# Chapter IV

# Space and Spirit in the European Colonial Imagination after First World War

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## First World War as a zero-hour for Imperial Europe

First World War was a profound shock to Europe in many senses. One of these was its potential destabilising of the discourse of the *mission civilisatrice* which had legitimated the possession of colonies and the less direct domination of large parts of the world in the age of High Imperialism. Often combined with an overt racial idea of the white man's biological 'fitness' the basic conception was that Europe - and sometimes its 'offspring' in America – was not only capable, but also justified in such domination, because its technological advancement mirrored a moral advancement; a 'civilized state' at the level of values and spirit.

The War - having been both between civilized Europeans and thoroughly savage in conduct – seemed to fundamentally question such easy presumptions. And in the intellectual debate on the state and future of Europe which blossomed between the World Wars many voices directly addressed the 'colonial problem'[1]. There was however agreement neither as to the solutions nor as to the exact nature of the problem.

In this article I will examine and compare how Europe's relations to the non-European (colonial) world was thought about in what I conceive to be two of the dominant discourses in this debate about Europe[2]. My claim is that the discourse of Europe's *mission civilisatrice* split in two distinct parts after the War. In one discourse – which I term the 'geopolitical discourse of Europe' - Europe's destruction was conceived primarily in material terms, the authors worried chiefly about its future in a global geopolitical system, and advanced an unrestrained confidence in technology as its solution. The colonial problem here becomes mainly logistic and economical; it is about securing and expanding a sufficient portion of the world's surface and resources for a future European World Power.

The other discourse – the 'spiritualist discourse of Europe' - instead conceived of Europe's destruction in spiritual terms, it worried incessantly about the degeneration of Europe's *soul* in the hands of 'modern technology' and sought a spiritual reinvigoration as the solution. Here 'the colonial problem' was sometimes completely reversed by emphasizing the inferiority of Europe and the need to seek inspiration in Asian values. Or, if spiritual reinvigoration was found elsewhere, it took the form of a fear that formerly colonized peoples would seek to take advantage of Europe's spiritually weakened state.

However, in neither of these discourses was the shock of the war translated into a full rejection of the colonial system or of the ideas of justified asymmetries of power and moral worth which underpinned it. The justification for colonial domination was rethought in the geopolitical discourse, but the idea that domination could be justified was retained. In the spiritualist discourse, Europe's moral superiority was questioned, but the idea that a basic moral asymmetry between 'the civilized' and the savage was a part of the international system

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1    As Paul Michael Lützeler demonstrates in his "Die Schriftsteller und Europa", R.Piper, Gmbh, München, 1992, it became something of an intellectual fashion in the interwar years to write about the state of Europe.

2    The two discourses which I will characterize in the following should be thought of as something of 'ideal types' to the extent that they define the extremes on a continuum. The different ideas of and projects for Europe under consideration are as such not simply to be placed 'in' one or the other discourse but at different intervals between the extremes defined by a 'pure' geopolitical and a 'pure' spiritual discourse. I cannot therefore analyse each of the particular and different projects for Europe in any detail. Rather I shall concentrate on illustrating what I consider the central logics in and differences between the two discourses. Also I here remain at the level of intellectual thought, and cannot in any detail discuss how certain of these ideas of Europe managed to connect to the field of real politics (for example Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi's ideas also had a 'political life of their own' as he lobbied prominent politicians tirelessly), while other remained purely literary speculations. Finally, I limit myself to authors speaking directly about 'Europe', and thus not on the colonial problem as either a national one or as a subject in a new international system in general.

was never completely rejected, not even when it was reversed casting Europe in the role of the 'savage'. The historical break or 'Zero-hour' of the War did impact on the ideas underpinning the colonial system, but not at this point to a degree where the ideological structure of colonialism was fundamentally damaged.

## The idea of historical breaks

Before proceeding, a few remarks on how the idea of historical breaks or Zero-hours is appropriated and used within the present discussion are in order. In conceptualising 'Historical time', Reinhardt Koselleck employs the conceptual pair *'space of experience'* and *'horizon of expectation'*. For Koselleck, these are inseparable; there could be *"No expectation without experience, and no experience without expectation"*[3], further more they were *"indicative of a general human condition; one could say that they indicate an anthropological condition without which history is neither possible nor conceivable"*[4]. The space of experience is the 'past made present' – it is not the past in its entirety, but those parts of it which have been 'collected' which in a certain present are the basis on which expectations of the future are formed. The horizon of expectation is thus the imagining of the future which becomes possible and legitimate through references to a certain experience. Koselleck's main historical hypothesis was that modernity involved a shift from a notion of historical time in which one expected the future to resemble the experience of the past and present (ultimately a cyclical understanding of time) to one in which the future was expected to be substantively different from the past and present. This, however, did not mean that the link between experience and expectation was dissolved. Rather new concepts such as 'Progress' meant that the future could be imagined as radically different from the present on the basis of an emerging experience about the substantial difference between the present and the past – for example in the realm of technology[5]. Koselleck's idea about the qualitative difference of Historical time in modernity (*Neuzeit*) however does not directly relay an idea of historical breaks. Modern time is one of profound changes, but also one in which such changes are expected. The pace of change is accelerated and the portion of experience thought to be transferable to expectations is reduced, but the link between experience and expectation is not itself necessarily broken by this. However, when it comes to conceptualising historical breaks we are thinking about the emergence of the *un*-expected in history.

One might venture a first conceptualization of the historical break as the emergence of a critical event which radically contradicts the accepted expectations of the future: an event which we are thus unable to relate to our experience in a meaningful way. What breaks in other words is exactly the link between experience and expectation. The problem in such an understanding is that it eliminates the dimension of how the event itself is conceptualized. The critical nature of the event – its 'breaking' quality – is implicitly conceptualized as immanent in it – often as constituted simply by its often radically violent content. But violence can be expected. Violent events come and go in history without necessarily all resulting in a deep reimagining of the future or a rethinking of the past. The making of a historical break is not simply done by the emergence of an unexpected violent event, it depends also on this event being *conceptualized* as a historical break. It involves, in other words, that human actors conceptualize the event as a radical crisis and do this so forcefully that it comes to justify not just new expectations, but a reconfiguring of experiences. As Koselleck remarks at one point, experiences already had, can actually be changed in situations where *"new expectations, enter them with retrospective effect"*[6]. The constitution of a historical break is ultimately retrospective in this sense. The way in which the event is given a certain meaning and made to mark a certain Zero-hour, a moment in which old expectation and much of the accepted experience is 'nullified' is inseparably connected to the *new* expectations whose emergence the event is made to justify. We are, in other words, not dealing with a simple causal chain – first the event then the new expectations and ultimately the reordering of experience – but rather with a synchronous transformation in which the reordered past, the historical break, and the new future are simultaneously constituted anew by their common inclusion in a novel historical narrative about a 'New Beginning'.

