—at least from your social standpoint, which is hardly realistic. At any rate, *we* will survive, and your clients, on the other hand, will not.

Agent Myers: I would like to point out, however, that several of the fusion bombs fired at the last moment did indeed hit the mark.



During construction of the hilltops.



True-to-life reconstructed area with cliffs, mountain peaks in the distance, waterway, and steamships.

Lu Hsun: "Correct. We shall never forget the bitterness of seeing countless comrades and all of the provinces of our country buried beneath ruins."

Agent Myers: Does that mean that I have to suffer through all of this, so you can hold a war crimes tribunal?

Lu Hsun: You have obviously not understood me in the least.

Agent Myers drafts a radio message.

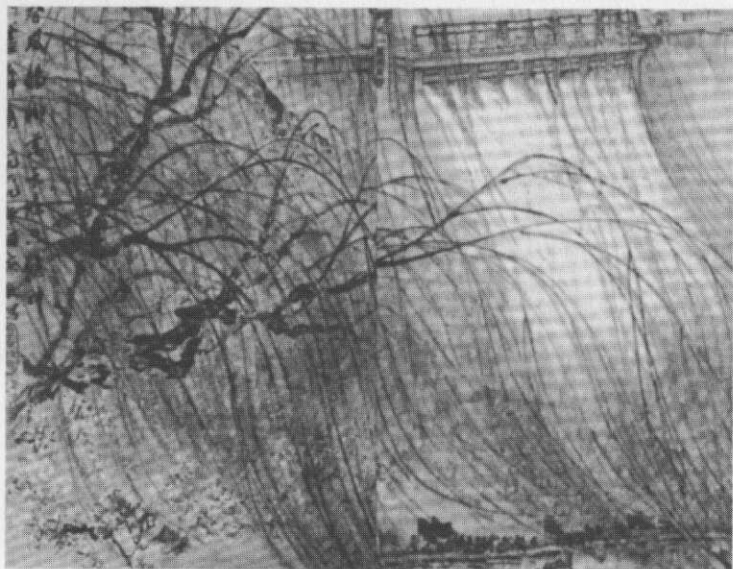
He makes an effort to explain the standpoint of the Chinese comrades while conforming to their vocabulary. "The announcement of the Mars Administration, that the Earth is utterly uninhabitable, is characteristically exaggerated insofar as the *Chinese Marxists* still inhabit and cultivate this mountain of ruins one way or another. One can only speak of ruins from *the viewpoint of a society based on exploitation*, for which nature becomes a ruin only when its natural resources can no longer be easily *overexploited*. In this re-

spect, this report is only an example of the inability of the observers to adapt. All one can properly observe is that the Earth has lost its spherical shape and is now revolving around the sun in several large pieces."

This radio message was never sent. The comrades decided to maintain radio silence. "You never know what predatory instincts such a message will unleash in its eventual recipients." "At the moment no global public sphere can be established."

Several years later, the Chinese—now in possession of the entire planet—began to rebuild the mountains, hills, and landscapes on the eastern rubble fragment of the Earth.

Dedication of a landscape, reconstructed true to life, with bridge and power station. Several buildings reach to a depth of 6 km into the interior of the Earth. Some of the buildings are covered with glass.



Ceremony for the sixth anniversary celebration of the catastrophe.

CHAPTER 2 A MAY DAY IN THE FUTURE

116th Space Cavalry Flotilla on the Moon Mimas, January 2012.¹

Their guts hung from their throats—nonetheless they took off to the west immediately and without protest. It was an order. However, had someone ordered them to plant bushes or to carry a stone from one end of the launch pad to the other, they would have killed the officers who had given the command.

While the comrades from the 12th Division who occupied the moons of Saturn—which were now called “homes”—were still waiting for their orders to go into action, their bunkers went up in smoke under murderous fire from the 116th Flotilla. From orbit the flotilla was executing a centripetal pincer attack, against which there had been no defense even before the loss of the planet.² If the labor had been available, the planet would now have been industrialized and one could have gone on as before.

¹ A note by Boltzmann: Through the combination of personnel from Customs and the Mars Transport School, through the levying of scientific personnel, and the organization of the few scattered remnants of military forces that were able to find refuge from the final catastrophe in the orbits of Mars or Jupiter, there arise various divisions of troops who immediately begin fighting against one another. “To organize the available forces into a whole demands that we destroy roughly half of the surviving troops, cadres, draftees, and so on. The remainder obey.”

² Von Ungern-Sternberg: “Every shot issued *against* the attacker is slowed by the gravity of the planet or its satellites. Every shot *from* the attacker is accelerated by an equal amount. Therefore the rockets fired in defense strike *locations where the trigger-happy invading forces are no longer present*, while their shots destroy the immobile targets on the ground.

A failed attempt to produce laborers. Fifty-two military physicians were called together in the Mars Surgical Center. They were to introduce 22 tons of semen from members of the fleet into ovary donors from the 22nd Division.³ This enterprise, which would have produced results at the earliest 20 years later, failed due to the lack of interest on the part of the physicians who considered themselves to be military personnel and researchers investigating the fundamentals of their science, and not factory workers. Instead of producing workers, they discovered a new, improved method for killing off progeny in necessary instances where they proved to be “significantly inferior.”

The last tip from the vanished president of the United States. As the catastrophic situation that led to January 2011 became clear, the president, who had studied economics for a couple of years, followed the squadrons on their course over Africa (where they were all destroyed in the end). Beforehand, he was able to radio a few friendly corporations, whose representative he considered himself to be, and advise them to transport certain “treasures” into space.

A new *hierarchy of values* was established in these firms—based on the presumed destruction of the planet, all values came to be revalued anew. **For example, gold for wedding rings was now worthless. Several firms transported almost 100,000 skilled workers in spaceships beyond the Earth’s gravitational field.** While still in the ships, the workers signed contracts in which they committed themselves—as compensation for their rescue—to work in space exclusively for these firms for a period of ten years. To attorney Schulz, who represented the consortium of companies, these paper contracts appeared to be the most beautiful treasure he had ever tended.

The spaceships—including Schulz and the workers—were shot down before they reached the mines on Mars, Titan, and Pluto.

³ Information from Boltzmann: All of the female office personnel from the Mars institutes were combined into the 22nd Division. Later, we had to disarm the 22nd Division since it could not be incorporated into the disciplinary structure.

Field Officer von Stegmann is responsible for this crime against human labor power. Dorfmann punishes him. Although Dorfmann threatened Field Officer von Stegmann (who stood before the firing devices for the rocket battery on Mimas) with a loaded automatic weapon, von Stegmann pushed the buttons anyway. Dorfmann’s bullet reached von Stegmann’s stomach and chest too late. The rockets destroyed the slow-moving formation of transport ships containing the 100,000 skilled workers. (The heaviest transports had launched on the January 15, 2011, and flew, while maintaining strict radio silence, for a year before reaching Jupiter’s orbit.) The guards in the rocket battery apprehended Dorfmann immediately. Dorfmann’s interrogation by the officer of the court at the rocket base.

Interrogating officer: You shot Staff Officer von Stegmann with your own hands?

Dorfmann: Yes. Because he made a mistake.

Officer: You are not permitted to execute anyone without a court-martial hearing.

Dorfmann: Due to the overwhelming severity of the error, I was permitted.

Officer: In what did the error consist—in your opinion?

Dorfmann: The staff officer fired on six heavy space ferries approaching the moon Titan.

Officer: How did these ferries identify themselves?

Dorfmann: As the ships we expected, loaded with workers already under contract, who were to get us out of the jam we’re in. We have raw materials, but no workers.

Officer: What prompted von Stegmann to act as he did?

Dorfmann: It was by no means an unpremeditated act. Von Stegmann believed his action would earn him the Knight’s Cross. He was of the opinion: if the fleet remained pure, crises such as the one which led to the loss of the planet would be avoided. Von Stegmann’s logic: no importation of workers—no importation of Bolshevik thought.

Officer: He shot, then, on the basis of his own individual analysis?
Dorfmann: Which cost us our only chance.

At that moment Juridical Ruling no. 1, concerning the "protection of human labor power," arrives by radio telegraph.

The interrogating officer reads aloud: "§1: Whosoever destroys human labor power will be punished with death. §2: The designation *labor power, worker*, and so forth is forbidden. The designation for workers reads 'partners.' §3: This law goes into effect retrospectively."

Dorfmann: This law is irrelevant. There are no more living workers. Officer: On the basis of this law the court-martial proceedings against you are hereby suspended.

Dorfmann: Thank you.

The tenant operators of the canteens on Zuse II (moon of Neptune) apply for an allocation of imprisoned mutineers for use as kitchen help and as transport personnel. The provision of 160,000 aggressive soldiers, who were spread throughout the mobile bases within the domain of the 6 astronomic units, stretched the canteen management to its *limits*. If the troops were unsatisfied, the canteen operators were the first to be shot. **They requested a number of prisoners as temporary labor from the military penal institutions.** To counter their indifference toward the grunt work they had to perform (piloting space ferries loaded with food material between the planets, working in the huge steam kitchens), the managers provided these "partners" with incentives.

The operator, H. H. Boots zweck, bribed judges to increase the number of convictions among fleet soldiers. The justly or unjustly condemned entered the prisons as soldiers and came out as workers. Mining enterprises on Pluto paid up to 600 dollars per head for leased partners. Canteen operators like H. H. Boots zweck gave up their careers to trade in the rare commodity of labor power.

The search for "alien life." According to the law, trade in human beings is forbidden. Since the fleet protects the law (because they depend on legal discipline amongst the troops to maintain their permanent posts), it is impossible to stage illegal slave hunts that would permit the concessions operators to rapidly increase their supply of labor power. Therefore, numerous hunting commandos searched for **nonhuman** forms of life for the operators.⁴ Since, however, no "intelligent alien beings" were found in the regions of the solar system and the neighboring galaxies, despite all exploration, mutinying soldiers from the fleet were from then on treated as "foreign life-forms." Having been "mistaken" for mutinous units, legal institutes, refugee groups, and remotely stationed units of hunting commandos were included among the material available for the "procurement of labor power."

Space Admiral Hinnercke: "That is quite clearly an instance of abuse. It is necessary to intervene, clearly and forcefully, against these man-hunts."

Immediately several high-ranking officials began the inspection, reassignment, and harassment of individual military units that were thereby induced to mutiny and hence legally led into the hands of the hunting commandos. The prisoners were pardoned and designated "partners" or assigned to particular workplaces, in particular to the mines located on planets from where it was impossible to escape. In legal terms, these workplaces functioned as prisons.

Officers allowed themselves to be convinced by various tenant-operators to accept second jobs in the economy that arose out of this situation. The Fleet Judicial Bureau combated these *supplementary activities* with draconian punishments. The officers were dismissed from the fleet without notice and sought refuge as "penitents" in the tenant-operator industry. Hinnercke: "The army must maintain its purity; it must try to maintain its absolute supremacy."⁵

⁴ Dorfmann: The superstition persisted that intelligent beings were to be found hidden away somewhere in the solar system. Zwicky: That has been scientifically disproved. Dorfmann: But the idea persisted.

⁵ Boltzmann: On Easter, 2018, two moons of Jupiter were ambushed by the 123rd

The scientists from the Extragalactic Mars Institute believed they could make themselves a little something extra. For the scientific researchers the destruction of the Earth is not in the least a misfortune. The majority of them, including Professor Koeppen, Professor Tautler, Professor Dr. Schlappau, and so on, now saw the possibility open to them to explore broad sectors of space without any regard for the programs of the cultural ministries on Earth, which were oriented toward practical, applied research. They conducted no unnecessary discussions with their colleagues from the Fleet Judicial Bureau, the transport school, and the fleet hospital, which had integrated themselves into the overall military structure of the fleet within a year's deadline. Instead, they made fun of the beat-up ships that called themselves the "New Galactic Fleet" (without real enemies, without a military goal!).

In the summer of 2012 the institute was surrounded by the Secret Military Police. Under the Compulsory Service Law the scientists were distributed among the various industrial centers that were being developed. The tenant operators gave them concrete tasks which were to be solved by scientific means (for example production of soup for the soldiers). Spread among various planets, the scientists were never able to gather as a group again, which would have enabled them, for example, to strike or protest against the forced labor.

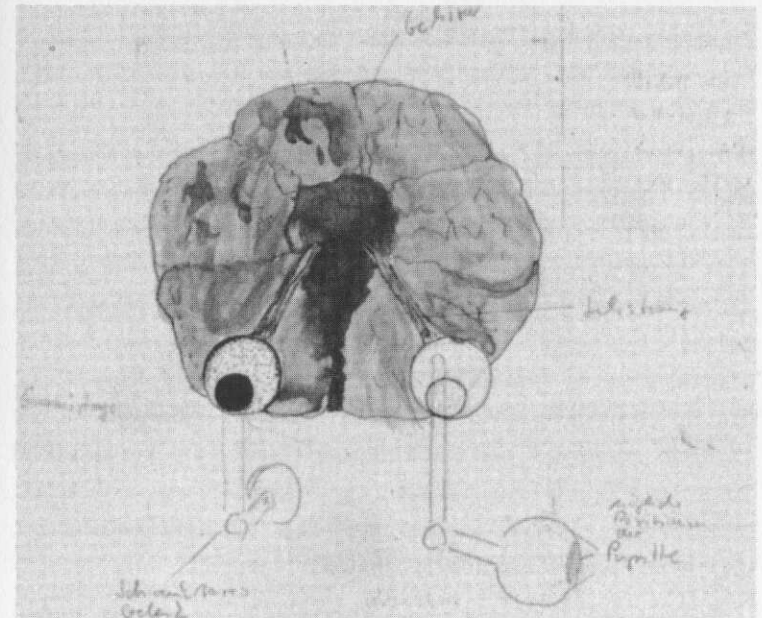
The greenhouse-like development of individual characteristics. What presented itself in the first three years after the catastrophe as *something that had been saved* was in no way a unified entity, such as the term "saved humanity" suggests. On the contrary, there ex-

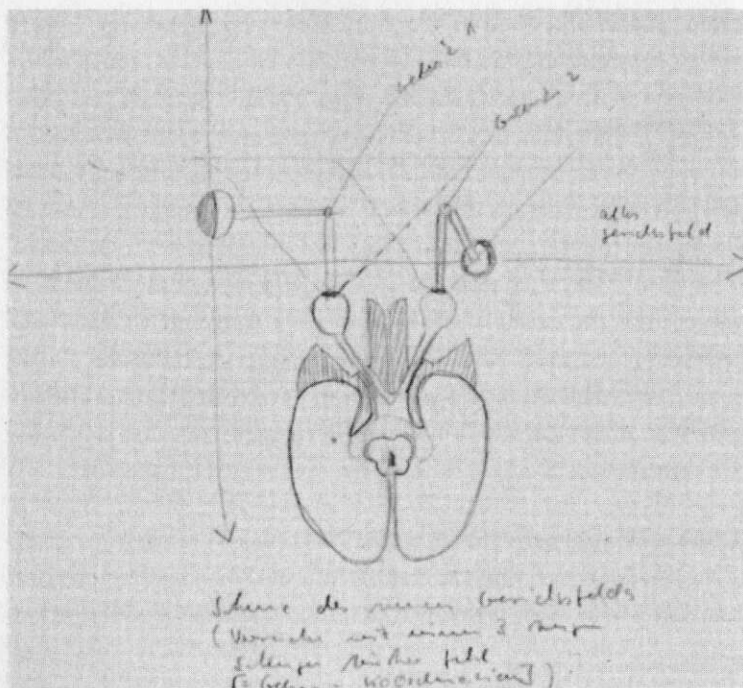
Space Torpedo Flotilla, and the residents were sold as workers after a brief period of scientific training. After their residences and supplies were destroyed, they would have had to work for someone in any case. The units involved in the illegal attack were surrounded by my forces. Every fifth mutineer was shot. Every second and third were sentenced as "labor power"; Dorfmann and von Ungern-Sternberg made every first, fourth, and sixth of them into the tightest elite unit in the galaxy. The workers "robbed" from the 123rd Torpedo Flotilla were handed over to *trusting purchasers* as long as proper contracts were presented.

isted considerable conflict, if only at the level of armament. Each of the groups could survive only if it increased its level of industrialization and military development more rapidly than all the other groups. The idea that a customs inspector or an accountant could fill in for an absent transport pilot is erroneous in this context. Rather, the task of the customs inspector is to inspect, a bookkeeper to keep books, and the transport pilots under no circumstances to be absent. Transport pilots with fevers of 42°C or with broken shoulders were tossed into the cramped cockpits of their transport rockets—and they delivered their payloads to their proper destinations. Goods inspectors and customs inspectors improved their vision to such an extent that this category of worker developed eyes that *protruded six centimeters*. Nothing escaped the eyes of these inspectors.