Narrating history therefore always has a political dimension – if not always a revolutionary one – because it carries within it a certain expectation – a certain hope for – the future. This means that the horizon of

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3    Reinhardt Koselleck, *Futures Past. On the Semantics of Historical Time,* Columbia University Press, 2004 p. 257.

4    Reinhardt Koselleck, *Futures Past. On the Semantics of Historical Time,* Columbia University Press, 2004 p. 257.

5    Reinhardt Koselleck, *Futures Past. On the Semantics of Historical Time,* Columbia University Press, 2004 pp. 267-68.

6    Reinhardt Koselleck, *Futures Past. On the Semantics of Historical Time,* Columbia University Press, 2004 p. 262

expectation is always partly a normative construction, and perhaps never more so than when the narrator believes himself to be engaged in putting back together a viable future for a shattered world. The expectations generated in connection with a historical break are rarely simply the dispassionate result of objective prognosis. In imagining what the future will be, one always speculates – whether explicitly or implicitly – on what it should be. As Ernesto Laclau has argued, revolutionary politics – which are of course all about the future – feed of a common effectual investment in certain central concepts which, although often unclear as to their precise semantic content or application, become focal point for wider utopian dreams and hopes[7]. Indeed perhaps the very concept of 'Revolution' is itself the best example. Koselleck's claim that the transition to modernity caused the political vocabulary to take on a more 'ideological' form (*Ideologiesierbarkeit*) could be interpreted along such lines[8]. When, as Koselleck points out, this process means that political concepts change from the concrete particular form (liberties) to the abstract universal one (liberty), this also seems a shift from denoting a practise to symbolizing an ideal. In the new horizon of 'liberalism', liberty could be interpreted in numerous ways and articulated in connection with an infinite number of actual political aims or projects, because the concept had not only become abstract and universal, but also the focal point of a different imagination of the future.

In analysing the construction of a new horizon of expectation, one should therefore also take an interest in which concepts are being idealised and invested with utopian fantasies, because it is around such idealizations and hopes that re-imagining of the future is structured and ultimately this structuring impacts both the reordering of experience and the articulation of the historical break as argued above.

Before attempting to identify such ideals for the future and their corresponding re-orderings of experience in the different discourses of Europe and her colonial possessions, it is however necessary to sketch the kind of imperial experience and expectation which inscribed the colonial relationship before the war.


## The idea of civilization: between technology and spirit

In his classic work 'The Heart of Darkness' from 1902, Joseph Conrad has his narrator Marlowe utter an often quoted characterization of the imperial project: *"The conquest of the earth, which mostly means the taking it away from those who have a different complexion or slightly flatter noses than ourselves, is not a pretty thing when you look into it too much. What redeems it is the idea only. An idea at the back of it; not a sentimental pretence but an idea; and an unselfish belief in the idea — something you can set up, and bow down before, and offer a sacrifice to."*[9] But immediately preceding this forceful diagnosis, Conrad has Marlowe invoke the history of the Roman conquest of Britain; not, as it is often interpreted, as a simple historical parallel to the contemporary British colonial conquests of the world, but as something qualitatively different: *"They were no colonists; their administration was merely a squeeze, and nothing more, I suspect. They were conquerors, and for that you want only brute force-- nothing to boast of, when you have it, since your strength is just an accident arising from the weakness of others. They grabbed what they could get for the sake of what was to be got."*[10] What Conrad produces here is a distinction between two modes of superiority. One regards a technological asymmetry between political units, which allows one to appropriate and exploit the space and resources of another. The other regards the construction of a moral or spiritual superiority which sets up one part of humanity as the legitimate masters and educators of another part. One is material in its focus, the other ideational. Conrad's critique of the civilizing mission becomes all the more brutal, because it goes beyond a claim that we have not yet achieved the ideal set by our classical heroes. Rather it turns the argument on its head, deconstructing the classical ideal, in the claim that we - in our imperfection - are in fact just like the Romans. Faced with the darkness of Africa the fantasy of a civilized spirit or moral code, justifying the endeavour, is ripped apart and our 'civilizing mission' also reveals itself as nothing more than a 'squeeze', an extortion racket, possible – but hardly morally justified – by the coincidence of technological superiority.

As is well known – and as indicated by the impact of Conrad's exposition – the civilizing ideology of High Imperialism had on a discursive level successfully merged these two modes of superiority. Technological

7    Ernesto Laclau, *On Populist Reason*, Verso, 2005.

8    Richter and Richter 2006

9    Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, Penguin Classics, [1902] 2009, p. 13.

10   Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, Penguin Classics, [1902] 2009, p.12.

superiority was taken as evidence of a spiritual or moral superiority[11]. And indeed this fusing has deep roots in the development of the idea of a Western civilizing mission. In what can be thought as the formative text in moulding the fantasy of the civilizing mission – Defoe's Robinson Crusoe (Defoe [1719] 2001) – there is no distinction between the technological working of the island which enables Robinson to extract the necessary resources from it, and the moral working of Friday which transforms him into a Christian semi-civilized subject[12]. This is not to say that Conrad was the first to notice a distinction and possible tension between the technology and the spirit of civilization. In fact, quite the contrary is true. The enlightenment philosophers who laboured on the idea of civilization worried incessantly about the separation of the outward appearance of civilization (its technology, manners, and luxuries) and the moral core which these supposedly pointed to (Starobinski 1993). But again the point to be made is that the political and ideological structure of high imperialism mostly succeeded in covering over this potential tension in its foundational legitimating philosophy.

In such an ideological climate the First World War erupted as a potentially devastating illustration that the forces of modern European technology was in no way contained by an underlying civilized spirit, but instead resulted in a barbarous carnage of a scale which surpassed anything previously known.

This could indeed be said to represent a Zero-hour for the idea of European Civilization – and thus for the colonial system which was its political expression – after which the conceptual field around claims to European superiority, around ideas of Europe's role and place in the World, and around the vexed tension between technological achievement and moral /spiritual essence, was rethought in a number of different ways. I will start here by sketching the 'spiritualist' discourse of Europe's collapse, its possible regeneration, and the part played by non-European peoples in this endeavour. Subsequently I will turn to the alternative 'Geopolitical discourse'.


## Spiritual collapse, the curse of technology and Asia

The feeling that the war entailed a breakdown, not just of the political and economic structure of Europe, but of the very moral fabric of European civilization emerged even before it was over[13]. Sigmund Freud, in his essay written during the war '*Reflections on War and Death',* emphasizes exactly the disappointment that the civilized nations of Europe would stoop to such barbarity:

> We were quite ready to believe that for some time to come there would be wars between primitive and civilised nations (…) as well as with and among the partly enlightened and more or less civilised peoples of Europe. But we dared to hope differently. We expected that the great ruling nations of the white race, the leaders of mankind, who had cultivated worldwide interests, and to whom we owe the technical progress in control of nature as well as the creation of artistic and scientific cultural standards – we expected these nations would find some other way of settling their differences and conflicting interests[14]

Freud will go on to argue that the war therefore has exposed the dark forces beneath the surface of pre-war Europe. We might even go so far as to say that Freud is close to a political application of his theory of the human psyche only fully developed by him in the following years. What the war illustrated to him was that the apparent rationality and moral standards of European Civilization (what in the personal psyche would be faculties of the Ego and the SuperEgo) was in the end no match for the frightful (Id) forces of aggression, greed and selfish pride which all nations still harboured below the surface. In fact one can already here detect the beginnings of the deeply pessimistic attitude to 'modern civilization' which he would unfold later in *"Civilisation and its Discontents"*[15]. The authors employing a 'spiritualist' discourse all joined Freud, not just

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11 Cf. Bruce Mazlish, *Civilization and its Contents*, Stanford University Press, 2004; Robert Nisbet, *History of the Idea of Progress*, Basic Books, New York, 1980; Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes,* Routledge, 1992.