Dagmar Hennriegel's deed. Dagmar Hennriegel, member of a smuggling syndicate, fell into the hands of one of the specialized customs assistants who, with the fully mobile, six-centimeter ocular exten-

Eye of a customs official.





Design sketch of the freely moving eye of the customs assistant who was "sacrificed" by Dagmar Hennriegel

sions, was interested in nothing other than discovering smuggled goods. The customs official, after expert palpation, removed from the beautiful smuggler's specialized uterus four kilograms of a valuable osram-platinum-gelatin alloy with a market value of several billion dollars. With sagging belly, Dagmar Hennriegel began a long prison stay. She took her revenge later when she abducted the customs assistant in a pirate ship, sliced her into numerous tiny pieces, and then sent these to various customs employees. In response, the customs employees organized themselves into a posse and used knives to kill individual smugglers *on the run*. Because Boltzmann was unable to prevent these acts of revenge with his armored ships, he was demoted from colonel to lieutenant colonel.⁶

⁶ Fleet representative for penal matters, Dr. Vieweg: In this condition, the fleet

The battleship-counter Erich Feldmann. Erich Feldmann was the only person during the founding years who was interested in making a complete inventory of all publicly owned vehicles and supplies from this remnant fleet, which had once comprised the military fleet of the terrestrial nations. At that time, under the influence of the immediate shock of 2011/2015, he had obtained all possible information from the various command staffs. Since then he has published segments of the overall information in the form of notes and fleet calendars with precise data on the strengths of the fleet, which did not agree with the reported levels of actual fleet strengths. Feldmann was extremely shortsighted and hard of hearing. How he managed nonetheless to record the information and store it in his bald head was unknown. Presumably he knew so much about ship statistics that every new piece of information was simply the confirmation of an older one. In this respect he could simply guess.

divided itself into rapidly developing departments of prisons and departments for the imprisoned.

Boltzmann: How could one have grasped that? The individuals who burdened themselves with "guilt" (because they were taking revenge in reaction for past "injustice") were for the most part not apprehendable in the moment of revenge. That's why in each case the revenge affected someone other than the "guilty party"; these "innocent parties" were thus provoked to acts of revenge which, for their part, did not reach their addressees but rather an *innocent third party*. Our "retribution" (which was in itself made possible through the deployment of the armored ships) would not have reached the "avenging parties" but could have only been undertaken against arbitrarily "available parties" as a "deterrent."

Fleet representative for penal matters, Dr. Vieweg: Even if I were not to deny the educational value of such deterrence, we ourselves, and the responsible armored ship commanders, would have completely lacked any appropriate *motive*. We did not want to avenge the violation of the law on completely innocent parties, and we did not want to direct our thirst for revenge against the troops. Thus the punishment fell on me in the end, since the fleet had to pick on someone, and a collective punishment of the entire incompetent unit would have induced it to vent this injustice inflicted upon them by means of unjust punishment through aggressive attacks against either uninvolved third parties or against ourselves. In this manner the highly specialized penal divisions in the fleet very rapidly become punished parties themselves with an inclination to punish their punishers. This demands a permanent reinforcement and higher specialization of the penal divisions, since their tasks are indeed growing larger.

Officers from various units regarded him as a threat, especially if they had secretly sold ships *slated for retirement* to representatives of industry. In Feldmann's brain these ships and components remained the property of the fleet, even when they had long been serving industrial purposes. Economic leaders such as H. H. Boots-zweck, who had acquired fleet property, endeavored to eliminate Feldmann. But in Boltzmann, Admiral Dr. Friedrich, and Admiral Hinnercke, Feldmann had powerful patrons who assigned him agents and bodyguards. Despite this, he, along with his bodyguards, melted away when the frigate *Thalia* "accidentally" came under fire from the moon Mimas. Afterwards no one else had any precise information regarding fleet assets.

Only the lack of workers prevents further progress.

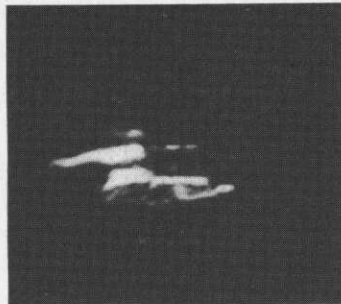
Boltzmann: "I have never seen so much nature all at once as I could during the last low-level fly-bys of numerous moons, planets, and suns. One becomes virtually farsighted in the face of this starry firmament."

Von Ungern-Sternberg: We can't make it. As soon as we try to land, the comrades from one of the competing divisions will notice and

they will destroy us, since we'll be an immobile target on the ground. Zwicki: So let's sit here for months in these 80 cm x 1.20 m command bunks and look at these marvelous treasures.

Von Ungern-Sternberg: That's why the starry heavens won't delight me for very long either.

The May Day celebration in January, 2012. Space Admiral Hinnercke, Central Fleet Judicial Bureau, in his command post in the Northern Zone of Mars: "I immediately understood the significance



Frigate *Thalia*, shot down by space defenses, moon Mimas (photographic analysis of the shot).

of shooting down the worker ship. Our only option is to honor the unknown worker or 'partner' alongside the unknown soldier."

The 3rd Speaker of the Propaganda Division in the Fleet Staff of the Fleet Judicial Bureau recommends a gigantic demonstration of labor—as if it still existed—several months early. Perhaps, labor could be reawakened **subjectively**, out of people's imaginations. . . .

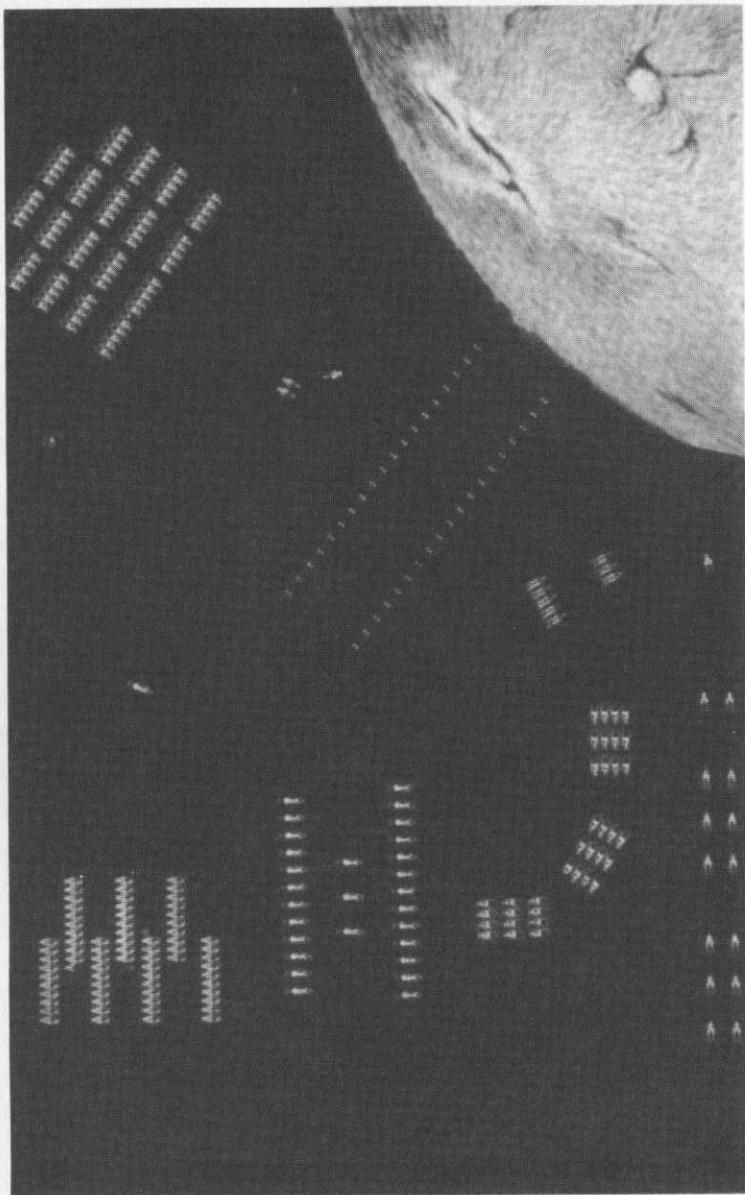
Hinnercke: "It has already happened quite often in history that ideas have induced radical material transformations. There is absolutely nothing else we can do but **begin anew from the very idea.**"

Command: Colonel Boltzmann, together with units subordinate to him, makes an emergency launch from the moon Mimas and other connected bases in the direction of the orbit of Mars. The soldiers and machinists are **disguised** as workers, experts, and so on. Television transmission. The furnishing of the costumes in detail is supervised by experts from the Propaganda Division of the Fleet Judicial Bureau, who refer to a volume of pictures in the Judicial Bureau's library that contains reproductions of workers, craftsmen, and so on from earlier periods of industrial development.

The objection of an office worker from the Division for the History of Law: one should not speak of workers, but of those who work, since hairdressers, craftsmen, and scientists are not workers in the narrower sense. Objection denied, since the designation reads "partner."

7 Zwicki, from the perspective of the year 2103: There was a contradiction here. No longer could one refer to an office worker but rather to an office partner. There were two completely different reactions to this senseless situation: 1st, the attempt to solve the problem by eliminating terminology; 2nd, the attempt, diametrically opposed to this, to develop anew something like labor power from its idea.

Boltzmann's information, 2103: The spectators in front of their television sets on Mars and Mimas were bitterly disappointed by the entire production. In part, they did not recognize that the disguised soldiers were supposed to be *workers*, but rather sensed that the improvised clothes were fantastic costumes. The troop was close to mutiny. The deployment of partners in the secret military police made it possible to lead the parade formation by Mars. It was not possible to land the troop immediately after the parade. Rather, to reinstitute discipline, it was necessary to perform further fly-by maneuvers after the soldiers removed the borrowed clothing.



Boltzmann's fleet during the fly-by of a type G1 sun, rich in raw materials.

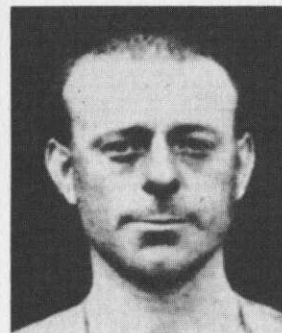
I had a dear comrade,
 A better you won't find.
 The drum called us out to fight,
 He strode on at my side. . . .

To these words sung by Boltzmann in his command cockpit, the units, held in formation out of necessity, flew by Mars at a distance of 1600 km. Boltzmann had transformed the unsuccessful enterprise into a memorial ceremony for the "comrades" who had died during the past year on Earth.⁸ The vehicles performed a gentle gyration that was to signify "funeral service." Afterward, the ships curved around Pluto—a lump of metal made of gold, osram, and platinum the size of a planet—as well as the planet III of Alpha Centauri and IV of Sirius, both rich in raw materials. These raw materials waited, guarded by the fleet, for their valorization.

Excursus 1: Typical Forms of Enterprise

1. Plan for the production of battleships using a solar corona (Omega Virginis) as a welding torch.

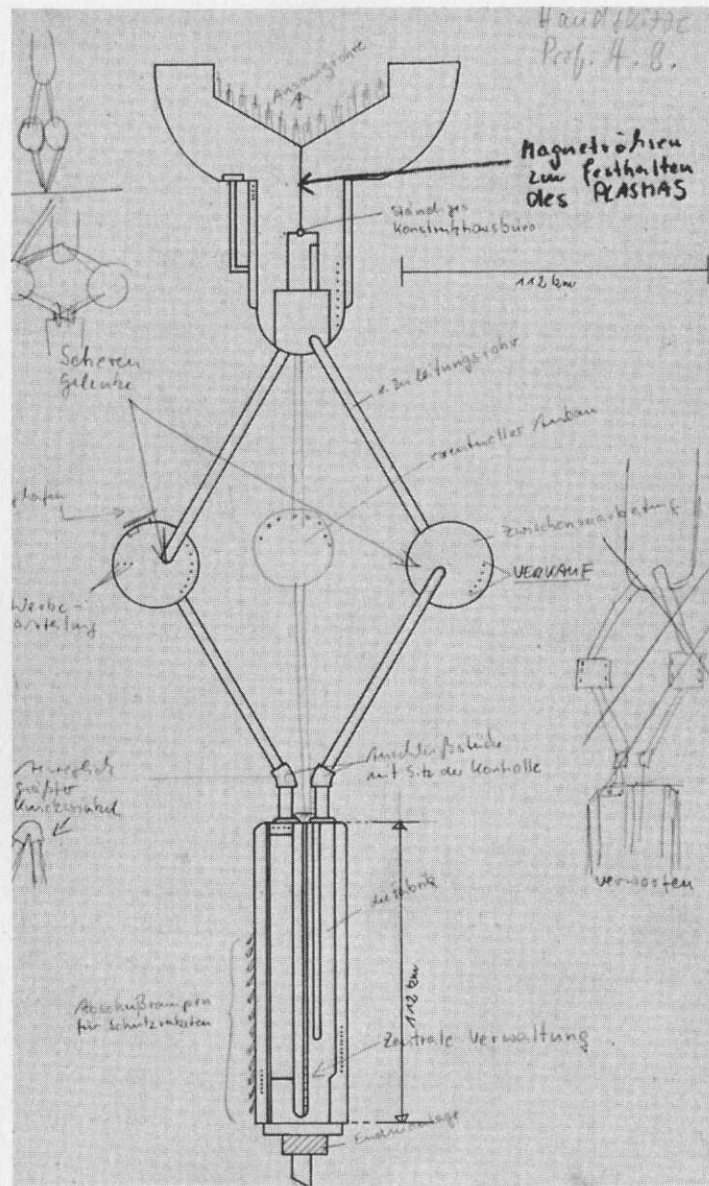
The inventor and astrophysicist Dr. Heineke-Bayer transported six laboratory ships at low speed from lunar orbit into the solar system of Centaurus. When he arrived—shortly before the outbreak of war



—in 2011, the drawings and plans that would enable the exploitation of the sun's plasma had already been created on the ship's drawing boards in a bunk 1.8 m high by 1.3 m wide. The plan was to exploit the heat of solar projections for battleship construction.

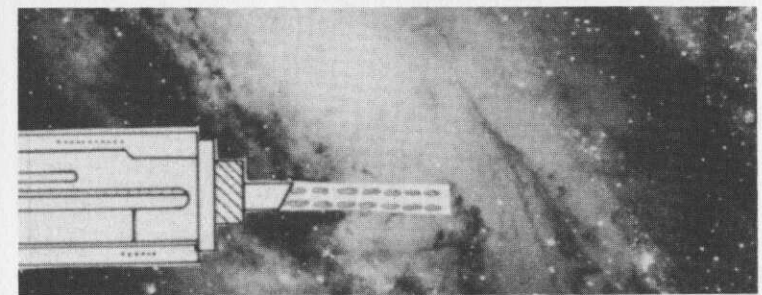
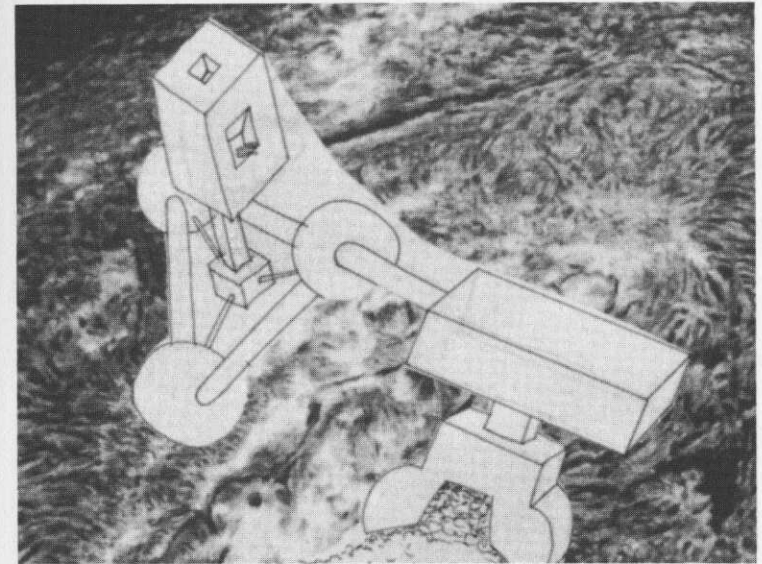
Space pioneer Prof. Dr. Heineke-Bayer

⁸ Boltzmann: In itself it was wrong to speak of comrades, since the troop consisted primarily of front-line units who for the most part didn't know the Earth forces in the slightest. They were, however, used to funeral parades.