12 For an analysis of the discourse of civilization in Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, Penguin Classics, [1719] 2001, see Jan Ifversen, *Robinson og civilisationen*, Passage – tidsskrift for litteratur og kritik, 31/32, 1999, pp. 64-77.

13 For a good overview of the literature lamenting the crisis of European Civilisation after the First World War, but without the specific focus on colonial relations employed here, see Jan Ifversen,"The Crisis of European Civilisation after 1918" in Spiering & Wintle (eds.), *Ideas of Europe since 1914*, Palgrave, 2002.

14 Sigmund Freud, *Reflections on War and Death*, Moffat, Yard and Company, New York, 1918.

15 Sigmund Freud, *Civilisation and its Discontents*, Hogarth Press, London, [1930] 1963.

in viewing the war as a *moral* catastrophe, but also in the notion that, in fact, European civilized values had not simply been destroyed in the war as such. Rather the war was simply the event which revealed that a deep rottenness had long eroded the strength of European civilization. For these intellectuals the war was simply the latest and most terrible symptom of an illness now entering a terminal stage. As Paul Valery famously wrote in 1919: *"We later civilisations… we too now know that we are mortal"*[16].

Despite the fact that different authors within this discourse differed profoundly both in identifying the time of the onset for this illness, and its possible cure, there is a deep uniformity in their ideas as to its main cause. What had eroded the moral and spiritual heart of European civilization was its own technological, material and scientific surface. It was a pathological overemphasis of this mere surface which had caused an increasing alienation from the moral depth of 'values', 'spirit' or 'metaphysics'. The war, in a sense, was proof that without such moral foundation, technology and science were in fact the ready handmaidens of barbarism, rather than of civilization. The Russian author Nicolai Berdjajef thus decried the *'tecnologisation of life'*[17], the ultimate consequences of which had been revealed by the war, arguing that man had become a slave of his machines, able only to believe in the miracles of science, no longer of a graceful God[18]. The remedy was a return to a purer form of Christianity inspired by that of the Middle Ages[19]. In a similar vein the French literary historian Henri Massis saw the Catholic Church as the *"sole power capable of restoring true civilisation"*[20] and argued that it was a 'Mechanical progress' which had wounded the very idea of civilization because it had come to dominate over the spiritual elevation of man[21]. But even if authors such as these therefore identified a return to religion as the means through with Europe's spirit should rejuvenated, they did not deny the crimes committed in the name of Christianity. Rather they constructed an ideal Christianity which had either long been absent or never fully realized. In this way, the role Christian conversion had played as a legitimizing element in the brutalities of colonial oppression could be sidestepped as another symptom of the degeneration of Europe in the absence of 'true' Christian values[22]. There was however little sentimentality here about the plight of the oppressed. Berdjajef argues that 'Eastern people' would never acquire Christianity, but instead as 'yellow mercenaries' learned to emulate the worst parts of European civilization[23] and was as such only waiting to exploit Europe's newly revealed weakness. As Massis puts the same point:

Asia, which has so long suffered under the domination of the Western yoke, is not only overjoyed to see Europeans vilified and beaten down by themselves: it has remembered the grievances and accusations that were spread by an imprudent propaganda to the farthest limits of the Oriental World[24]

The catastrophe of the war is, according to this view, propounded by the fact that European powers not only acted barbarously towards each other in front of the colonial onlookers, but that they actively sought to undermine the respect and awe which colonial populations had for other (enemy) European powers. In their mutual destruction and incrimination the warring European Powers have destroyed any colonial regard for European Civilization as such; *"The old easy submission has been succeeded by a secret hostility, a veritable hatred that awaits only the favourable moment to be translated into action"*[25]. Carlo Sforza – although hardly a full-blown 'spiritualist' - imagines the Chinese sitting in the confiscated mansions of European diplomats and articulates the contents he imagines in the native mind; *"they [the Chinese] must have said to them selves, 'When will the turn of the English, French, Italian concessions come which we can see from these villas that fell into our hands so easily?'"*[26] This paranoid fantasy of the 'yellow peril' in the form of the plotting Asian seems a standard feature in the spiritualist literature which seeks its redemption in Christianity. There is therefore in fact no fundamental moral challenge to the fact that Europe – even after its 'spiritual collapse' – continues to uphold structures of domination over non-European peoples. The problem which worries these

16    Paul Valery, *The Crisis of the Mind, in The Outlook for Intelligence*, Princeton University Press, [1919] 1962.

17    Nikolaj Berdjajef, *Tidsskifte – Den nye Middelalder og Dommen over vor tid*, Europa-bøgerne, København, [1925] 1937, pp. 84-85.

18    Nikolaj Berdjajef, *Tidsskifte – Den nye Middelalder og Dommen over vor tid*, Europa-bøgerne, København, [1925] 1937, pp. 115-16.

19    Nikolaj Berdjajef, *Tidsskifte – Den nye Middelalder og Dommen over vor tid*, Europa-bøgerne, København, [1925] 1937, pp. 115-16.

20    Henri Massis, *Defense of the West*, Harcourt, Brace & co, New York, 1928, p. 231.

21    Henri Massis, *Defense of the West*, Harcourt, Brace & co, New York, 1928, pp. 20-22.

22    Cf. 22 Nikolaj Berdjajef, *Tidsskifte – Den nye Middelalder og Dommen over vor tid*, Europa-bøgerne, København, [1925] 1937, pp. 128-30.