During the experiments Heineke-Bayer died. As he sat squatting in a metal cone being inserted into the suction pipe, and attempted to check if the solar plasma was coming, the technician steering the metal cone by remote control turned to his dinner. A few seconds later the plasma arrived according to plan and Heineke-Bayer melted.

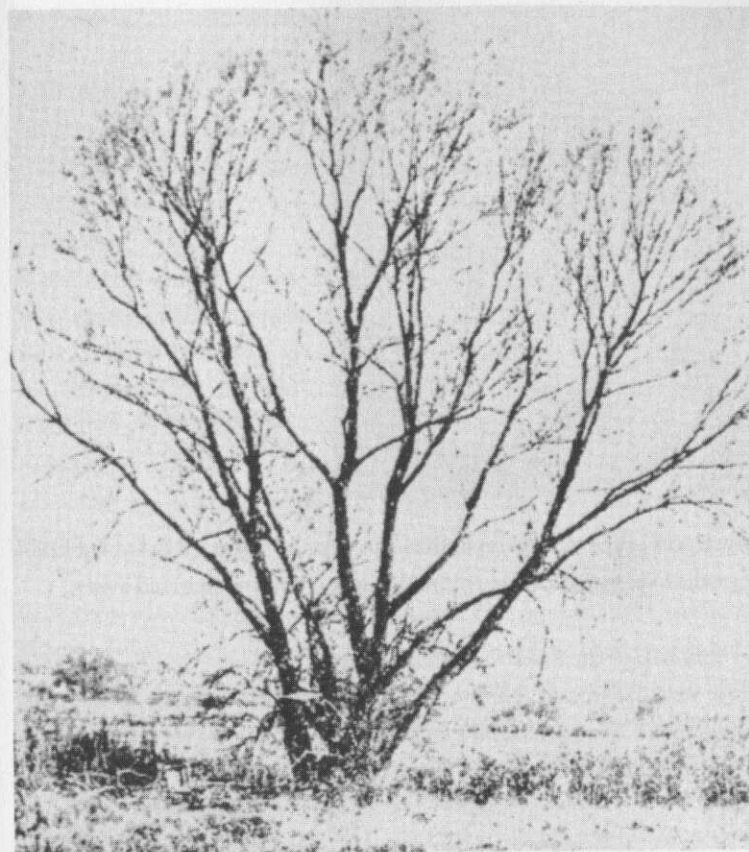
Prof. Heineke-Bayer's rendition of the solar platform with suction pipe.



Prof. Heineke-Bayer's rendition of the finished spaceships leaving the solar-oven factory. Advertising and design sketches.



Removal of Prof. Heineke-Bayer's incinerated remains†. The spaceship is fitted with free-hanging funeral trappings.



The tree on Prof. Heineke-Bayer's gravet. (The actual remains were completely dissolved during the accident.)

2. The plan to blast metallic sections from small celestial bodies (asteroids) and tow them great distances to marketplaces.

As the Space Cavalry Division No. 1, which today no longer exists, abandoned their horse transporters in June of 2010, instead of having them destroyed, the veterinarian Dr. Dalquen had the ships brought to the orbit of a distant moon. Now, after the catastrophe, in January 2011, Dr. Dalquen congratulated himself for this precaution. With little difficulty he had the livestock ships refitted as ramming and



Dr. Dalquen. March 18, 2014. Execution of Dr. Dalquen † for the illegal deployment of the medical corps as workers.

transport ships. Celestial bodies can thus be rammed in such a manner that sections splinter off and can then be transported away.

3. The rise of the Suez Canal Company.

The acquisition of Dubna. The law did not permit joint-stock companies to acquire planets. Primary acquisition was reserved for people.¹ Consequently the Suez Canal Company purchased the pi-

¹ Zwicky, from the viewpoint of the year 2103: Actually it had nothing to do with a real system of laws. On the contrary, it was a compromise between the practical activity of the Fleet Judicial Bureau on Mars as well as its subsequent organizations, which were formed after the murder of Hinnercke, and the equally practical initiatives of the joint-stock companies. Had anyone touched Hinnercke's Principle No. 1, "Only natural human beings have legal rights," then the entire galactic law would have had to have been rewritten. The process of the acquisition of capital, uninterested in such complications, therefore conformed to the legal system, which was in itself foreign to it.

There were tens of thousands of methods, properties, planets, raw materials to be brought under its power, but only one opportunity to found *legal* relationships of power.

Dorfmann: The system of laws functioned under these relationships of power as the "money of power"; payments are made in this currency and are recognized as "payments."

lot Schwertau, who was the first to set foot on the metal planet of Dubna, which was later to return great profits.²

This planet, distant from the sun, consisted exclusively of heavy metals, platinum, gold, which were extracted in pieces and then transported with mass drivers into space. According to their agreement, Schwertau sold the planet to his employer, the Suez Canal Company.

The Suez Canal Company belonged to those specialized firms **that only experienced their true development after the loss of their original capital object, the Suez Canal, that is, after giving up their original purpose** (and therewith the impediments associated with the actual object). **In struggles of this nature, those joint-stock companies survived that had at one time lost everything and that were forced to be open to more and more abstract ways of looking at things.**

Supplementary comment by Dorfmann: The Suez Canal Company survived the Black War only as an idea, since neither documents nor people found refuge in space; in a manner similar to the way their original capital—the Suez Canal—had already been expropriated from them in 1956. Von Müller, the last rector of the University of Capetown, who at the time was visiting the Extragalactic Mars Institute, took up this idea. He found a business report from the company in the institute's library. While Admiral Hinnercke's laws precisely regulated the acquisition of individual material goods, the acquisition of entire monopolies as well as the legal entitlements of old, vanished companies remained unregulated. The Fleet Judicial Bureau had no experience in this area. After von Müller had acquired the system of legal entitlements (transport monopolies, entitlements to war reparations, which, on the basis of legal succession, were to be covered by the Mars Coordination, etc.), he fell

² Dubna is a planet possessing a gravitational field with a mass attraction of 12 g. That is, it exerts a force of attraction 12 times stronger than the attractive force of the former Earth. On the special conditioning of the Dubna workers see below, Excursus 2.

victim to a rapacious group of officers. Von Müller was blown to pieces in his space glider by armed vehicles and was then preserved in critical condition; without ever regaining consciousness, he was kept alive for centuries so that a tightly run organization could be built up and run in his name. (Zwicki: The particular immortality of the Suez Canal Company rested upon the fact that it itself, or its bearers, had already died repeatedly and so completely. There is practically nothing left of this company to die.) Von Müller's individual personality would have been a hindrance to the proper unfolding of this enormous enterprise, which controlled all other units of capital after the year 2050.

Zwicki: To state it correctly: After von Müller's death, the Suez Canal Company belonged to no human being, but rather to itself, that is, it belonged to the property "in itself."

Dorfmann: Hence the frequent change in leadership in the company. The Suez Canal Company has used up more command personnel than have fallen in all the wars we have conducted.

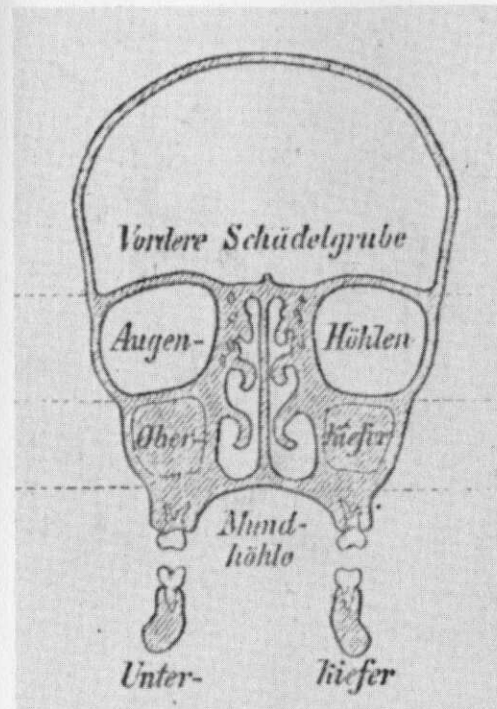
Excursus 2: The conditioning of labor power.

1. May Day Celebration in 2042.

Summer 2032, Arcturus Sector

They have been working desperately. Now they face Nothingness. They are being dismissed from the services of the fleet. Engineers with the highest qualifications and high military honors, previously always engaged, are happy to scrounge a post as a copilot.

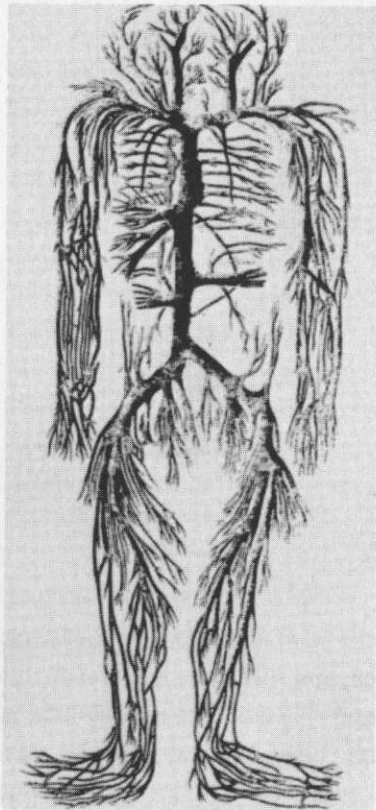
The engineers, suddenly deprived of the value of their labor—until moments ago they had been in charge of planet-wide industries or communications networks of up to 3 or 4 parsecs, and now they sit without any pension in an 80 x 120 cm cubicle and try to sight a sun by which to navigate—react in completely different ways. Some attempt to revolt—and are shot; others, who feel themselves to be employed beneath their qualifications, sabotage instruments and



The "valuable" parts of a human, which can be shifted laterally, recombined, or replaced in part or whole as desired. Sketch by Prof. Meixner.

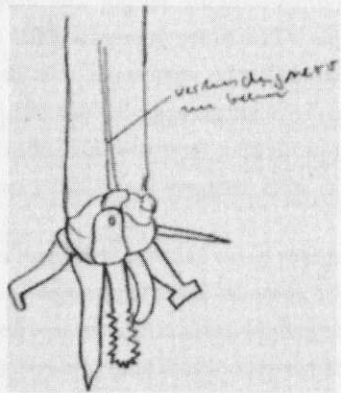
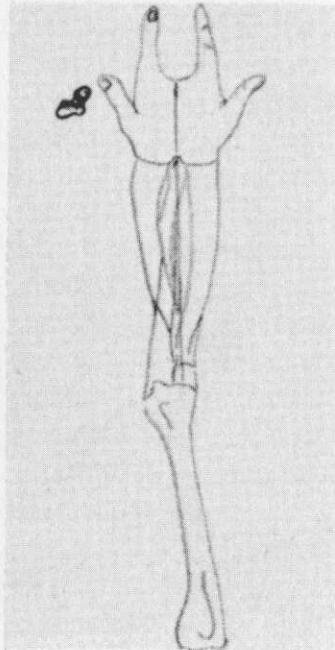
ships—and are let go. The majority work according to the principle "The more depressing the situation, the more completely one should take advantage of its assets"—in order to thereby take in a little something for oneself. Prof. Chief Engineer Meixner, who founded his Institute for Labor Economy and the Research of Time in 2036, belongs to the last group.

A few older economic leaders assumed that squeezing out that last bit of sweat from workers as Prof. Meixner proposed, leads to a dulling of the senses. Therefore they said, "An economy of labor makes them less rebellious." In contrast, Prof. Meixner worked from the assumption that "the development of human productive capacities and the development of the wealth of human nature was an end in itself." Until the end of his life—he fell victim to an assassination—Prof. Engr. Meixner remained a person full of joy and hope.

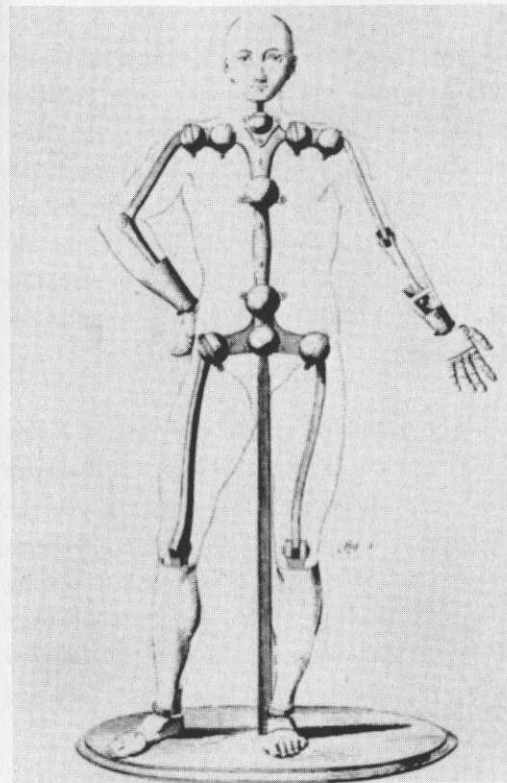


Basic structure of a human, according to Prof. Chief Engineer Berthold Meixner's Model for the Improvement of the Labor Economy.

Mutational change in the human hand (natural).



Labor economy utilization of a mutated hand for improving the human hand as an effective tool. Sketch by Prof. Meixner.



Basic model of support and movement mechanics according to Prof. Meixner. Can be altered as needed.

Conditioning of a future worker during childhood, from a sketch by Prof. Meixner—cross-displacement of the heart and other interfering internal organs. This conditioning was in violation of the decree for the protection of labor power issued by the Fleet Judicial Bureau in 2011.

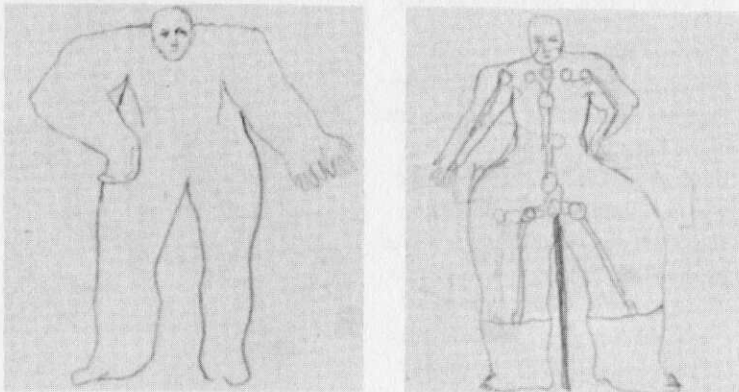


The Women of Dubna

In the Swan Sector, 2,039 workers were sought for the giant planet orbiting around the sun Arcturus, where humans were 12 times heavier than on planets whose dimensions were similar to those of their lost homeland. Through exercise and training a type of person developed here with reinforced lower legs, who further refined themselves into a squat muscular construction. At birth, the offspring of these giants looked like normal human children; a training program was then immediately implemented to adapt them to the environment of the giant planet.

The fate of the biologically "retrained" women of Dubna. A few years after the conditioning of the Dubna workforce the industry abandoned the heavy metallic planet and left the women, who in the meantime had been "retrained" in their sexual economy, to themselves. Under the pretense that they were to undergo retraining procedures, the men were brought to mountain camps, where they were euthanized. The women from whom they had been separated roamed the galaxy for years in search of the men whom they had become used to.

(Left) Position of the head of a worker on Dubna moon 1. The head and neck have been compressed into the shoulders by the gravity of 12 g.
(Right) Rendering of an ideal type of Dubna woman.



Wife of a specialist with reinforced lower legs.

On the information politics of the big corporations. One cannot say that the propaganda, the artistic endeavors, or the news reports in those years actually lied. There was always talk of doom. The remaining troops under control of the central government, as well as the units belonging to the large concerns, were afraid of the special qualifications that the workers acquired during those years. All of the armed units had been terrified of the giants of Dubna (which is why they were euthanized). The troops had reacted to this threat in two ways: (1) they were malicious and used trickery to eliminate danger; (2) they attempted to **defect to the enemy** and became unreliable in the eyes of their commanders.

The sole means that the big corporations found to prevent this was to isolate individual planets and workplaces from one another. In addition, the managements were prone to individual terrorist actions. Thus, for example, Zuse's third moon, where an intelligent class of specialists wanted to organize, was inadvertently shot to pieces. The engineer responsible for the "inadvertence" was executed, "so that the deed would not become public."

Music repertoire of the Central Broadcasting Company, Wurst, May 25, 2043.

The image shows a musical score for a radio broadcast. It is organized into two columns, labeled 'a)' and 'b)' at the top. The pieces included are: Denial motif, Magic fire, Curse, Thunder, Hunding, Love, Loge, Loge, Rheingold, Giants, Ring, Sword, and Siegfried. Each piece is represented by a short musical notation snippet on a staff.

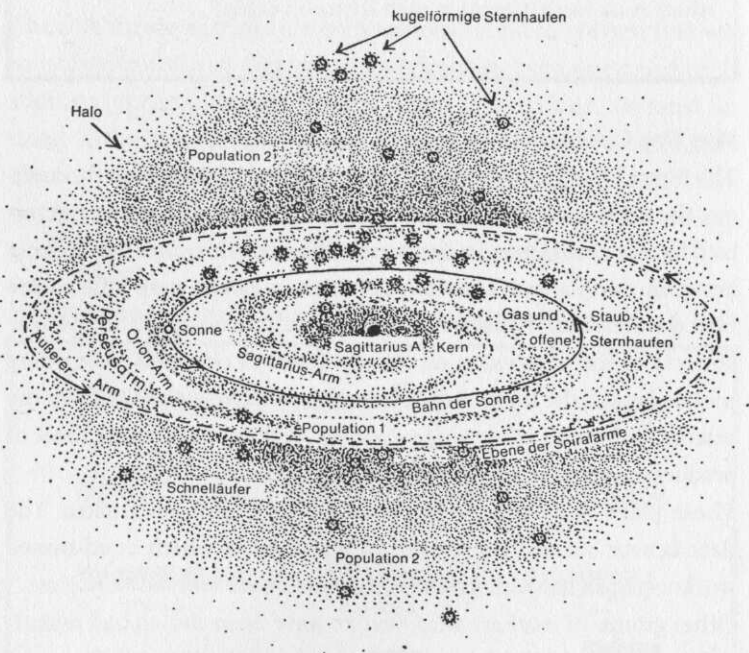
"Even if civil society were to dissolve itself with the consent of all its members (for example, if a people who inhabited an island decided to separate and to disperse to other parts of the world), the last murderer in prison would first have to be executed in order that each should receive his deserts and that the people should not bear the guilt of a capital crime through failing to insist on its punishment; that it cannot be considered an accomplice in this public injury to justice. It is better that one man should die than that the whole people should go to ruin; for if justice perishes, there is no further point in men living on earth."

May Day Celebrations in 2042

The May Day celebrations of 2042, broadcast on television throughout the entire sector around Dubna and Arcturus, were characterized by **noticeable gaps in the parades** of spaceship convoys drifting between the planets. On their receivers viewers were able to see into the individual spaceships and, simultaneously, to follow the entirety of the procession on other television channels. According to the plans of the union leadership, the parades were to portray the history of human labor since 1900 as well as the current level of productivity on Dubna and the smaller Arcturus planets.

These plans, however, were overtaken by events on Dubna. The fleet censor banned the launch of all ships in which conditioned workers could be seen. To show these workers seemed "tasteless." Other groups of workers who were to have been shown had recently been euthanized. Neither these dead nor the inmates from the mountain camps on Dubna dressed in special prison uniforms were allowed to be filmed in the triumphal procession of labor. Lastly, it was considered "delicate" to stage the rise of the modern "partnership" system out of the system of military prisons. So, for the most part, the May Day parade consisted only of a historic section (work groups up to and including 2010) **and otherwise only of gaps.**

The Milky Way: Schematic representation of our Milky Way system. The plane formed by the spiral arms contains stars of category 1, gas, dust, and loose star-clusters. The halo consists of stars of category 2. Also found in this area are spherical star-clusters, which likewise include stars of category 2. The core (containing Sagittarius A, a powerful source of radio waves) also consists primarily of stars of category 2. The form of the spiral arms is still only partially known. The stars of the halo, which orbit in the vicinity of the sun, are known as sprinters. The sun is located on the inner side of the Orion arm. The diameter of the system measures roughly 100,000 light years, and the sun is about 27,000 light years from the center of the system. The core measures roughly 20,000 x 6,000 light years.



CHAPTER 3 FOUNDING YEARS IN THE WEST OF THE GALAXY

I. "It is homesickness that sets adventures free."



In the western region of the galaxy, command floor of the fleet staff, April 2043.

Hinnercke: If the homeland is *kaputt*, then what holds a society together is its **ideal values**.¹ If we can no longer transform the real conditions that affect the fleet command, we have to at least maintain some movement in the realm of ideal values. *Of main concern is that we move.* If we move among alien stars, then "the stars of home" will no longer be simply an idea but an actual guiding principle. Here we are making the distinction between figure (*Gestalt, eidos*) and figuration (*idea*).² In this you see that I am concerned with

¹ Drawitz, head philologist in Hinnercke's staff: Ideal values are former real (material) values in their current exhausted condition. My land is good; my land, i.e., the exploitable fields and people, is good = goods from the land, my estate = goods = goodness; what is right, is what's right for me = right; but today all that is left is the idea of goodness and the idea of justice, and so on. The idea is indispensable because of the inevitability of this reduction.

² Welp, first assistant, fleet staff for the research of peace: This distinction permits one to avoid being confused by the mere figure (*eidos*) and to counter it with the active principle of figuration (*idea*). An example for practice: Distinguish between "eidos" and "idea" in the following 3 groups:

1. the just, the beautiful, the good
2. man, fire, water
3. hair, clay, dirt

active observation, with the primacy of "figuration." In my staff I can only use people who know Plato well.

We of the Starway generation (von Thiersch, Boltzmann, Zwicky, Dorfmann, Heuber, von Ungern-Sternberg, etc.) hold fast to our love for the homeland, even if our homeland can only be grasped in a reduced form, i.e., in the form of domination. Von Thiersch: "Grasped" is, of course, overstated. How are you to literally take hold of our "homeland in a reduced form?" And since you, my dear Boltzmann, have recently had both of your arms blown off, you couldn't possibly take hold of even a homeland that actually existed—for example the trees and shrubs.

Boltzmann: But that's where I'm optimistic. Your entire chest and waist collapsed not too long ago, and they've been completely reconstructed by a medical team. So I need not worry in the least about replacements for my arms.

Without any effort, doctors increased the life expectancy of the soldiers from this elite battalion to 160 years, whether one has temporarily fallen in battle or not.

Heuber (on a megaphone):³ I understand homeland as the reinvigoration of our strength by means of a return to nature, and as directly as possible. Drawitz has already pointed out the presence of with-

The evidence diminishes incrementally as the examples approach everyday experience. The *pure* idea in group 3 presents difficulties. *Dirt*, for example, is defined as "matter in the wrong place"; thus, there is only dirt in reference to a particular *value system*. Without this value system as it presents itself, for example, in the hierarchy of the fleet assistants (upper, middle, and lower ranks), dirt would not exist as an *idea*, that is, as figuration, but rather only as figure.

³ The megaphone is fitted with a 6-cm-long cylindrical extension, which Heuber presses against parts of his former throat region. By means of this transistorized device, the vibrations of his vocal chords, to the extent that they have been preserved, are transmitted to a membrane that generates comprehensible, if unmodulable, sounds of speech. These pass through a translator. The final impression is often shrill, but nevertheless the meaning of the sentences can be ascertained.

drawal symptoms.^{3a} I believe we are suffering from such symptoms. A certain haste is advisable. Since we cannot solve this problem through actual labor—which I would call "figuration" in the narrower sense—for example the construction of hills, deserts, tundra, snowfields, gravel pits, and so on (I myself long especially for those relatively lonely, open places with moss and coltsfoot, but for the most part with very little vegetation and if possible no neighbors and just quiet, and so on)—there exists the danger that we could be led astray by these longings.⁴

An attempt at abiogenesis. In the area of the former Mars Administration, a group of researchers was working on the development of a weapons system. After the supervising fleet staff had been destroyed, this group of researchers was suddenly unemployed. Their existence was in no way apparent in the files of the remaining fleet staffs. It then became clear in the behavior of this research group, that beneath the contract labor that this group performed, there had always simultaneously lurked, in the form of an independent labor process, an *unconquerable longing* for the reconstruction of their homeland (as they understood it). This group developed a soup of

^{3a} Fred Drawitz: "Homeland, as figuration (idea), for example, is not the external figure of homeland (eidos), but rather the "soil," i.e., the land and the people who allow themselves to be exploited, in the old sense of the term. 'The homeland is an intact realm of domination.' While we can replace mountains, rivers, hills and gardens, if necessary, with their representations in film, the soil itself is indispensable. The *idea* of soil is sufficient for only a short while."

⁴ Zwicky: The return to nature is quite obviously romantic; Heuber can be a little crazy sometimes. We cannot extract strength (including replacement parts for our bodies) directly from nature, but only from a processed nature in the form of the people. Humans mix with humans. Unlike the gods of antiquity, we cannot ourselves create our descendants from the soil.

Dorfmann: That's essentially what Heuber wishes to do.

Zwicky: Although he relativizes it. He does warn against being misled.

Dorfmann: I can't bother with that now. We have to remove "the return to nature" from our platform in its entirety. We have enough to do with the problem of giving form to our relationship to the "people." The soldiers, settlers, machinists, doctors, and functionaries, who differ from each other in the most different of

organic substances,⁵ which in the course of a few years passed through the phases of life in the primal seas, the amphibian phase, the phases of the dinosaurs and of the mammals. Because of the urgency of their longing, the scholars attempted to shorten the developmental period between the early dinosaurs and early humans through cross-breeding. The group was discovered by the fleet leadership and was immediately eliminated as they were about to experiment with a variant of human life in the wild. In addition, a generation of small dinosaurs that are capable of space flight already exists in captivity.

Dolphin-norm. The spaceship that settled on Mars on March 26, 2052, due to a defect in the propulsion system, was half flooded with saltwater and half "land." The crew consisted in part of fleet members and in part of dolphins. The ship belonged to a group of vehicles that were testing symbiosis and the separation of the ships' com-

spaceships, no longer cohere as a "people." In comparison with the "people" as fashioned by the tangible soil of our homeland, only the idea of the "people" still exists in current conditions, an idea that has the tendency to elude our "figuration" by shifting from place to place and thereby threatens to disappear as an "idea" itself. We have to gather all our strength in order to hold at least the idea of the people together.

⁵ Boltzmann: Life arises only in the ecusphere, an imaginary hollow sphere around the sun that permits equatorial planets. Equatorial planets are planets on which water concentrates in the equatorial region (their opposite: polar planets). "The soup that ate itself."

The atmosphere must be free of pure oxygen. Steam (H₂O), methane (CH₄), ammonia (NH₃), carbon dioxide (CO₂), sulphur dioxide (SO₂), and electrical charges in small, sealed-off ponds create—when combined in a particular, individually controlled sequence—an organic substance that becomes increasingly complicated over the course of 200 years and that rejects the less complicated portions of the substance. A portion of the soup that was created in this manner actually ate the other portion. That is, it lived.

The fleet command and industry were happy that they could, through the introduction of microorganisms, prevent the occurrence of such "primal phenomena," which had the tendency to *duplicate world history*. This is how, for example, the phenomenon of abiogenesis was successfully prevented on Mimas. The microorganisms ate up the self-generating organic material.

mand into two symbiotically interacting crews.⁶ Within the fleet command there were decided opponents of this experiment with symbiosis. They feared sexual excess among the symbiots. In fact, there were intimacies exchanged between the flooded and dry halves of the ships, but they were no more excessive than those among the animals or among the humans. At the decisive moment of the accident, racial prejudice prevented a proper search for the damaged ship. It was later found—plundered—in the vicinity of the Schiaparelli Crater.⁷

A typical character of the Starway generation: von Thiersch. The former director of the Berlin prison system, and later governor of the Sirius system, noticed in several situations, when he felt a great will to be courageous—that is, he wanted to be regarded as courageous—that he did not know what it was to be courageous, "what was to be feared and what he did not need to fear." "He knew that he knew nothing." To take up his studies again could have been embarrassing. He also doubted whether the various academies under his jurisdiction had enough information to offer him. Von Thiersch had known for years that he was obsolete and knew nothing, but he didn't trust his successors (for example the deputy governor, Heinz

⁶ Note by Boltzmann: They had common descendants. The various limbs which came out unconnected were fitted together after birth with a gelatin-iron-construction. That is, these promising intelligent beings were born in two parts and then assembled. They were superiorly suited for combat.

⁷ Zwicky: It's a crying shame.

Boltzmann: Only the technological waste products of these experiments with the symbiots were made available for further development.

The inventions developed in conjunction with these experiments were put to use with elan in the factory of Raymund A. Komoroski II, in the year 2054. The kidney breeder Oswald, on the planet Wolf 428, belonged to the same firm. He had a herd of 26 subhumans. A kidney culture needs 26 years to develop to maturity, and every two years after that it will yield one kidney. The customs in the laboratory are liberal. The valuable kidney bearers must be distracted and kept in a good mood, and above all, psychogenic reactions that could quite easily influence the kidneys must be prevented. After harvest, the kidneys are put on ice and transported.

Gervais).⁸ With these considerations in mind he remained in office and made his mistakes, which he represented as "the least objectionable." To avoid making any excessive mistakes, to keep them from piling up, he refrained as much as possible from being intrusive. His most significant daily achievement consisted of keeping himself available to the doctors who monitored the state of his health.

2. The Decadence of the Fleet.

The disbanding of the armies (2046-2058). No one could have deliberately disbanded the armies. They were prepared to kill anyone who opposed their interests. But there was one thing against which the armies had no power: the money hunger of their soldiers.

Astral criminal H. H. Bootsztweck. The wiry astral criminal let his wily pig's eyes slide over his bodyguard and commanded "launch." Seven silver war machines departed from the camouflaged hideout on the unpopulated planet.

If it were a matter of making extra profits, H. H. Bootsztweck would not shy away from destroying a sun of the most valuable spectral class (the Wolf-Rayet star). He had 20^{36} megatons of explosives divided into manageable two-meter-long cases that were transported to the blue-white star Iota in Orion's "sword." Deposited deep in the interior of the sun and then ignited, this forbidden operation *shocks* the sun's radiant and gravitational balance and leads its gaseous mass to cave in. The enormous sphere collapses into one central block, a "black sun" whose matter has decayed and no longer radiates any light. During this operation an extremely dense cloud of matter forms and rotates around the central core of the former sun.

⁸ Dorfmann, note on Gervais: Heinz Gervais, who at the time was especially popular amongst the troops and on the settlement planets, who won all the elections and was so careful that no "accidental mishaps" could have put him out of the way, defined law as "the scientific doctrine of the possible escapes from a crisis." This stood in complete contradiction to the prevailing administration of justice.



It is this cloud which H. H. Bootsztweck was looking to plunder. A thimble full of this material, weighing several million tons, the smallest nugget,⁹ the waste from this now "dead" giant sun, was enough to make Bootsztweck a billionaire several times over. Director of Investigations Adam A. Komorowski, the brother of the bearer of this gem, brought charges against Bootsztweck in 2048 for astral

crimes. The law of the Mars Administration that punished the extinguishing of a sun with the extinguishing of the perpetrator was still valid. Bootsztweck fled. A penal expedition was dispatched after him.

The penal expedition is purchased along the way. The six flotillas pursuing the fleeing H. H. Bootsztweck's ships never returned to their home ports. During a refueling maneuver in the vicinity of the space port *Kapteyn's Star*, a few of the soldiers were wooed away by agents of the astral criminal Adolf König, Bootsztweck's front man. Adam A. Komorowski was shot by his own people as he tried, ray-beam in hand, to prevent his officers from removing valuable precious metals from the command cockpit of a space hunter.

The supply kings. They sell freight space and supply provisions surplus, canteen articles, ammunition, and entire ships and they buy scrap metal and cheap planets from the army, which they then sell again. Officers who refused to deal were in danger of being shot down in ambushes or they were forced to board spaceships with lethal defects, which the dealers had delivered new.

The ramming business. Boltzmann: At the same time these symptoms of decay began to appear, we developed the particularly successful **ramming technique**. The notion of "ramming" was likely taken from the language of propaganda. In actuality, the protective

⁹ The atoms of this material collapsed to the diameters of their cores.

shield on my space hunter is placed against the protective shield of the giant transport to be shot down—at the time we had decimated the excessive transport capacity of the smaller competing firms that were conducting illegal transports. This generates an intense concentration of heat, which is used like a blowtorch to bore a hole in the hull of the “enemy” ship. Oxygen, materials, and people escape through this hole into space. Most of the enemy crew last a while in their space suits and are then drawn in the direction of the nearest sun—a process that can last thousands of years. In exchange for ransom—they’re still wearing their radio units in their space suits and can contact us—we will save them, assuming they can guarantee their credit. Otherwise we receive two silver dollars a head for every destroyed crew member. The number of dead is calculated from the average freight capacity of the shot-down freighter, with a 20 percent reduction if the freighters are undermanned. With the money, the command buys ships and crews to reinforce the **open hunt**. The entire economy of the space fleet was based on this principle of exploitation until 2060.