23    Nikolaj Berdjajef, *Tidsskifte – Den nye Middelalder og Dommen over vor tid*, Europa-bøgerne, København, [1925] 1937, pp. 128-29

24    Henri Massis, *Defense of the West*, Harcourt, Brace & co, New York, 1928, p. 23.

25    Henri Massis, *Defense of the West*, Harcourt, Brace & co, New York, 1928,, p. 24.

26    Carlo Sforza, *Europe and the Europeans*, G.G. Harrap, London, 1936, p. 207.

authors is not the moral legitimacy of European superiority as such, but rather the fear that colonials will use the war as a pretext for challenging this superiority. The search for a reinvigoration of European values does not entail a giving up of 'illegitimate' domination, but is exactly an endeavor to reconstitute it *as legitimate*. The fact that the Asian subjects now doubt Europe's superiority is never translated into an idea that this very dominance might be illegitimate. Rather the Asian resistance is portrayed as insidious, scheming, and dangerous. Indeed Massis believes that Asia is not simply plotting to reclaim those of its resources now controlled by Europeans; *"It is the soul of the West that the East wishes to attack, that soul, divided, uncertain of it principles, confusedly eager for spiritual liberation(…)"*[27]. He ends his book with the warning *"If we desire to work for the restoration of European culture and harmony, we must be aware of the Asiatics. Their counsel is worthless to us"*[28]. Thereby he stages a direct confrontation with what he terms 'Asiaticism' and which constituted another vein in the spiritualist discourse which completely reverses the imagery. Here Asia becomes the very site from which Europe can be spiritually reinvigorated and the end of European domination in Asia becomes not only legitimate, but long overdue. This kind of argumentation incorporated a wider Orientalist fascination of Asia's mysteries into a cultural critique of Europe[29]. The starting point is still a distinction between the technology of European civilization and its (missing) moral or metaphysical core. The French academic and orientalist Rene Guenon argued along these lines. He conceived of European civilization as an 'abnormal civilization' because it had developed singularly along material lines[30]. It had given up metaphysical speculation for a cold rational and practical intelligence aimed only at industrious purposes. Science had become a 'Lay religion' whose disconnection from any idea of a 'higher order' meant that it was chiefly employed to find ever more barbarous methods for killing each other[31]. The origins of this rot in European civilization far preceded the war (Guenon sees its origin in the renaissance fascination with reason), but the war had now made it obvious that Europe's superiority – in any other sense than the strictly material – was an illusion[32]. Only by turning to Asia – especially China – for guidance and inspiration, and doing so with the modest attitude of one who is aware of his own profound inferiority, could Europe hope to avoid ever more destructive wars. Guenon therefore in fact does not break with the basic ideas of the *mission civilisatrice*; he simply reverses them. This kind of criticism is in fact neither new nor really external to the discourses of Imperialism. The figure of the 'Noble Savage' served almost from the conception of the Enlightenment idea of civilization as a literary trope for self-critique[33]. The 'Noble Savage' is however internal to the logics of the civilizing mission; he lectures us as one who is 'more civilized than the civilizers'. As such, this figure always only challenges the currently achieved stage of European civilization, or rather its notorious decadence, it never questions the idea of 'stages' or the possibility of European civilization as such. The noble savage therefore is as much an invention of the imperial imagination as is his counterpart the barbarian. With him we are no closer to a complex or nuanced understanding of, or approach to, the non-European Other; he is still a simple stereotype, even if a positive one.

And indeed, in Guenon, the view of 'The East' seems somewhat one-sided. Even if he identified the sources for Europe's rejuvenation exactly where someone like Massis or Berdjajef saw its biggest threat, he treated Asia in much the same way that they had treated Christianity. He constructed an ideal Asia, divorced from the contemporary and historical realities of the continent. Japan indeed did not seem to conform to his image of a tranquil and wise East, unaffected and uninterested in the trappings of western technology. But this was only because Japan had already learned from the West. Even as also China seems to turn from its original spirituality, he added an appendix maintaining that 'the Real East' would never be infected[34]. That this 'Real East', much as 'Christianity' in Massis and Berdjajef no longer had much of a referent in the real world, only served to emphasize the seriousness of the situation.

Furthermore both veins of this discourse were in complete agreement when it came to another non-European entity in the world. America, across the different veins of the spiritualist discourse, was uniformly derided and scorned. It became the horrific example of a culture in which Europe's illness had been allowed to

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27    Henri Massis, *Defense of the West*, Harcourt, Brace & co, New York, 1928, pp. 26-27.

28    Henri Massis, *Defense of the West*, Harcourt, Brace & co, New York, 1928, p. 249.

29    Alfons Pasquet advanced an idea of 'Chinesierung' of Europe along the same lines (Alfons Pasquet, *Rom oder Moskau, Drei Masken Verlag*, München, 1923). See also Andre Gide, *Die Zukunft Europas*, Neue Rundschau, vol. 34:2, pp. 602-10, 1923.

30    Rene Guenon, *East and West*, Sofia Perennis, Hillsdale, Ny, [1924] 2001, pp. 12-20.

31    Rene Guenon, *East and West*, Sofia Perennis, Hillsdale, Ny, [1924] 2001, pp. 27-28, 67-68.

32    Rene Guenon, *East and West*, Sofia Perennis, Hillsdale, Ny, [1924] 2001, p. 70.

33    Anthony Pagden, *European Encounters with the New World: From renaissance to Romanticism*, Yale University Press, 1994.

34    Rene Guenon, *East and West*, Sofia Perennis, Hillsdale, Ny, [1924] 2001, pp. 165-66.

progress to a state where all hope was lost. Even Guenon afforded Europe the courtesy that it was not as bad as America when it came to the mindless worship of science and material progress, but warned that Europe was not far behind this outpost of the 'Far West'.[35] And Berdjajef explains that when he laments "*the tecnologising of life*" he is in some sense referring to what is usually called 'Americanism'.[36] For Herman Keyserling – another prominent Orientalist spiritualist[37] - technology plays a central role in his characterization of America as a culture in which the homogenizing force of the standardized production made possible by modern technology has destroyed the spiritual individualism of their European forefathers and opened the collective psyche of America to the influences of the Negro and of the native. The American thus becomes *"A European with the manners of a Negro and the soul of an Indian".* [38]

The uniting feature of the spiritualist discourse was therefore first and foremost a deep anti-modern distrust of technology, science, and the merely material progress that they delivered. These were identified as the main culprits in the moral catastrophe of the war, but nevertheless as an ill which had been affecting Europe long before this final eruption. But beyond this, these authors are united by the fact that when dealing with the non-European world (for good or for bad) it is primarily Asia which interests them. America is little more than an image of the negative extreme Europe is approaching, and Africa seems completely absent from the arguments.

Much of this changes when we enter the geopolitical discourse. First, technology is not only no longer feared, but becomes an object of fascination – and of fantasmatic idealization – akin to what happens to Christianity and Asia in the different veins of the spiritualists. This impacts profoundly on how the war is remembered, on how America is conceived, and on which part of the non-European 'colonial' world is of primary interest. For the geopoliticians, Asian values are not of much interest; their focus is on the vast space and boundless resources of Africa.