Since the per capita profit was calculated abstractly from the average freight capacity and average reductions, but the ransom money for “rescued” (and usually subsequently destroyed) crew members represented a concrete transaction in cash, some commanding officers—in military terms, particularly successful ones—settled their accounts twice. We tried desperately to prevent these double transactions.

A provocative but ultimately pointless deed. The 10th Hunter Flotilla was stationed on the moons of Pluto. The courageous unit was to be dissolved because their original mission¹⁰ had been canceled.¹¹

¹⁰ Von Ungern-Sternberg: The mission of the 10th Hunter Flotilla was to stop the pirating of the osram-platinum=shipments from Pluto to the processing centers on the moons of Jupiter. Now, however, the smaller pirating companies that had been conducting the raids were contractually bound to the mining companies. For a reasonable fee they protected the transport lines—a task for which they were well qualified, given their previous experience as pirates.

¹¹ Boltzmann, supplementary remark: The false impression could arise here that

These men, threatened in their very existence, launched their warships in the direction of the fleet headquarters on the moon Titan before their nonexistence as a unit could become known to the ground and control personnel.

On Titan, the troops of the 10th Hunter Flotilla left their combat boats¹² on the double and arrested the commanding officer and the staff officers of the Arcturus Fleet. They poked out the eyes of the fleet commanders who had signed the orders for their disbandment and deposited finely chopped body parts into the empty sockets. This was photographed at gunpoint from all sides by the press photographers from headquarters and broadcast throughout the fleet over the image transmission channels. They actually achieved this success: there was general agitation against the murdered fleet leadership and the 10th Hunter Flotilla received new work in a border zone of the empire.¹³

troops were only disbanded. The truth is, however, that at the same time new units were created. For example, I received my promotion to major general at this time. My command: the 16th Buccaneer Division. A thoroughly decent bunch. On January 14, 2050, for example, I plunged the command ship into the aura of the sun Epsilon Aurigae. At the time, traverses of suns were not yet common. An F2 giant, diameter of 2×10^9 miles. Temperature 1300° Kelvin. Without hesitation, the remainder of the division followed the command ship on this course, which on the basis of all previous experience was thought to be *impossible*. A *completely false impression arises when one speaks of a “décadence permanente” amongst the troops*. On the contrary, it was actually their heyday.

¹² During the maneuver the boats broadcast at the highest possible volume the 10th Hunter Flotilla’s identification signal, which recalled the “desperate cry of a horse at slaughter.”

Colonel von Vieban: The mutinous troop was not victorious because of any superior weapons capacity, but because they were able in their total program, which comprised acts of violence and the use of the radio, television, and press, to convey to the viewers in the command staffs and in front of their television sets an expression of eccentric brutality born of a hopeless situation.

¹³ Dorfmann, in response to Zwicki’s question, “How could one provide a more graphic description of Boltzmann’s personality?” He made an impression wherever he set foot. Zwicki: You mean, on every planet where he set foot, he made an impression with his personality? But what did this personality consist of? Dorfmann: He created the impression of a character that always remains the

The advantages of amoral values over moral values in commanding elite military units. The settlers on Ben Hur, the third moon of Pluto, were small-statured "shepherds," i.e., they tried with glowing eyes to keep the iron karakuls moving in the direction of the planetary radiation and to "rotate." This technically grueling work was carried out by men and women wearing internally heated overalls made of lengths of osram.¹⁴ The destroyer escorts from the 326th fleet landed on Good Friday, 2052, and drove the "shepherd" families into their underground bunkers and sorted out the women. The rapes may have been no more of an inconvenience to the women than one of their extremely harsh workdays, and had the similar consequence of occasional tissue injuries. The friendly "shepherds" had a certain understanding for the crew's erotic starvation.

The troop's behavior, however, constituted a military crime. Because the soldiers feared being reported, they bombed the scene of their crimes after boarding their war machines. The bombardment caused shredded bodies, ripped-open stomachs and skulls, and irreplaceable human losses for the "shepherd" people on this lonely moon distant from the sun. The severely wounded had no chance of being healed because there were no surgical facilities in the entire Pluto region. On the other hand, the commanding officer of the escort ships, who had physicians and surgical stations at his disposal, refused any treatment because he wanted to be true to principle. The

same. He talked "like a character." Actually, however, the image of his personality changed with his function. He could look like a "general," if you know what I mean by that, but he could also look like a ragged rebel, if he had to convince his troops of his loyalty. What remained the same was his foot fungus. This parasite had become resistant to all medical treatment and it rotted his feet and shoes. Boltzmann's girlfriends never saw him a second time but they kept this foot fungus as a remembrance—and the spaceship crews with whom Boltzmann flew also suffered from this inalterable foot fungus.

¹⁴ Zwicky: These "animals," whose external form had been modeled after terrestrial karakul sheep for purposes of publicity, were in reality machines. Dorfmann: I never quite understood how the people on the third moon of Pluto actually fed themselves.

settlers would only have been unfit witnesses if they had been classified as enemies.

Was an investigation into the conflicting interests of the "shepherds" and the soldiers attempted? Did anyone check as to whether the interest of the "shepherdesses" to be spared could have perhaps been reconciled with the interest of the fleet subdivision to obscure their prior deeds? At the acknowledged level of "custom" in this space sector, compensation was out of the question.

When von Ungern-Sternberg later investigated the affair under the direction of the General Staff, he emphasized: These "additional destructions" could have been avoided at every other level except for the level of moral values. He did not dare, however, to set down in writing his recommendation to lead troops "amorally." On the basis of a similar sentence, von Schwedler, an officer of the General Staff, had recently been entangled in a confrontation with the press.

3. A Cathedral of the Perversion of Justice.

The concentration of all legal matters on a single planet. After the earlier legal reforms, all matters concerning law and trials in the Alphand sector remained together on the second planet, Tauta Eridani. The examining magistrates of the entire sector were concentrated in a district of the city filled with palaces of justice. After the catastrophic end of the reform government, all that remained of the reformist zeal¹⁵ of those first few hours, to which the palace-like, even church-like buildings owe their existence, was the excessive workload of the examining magistrates. Everyone in the sector knew that they could come here to conduct trials. Legal battles piled up here that would otherwise not have taken place since lay people would hardly have been able to find the appropriate court.

The Major Corporations had housed each of their delegations in special palaces here. An entrepreneur by the name of Berlinger had

¹⁵ Zwicky: "One cannot take all rights away from a person and still expect him to work."

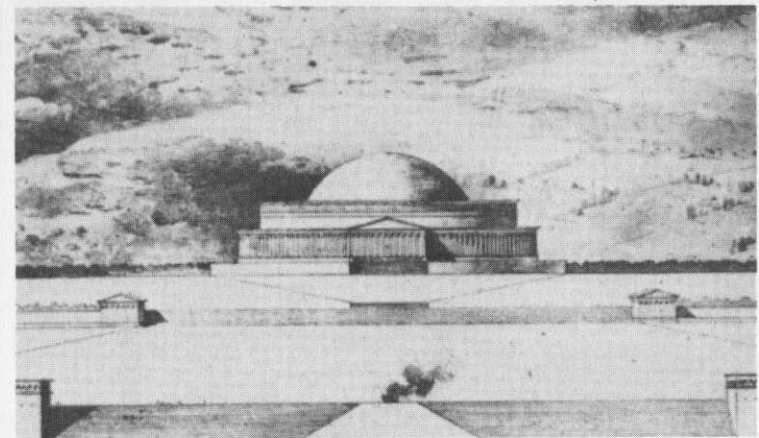
put together a syndicate that encompassed the activities of investigation, legal representation, contract surveillance, and lawmaking. He paid his own judges, who actually possessed no public authority, but who at reduced legal costs simulated trials exactly as they took place in the great Palace of Justice. Numerous plaintiffs welcomed this possibility of cheap, quickly simulated fake trials.

The Major Corporations, which had special legal offices where one could also purchase justice, proceeded from the assumption that all the judges in the palaces of justice were overworked. This basic fact obliterated all of the varied nuances between the legal dogmatists and the reformists, who saw the law as only a scientific guidance for the solution to crises.

In difficult and confusing legal cases, all that could be expected from these highly specialized judges was a defense reaction. For the most part their decisions tended to favor the party whose case was easier to make. In other cases the decisive factor was which judgment could be justified with the least expenditure of effort and money.

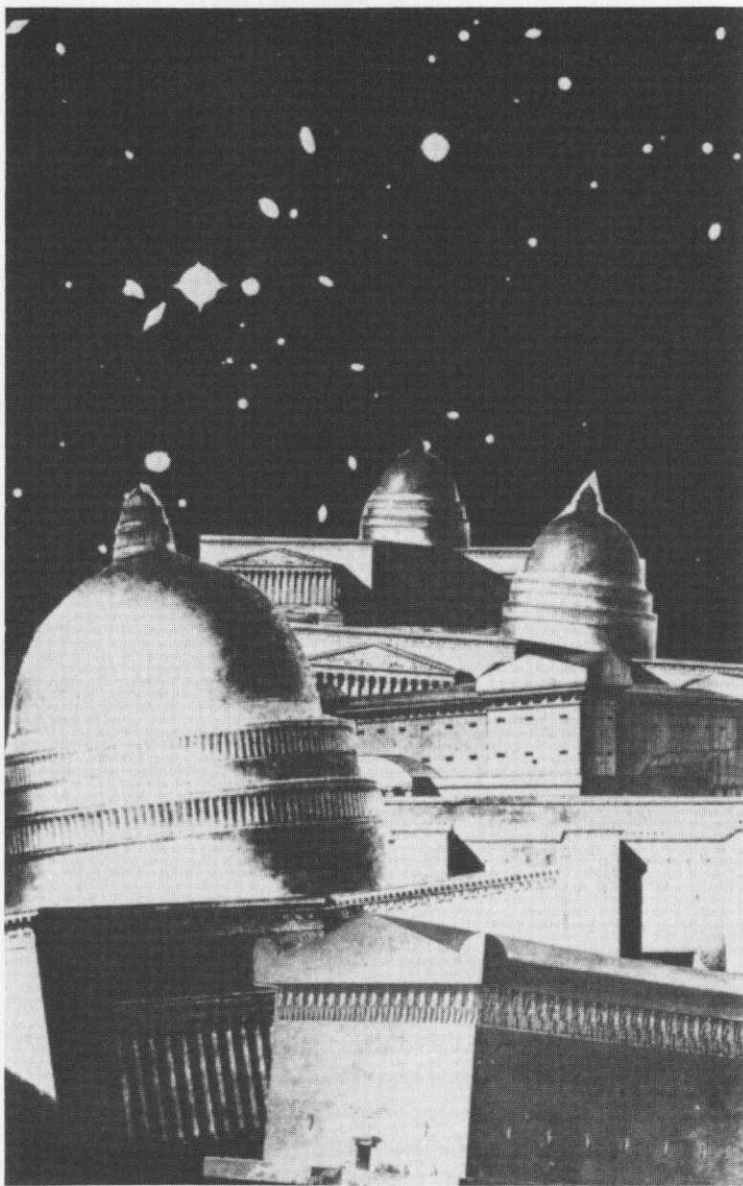
The task of the commercial legal manipulation, as it was conducted by the offices of the Major Corporations, consisted in foisting the more difficult arguments onto the opponent while keeping the comprehensible facts for one's self.

One of the tormented judges cried out softly. Every stimulus to his overtaxed brain, excited from years of monotonous activity, was like a drop of water from a torture device that permits one drop per minute to fall onto the anterior part of his skull. No government, no people enfranchised to vote in the Alphand sector, was entitled to force such a suffering bundle of nerves into retirement after reaching the legal age limit. This was originally intended to guarantee the judges of the justice planets freedom of influence from every external power. For the same reasons, judges were not allowed to quit at their own initiative—such behavior could be motivated by an external attempt at extortion. These ruins of a legal idea that had still been vital only a few years earlier could not be shaken. The Major Corporations were happy with the reformist project in the state in which it had existed since 2031.



Photograph of the overworked, overly sensitive, Chief Justice.
Palace of Justice of the Western Galaxy on the Central Planet of Justice.

The material connection. The Dogcart System, consisting of a yellow-red central sun and three planets, was settled shortly after Ruttler's famous expedition. The "Settlement," with regard to Planet III (Pinzgau), referred to its entry, by the Suez Canal Company, into the Register of Settlements on Dubna and to its "acqui-

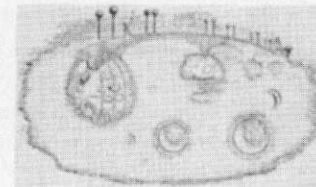


Ten years later: The palaces of justice of the Swan sector in the eastern region of the Central Planet of Justice.

tion" by an agent who departed immediately after this "acquisition." The settlements of Planets I and II on the other hand—rich in metals and with radii of about 6,000 km—succeeded through the Peickert family organization. This group settled Planet II by erecting a steel and glass pavilion on one of the *continents* that rose from the jelly-like mass of oil, hydrogen, and traces of metal which approximated something like the "oceans" on this planet. They had lifelong difficulties defending possession of the planet against the Major Corporations. Their entry in the Register of Settlements did indeed protect them from arbitrary expropriation; but they were bound to provide constant proof of their possession. At intervals, the Corporations initiated court proceedings to have their entry erased by proving they had relinquished possession. If the Peickert collective, which wanted to remain together, were to reside on Planet I then their ownership of Planet II would be in doubt, and vice versa. Were the collective to split into two groups, which none of the members intended to do for any length of time, then the identity of the commune would be in question and hence their agreement with the original legal holder who had acquired the planet, since the members of the commune, who had no knowledge of the law, had each been registered as owners.

The engineer Makavejev, who had joined the collective, found a way out in the form of the so-called Makavejev Pipes, a "rigid" connection between Planets I and II in the form of a pipeline through which materials (water, oil, dry earth) could be pumped from one planet to the other. The aim was not, however, this pumping process, but rather the physical and material connection between both planets, which in legal terms united them into a single, inseparable body.¹⁶ The pipes were manufactured from a synthetic material which could be flexed up to 700 km to the left and the right. The longest of these

¹⁶ Peickert's inspiration—an idea from Granville. Of course this bridge could not be constructed on true planets, given their motion mechanics, since they move in orbits and at no point in time "hold still."



pipes was 7 astronomic units, the shortest 1 AU. On one end, 820 km of pipe had to be dismantled every hour, and, at the other, it had to be extended by the same amount. If the operation were interrupted for more than 72 hours, the pipeline on the planet that was pulling away would exit that planet's gravitational field and swing freely through space. The pipeline on the approaching planet would bore deeply into the planet's surface and cause destruction if it were not successfully launched into free space.

These difficulties were easier to master for the Peickerts than a confrontation with the legal offices of the Major Corporations.

Planet Paddlewater. There had been a change in government on Paddlewater six years before, which received the name "revolution" and from which the years were numbered. In Year 6 of this so-called revolution, a number of warships appeared in the planet's atmosphere below the Kármán Line.¹⁷

These had been sent by the central government of the Herrera I system, which revolved around a green double sun, to observe the "revolutionized" planet. The central government feared conflicts should Paddlewater develop in a manner divergent from the rest of the system.¹⁸

"Right is the sum of all conditions under which the caprice of one can be united with the caprice of another in accordance with a universal law of freedom." In other words, it was a science.¹⁹ The lawyers from the central government, who had been assigned to the warships, had not mastered this science, however. Herr Dietritsch

¹⁷ The upper boundary of the oxygen mantle of a planet. According to interplanetary law, a planet's sovereignty ends at this line. Interplanetary space flights may be conducted above this limit without the authorization of the planet in question. Beneath this line they require authorization.

¹⁸ It was primarily a question of differences in sexual practice, raising of children, and of the abolition of Sundays and holidays.

¹⁹ Dorfmann: Of course that doesn't have the slightest thing to do with jurisprudence. Von Ungern-Sternberg: Wrong. Legal science is the investigation of those *ways out*, which make the unfolding of the caprice of the one *and* the caprice of

Milonka arrived at the embassy of the central government on Paddlewater to bring the heightened dispute to a legal compromise. But the jurists in the parliament on Paddlewater were of the opinion that the **observation** of their planet by warships from the central government represented a clear violation of international law. "We would rather sacrifice the revolution and die in a war than leave this legal question unresolved."

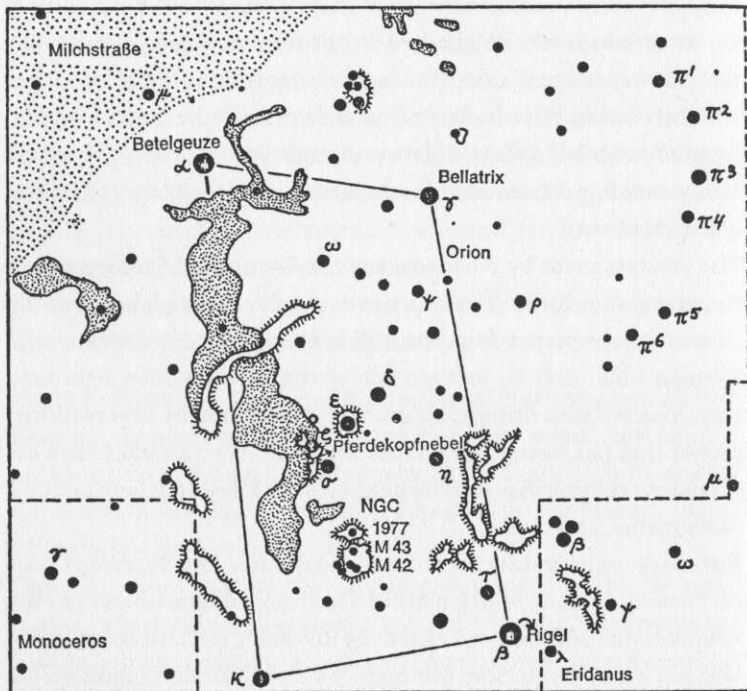
The protests made by the lawyers of the Republic of Paddlewater to the press were futile. That very evening the space glider from the central government, which was still hovering in space just above the Kármán Line, that is, just outside of the planet's sovereign territory, lowered into firing position. It was protected by observational probes that had been lowered into the planet's atmosphere and observed everything that was happening on Paddlewater, be it actions, movements, or words.

Instead of investigating ways out of the muddle, the Supreme Court on Planet II Eridani, which had been summoned immediately by the residents on Paddlewater, offered the following reflections: indeed it was not a real revolution, but merely a divergent development. On the other hand it could not be concluded beyond the shadow of a doubt that it was not the beginnings of a real revolutionization. The central government, however, has a monopoly on revolutionization. Hence it shall be the decision of the central government whether or not observational measures should be taken.

The central government had the planet encircled by fleet strike forces and conducted warning explosions in the vicinity of the settled areas on the planet. The militias on Paddlewater opened fire on the warships from the central government. A significant portion of the population died in the fighting.

another possible according to a universal law of freedom. Zwicky: It follows then that the object of jurisprudence on Paddlewater is the change of societal relations. Dorfmann: And why not? It's being done scientifically.

Zwicky: Now compare that with the sensitivity of the jurists barracked on the Planet of Justice.



Industrialized zone

Afterward, a scientific investigation was conducted: it would have been possible to exclude Paddlewater from the Herrera system. All that would have been necessary was a reversal of Paddlewater's magnetic poles. This would have cut off the transportation connections to the system. But at this point in time, the will to an independent development on Paddlewater had already expired. Paddlewater was fixated on its opposition to the central government's legal position. A whole generation of jurists and officers occupied itself with the "revenge for the lost revolution."

**The main thing is to learn to think crudely.
A thought must be crude,
if in action it is to come into its own.**

CHAPTER 4 "LA FUITE DU TEMPS" (TIME WITHDRAWAL)

"Spanish eyes"

Canteen of the space port of a provincial planet,
Arcturus Sector, August 2060.

Her frizzy hair is combed away from the right half of the forehead. Signs of balding may appear here later. She looks around nervously. A cola ordered and received. She clicks her teeth, inspects her fingers. She squints, nervously, because she's shortsighted. The bar is full of mystery. Mysterious why no one is paying attention to her. She removes the last remnants of food from between her teeth. She sits there, upright, a white button-through jacket, made of lace. In the meantime someone has noticed that she sees nothing. A few of the people sitting there assume: we could take advantage of this weakness. But the time is not yet ripe. The people sitting there don't know what benefits she might yield for them.

Brooks and the tabloid press. When the astronaut Brooks landed on a space port after a twelve-month transport in the relatively starless Eastend Sector, he didn't want to eat, to sleep, or to wash, or the warmth of a human body, but rather **news, news, news:**

"The exploitation of Lucifer Junior, an intelligent planet, i.e., a lump of protoplasm the size of a planet that was found floating in space, is progressing. Against the protests of the Interstellar Office, astral criminals have gotten this enormous creature drunk. They want to train him to love humans so that he might be exploited."

"Red Shunkle died while suctioning off a titanium-rich solar corona when the overloaded suction pipe exploded. The pipe was overloaded because the firm 'could not fill the canal.'"

"H. H. Boots zweck, who 'had his hands in too many pies,' has been banished for ten years to the penal planet Dubna, from where he has escaped."

The encounters among people are too brief, one cannot call them "life."

Space port canteen in the vicinity of a metropolis, Arcturus Sector, October 2060, night

Both of the spaceship commanding officers and the girls they had picked up (they met because they all spoke French) drank a few beers and tried to make contact by reading each other's fortunes in the palms of their hands. Later, Mr. Brooks, one of the commanding officers, tickled or stroked his girl's open hand, which she extended to him under the table. She contorted her face when he looked at her for any length of time—it is impossible to tell whether or not the two of them, excited, looked "kind," there were different expressions in their faces. Impulsively she closed her hand over his tickling finger and held it in her lap and leaned back. While words were being exchanged between the couples above the table, she stroked Brooks's forearm with sweeping, caressing motions where his veins stood out; with long strokes she caressed his skin "thoroughly" and "diligently" until he took her hand and put it to his mouth and cheek, whereupon she took his hands and put them to her mouth and nibbled on his fingers. The 24 months in the narrow space capsule, laid out flat as if in traction, were forgotten. Brooks's accumulated aggression manifested itself in the watchful gaze with which the excited man observed his object, his kindly girl, a gaze that remained "empty," appraising, with a cold precision that could have had grounds other than the pent-up aggressivity of the past months of labor. It might also have had something to do with the excitement itself. They then went home quickly, i.e., to their assigned quarters.

There is always too little time in the space ports. At seven the next morning Brooks had to board his ship and warm it up for two hours if he wanted to join the big convoy of ferries launching at nine. The girl at this hour was still snuggling in the rented twin hotel beds. She was "savoring" it. Brooks radioed to Jonasson, his comrade from the evening before, who was sitting, freezing, in the tiny nose cone of an enormous transport rocket two kilometers away. "It's still cold here." "It's warming up slowly, though." Brooks: "We probably won't see each other again." "Ciao," answered Jonasson. "I'm flying to the Chernovitz system." "Have a good trip!" "Have a good trip!"

Brooks had been lying in his stinking space capsule for eight months now: bacteria, lint, dried mucous, minute particles of skin, tobacco smoke; with a pocket of gas in his intestinal tract, the frustrated, underpaid astronaut lay there in his enormous freight rocket, while on the numerous planets in the galaxy mounds of commodities piled up in the freight platforms owned by the big syndicates. The more obvious it became that these hoards didn't produce any real pleasures, the greater was the wrath of the troops on the front and the rage of the engineers and pilots.

The combat readiness of the Major Corporations in the year 2066 (troop strengths)

1. Industrial SS and remote SS (7,200,000 men)
2. Legal protection (8,200 experts)
3. Juridical division (220,000 men)
4. Censorship and auditing (70,000 men)
5. Market protection and control (7,300,000 men)
6. Market Stimulation Act and Act for the Guarantee of Freedom (32 men with voting privilege; 27,000,000 men without voting privilege)
7. "Market stewards" (1,200,000 men)
8. Private sector police and judicial units, legal defense (60,000 men)
9. Regulation of the past (3,200,000 men)

The 86th Spaceglider fleet—"The History Killers." The chief administrator of the Suez Canal Company, quick-switcher H. Dirksen Jr., who occupied this position for four years—longer than any of his predecessors—and who was therefore able to draw on more experience than any other administrator, worked from the following premise: if the extinct industrial zones (understood as an "enormous collection" of astral crimes and war crimes, broken-up raw materials, and remnant organisms that now lie behind us) managed to break out of these zones and force their way into the present, they would destroy the entire system of production as it is currently organized. **We must hermetically seal off these zones of the past.** We have to make a break with our history, even if it may hurt a good many people.

A few days later, H. Dirksen Jr. was toppled by the other managers "because he knew too much." But the 86th Spaceglider Fleet was already on the way. It consisted of "volunteers." The soldiers were quartered in space ships that glided forward with a certain initial velocity but whose pilots could neither turn them nor reverse their course in the direction of civilization. The fleet, whose soldiers wore badges of honor on their forearms that read "History Killers," sealed off every planet that had been abandoned by industry before 2052. The ruins of the former Starway were riddled with countless traps—old planets inhabited by diseases, specialized forms of combat residents adapted to the particular conditions of the former industrial planets—and proved to be extremely dangerous for the "volunteers" of the 86th Fleet. None of these guardians of the past landed on any individual planet; from orbit they destroyed those sites where thermal radiation indicated the presence of life. The basis for such a *modus operandi* was a complete indifference to the valuable raw materials that would be destroyed in the operation. In order to prevent the application of this particular method of superexploitation to the industrial zones in the present, the 116th Fleet was equipped to protect the productive present against a possible return of the 86th Fleet, by means of a powerful but rigid blockade.

Sudden increase in resistance activity, successes for the rebels.

Question: How is it, Chief Admiral, Sir, that you are unable to terminate the constant acts of resistance?

Admiral: I have to go back a long way. This time we haven't been able to contain the mutinous workforces—I say *mutinous* because they have violated the stipulations for labor discipline as established under martial law—on those planets where their workplaces are located. These planets have been industrialized in such a manner that a single product, for example spaceships, can be produced only by several planets working in concert.

Question: We already know all that.

Admiral: Just listen a moment. The insurgents were able to establish ferry contact between the individual planets. Thus they were able to produce tanks and space vehicles as they pleased.

Question: Because you needed three months to get the few spaceships you have in the Altair Sector running!

Admiral: The local commander did not locate the correct planets at first. This sector is practically littered with the ruins of planets. As I said, the insurgents did not stay put. Instead, they obviously received the order to leave the sector in the smallest possible spaceships and penetrate into the actual industrial zones.

Question: Precisely what should never have been allowed to happen.

Admiral: How would you like to find these puny little ships with our locating devices, which are designed for larger ships? The enemy was now in the "lethal zone of proximity."

Question: What does that technical term mean?

Admiral: In this zone the enemy is no longer recognizable as such, but is active as servants, pilots, and even guards. There is even a certain percentage of recruits in our military academies who are enjoying a free education before seeking out an insurgent area and taking up activities there.

Question: And why don't you shoot them?

Admiral: We can't very well destroy an entire new generation of military personnel. They can't pinpoint the authentic ones.

The questioner, a member of one of the richest families in the Republic of Antares, owned newspapers in which the chief admiral was severely attacked in a series of interviews that led to his dismissal.

1. Meaning Withdrawal

As long as it puts up a united front, the resistance becomes independent. On the six industrial planets of Capella, all of the fleet officers were shot to death. The factory security units cut off the insurgence's connections with the outside world. After the bombardments, the inhabitants of Capella were so disturbed that for generations they were unable to comprehend the meaning of a labor contract.

The industrial security fleet was unable to approach another center of mutiny on two planets around 61 Cygni. The assault ground to a halt under the fire from the rebels. Since no orders came through from Central, the units limited their actions to sealing off the planets. The residents of the two planets sat on their heavenly bodies and waited.

On the planets around the giant sun Deneb, the fleet forces joined the uprising. In a united mass they attacked the surrounding *space sector* of Deneb where the local intervention forces were gathering. These forces were destroyed. The defense echelons from the Central Government did not attack the insurgent units from the fleet. In countless advances and retreats over a distance of forty parsecs, for more than thirty years they tied up the insurgent forces, who named themselves the "unbelievers" because they believed no promises. After this point in time it was impossible for most of the rebels to return to the factories on Deneb. The difference between the units from the resistance and the units from the remote SS became smaller and smaller. Together the armies traversed the remnant galaxy, plundering as they went, for this was now their means of nourishment.

Colonel Hinke. The girl who had helped the aging industrial security colonel find his youth for a third time was only interested in

his plans for deploying his troops. Hinke had no idea what else to do but put a bullet through the girl's head as she sat there stubbornly under interrogation. He condemned himself at the same time, since he could not and did not want to live any longer without the girl.

The surgeon who was feeling about for the bullet in Hinke's wounded head had to allow members of the Industrial Security Command to send a probe into the dying brain in order to save valuable information that only Hinke possessed. The prescriptions



Colonel Hinke †

for the maintenance of secrecy in these elite units were extremely strict, since none of the staff officers could be trusted. Consequently, the command staffs suffered from an almost complete lack of information concerning the most important plans unless an accident such as Hinke's suicide permitted them to tap secret information from one of the commanders.

The tempo of learning processes and of the life cycle—a conversation with the chief of the security unit for the Suez Canal Company in the year 2068. The chief of the security unit was arrested for taking part in executions of prisoners. The investigation was to be dragged out until there was a change in power that would grant Dr. Meier, the chief of the security unit, his freedom once again. Since the facts of the case under investigation were so undeveloped, the participants in the interrogation had time. The space fleet disputed the fundamental right of Meier's industrial security units to pursue sovereign actions; this led to enmity. This was also the reason the fleet had, as a deterrent, arrested Dr. Meier. At the same time, however, the interrogating fleet officer felt himself to be a colleague. Space officer: You say that the executions of prisoners that you carried out are actually meaningless, that these measures are not the

basis of your counterinsurgency operations?

Dr. Meier: Exactly. The Remote SS could not combat a unified uprising directly.

Space officer: Why isn't there any unified resistance?

Dr. Meier: Because of the rapid pace of development.

Space officer: What's happening here so quickly?

Dr. Meier: You have to measure the speed of development against the human life cycle, which is, after all, our raw material in the production of security. Human infants—even on planets with gravitational fields, on the solar platforms revolving around the giant suns of Antares, Arcturus, and Aldebaran, but also, if you think of it, on the desert planets, whose arid storms and lack of oxygen are not suited for human lungs—have to incubate for nine months in small boxes in a warm and moist environment like that of the former Earth. In contrast, the organization of time for the rest of this life conforms to the norms of our industrial production.

Space officer: What do you mean when you say that infants must wait nine months in their warm, moist containers—which is, in actuality, rather slow when measured against the movement of the fleet?

Dr. Meier: You see, this slow pace of development is repeated in the transformation of cerebral and bodily characteristics when they're adapted to our new work methods. Even with the newest methods of industrial medicine, you cannot replace the human pelvis with a turnstile and simply send a man back to work; the wound must heal. The habituation to these new features requires the passage of time. There are processes of specialization at work here that produce new productive capacities in people and at the same time generate a deep unhappiness about the change in their original condition.

Space officer: This change is not felt as desire?

Dr. Meier: No. And the psychologists say that this newly won productive power, begotten on the path of agony, slowly learns to turn against us. We slow down these learning processes on the one hand by concealing what we're doing and on the other hand by beheading the ringleaders.

Space officer: And in so doing exceed the bounds of your authority, since this is the responsibility of the space fleet.

Dr. Meier: The guys with the remote control artillery can't shoot off individual heads. We always return to the fact that you do indeed have jurisdiction but do not have the means. Now these people are learning to deploy their new and highly specialized capabilities against us. At the moment, however, the interest of the industries has moved on to other planets rich in raw materials. When the people's resistance is organized, then the sites of production are no longer the center; they are already a *no man's land*. That means that people are in fact still there, but the means of production are gone. We will abandon these areas.

Space officer: And we could bombard them.

Dr. Meier: Previously the exploitation of a planet required four to six years. It now takes two years. We only extract certain easily accessible raw materials and then move on. In contrast, the learning and specialization processes last at least three years.

Space officer: So you only ever half-train your laborers.

Dr. Meier: Precisely.

Space officer: What, then, is the value of half-trained workers on planets that have been deindustrialized?

Dr. Meier: At the moment, nothing. That is why the resistance, which we unwillingly had a hand in producing, is now transforming itself into a paper sword.

Space officer: Now, please, do not belittle the achievements of a fleet confronted with an enemy who often sets treacherous traps.

Dr. Meier: Right. I forgot that in a certain respect people still do have a certain value.

Space officer: And to what extent, if we nonetheless conduct sustained bombings against them?