## The geopolitics of Eur-Africa, technological fantasies and lebensraum

In the geopolitical discourse, post-war Europe is quite a different entity than in the spiritualist one. But this certainly does not mean that the geopoliticians were more optimistic in judging the state of the continent. Whereas the spiritualist had conceived of Europe as something of a wounded soul, the geopoliticians saw instead a faltering socio-economic entity. The war was above all a political and economical disaster for Europe. It had deprived industries of raw materials, had undercut the states' finances, and destabilized the old configuration of the international system in which Europe (or rather the European imperial powers) had enjoyed such centrality. These points were among others made mercilessly (and statistically) by the French geographer Andre Demangeon in his '*Le Déclin De L'Europe',* translated as '*America and the Race for World Domination'.*[39] Demangeon painted a picture of Europe on the verge of economical, financial, and political bankruptcy. This was made all the more forceful because Demangeon continuously contrasted this sorry state of affairs with the rapidly rising power of America. America, in his view, and in contrast to those who worried primarily about a rising geopolitical 'yellow peril' from Japan[40] was the world power to come commanding, as it did, vast spaces, resources, and manpower.[41]

As O'Loughlin & van der Wusten shows, geopolitical thinking about the world developed in these years an interest in so-called Pan-regions. The focus on the analysis of the international realm was no longer on the diplomatic relations of states – or on their moral capacities as civilizers. The world was instead conceived as increasingly divided among a relative few potential 'World Powers' all with their respective power centres, their spheres of interest, and their necessary hinterland for resources and settlement. This was to some extent a merciless world where old friendships or cultural kinships mattered little, but where each had to be aware that if one could not make it among the ranks of the world powers, one would instead become somebody else's

35    Rene Guenon, *East and West*, Sofia Perennis, Hillsdale, Ny, [1924] 2001, p. 12.

36    Berdjajef, *Tidsskifte – Den nye Middelalder og Dommen over vor tid*, Europa-bøgerne, København, [1925] 1937, p. 85.

37    For an overview of Keyserling's ideas see Steen 2007.

38    This might seem a somewhat strange statement, but suffice to explain here that Keyserling's ideas of cultural transfer and influence not only often employ a Freudian vocabulary, but extensively use Jungian theories of spiritual adjustment, self-realization, and collective subconsciousness both at the level of national and at the level of continental subjects. Hermann Keyserling, *Europe,* Jonathan Cape, London, 1928, pp.336-37, 342, quote p. 337.

39    Andre Demangeon, *America and the Race for World Domination*, Doubleday, Page and CO, 1921.

40    Rudolf Pannwitz,"Europäische Politik, nicht Weltpolitik" in *Der neue Merkur*, Vol. 3:5, Oct., 1919, pp.297-307.

41    Andre Demangeon, *America and the Race for World Domination*, Doubleday, Page and CO, 1921.

hinterland.[42] The ultimate justification of colonial expansion and domination was no longer found in lofty ideas of moral superiority and the *mission civilisatrice*, but in the iron necessity of 'expand or perish' with the evolution of such a world presented Europe with.[43]

Perhaps the most famous of the authors contemplating Europe in the interwar years – Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi – positioned himself thoroughly within this geopolitical discourse. Although his books also speak at length about a cultural kinship among European countries - a philosophical and spiritual heritage which unites them – the core of his arguments are geopolitical[44]. As is well known, Coudenhove-Kalergi thought that a Pan-European federation was necessary both to ward off future wars and to secure Europe's survival as a power in the world[45]. In imagining Pan-Europe, Coudenhove-Kalergi did not take over the spiritualist derision of America, but indeed treated this continent as a model for a future Pan-region of Europe. In doing so, he vastly exaggerated the emerging structures of Pan-Americanism between the South and North America.[46] But America was as much a problem as a model because in the emerging world of Pan-Regions Europe would need to compete with America, and Europe was as such already at a disadvantage. For an economically broken, politically divided, financially indebted, and - above all - overcrowded Europe, not even political unification would be sufficient in itself. The first and greatest task of the new Pan-Europe would therefore have to be the joint control and development of Africa. Pan-Europe would have to acquire a hinterland south of the Mediterranean, becoming in turn *Eur-Afrika*[47]. The Pan-Region of *Eur-Afrika* is in his words constituted by Europe as 'the head' and Africa as 'the body'; Africa would be the 'Plantation' or 'Garden'of Europe,[48] its boundless source of '*Rohstoffen und Siedlungsland'*.[49]

As part of the geopolitical thinking on *Siedlungsland* a direct difference from the metaphorical language of the spiritualists emerge. Their Europe was above all hollow and suffering from a moral vacuity and spiritual emptiness which was often indicated by calling attention to the 'absent Europeans' to those brightest luminaries which had been lost to Europe in the war. Carlo Sforza writes movingly on the very first pages of his book about the common war memory of all Europeans that *"two or three of our best friends died – friends whom we considered as the purest promises for the scientific and moral life of to-morrow"*[50] and he goes on to lament *"How many times have I seen their shades and bitterly felt their absence in the Italian Parliament* (…)*"*[51]

For the geopoliticians the problem was never the absence of a few luminaries, but the unbearable presence of everybody else. Europe was a cramped and crowded place, too small for its populations to live out their true

42    John O'Loughlin & Herman van der Wusten,"Political Geography of Panregions" in *Geographical Review*, Vol. 80:1, Jan., 1990, pp. 1-20.

43    John Agnew & Stuart Corbridge, *Mastering Space*, Routledge, 1995.

44    I disagree with Daniel Villanueva who seems to consider the geopolitical dimension of Coudenhove-Kalergi's ideas marginal when compared to his speculations on "a long-buried common European cultural roots in need of renewed cultivation" (Daniel Villanueva, *Richard von Coudenhove-Kalergi's Pan-Europa as the Elusive, Object of Longing*, Rocky Mountains Review, Fall, 2005, pp. 67-80, here 70). Despite often being labeled an idealist and despite a sometimes overwhelming focus in the literature about his Pan-Europa on his musing on a substantial European Kulturgemeinshaft, Coudenhove-Kalergi's basic argument rests firmly on the geopolitical idea of a world divided into 'World powers' each needing their own 'hinterland'. To Coudenhove-Kalergi the vision of a merciless evolution towards a World of Pan-regions or 'World Powers' is so crucial to his argument that it is presented in the opening chapters of both his 1926 and his 1934 books on pan-Europe.

45    The envisioned membership of Coudenhove-Kalergi's European federation changed as the political situation in Europe changed in the interwar years. Originally envisaged to encompass continental Europe, but without Britain who was already an empire ('a World Power') in its own right, it was at first primarily conceived as anti-Communist. However with the rise of Nazism in Germany, Coudenhove-Kalergi envisaged a possible inclusion of Britain and saw his Pan-Europe as a necessary countermove to Nazism (R.N. Coudenhove-Kalergi,"The Pan-European Outlook" in *International Affairs*, Vol 10:5, Sept., 1931, pp. 638-51; R.N. Coudenhove-Kalergi,"Europe To-Morrow" in *International Affairs*, Vol. 18:5, Sept.-Oct., 1939, pp. 623-40). Coudenhove-Kalergi is interesting not only because of his detailed and prolific thinking on Europe's present and future (R.N. Coudenhove-Kalergi, *Das Pan-Europäische Manifest*, April, 1924; idem, *Pan-Europe*, Alfred A. Knopf, 1926, pp.70-87; idem, *Afrika, in Paneuropa*, Vol. 5:2, 1929, pp.1-19; idem, *The Pan-European Outlook*; idem, *Europa Erwacht!*, PanEuropa-Verlag, Zürich, 1934; idem, *Europe To-Morrow*), but also because he, and the organization of Pan-Europe which he built, was a somewhat effective pressure group in interwar politics. Coudenhove-Kalergi actually succeeded in making high level politicians interested in his ideas. For a good exposition of the actual political maneuvering of Coudenhove-Kalergi and his organization see Peter Bugge, Europe 1914-1945, in Wilson and van der Dusen (eds.), *The History of the Idea of Europe*, Routledge, 1993.