Dr. Meier: It's an illusion to think that you actually destroy them with bombs. There are always a number of these guys left over, precisely because they have a certain experience with productivity and use it, for example, in the construction of bunkers. They scratch their way deep into the mining planets. Then a double learning

process emerges, but in the opposite direction from the one used in the two years of the phase of productivity: through bombardment we show them that they no longer have any productive significance. They get "sobered up." A few of them who are once again ready to engage in learning processes come to the industrial zones as refugees. But there aren't many.

Space officer: Customs law forbids the importation of these surplus workers!

Dr. Meier: But you know it's happening. I'm not betraying any secret that it is precisely our company that funds transport enterprises to bring refugees through the restricted zones of the 86th Fleet to the industrial planets.

Space officer: Can I put that on the record?

Dr. Meier: Please don't. I would dispute it in the hearing.

Space officer: And you believe that even with our tanks we would not be in a position to suppress a widespread resistance movement by these people during the two-year or shorter productive phase?

Dr. Meier: Your tanks are useless as long as they are not permitted to smash the industrial plants. You wouldn't even get close to the people. For that matter, as long as they are in possession of the plants, they would be able to construct their own tanks. The only chance lies in the temporal advantage of our companies, who jump from one raw materials planet to another more quickly than the learning processes necessary for resistance are able to run their course. That is, these learning processes still obey the sluggish cycle of human biology; they are too substantial to achieve the velocities toward which our organizations tirelessly strive.

Space officer: And the fleet is even faster.

2. "Violence you get used to."

Little Mecki. The child was supposed to be named "Little Mecki." After it was born, the child of pharmacy employee Alf Arnoldt was laid in an incubator in the Epsakon-Wurst Women's and Children's Clinic. The incubator had a defective contact. During the night a

young, attentive nurse informed the midwife Lohmann that the newborn in the incubator appeared pale and its eyes were excessively wide open. The experienced midwife removed the child and gave it a smack on the bum. Since she was able to ascertain a normal scream reaction she lay the child back in bed. The heat from the heatlamps increased to 70° centigrade during the night and caused third-degree burns from the head to the thighs; a deformation of the spinal column resulting from the infant's attempts to escape the heat still hinders the child's growth today. Thus Little Mecki does not even come into being as a creature capable of revenge.

"And when the workers of Wurst finally stand, exhausted, in the early morning light of freedom . . ." They stood in cellars in the dark a short time until every tenth one was shot dead with machine guns. They could not have seen the light of dawn, only the fire from the barrels of the guns. Incidentally, not every tenth man was individually sought out, but rather from a statistical standpoint they fired into the darkness so that every tenth one may well have been shot, but it could have been more or less. The men and officers who carried out the executions—very much against their "inner will"—were fitted with masks in addition to the protection provided by the darkness in the cellars. It was to render anonymous the tiresome and at the same time overdiscussed issue of "guilt." The wardenship, whose Remote SS squad carried out the measure in accordance with orders, later described it as "having gotten out of hand," as if the men had shot into the dark out of fear.

The chief detective from Odeon and the start of the massacre. "He had been standing underwater for days." The infection migrated from the region of the nose and throat into the lungs, from where it reinfected the nose and throat region. The criminologist attributed his sickness, and his inability to heal it, to the visit from his girlfriend at the time, Karla, whose fat little body was not exactly what he was after and who was disturbing his daily work, but whom he also had no desire to *give away*. He had now sweat through all of his

shirts and pajamas and did not wish to stay in his apartment any longer during the holidays (the quarterly holidays on Odeon had all been combined for instrumental reasons so that six holidays had to be dispatched one after the other). Had he gone out, however, into the harsh mountain winds that poured down on Odeon from the Middle Range, he would have contracted an inflammation of the lungs. So he waited longingly for the next work day when his position would once again provide him with the orientation he needed, if only because it required him to dress properly.

When the emergency messages came through a few hours after the start of his shift, he was in the railroad yard in the capital city, struggling across the train platforms. He wanted to get hold of a bottle of beer, have it warmed up, and then lie in bed and sweat it out. The announcements were made over all of the station's loudspeakers, as well as on the radio. He turned around and stole through the main hall looking for a vehicle to commandeer in order to reach

Volcanic landscape on the planet Humboldt in the Vega system. Before the destruction of the planet.



his office, and more importantly a telephone, as quickly as possible. In this state he was hit by the shots, since the opposing side of course knew exactly where he was to be found. With this murder of Chief Detective Reinhardt, the slaughter began that was to deliver Odeon into the hands of criminal forces.

The highly active, blue-white sun Vega—12³ solar masses—still provides its 62nd planet, **Humboldt**, with warmth and a veil of ultraviolet radiation that does wonders for one's skin. The planet Humboldt was destroyed a few days after this photo was made. Now the planet was "pure raw material" and once again available to processes of economic exploitation. The hyperradio station, the voice of the unfortunate people of Humboldt, broadcast the following sentence for months after the death of the planet's residents:

Humboldt will never forgive
You bloody laymen.¹

3. Time Withdrawal

Time is working against the experts. In numerous previously industrialized centers, wherever the supply system was still in operation, there were still first-rate elite forces sitting around living in fear of the end that was now being universally forecast. They had the feeling they were working against time. The space surgeon Dörrschlag, famous for his cesarean sections, removed children from the uteruses of managers' wives in the first month of pregnancy because he could not predict with any certainty whether or not his surgical center would still be in working order eight months later. The surgeon possessed eight fingers on each hand. Friese I, the radio reporter, had gathered up-to-date information for the next three years in case the communications systems should collapse.

¹ Zwicky: To whom did this "you" refer? Dorfmann: They didn't know their enemy in the slightest.

Conversation with the star prospector A. Weiland

Question: Through the instruments here at your institute you can see a radius of 300 parsecs.

Weiland: "See" is well said. I see instruments that give readings, that is, with my eyes I see absolutely nothing, since, as you can see, I don't have any windows anywhere. I can, however, draw conclusions from the meters on the instruments that enable me to "observe" planets and even smaller celestial bodies within a radius of 300 parsecs. Under certain conditions, I can distinguish objects the size of a barn on the most distant celestial bodies.

Question: And what do you do with these observations?

Weiland: I forward them to those responsible for raising the extensive funds necessary for running the institute.

Question: And what do they do with this information?

Weiland: They store it. There is too much to be able to use it.

Question: And now they want to close this valuable institute?

Weiland: Yes, money has to be saved.

Question: What is the reason?

Weiland: Tensions have arisen between the contractors who raise the funds and the management of the institute.

Question: Who is the management?

Weiland: I am.

Question: What exactly are these tensions?

Weiland: The contractors' representatives allegedly cannot use the information gathered by the institute—for example, the data on the composition of the raw materials on planets in the presumed direction of the development of industry—I am thinking above all of the neighboring galaxies Steffens Quintett, Andromeda, and so on—because there is too much of it. They can't comprehend it. We, on the other hand—and here I am speaking for all of the researchers at the institute—cannot deliver any less information than we collect from the instruments to the best of our knowledge and belief.

Question: And a compromise is not possible?

Weiland: Out of the question. We would be giving up.

Question: But if the institute is closed you have to give up anyway.

Weiland: We will establish new institutes.

Question: Good evening.

Weiland: Good evening.

The scientist was wrong. After the closing of the institute, its members were placed under guard on a lonely planet because they possessed information about deposits of raw materials in the galaxies. Under no circumstances was this information to be made available to the competition.

One day industry has disappeared. A group of customs officials who had been conducting searches in the middle of an industrial system found themselves a few days later in no-man's-land. But they hadn't moved an inch. Instead, reality had vanished from them overnight. Shortly thereafter they hitched a ride with a group of forty people flying by in small space vehicles in the direction in which industry had allegedly disappeared. They were questioned in a hastily erected barrack.

Customs official: You claim to be forty high-level managers who, a short while ago, had direct visual contact with the factories and international markets from your administrative towers. How do you explain that you are sitting here in such a ragged state?

Spokesperson for the managers: We set off in a hurry and we aren't used to operating these spaceships.

Customs official: That's implausible.

Spokesperson for the managers: We missed the connection to our plants, which had been relocated in a hurry, since we are indeed high-level managers, but during the reorganization phase we are still subject to directives from our superiors.

Customs official: Could you please substantiate your claims in greater detail?

Spokesperson for the managers: Only a while ago, the turnaround for exploiting individual raw material planets was shortened from six months to two. In the end the prospectors, engineers, and manage-

ment directors just flew past the planets and produced, as well as exploited, the natural resources *in pure thought*. What drives us is the competition from the other companies, who are also doing fly-bys on the planets. This form of exploitation brings in higher profits than actual mining. Let me put it this way: the market value of a raw material planet that has merely been glanced at by representatives from the Suez Canal Company skyrockets to such a degree that it becomes too expensive even for a capital-strong firm like the Suez Canal Company to acquire.

Customs official: Some things that we have been experiencing lately are now becoming clear for me and my colleagues. We understood them as a drop in customs activity, which threatens our permanent employment. If I understand you correctly, you missed your connection and are now in search of your factories?

Spokesperson for the managers: For which we are, after all, responsible. We've lost them, and with the limited thrust of our vehicles we'll never catch them again.

Customs official: Do these industrial plants even exist any longer?

Spokesperson for the managers: We don't know.

Customs official: Do you at least know if, during such a quick departure, the necessary customs formalities could have been overlooked?

Spokesperson for the managers: That also doesn't matter any longer.

Customs official: That's where you're very much mistaken.

Star counter Eduard Körner makes an important connection but cannot tell anyone about it and is eventually destroyed. On the moon Sagittarius, star counter Eduard Körner sat at highly sensitive telescopes. During his daily two-hour "look" he froze horribly, but the lenses on the telescopes had to be kept cold to keep them from fogging up. For days, the machines in the interior of the moon station had been emitting unusual noises. **Full of curiosity, he aimed his refractors at the zones of the past. This form of observation was strictly forbidden.** For a few days Körner had been using the telescopes to scan the ruins of the former planet Earth. He ascertained forests, hills, and developed areas: beneath a partly cloudy, partly

reflective intermediate layer that hindered the view through to the immediate surface of the Earth. There were also yellow areas partially hidden behind layers of cloud or buildings.² Eduard Körner broadcast a number of Euclid's mathematical formulas and theorems over directional radio in the direction of the Chinese, who picked up these reports. Since they were obviously not *calls for help*—they knew the theorems—they paid no further attention to the communication. Körner attempted to report his discovery to the Central Planet, which he suspected was still in the Wurst system. A few days later a **band of robbers**, who had located Körner's signal, landed, took over the radio, and blew up the telescope portals. They killed Körner to prevent him from testifying against them.

Reporters in the Mars region, rearguard of humanity, have a surprising encounter. Progress in the Dubna – Wurst – Dawn systems is marked by the watering down of the news. Nothing exists here that does not have to do with the fleet leadership or the big joint-stock companies. Their affairs are not news, however, they are *secret*. This politics of extreme secrecy forces a group of reporters further and further backward—in historical terms—into the Mars region.

² Körner had no explanation for this observation. He could not know that these were terraces, gardens, canals, and tracts of land that had been rebuilt by the Chinese comrades after the catastrophe of 2011. During the reconstruction of these areas "as it once was," even the Gobi Desert, amongst other things, was rebuilt. Nevertheless, the Chinese avoided all schematism in these efforts. They shifted the desert approximately 600 km to the north and made it smaller. There were tunnels built under most regions where mushrooms were raised and workshops set up. Above the desert surface there were terraces, linked to irrigation systems, used as parks and parade grounds and well-suited for raising strawberries. Colored strips were set into the empty regions of the desert; these formed letters 4–6 km wide that spelled out a message for the universe. The message read:

When we say imperialism is bestial,
we mean that its essence cannot change,
that the imperialists, to their very death,
will not put down their butcher knives,
will never be able to transform themselves into Buddhas.

Körner was unable to decipher this message, since he spoke no Chinese.

News still exists here. In the year 2102, however, the radio connection to the Central Planet in Wurst is broken off. The reporters are sitting in their quarters—out of work. One evening, 5 spaceboats landed in their vicinity, manned by Chinese who were celebrating May Day 2102 with the inauguration of space travel.

Commanding officer of the Chinese spaceship (immediately after landing): "We cannot let down our guard against the raging, revanchist machinations of the imperialists and their lackeys simply because we have won. Whoever lets down his guard disarms himself politically and ends up in a passive position."

Reporter Mutius: Now that's interesting. But I've noticed that your comrades have neither gathered any stones, nor have they raised a flag. That's what's usually done on first landings.

Chinese comrade: "The stone they have raised falls on their own feet." We have not come here to gather stones but to work together with your people—but by no means with the imperialists—while preserving your independence.

Reporter Friese II: People is the right word. We hardly have any connection to headquarters anymore. If you can use us, and we're really only a small people of reporters, then we're more than ready to work together with you. That you have arrived here in your slow manner is interesting news in itself.

Reporter Müller (looking at the Chinese spaceboats): And you made it here with these lemons? You wouldn't get even 8,000 dollars for them on the central planet Wurst.

Commanding officer: You make too much out of the exterior packaging. It is true, we are still an underdeveloped land. "Even technically we are no superpower chauvinists." You should, however, take a closer look at the engines.

Reporter Müller: They're quite clearly buckets with wheels and exhaust. If I might speak for my readers here, you couldn't get rid of them for even 6,000 dollars.

Commanding officer: We don't intend to sell them, but to fly with them.

Müller: I'm responsible for the "technology" page of my now-defunct paper—I used to be an engineer. I can show you a couple of real spaceboats (shows pictures of the newest ship models).

Commanding officer (after considering the pictures): The difference between your version and ours is that your first-class pictures here do not fly and our less attractive boats, on the other hand, do.

Müller: But before, when they were still being built, the ships you see here would have beat yours.

Commanding officer: That may be. We're in no hurry.

The Chinese plans according to the reporter Friese II's account: "To the question, Where will your trip take you? the Chinese who had landed here answered that sooner or later they would turn off the Starway to the west in the general direction of the constellation of Cygnus. 'We're searching for people, not raw materials,' they answered in response to my inquiry as to the purpose of the expedition. It is possible that this is some sort of linguistic convention which conceals an ancient oriental ruse; but it's also possible they meant it seriously. In any case, their ships are not well suited for transporting larger quantities of raw materials. Common sense would suggest that they would not attempt such great distances if they didn't intend to make a big haul. But these Chinese have other opinions that puzzle the observer. More about that in my next broadcast on Thursday, same time, same channel."³

³ Zwicky, Dorfman, von Ungern-Sternberg, Boltzmann, 4 parsecs to the north of the planet Wurst, received Friese II's radio broadcast. They were especially interested in a toast the Chinese comrades had made, which Friese had repeated in Chinese (and obviously not understood): "With his staff the golden monkey gave a magic thrust, the sacred heavens of jade were once again free of dust."

Dorfmann (he understood Chinese): One could also translate it as "Golden monkey, leap up to a thousand honest thrashings, to cleanse the heavens of jade of the filth-of-ten-thousand-miles." Zwicky: And what do you hope to gain with this linguistically much more awkward choice of words? Dorfmann: Filth is "matter in the wrong place." With their patient methods they want to put the matter back in its proper place!

Reporter Friese II carried out these weekly broadcasts simply because the equipment still functioned. He no longer had a real contract, and he was also not being paid.

As passengers on the Chinese ships, the Mars reporters ventured out in the direction of the devastated Starway; in spring they reached Pluto.

"The thought of suicide is a great source of comfort: with it a calm passage is to be made across many an evil night." The massacre on the planet Wurst, August 2103. Six hours later, the moon Ust-Urt, 4 parsecs to the north, where the experts had their offices, was in a state of civil war. Zwicki and Dorfmann, the 180-year-old founding father who had been "rejuvenated" several times, von Ungern-Sternberg and, next to him, Boltzmann. But it hadn't been Boltzmann in the old sense for quite a while now. His lower legs, shoulders, head, and thorax had been replaced twice; large areas of his skin had been renewed—you could just as well say this was Boltzmann's great-grandson. The four friends in a despairing mood. "No, a manhood that artful and that full of historically conditioned egoism yields to an old age of repulsive greed that hangs onto life without dignity, and then the final act

**That ends this strange eventful history,
Is second childishness and mere oblivion
Sans eyes, sans teeth, sans taste, sans everything."**

Dorfmann: It's a mystery to me where they're going to find any workers after this bloodbath.

Von Ungern-Sternberg: This time they've gone too far.

Boltzmann (hesitant): As long as there are still four of us, two of us could make the other two into workers.

Von Ungern-Sternberg: Stop, Boltzmann! We don't want to rush into anything that would unleash the **war of all against all, even among ourselves**. We've known each other for a good 160 years.