46    Coudenhove-Kalergi, *Pan-Europe.*

47    Because Coudenhove-Kalergi excluded the British Empire from his political union of Pan-Europe, Eur-Afrika in fact only entails the non-British colonies in Africa. The term Eur-Afrika does not appear in Coudenhove-Kalergi's first book on Pan-Europe, but the idea of joint control over Africa is already present (Coudenhove-Kalergi Pan-Europe). Only in a 1929 article on 'Afrika' does the term Eur-Afrika appear, and it is used extensively in his 1934 book 'Europa Erwacht!'. For a wider discussion of the genesis of this idea in Europeanist thought, see Thorsten Botz-Bornstein,"European Tranfigurations – Eurafrica and Eurasia" in *The European Legacy*, 12:5, 2007, pp. 565-75.

48    Coudenhove-Kalergi, *Afrika*, p. 5; Coudenhove-Kalergi, *Europa Erwacht*!, p.218.

49    Coudenhove-Kalergi, *Europa Erwacht!*, p.194,

50    Carlo Sforza, *Europe and the Europeans*, G.G. Harrap, London, 1936, p.12.

51    Carlo Sforza, *Europe and the Europeans*, G.G. Harrap, London, 1936, p.12

potentials without getting in each others way. The war in this sense was the result of a continent where different peoples and states were increasingly forced on each other by sheer lack of space[52].

Thus the access to an African *Siedlungsland* would to Coudenhove-Kalergi have a pacifying effect in itself. Young Europeans could throw themselves and their energies into this great endeavor, instead of at each other.[53] As Lillian Ellena has argued, this entails that Africa is thought of as a European 'safety valve', as a space into which the potential violence which had exploded in Europe during the war could be 'exported'; *"'Africa' seems, therefore, to embody a sort of displacement of European violence".*[54] Coudenhove-Kalergi's pacifism in other words does not extend to the colonial space. Here Europe clearly needed to dominate rather than – as was the vision internally – to 'co-operate'. The issue of the potentially violent confrontation with the African population was however subdued in the geopolitical discourse, because for Coudenhove-Kalergi as for the other geopoliticians it was Africa - and not 'the spirit of Europe' - which was empty; both as regarded the size of its population in relation to the available space, and as regarded any notion of an native cultures, political preferences, or possible resistance.

In the pure geopolitical argument, the 'African' simply disappears as a human subject. This does not mean that his extermination is advocated or regards his cultural transformation through the *mission civilisatrice*. Rather he is simply irrelevant. What matters is the space he only partly inhabits and the resources he cannot himself put to good use. The African population hardly turn up in Coudenhove-Kalergi's idea about Eur-Afrika, they are only present as numbers in statistics aiming to show exactly that they do not by any measure 'fill' the continental space that they inhabit[55]. Whereas the classical *mission civilisatrice*, as well as the post-war spiritualist discourse, incorporated 'native voices' – either validating the civilizing endeavor with their gratitude or challenging it as 'the noble savage' – the geopolitical has no place or patience for such interlocutors. The geopolitical incorporation of Africa is never primarily about a relationship between the Europeans and the Africans; it is a logistical problem of how to access and extract, not a moral one about how to educate and enlighten. It is still, however, an ambition to dominate and control, even if the object of this exercise was rendered as 'space' rather than 'people'.

As a logistical problem its solution soon reveals itself as technical rather than political. It is indeed the much derided 'miracles of technology' that will open Africa up to Europe.

Coudenhove-Kalergi does recognize that technology played a part in the war becoming as brutal as it was, arguing that the end of war in Europe is ever more necessary because technology can turn any war into a war of extermination.[56] But technology is never a spiritual problem. There is none of the anti-modernist anxiety about technology's impact on the soul in Coudenhove-Kalergi, or in the geopolitical discourse in general. Quite the contrary: technology is not simply the practical means through which certain industrious aims might be accomplished; it is often an object of unbridled fascination, a frame within which the most outrageous utopian dreams are made to feel realistic. Herman Sörgel's vision for what he termed *Atlantropa* could be counted among such utopian schemes. Sörgel is completely in line with Coudenhove-Kalergi and other geopoliticians when it comes to diagnosing Europe's problems, their causes, and their possible solutions. The problems again are a lack of space and resources, aggravated by the political fragmentation of Europe, and the solution is to turn to Africa.[57] But Sörgel's solution to the logistics of such an African endeavor is beyond anybody else's imagination. He suggests nothing less than a controlled draining of the Mediterranean by building enormous water locks at Gibraltar and vast hydroelectric works at all the main inflowing rivers. Lowering the water level in the Mediterranean would open up space for settlement and make the passage to Africa shorter. But he does not stop here. The power from the hydro electric works would be directed to

52    A similar argument can be found in E.L Guenier,"Afrika als Kolonisationsland" in *Pan-Europa*, 11:1,1935, pp.7-11 who however laboured more extensively than Coudenhove-Kalergi to bring a moral – civilizing – dimension to the geopolitical argument that Europe would acquire Africa as 'Kolonisationsland'.

53    Coudenhove-Kalergi, *Afrika*; idem,"Reparationen und Kolonien" in *Pan-Europa*, Vol. 8:1, 1932, pp. 7-11; idem, *Europa Erwacht!*, pp. 194-97.

54    Lilliana Ellena,"Political Imagination, sexuality and love in the Eurafrican debate" in *Review of History*, 11:2, 2004, pp 241-72, here 246.

55    Indeed the colonial population only shows up in Coudenhove-Kalergi's first book on Pan-Europa (1926) as he calculates the population of what would later be termed Eur-Afrika by adding 78 million colonial inhabitants to the 300 million from the European countries (Coudenhove-Kalergi, *Pan-Europe*, pp. 32-33). In his 1934 chapter on 'Kolonien', his focus is exclusively on the issues of resources, and land for settlement and the native population never enter the argument. Only later in unfolding the vision of a future 'Europäische Reich' do we come across a much quoted reference to the colonials as 'farbigen Mitbürger', whose commercial and social conditions must be improved by Europe. This however is hardly a full-blown civilizing mission because as Coudenhove-Kalergi immediately states, the reason for such an effort would be that "Diese farbigen Bürger des Eropäische Reiches können eines Tages zum reichsten Markt der europäischen Industrie werden"(Coudenhove-Kalergi, *Europa Erwacht!*, p. 218). Africa's 'emptiness', both specifically as regards Coudenhove-Kalergi's Pan-Europa and Eur-Afrika, and in colonial discourses more generally is well treated by Ellena, Political Imagination.

56    Coudenhove-Kalergi, *Pan-Europe*, pp. 105-14.

57    Herman Sörgel, Atlantropa, Frezt &Wasmuth, Zürich, 1932, pp.75-85.

enormous pump stations drawing water from the great central African lakes to irrigate the Sahara by the establishing of sea size man made lakes. This would in one stroke eliminate unemployment because the works would take more than a century, relieve overpopulation through gradual settlement of irrigated areas, supply European industry with unlimited amounts of electrical power, and secure that Europe could compete with Pan-America and an emerging threat from Pan-Asia..[58]

In Sörgel at least, Berdjajef's bitter remark the men were now only able to believe in miracles when it regarded the 'miracles of technology' seem almost justified. Sörgel's vision does represent an extreme in the geopolitical discourse, but even if the fascination with technology did not always, as in Sörgel, become a full-blown fantasmatic dream about the 'miracles of technology', it was a stable and core feature of this discourse. It seems indeed that this ever present fascination with what *could* be done, utilizing the wonders of modern technology, served to subdue any sustained reflection on whether is *should* be done; on the wider moral legitimacy of Europe's imperial status in Africa.

The geopoliticians, in a sense, departed from the old discourse of the *mission civilisatrice* by 'over-identifying' with the mere surface of civilization. When the colonial relationship was rethought here it was not in an endeavor to reestablish or criticize its moral legitimacy, but purely and brutally a matter of handling the complicated logistics between a World Power and its natural '*Lebensraum*'.


## Another horizon: the liberation of the European body

Although the two discourses treated so far are considered as the dominant ones when it came to reimagining Europe and its colonial possessions after the catastrophe of the war, a third option did exist. It was however one which was generally much vaguer in its articulation of an actual project for Europe and one in which the colonial world (mainly Africa) was treated as little more than a stereotypical metaphor. This kind of discourse equally rejects the geopolitician's fascination with technology and the spiritualists' search for a rejuvenation of the moral bedrock of Europe, here the rebirth of Europe is to be accomplished through a radical liberation of the body – through a sexual revolution which would first destroy the bourgeois family and through this the bourgeois states of Europe. Rudolf Leonhard's book *Die Ewigkeit dieser Zeit. Eine Rhapsodie gegen Europa*[59] is singular in its application of these ideas to Europe as a collective subject, but the bodily thinking it employs is drawn from a combination of leftwing politics, psychoanalytic theorising, and stereotypical fantasies of the colonial Other which all became popular in the post-war period, even if Leonhard was somewhat alone in connecting these directly to the question of Europe. Leonhard's ideas could be described as proto-Reichian, in the sense that they resemble – in a somewhat incoherent and less than fully-developed way – the programme of sexual and political revolution later to be made (in)famous by Wilhelm Reich.[60] Reich challenged Freud's version of psychoanalysis by rejecting its implicit bourgeois values. As already touched upon, Freud believed that a core of sexual instincts remained a force to be reckoned with in the human mind. These instincts were however in advanced societies repressed and denied expression. Although this was a source of suffering for the individual – a suffering which could ultimately manifest itself as neurotic symptoms – Freud clearly believed this both a necessity and ultimately as justified in order to uphold civilized society. The alternative would be a return to a situation in which *'Homo homini lupus'* – man would be a wolf onto his fellow man.[61] Reich, on the contrary, believed that the suppression of especially sexual urges – as it was enforced already in childhood in the bourgeois family – was a major precondition for producing individuals of a fascist disposition, as he would are in his later 'Mass psychology of Fascism'.[62] For Reich, the natural core of the personality was not an inherently nasty and violent agency; it only became so because it was so brutally repressed – first in the patriarchal family and later in bourgeois society. True liberation would therefore have to start with a revolution against the patriarchal family, and only on this basis

58    Sörgel, Atlantropa, pp. 75-85. Sörgel, similarly to Coudenhove-Kalergi, laboured hard to bring his plans political attention. However the Nazi regime after 1933 had no interest in Eur-Afrika, looking instead East for Lebensraum (Anne Sophie Günzel, "Das "Atlantropa"-Projekt – Erschließung Europas und Afrikas" in *GRIN* Verlag, 2007).

59    Rudolf Leonhard, "Die Ewigkeit dieser Zeit. Eine Rhapsodie gegen Europa" in Verlag Die Schmiede, Berlin, 1924.

60 Wilhelm Reich, "Die Funktion des Orgasmus: zur Psychopathologie und zur Soziologie des Geschlechtslebens" in *International Psychoanalyse Verlag*, 1927; idem, „Ueber Characteranalyse" (On the Technique of Character Analysis) in *Internationale Zeitschrift für Psychoanalyse*, XIV, 1928; idem *Mass Psychology of Fascism*, Orgone Institute Press, [1933] 1946.

61    Freud, *Civilisation and its Discontents*, p.48.

62    Reich, *Pscychology of Fascism*.

could one hope to revolutionize society as such. One would set the body free to enjoy its animal urges and society would follow[63].

Leonhard, writing already in the early 1920's, is actually on the forefront of many of these ideas. He too advocates that the lesson of psychoanalysis is not that the animal core of human nature is to blame for the ills of society, but, on the contrary, the blame for societal misery, violence and conflict should fall to *"die bürgerliche Ordnung und ihren Hort and Ihren Stütze, die Familie"*.[64] The rebellion against the repressions and prohibitions of the patriarchal family advocated by Leonhard is of the most radical kind. Freud had argued that the bedrock of human (bourgeois) morality was laid as the child accepted the father's authority by bowing to the most fundamental of prohibitions: the Incest-taboo[65]. Thus for Leonhard this was exactly where the rebellion would have to begin.

Lasst Euch den Inzest nicht verbieten, ihr Liebenden im nächsten heißesten Kreise, wenn Euch kein glaubhafter, würdiger, Euch und grade Euch überzeugender Grund gesagt wird. Ihr lerntet von der Psychoanalyse, dass er zum traumhaften Wunschbesitze der Menschheit, zum Erbgut ihres Blutes gehört.[66]

Ultimately he thus advocates a total rejection of the bourgeois (sexual) morality and envisages a rapture of *"stürmisch polygame- und polymorphe Pansexualität"*[67] in European cities where *"nackte Mädchen auf den Strassen europäischer Städte ungefangen und unbefangen gehen"*.[68]