They sat in the cellar hideout, in a gloomy mood, singing: "The earth is mightily beautiful, but safe it is not!"

A steel roof covering this old oil-tank protected them from the

bombardment. After a period of time, which one could call a "night" according to the old terrestrial standards, the friends were doing better. "Every suicide is an unsuccessful attempt at suicide." After hours of failed attempts—each man thought to himself—to find a way out at the expense of the others—under actual circumstances this would have been *suicide*—they looked hopeful once again. They found four spaceships on an abandoned launchpad.

The avant-garde in the Dawn Sector. They flew flat out, as far as their fuel took them. They had only one thought: to get as far from the crisis as possible, to distance themselves from "human beings" as if they had been shot out of a cannon. Caught in the orbit of a red gas ball, which they named "Franz Zwicki," they congratulated themselves on their push of over 40 parsecs into a region of blue and red giant suns.

Dorfmann: "Faster than the crisis can follow!"

The engines were trashed. They built a solar platform from the remains of their spaceships. However far one looked around on this island, one saw old iron constructions, parts of old spaceships. The green giant cast its light on the plastic cupola beneath which the four friends were sitting. In the interior of the iron construction there were bunks, sleeping areas, writing cubicles, and supplies.

It was impossible to travel any further. They also couldn't find as much raw material anywhere else as they "possessed" here within a radius of a few parsecs.

Behind them lie the bombed-out zones of the Dubna and Wurst sectors and the region of the Dawn Sector that they have just traversed. What ship could ever take them back? Objectively, the situation is *hopeless*, but for professional hopefuls like Zwicki, Boltzmann, von Ungern-Sternberg, and Dorfmann, it is not. They find forested continents on the sixth planet of "their" giant sun. With chemical weapons from one of their rescue boats they "carve" the image of

the “Hymn of the Dawn Sector” into the forests. Boltzmann and Zwicki’s blasted-out forest clearings were between six and eight kilometers wide. This sign of intelligent life would stand out to any intelligent beings flying by and entice them into landing.⁴

The owners called the forested planet “Dorfmann” and its moon “von Ungern-Sternberg.” The avant-gardists’ solar platform is fitted with a synthetic cupola flooded with oxygen. If Zwicki looks out, half of the red giant Zwicki rises on the horizon above the old iron remains. If he turns around he can see the planet Dorfmann in the north. If he uses his telescope he can read “The Dawn,” a sign of intelligent life that delights him:



4 Perhaps in this manner they could attract workers, who as “partners” would allow themselves to be milked dry. In such a case Dorfmann, von Ungern-Sternberg, Zwicki, and Boltzmann would once more go into action. Otherwise they will keep working as historiographers.

AFTERWORD

Alexander Kluge has described the writing of *Learning Processes with a Deadly Outcome* as the performance of reparations in literature (*literarische Wiedergutmachung*) for the series of science fiction films he made at the end of the sixties and beginning of the seventies. These reparations were necessary since the films—*Der grosse Verhau* (*The Big Mess*, 1969–70), *Willi Tobler und der Untergang der sechsten Flotte* (*Willi Tobler and the Demise of the Sixth Fleet*, 1971)—were faulty both technically and formally, as well as being critical and commercial failures, and in no way lived up to the enormous potential the science fiction form held. For Kluge, this potential had nothing to do with the form’s marketability or entertainment value (his model was never Kubrick but Méliès), but rather with the critical perspective it offered on contemporary reality. As the reader of *Learning Processes with a Deadly Outcome* quickly notices, Kluge’s science fiction is not a serious attempt to represent a future technodystopia or utopia, as the now rather quaint imaginings of future technology in the book make clear. Instead, *Learning Processes* comprises more a commentary on and critique of contemporary reality, as it projects the social relations and processes of the postwar Federal Republic into the (not-too-distant) future.

Within Kluge’s larger oeuvre, *Learning Processes* belongs to a cluster of works from a period that began in the late sixties after Kluge and filmmaker Edgar Reitz (who was the director of photography for Kluge’s first feature, *Abschied von gestern* [*Yesterday Girl*]) had eggs thrown at them by radical students at the 1967 Berlin Film Festival. In the aftermath of this confrontation, Reitz and Kluge split, and

Kluge withdrew to the relative isolation of the Institute for Film Production in Ulm, which he had helped to found. At Ulm, the idea for science fiction films came up as a "sort of flight from reality" and as a means to create a utopian space where one could experiment and more thoroughly explore the potential of various topics and themes free from the constraints of society and the real. But this utopia turned out to be illusory, no more than the "path toward utopia" (*ein Hinweg zur Utopie*), as Kluge describes it, and the film team "immediately set foot on the return path during [the making of] the film":¹ everyday difficulties arose—children got sick, the film team disagreed, and so on—and reality once again intruded in the most material ways.

Following these experiments, Kluge then made an abrupt about-face and in 1972 published *The Public Sphere and Experience* with Oskar Negt, followed in 1973 by the stories collected as *Learning Processes with a Deadly Outcome*. Both works are intimately related, and one could even argue that *Learning Processes* is a virtual prose fiction version of the book on the public sphere. In *Public Sphere and Experience*, Negt and Kluge draw on the seminal work by Jürgen Habermas, *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*.² Where Habermas understands the public sphere to be the relatively limited discursive public realm of discussion and debate, Negt and Kluge expand the term to designate an overall "horizon of experience." The public sphere is no longer simply a realm of discussion but the entire complex of institutions—including the legal apparatus and law in general, the media, cultural norms, the entire economic system of production, and more—which create the terms and forms in which human experience can be had. It is simultaneously what

¹ Kluge in an interview with Ulrich Gregor, in *Herzog/Kluge/Straub*, ed. Peter Jansen and Wolfram Schütte (Munich: Hanser, 1976), 173.

² Jürgen Habermas, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit: Untersuchungen zu einer Kategorie der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft* (Neuwien, Berlin: Luchterhand, 1962); *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burger (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989).

enables and what restricts experience. The overall goal of *The Public Sphere and Experience* is to provide both an analysis of the dominant "bourgeois public sphere" (bürgerliche Öffentlichkeit) and an analysis of all experience and potential experience that is excluded from the bourgeois public sphere. This excluded realm is what Negt and Kluge broadly call the "proletarian public sphere."

For Negt and Kluge, the two most significant realms excluded from the dominant public sphere (which they term "nonpublic spheres" or "Nicht-Öffentlichkeiten") are the private or intimate sphere of the family and the realm of industrial production, the factory. Two of Kluge's films in the seventies devote themselves to explorations of these areas. In the 1973 film, *Gelegenheitsarbeit einer Sklavin* (*Part-Time Work of a Female Slave*), Kluge depicts the conflicts and mutual determinations between the realm of the family and the larger realm of industrial production and political action. *Der starke Ferdinand* (*Strong Man Ferdinand*, 1976) proceeds from a single premise, by Kluge's own account, that of the "nonpublic nature of the factories," and the main figure, Ferdi Schein, specialist in industrial surveillance and security, takes great pains to maintain the secrecy of his bosses' factories.

Included within the larger analysis of the bourgeois public sphere that *The Public Sphere and Experience* sets out is an analysis of German fascism, both as historical phenomenon (there is a discussion of the "public sphere of Nazism") and as a legacy that persists into the postwar Federal Republic of Germany. Negt and Kluge's concern with fascism is analogous to Theodor Adorno's (a mentor to both authors), who in his essay "Was bedeutet: Aufarbeitung der Vergangenheit" (What Does Working through the Past Mean?) wrote that he considered "the continued existence of National Socialism in democracy as potentially more threatening than the continued existence of fascist tendencies against democracy."³ Kluge's work has been obsessed with this issue from the very beginning. His

³ Theodor Adorno, "Was bedeutet: Aufarbeitung der Vergangenheit," in *Eingriffe: Neun kritische Modelle* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1962), 126.

first film, *Brutalität in Stein* (*Brutality in Stone*), is a twelve-minute montage documentary of Nazi architecture that attempts to evoke and then work through repressed memories of National Socialism. Similarly, Kluge's "Obersteutnant Boulanger," published in his *Lebensläufe* (*Case Histories*) collection of 1962, is the story of a man who analyzed "Jewish-Bolshevik skull material"⁴ under fascism, and whose skills are now available for use within the industrial organization of postwar Germany. Likewise, Kluge's short film "Porträt einer Bewährung" (*Proven Competence Portrayed*, 1964) is the study of a police officer who proved himself under "more than five" different German governments and is sent into early retirement in the Federal Republic for the unnecessary "discharge of a weapon." The skills he had used to police the Nazi public sphere are (to an extent) serviceable in postwar Germany. Negt and Kluge's analysis of fascism goes beyond simply exposing the numerous jurists, artists, filmmakers, and so on who held posts in their fields during the Third Reich and continued to do so after the war. On the one hand, it focuses on what Negt and Kluge in their later work, *Geschichte und Eigensinn* (*History and Obstinacy*), term "labor capacities" (*Arbeitsvermögen*). These capacities are acquired abilities to perform certain tasks: capacities to labor in specific ways that include not only what are traditionally understood as the abilities required for skilled labor but also the abilities needed for affective labor, encompassing the realms of child rearing, play, and even human emotions. Thus, a number of Kluge's protofascist or latently fascist figures are possessed of labor capacities that once found their realization during fascism and were still very much capable of—and, as important, desirous of—being employed in the postwar Federal Republic.

On the other hand, Negt and Kluge's analysis considers fascism in terms of how it organizes the entire system of production. In this, Negt and Kluge continue the Frankfurt School's analysis of fascism,

4 Alexander Kluge, *Lebensläufe* (Stuttgart: Coverts, 1962), 95.

famously summed up by Max Horkheimer: "He who does not wish to speak of capitalism should also be silent about fascism."⁵ For Negt and Kluge, National Socialism was the ultimate manifestation of capitalism, capable of achieving in full what capitalism could otherwise only achieve in part:

National Socialism mobilizes, in a technically effective manner, labor power as a whole, whereas capitalism is capable of exploiting it only piecemeal. The self-confidence of the masses, which rests on this, is, however, set in motion without regard for their autonomous goals and interests.⁶

To this end, National Socialism fostered an ultrarationalized mode of production in the factories and in the social realm as a whole and was also able to secure the imagination and trust (*das Selbstvertrauen*) of broad sectors of the people. Labor and production are thus the central categories in this discussion of fascism. Perhaps surprisingly for a contemporary audience for whom National Socialism has been de facto identified with the solitary figure of Hitler, there is little discussion or emphasis on the demagogic leader figure. Instead, National Socialism is considered primarily as a highly rationalized public sphere with a central goal of the total exploitation of human labor power.

This emphasis on labor is repeated in *Learning Processes with a Deadly Outcome*, where after the destruction of the Earth in the Black War of 2011, the concern of the powers that be are to once again establish the conditions necessary for a thriving capitalist economy (as well as to establish some sort of administrative

5 Max Horkheimer, "Die Juden und Europa," *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung* 8, nos. 1/2 (1939): 115. Quoted in Martin Jay, *The Dialectical Imagination: A History of the Frankfurt School and the Institute of Social Research, 1923–1950* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1973) 120.

6 Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge, *Public Sphere and Experience: Toward an Analysis of the Bourgeois and Proletarian Public Sphere*, trans. Peter Labanyi, Jamie Owen Daniel, and Assenka Oksiloff (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 169.

system that will justify the existence of jobs for the bureaucratic classes). This postwar situation is a radically new one for the human race, and for capitalists too. Fundamental questions about law (for example, whether one can even speak of humanity when only a few people are still left, a question with enormous consequences for the establishment of right) and the economy (how does one go about creating value when the workers are all gone?) are swept away in a single cataclysmic stroke. Rhetorically, the effect of the disaster is one of estrangement, for with the destruction of humanity, long-established systems of value and law are erased and new ones must be created out of thin air. In this context, the arbitrary or contingent nature of values becomes clear: what has previously seemed "natural" (what Lukács, another thinker whose influence is felt everywhere in Kluge's work, would call "second nature") must now be recreated anew through physical or equally brutal legislative force. Law and capital function in concert, legislative decrees conveniently redefine certain segments of the population as "partners" (the euphemism for workers or labor power), making them available for the labor-starved megaconglomerates and corporations. And in certain sectors of the Starway, the law itself becomes the universal equivalent of exchange, capable of being accumulated as a form of wealth and power.

In this context, the human subject is reduced to an instrumental object of these various discourses, and the euphemism of "partner" all too clearly attempts to hide this fact. From a legal perspective, humans are no longer the subjects of right but, rather, more its effect and instrument: subjects are what they are defined to be by the law, the official rules of the public sphere. In economic terms, subjects are reduced to pure labor power (they have no share in the means of production as the term *partner* might suggest), and they are literally reformed and conditioned according to their specific technical function: customs officials develop oddly extended eyes so they can inspect goods more thoroughly and women workers on planets with enormous gravitational fields develop massive and distorted lower bodies capable of supporting their tremendous weight. Kluge's

tales reveal the degree to which the human subject is object, determined and instrumentalized at a level by more global—or galactic—interests.

These effects of rationalization and reification are registered at another level in *Learning Processes*: at the level of language. As has often been said of Kluge,⁷ it is difficult to speak of an authorial presence in his texts. There is no "style" particular to Kluge, since the language of his prose is comprised almost exclusively of "collective societal languages which work denotatively, rationally and objectifyingly and to a great degree are formalized."⁸ In other words, Kluge's language is not really "his own," but rather as an author he functions much like one of his great film protagonists, Anita G. of *Yesterday Girl*: as Kluge describes her, she is a "seismograph," a virtually subjectless instrument collecting data on societal tremors and activities.⁹ Kluge collects and assembles an array of societal languages as so much data—in *Learning Processes* these are primarily juridical language and an imitated futuristic military/scientific language—and his author function may be said to reside in this collecting activity. One is reminded of Walter Benjamin in this context, himself an avid collector, who had wanted to write a book consisting solely of quotations. Kluge does indeed collect and quote, but much of his quotation is a quotation of the form of these languages, a quotation of their abstract, rationalized (perhaps one can speak of technical clichés in this context), and repeated forms.

In one sense, this activity is one of documentation, a documentation of what George Steiner has famously termed the "death of language" in German culture.¹⁰ For Steiner, the death of the German language began with the first unification of Germany and the subjugation of

⁷ See, for example, the excellent analysis of his use of language in Stephanie Carp, *Kriegsgeschichten: Zum Werk Alexander Kluges* (Munich: Fink, 1987).

⁸ *Ibid.* 220.

⁹ In an interview with Enno Patalas and Frieda Grafe, "Tribüne des Jungen Deutschen Films," *Filmkritik* 9 (September 1966): 487.

¹⁰ George Steiner, "The Hollow Miracle," in *Language and Silence: Essays on Language, Literature, and the Inhuman* (New York: Atheneum, 1967), 95–109.

language to the necessities of Prussian bureaucracy. Fascism, however, struck the final blow through both its bald promulgation of euphemism (speaking of victory in the final days of war, "clean-up operations," and the like) and its horrid dehumanization and highly precise functionalization (Jews as vermin, the objective accounts of operating extermination camps, and so on). Kluge documents these linguistic horrors, as in his first film, *Brutality in Stone*, where a voice-over reads from the notebooks of Auschwitz commandant Rudolph Höss, recounting with cold objectivity the difficulties of transporting and executing masses of prisoners. Similarly, Kluge documents the continued use of such language into the postwar period: the judge who tries Anita for petty theft in *Yesterday Girl* can only interpret her case according to the dictates of the German legal code, his response to her pleas consists solely of reading long quotations from this text.

Yet the full effect of these texts is not simply documentary. Through the formal principle of montage and through the genre of science fiction, Kluge's texts manage to leverage a degree of critical distance on these discourses. By severing these languages from their original contexts and setting them in an incongruous time and space, they become defamiliarized to the reader. Their innate sense is shattered, their senselessness thus revealed. In such a manner the subject, as reader, is momentarily freed from their domination. Kluge juxtaposes these various desubjectified and objectifying languages in such a manner as to permit subjectivity to arise once again. As Kluge has said of his films, they do not exist as a final product in the image projected on the screen, but rather complete themselves in the "mind of the spectator." Similarly, Kluge hopes for little more from his prose than the reader's participation in a coproduction. In the preface to *Geschichte und Eigensinn*, he and Oskar Negt write: "No book offers more than the chance to act independently."¹¹ Through a massing of sheer objectivity, Kluge hopes to nurture a new subjectivity.

¹¹ Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge, *Geschichte und Eigensinn* (Frankfurt am Main: Zweitausendeins, 1981), 5.

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