In Leonhard's reading, Europe has become atrophied and impotent because its citizens are raised and exist in the bourgeois family, but also because its societies all share an unhealthy fascination with technology at the expense of any genuine connection to nature; these two maladies have estranged the European from his *Tierheit*.[69] The derision of technology is – as was also the case with the spiritualists - connected to an anti-American stance. America is the primary example of the 'un-natural society'. But, unlike the spiritualists, Leonhard is neither a conservative Christian nor a sentimental orientalist. The ideal in relation to which he re-imagines Europe is instead Africa. The answer to 'Europe's question' is not Asian Values or American Technology but the natural immediacy with which life is lived and (sexual) pleasure pursued by the 'Negro'[70]. Europe faces the choice between '*Tropik oder Teknik*'[71]; between the alienation in technological bourgeois society, or the return to a mode of existence where the basic animal priorities of nutrition and procreation are no longer suppressed; where – as Leonhard puts it in a memorable phase – it is possible *"Banana und Phallus zusammendeuten"*[72]. Not surprisingly, Leonhard has little patience for the old ideas about European superiority, exclaiming instead that "(…) *wir warten nur auf den Ruf 'Afrika den Afrikanern', den Ruf des Rechtes, um mitzujublen"*.[73]

Although apparently radically challenging the old imperial discourse in this idealization of the potency of Africa, Leonhard is in fact employing a racial stereotype which was already popular in the early interwar years. The emergence of literary fantasies about the sexualised black body in the midst of white Europe is often connected to the deployment of French colonial black troops in the post-war occupation of the Rhineland and to the performances of Josephine Baker in Berlin in 1926. But already before this there had been a fascination with Africa in European modernist art.[74] Indeed the interwar years saw several novels which scandalously narrated an affair between a white heroine and her black lover.[75] Blackness as a metaphor for a more immediate sexuality could be employed equally well with negative as with a positive interpretation. Whereas

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63 For a good overview of Reich's thought see Paul A. Robinson, *The Freudian Left. Wilhelm Reich, Geza Roheim, Herbert Marcuse*, Harper & Row Publishers, Inc, 1969

64 Rudolf Leonhard,"Die Ewigkeit dieser Zeit. Eine Rhapsodie gegen Europa" in Verlag Die Schmiede, Berlin, 1924, p.130.

65 I am of course alluding to the Freudian theory about the Oedipal Complex. See Sigmund Freud, *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, Hogarth Press, [1905] 1962).

66 Rudolf Leonhard,"Die Ewigkeit dieser Zeit. Eine Rhapsodie gegen Europa" in Verlag Die Schmiede, Berlin, 1924, p. 165.

67 Rudolf Leonhard,"Die Ewigkeit dieser Zeit. Eine Rhapsodie gegen Europa" in Verlag Die Schmiede, Berlin, 1924, p. 165.

68 Rudolf Leonhard,"Die Ewigkeit dieser Zeit. Eine Rhapsodie gegen Europa" in Verlag Die Schmiede, Berlin, 1924, p. 165.

69 Rudolf Leonhard,"Die Ewigkeit dieser Zeit. Eine Rhapsodie gegen Europa" in Verlag Die Schmiede, Berlin, 1924, pp. 161-62.

70 Rudolf Leonhard,"Die Ewigkeit dieser Zeit. Eine Rhapsodie gegen Europa" in Verlag Die Schmiede, Berlin, 1924, pp. 159-60.

71 Rudolf Leonhard,"Die Ewigkeit dieser Zeit. Eine Rhapsodie gegen Europa" in Verlag Die Schmiede, Berlin, 1924, p. 161.

72 Rudolf Leonhard,"Die Ewigkeit dieser Zeit. Eine Rhapsodie gegen Europa" in Verlag Die Schmiede, Berlin, 1924, p.160.

73 Rudolf Leonhard,"Die Ewigkeit dieser Zeit. Eine Rhapsodie gegen Europa" in Verlag Die Schmiede, Berlin, 1924, p.157.

74 Moray McGovan, *Black and White? Claire Goll's Der Neger Jupiter Raubt Europa, in Yvan Goll – Claire Goll: Texts and Contexts*, Rodopi Press, 1997.

75 Lilliana Ellena,"Political Imagination, sexuality and love in the Eurafrican debate" in *Review of History*, 11:2, 2004, pp 241-72; Menno Spiering,"Engineering Europe: The European Idea in Interbellum Literature, the Case of Panropa" in Spiering & Wintle (eds.), *Ideas of Europe since 1914*, Palgrave 2002.

Nazism would use the image of the sexualised black body as the negative reverse of the sculptured (and de-sexualised) Aryan body – an imagery fully exploited in the 1936 Olympics[76] – others would, as Leonhard, hail it as a natural authenticity, lost by overly technical and intellectual Europe. What is overtly clear, however, is that Leonhard does not in fact escape one fundamental characteristic of a colonial discourse; the reduction of the colonial subject to a one-dimensional stereotype. His portrayal of Africa and Africans as a pure metaphor of sexuality is in fact no less reductive than the orientalist spiritualists longing for 'Real Asia' or the geopolitician's desire for an empty African space. Not even this most radical critique of European bourgeois society and its imperial project results in anything resembling a recognition of the colonial Other as a full and complex subject of his own.

## Conclusion

I have argued that the First World War presented the old discourse of the civilizing mission which fused technological superiority and moral superiority with an experience it could not easily assimilate. The barbarism which European civilization – aided in full by its 'wonders of modern technology' – here unleashed on itself, made it necessary to rethink the foundation of European superiority and the way that superiority was employed in the domination of the non-European world. In this context, 'spiritualist' authors desperately sought for a way to rejuvenate European values and found it either in Christianity or in Asia. These authors thus either refuted any validly of Europe's moral superiority, or sought to re-found it in a return to a moral essence of civilization and a rejection of its degenerate technological surface.

The geopoliticians instead gave up such pretensions of moral universals and conceived of Europe and its colonial hinterland as justified not by its 'civilized state' but by an new emerging world order in which select 'Pan-regions' would either dominate or be dominated. Here technology became as much an object of fantasy as Asia or Christianity had been in the spiritualist discourse.

Ultimately then we might say that there was, between these two discourses, no real disagreement as to the solution of post-war Europe's 'colonial problem'. Simply because there was no agreement of what constituted this problem. The spiritualist attempts at locating a source of rejuvenation which would reinstate the moral foundation of colonial possessions, was of no interest to a geopolitical idea of Eur-Afrika which had no need or patience for such sentimentalities. Legitimacy here was a child of necessity and thus the problem logistical rather than ethical.

Whereas Europe in a spiritual discourse had to be reinvigorated in order to maintain its moral identity as a righteous civilizer rather than as a power simply effectuating a 'Roman squeeze', the geopolitical logic of a future of emerging Pan-regions (each with their own colonial *Lebensraum*) distinguished only between those 'Romans' who would still be here in the future and those who would be somebody else's hinterland. Neither discourse therefore ultimately challenged the future legitimacy of European colonial domination. The war had been a shock to the colonial imagination of Europe, but in these discourses the shock was handled without ever arriving at a fundamental questioning of the idea of civilized superiority as such. Only Leonhard's radical sexual revolution seems to fully break with the imperial discourse, but does this only by deploying African blackness as a metaphor for a natural and unbounded *Tierheit*, and in that sense it stays firmly with the racist vocabulary of late imperialism.

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76    James Pitsula,"The Nazi Olympics" in *Olympika – International Journal of Olympic Studies*, Vol. XIII, 2004, pp. 1-26.